

Sociology 169F: Cultural Perspectives of Food Spring 2018

INSTRUCTOR

Jill Bakehorn

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Office: 479 Barrows Hall

Sign-up Office Hours: Tue/Thur 9:45am-10:45am

Sign-up: <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xjanb>

Drop-in Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 4:00-5:00pm

CLASS MEETING

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:30pm

105 North Gate Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide a broad overview of food as culture. Food has more meaning than mere sustenance and we will explore how food can also nourish us culturally and socially. Food itself is a social construction; how and what is defined as suitable to eat is socially determined and subject to change. What is acceptable as food in one culture can be taboo in another. Food reflects a culture's values and is a way one culture asserts its superiority over another.

We will begin the course by examining some foundational writings on the cultural implications and explanations of food:

- How and why we consume what we do
- How food is used to create distinctions

We will use these foundations to explore how food is imbued with gender, race, class, and even moral meanings and can form the basis for the constitution of identities and social relationships. Food is also connected to political ideologies that inform social movements including the slow food movement, organic food, and even punk culture.

What role does food preparation and cooking play in turning food from raw materials into culture? We eat food to nourish our bodies, which can be a source of a great deal of pleasure, but it can also be a source of anxiety. How does our body image impact our relationship to food? What about disease caused, at least partly, by what we consume?

What role do globalization and capitalism have on our food cultures and ways of life?

We will also examine how industrially-produced white bread in the U.S. demonstrates the complex social and political meanings and uses of food, like the construction of purity and germs; the reproduction of gender norms; the marginalization of immigrants; imperial ambitions and dominance; and the class-based meanings and ideologies of food.

Keep in mind this is a sociology course. Just to refresh your memory, sociology is the study of human social activity, organization, and interaction. Sociology is about the search for patterned behavior and social, rather than individual, explanations for this behavior. Sociologists look beyond the taken-for-granted notions of our social environment to examine the many layers of social meaning in the human experience. (If this doesn't sound familiar to you, or you are unclear about the *sociological perspective*, please refer to your introductory sociology text for a refresher.)

This course challenges many taken-for-granted assumptions about the social world. Keep in mind that your personal experiences may not match the general sociological insights discussed in the course. This does not negate the insights. Ask yourself why this might be the case. You may not agree with everything we read and discuss, but I expect you to have an open mind and demonstrate your knowledge of the sociological perspective. Disagreements and debates are expected and welcome in this class; however, I will not tolerate personal attacks.

COURSE GOALS

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- ❖ Discuss sociological theories of consumption practices
- ❖ Connect sociological theories to the social world and your experiences
- ❖ Use an intersectional approach
- ❖ Critically analyze media/“common sense” understandings of food
- ❖ Write succinct papers where you effectively synthesize course materials and apply theory

REQUIRED TEXTS

Counihan, Carole and Penney Van Esterick, eds. 2012. *Food and Culture: A Reader*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.

Bobrow-Strain, Aaron. 2013. *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Course Reader: Available at Copy Central (2576 Bancroft Way) and on bCourses. Books are on reserve at Moffitt Library and may be available online-check library website.

ASSIGNMENTS

Food Journal/Reflections: You will be asked to keep a food journal throughout the semester and critically examine your consumption practices in light of the themes of the course: distinction, identity, ideologies, bodies, health, globalization/colonialism, authenticity, and activism. You will complete two reflections. Each is worth 15% of your final grade. Due dates are listed under “Course Outline.”

Exams: You will complete two take-home exams. Exams will cover all materials in the course: lectures, readings, and any media presented in class. Each is worth 30% of your final grade. Due dates are listed under “Course Outline.”

Participation: You can earn full participation points by asking and answering questions in class and posting questions/comments/content on bCourses in the Discussion board. Worth 10% of your final grade.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Food journal/Reflections: 30%

Exams: 60%

Participation: 10%

COURSE FORMAT AND POLICIES

Readings: Readings should be completed prior to class. You must keep up with the readings to participate in class discussions and complete assignments. Bring your reading materials to every class; you will likely need to refer to them in class discussions. All of your assigned readings (aside from the required books) are available on bCourses and as a reader at Copy Central on Bancroft.

Participation: This class will incorporate the use of lecture, films, music, visuals, and group discussions. I expect you to be an active participant in the course. Bring your questions and comments to class and don't be shy about bringing them up.

You can also participate by posting links to news stories or videos, as well as any relevant thoughts on issues related to gender in the chatroom or discussion board on bCourses. Be sure to contextualize any posts by connecting them to issues in the class. Provide **trigger warnings** where appropriate.

If you have a question about the readings, lecture, etc., please post your question to the chatroom or discussion board on bCourses where both your questions and my answers will be visible to other students, rather than e-mailing me. Feel free to answer each other's questions as well.

Missing Class: If you miss a class, do not ask me if you missed anything. Of course you did!--but don't expect me to fill you in. I suggest sharing contact information with a classmate early on in the semester and getting the notes you missed.

Course Slides: I use course slides which often incorporate media. I will post course slides after lecture, not before, but they will only contain the text. Keep in mind that these slides are meant to be a guide during lecture and are therefore not exhaustive or a substitute for attending class.

Course Notes and Recordings: Course notes should not be disseminated beyond other students enrolled in the course. That means you are forbidden from posting them online on forums like Course Hero. You must obtain permission from me to record lectures.

Course Etiquette: Do not read, listen to music, browse the Internet, text, or sleep during class. If you want to do these things, don't bother coming to class. All **phones** must be silenced and put away during class.

Laptop Policy: I encourage you to consider taking notes without a computer if you are able. If you need/want to use a computer during class, I ask that you **sit in the back four rows of the classroom** so that you do not distract and disturb other students.

Email: Clearly indicate to which class you are referring in your emails to me. I endeavor to respond to emails within 24 hours, but this is not always possible; please be patient.

GRADING POLICIES

No **late assignments** will be accepted without prior approval.

Turnitin: All of your assignments will be checked by TurnItIn for plagiarism. Keep in mind, this program keeps a database of previously turned in papers as well.

Be sure to carefully consider assignment feedback; it is provided to help you improve on future assignments. For in-text feedback, **click on the link “View Feedback”** which may not be visible if you are not in full-screen mode.

If you would like to request a re-grade or re-evaluation of an assignment, you must first, wait 24 hours after the assignment was returned and second, write up a statement detailing why you believe you deserve a higher grade. This statement should be about the substance of your work, not about effort. Be sure to make specific reference to your work, don't simply say that you responded to the questions asked. Demonstrate how you did so.

You must request a re-grade within 7 days of the assignment being returned. My assessment and grade of your work will be used, even if that means you get a lower score than originally given for that work.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University defines academic misconduct as “any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community” (UC Berkeley Code of Student Conduct).

Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is collaboration with other students on response papers and exams. Plagiarism includes turning in any work that is not your own as well as improper or missing citations of others' works. As a student of the University of California, you are bound by the Code of Academic Conduct. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will result in a referral to The Center for Student Conduct and a zero for that assignment.

Plagiarism is most likely to occur because students are unaware of how to cite their sources or because they feel desperate. If you get to this point in your writing, contact me ASAP rather than doing something you'll very likely regret.

OFFICE HOURS

I will be holding **Sign-up** office hours from 9:45-10:45am on **Tuesdays and Thursdays**. Sign-up: <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xjanb>

I will be holding **Drop-in** office hours from 4:00-5:00pm on **Tuesdays and Thursdays** —no appointment necessary.

If you are having any difficulties with the material or assignments for the course or if you are having any personal problems that are affecting your ability to complete assignments on time, you should take advantage of office hours early in the semester. I will be much more amenable to granting extensions when I have been made aware of problems early on rather than at the last minute.

Remember that office hours are an important resource if for no other reason than getting to know your instructors could help you in the future when you may need letters of recommendation.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Disability Accommodations

Please let me know early in the semester if you qualify for any disability accommodations.

Student Learning Center

“The primary academic support service for students at Berkeley, the SLC helps students transition to Cal; navigate the academic terrain; create networks of resources; and achieve academic, personal and professional goals.” Located in The Cesar Chavez Student Center on Lower Sproul Plaza. Front desk phone: 510 642 7332

Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services

To learn more about these issues, how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: <http://survivorsupport.berkeley.edu>. Please note that I am **not** a confidential advocate. To speak to a confidential care advocate: <http://sa.berkeley.edu/dean/confidential-care-advocate/>

Course Outline Readings to be **completed** on day listed. Schedule subject to change.

WEEKS ONE-THREE: FOUNDATIONAL CULTURAL THEMES

Tuesday, 1/16 **Introductions**

Thursday, 1/18 **Food and Culture**

Counihan and Esterik: "Why Food? Why Culture? Why Now?" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Tuesday, 1/23 **Theories of Food Consumption**

Mead: "Why Do We Overeat?" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Barthes: "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Thursday, 1/25 **Food as Distinction**

Bourdieu: "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Lévi-Strauss: "The Culinary Triangle" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Douglas: "The Abominations of Leviticus" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Tuesday, 1/30 **The Food Revolution**

Finn, S. Margot. 2017. "Chapter 1: Incompatible Standards: The Four Ideals of the Food Revolution." Pp 18-49 in *Discriminating Taste: How Class Anxiety Created the American Food Revolution*. Newark, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Thursday, 2/1 **Food, Status Anxiety, and Class**

Finn, S. Margot. 2017. "Chapter 2: Aspirational Eating: Food and Status Anxiety in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era." Pp 49-79 in *Discriminating Taste: How Class Anxiety Created the American Food Revolution*. Newark, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

WEEKS FOUR-FIVE: FOOD AND IDENTITY

Tuesday, 2/6 Popular Culture and Identity

Holden: “The Overcooked and the Underdone: Masculinities in Japanese Food Programming” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Swenson: “Domestic Divo? Televised Treatments of Masculinity, Femininity, and Food” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Thursday, 2/8 Food as Ideology **REFLECTION 1 DUE**

Williams-Forson: “More than Just the “Big Piece of Chicken”: The Power of Race, Class, and Food in American Consciousness” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Tuesday, 2/13 Reproducing Ideologies in Everyday Life

Allison: “Japanese Mothers and *Obentōs*: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Carrington: “Feeding Lesbigan Families” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Thursday, 2/15 Food as Empowerment

Counihan: “*Mexicanas*’ Food Voice and Differential Consciousness in the San Luis Valley of Colorado” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Clark: “The Raw and the Rotten: Punk Cuisine” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

WEEKS SIX AND SEVEN: THE BODY AND CONSUMPTION

Tuesday, 2/20 Body Size and Morality

Biltekoff, Charlotte. 2013. “Chapter Five: Thinness as Health, Self-Control, and Citizenship.” Pp 109-149 in *Eating Right in America: The Cultural Politics of Food & Health*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Thursday, 2/22 Body Image: Women

Bordo: “Not Just ‘a White Girl’s Thing’: The Changing Face of Food and Body Image Problems” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

O’Connor: “De-medicalizing Anorexia: Opening a New Dialogue” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Tuesday, 2/27 Body Image: Men

Parasecoli: “Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinities in Men’s Fitness Magazines”
in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Thursday, 3/1 Food and Disease

Nabhan: “Rooting Out the Causes of Disease: Why Diabetes is So Common Among
Desert Dwellers” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Albritton: “Between Obesity and Hunger: The Capitalist Food Industry” in *Food and
Culture: A Reader*

WEEKS EIGHT & NINE: GLOBALIZATION

Tuesday, 3/6 Authenticity and Nation

Srinivas: “‘As Mother Made It’: The Cosmopolitan Indian Family, ‘Authentic’ Food, and
the Construction of Cultural Utopia” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Wilk: “‘Real Belizean Food’: Building Local Identity in the Transnational Caribbean” in
Food and Culture: A Reader

Thursday, 3/8 Branding the Nation Through Food

****TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE****

NO CLASS

Chi, Janine. 2014. “Consuming Rice, Branding the Nation.” *Contexts* 13 (3):50-55.

Yano, Christine R. 2013. “Tasting America: The Politics and Pleasures of School Lunch
in Hawai’i.” Pp 30-52 in *Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader*, edited
by Su, Robert Ji-Song et al. New York: New York University Press.

Tuesday, 3/13 Cultural Colonialism and Consumption

Heldke: “Let’s Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Yan: “Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald’s in Beijing” in *Food and
Culture: A Reader*

Thursday, 3/15 Global Food Workers

Ceccarini: “Food Workers as Individual Agents of Culinary Globalization: Pizza and Pizzaioli in Japan” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Barndt: “On the Move for Food: Three Women Behind the Tomato’s Journey” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

WEEKS TEN-TWELVE: CAPITALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Tuesday, 3/20 Capitalism and Health

Julier: “The Political Economy of Obesity: The Fat Pay All” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Poppendieck: “Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Thursday, 3/22 The Soda Tax: Regulating Consumption

Philpott, Tom et al. 2017. “Should Progressives Support Soda Taxes?” *In These Times*. December 20. <http://inthesetimes.com/article/20747/Up-for-Debate-Soda-Tax>

Tuesday, 3/27 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Thursday, 3/29 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, 4/3 The Slow Food Movement

Leitch: “Slow Food and the Politics of ‘Virtuous Globalization’” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Guthman: “Fast Food/Organic Food: Reflexive Tastes and the Making of ‘Yuppie Chow’” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

**Thursday, 4/5 Is Slow Food Good Food for All?
REFLECTION 2 DUE**

Schlosser: “The Chain Never Stops” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Pilcher: “Taco Bell, Maseca, and Slow Food: A Postmodern Apocalypse for Mexico’s Peasant Cuisine?” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Bowen, Sarah et al. 2014. “The Joy of Cooking?” *Contexts* 13 (3):20-25.

WEEKS THIRTEEN-FIFTEEN: WHITE BREAD: A SOCIOPOLITICAL FOOD

Tuesday, 4/10 “Bread and Power”

Bobrow-Strain: *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*
“Preface”
“Introduction: Bread and Power”

**Thursday, 4/12 “Germs, Gender Roles, and ‘Dirty Immigrants’” and A
“Spectacle of Modern Progress”**

Bobrow-Strain: *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*
“Chapter 1: Untouched by Human Hands: Dreams of Purity and Contagion”

Bobrow-Strain: *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*
“Chapter 2: The Invention of Sliced Bread: Dreams of Control and Abundance”

Tuesday, 4/17 Avoiding and Enriching White Bread

Bobrow-Strain: *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*
“Chapter 3: The Staff of Death: Dreams of Health and Discipline”

Bobrow-Strain: *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*
“Chapter 4: Vitamin Bread Boot Camp: Dreams of Strength and Defense”

Thursday, 4/19 Imperialism and Domination

Bobrow-Strain: *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*
“Chapter 5: White Bread Imperialism: Dreams of Peace and Security”

Tuesday, 4/24 White Bread and White Trash

Bobrow-Strain: *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*
“Chapter 6: How White Bread Became White Trash: Dreams of Resistance and Status”

Bobrow-Strain: *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*
“Chapter 7: Conclusion: Beyond Good Bread”

Thursday, 4/26 Catch-Up/Review

WEEK SIXTEEN: READING, REVIEW, AND RECITATION

MONDAY, APRIL 30-FRIDAY, MAY 4

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM: Due MONDAY, MAY 7 at 2:30PM