Topics in World History: Food Cultures and Globalization
26:510:543:01
Cross-listed with 26:050:521:04
Conklin 448: Thursdays 5:30pm–8:10pm
Fall 2023

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Office Hours: Thursdays 4:00pm–5:00pm or by appointment
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Office Hours:
I will hold office hours in Conklin Hall 329 on Thursdays between 4:00pm and 5:00pm, and by appointment. I am present, during office hours which are scheduled for you, to talk about a course material or an assignment. If you have any urgent and critical issue about anything, ask and clear them with me immediately. Communication is the key for a rewarding course experience. Take advantage of these opportunities.

Course Description
This seminar will explore the central role of food in shaping global history chronologically, from 1500 to the present. The course considers food both as a tool for investigating global history and the relationships between human beings, and as a basic human biological or nutritional need. The basic idea structuring the course is the notion that food has shaped our relationship with nature, agriculture and commerce, gender, class, culture, race, identity and even our body. The course has two main themes: globalization and food cultures and the interactions between the two. It explores how on the one hand, globalization created a worldwide system of food production and distribution, and, on the other, how food served as a marker of social, racial, ethnic, cultural and national identities in world societies.

Geographically, it revolves around Africa, but paying serious attention to the interactions between African food, cooking and culinary culture with those of Asia, Europe and the Americas. To understand the interaction of globalization and the change in food cultures we will look at some special developments and institutions, most notably: the Columbian Exchange, the slave trade, empire, industrialization, migration, which followed World War II;
and the creation of institutions like restaurants. The readings for critical discussion and review include scholarly works of history, anthropology, and nutrition studies as well as cookbooks. We will go on some excursions to restaurants and food markets or grocery stores in Newark for gaining insights about the current trends in food cultures for course discussion.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, my expectation is that students will be able to:

- understand and evaluate how historical processes of globalization have shaped food cultures in societies around the world and our own eating or consumption habits,
- develop knowledge required to understand food as a category of historical anthropological, and cultural analysis as explained by scholars in various fields,
- develop critical communication and thinking skills, refine research and writing abilities at a graduate level.

Required Readings
Alternating weeks, we shall read articles/book chapters or entire books. The articles, chapters and books listed in the syllabus under class schedule for each week will be on reserve in the Library. Students can also purchase them from online booksellers. Additional readings will be made available electronically through canvas or through RU online databases.

Evaluation Breakdown
Participation (ongoing) 30%
Response/Reflection Papers (due weekly) 30%
Final food history project (due 16 December at 5 pm) 40%

Grading Scale
Grading for the course will be as follows:

90 - 100 A
87 - 89 B+
80 - 86 B
77 - 79 C+
70 - 76 C
60 - 69 D
59 or less F

Evaluation Details
Participation
Since this is a participation-intense seminar which meets once per week, your grade will be based substantially on the regularity of your attendance and the quality of active participation in the weekly seminars. Seminar sessions will proceed on the basis of assigned readings and each participant is expected to do the readings in advance of each meeting and to contribute their insights and thoughts. I will expect and assume your regular class attendance and full engagement with all the material. You need to have valid and documented reason if and when you miss class. Missing more than one class will severely lower your course grade. Please clear excused absences with the instructor in advance.

Serve as a discussant: Each student must sign up to lead seminar discussion twice during the semester. As part of your responsibilities as discussant, you are to post on the discussion board on Canvas and also bring to class a set of discussion questions to distribute to the seminar. The questions should help us guide our reading as well as serve as the basis of session discussion. In formulating questions, try at best you can to make them at once succinct, specific, and significant. To ensure full participation, no participant can contribute thrice, before all participants have contributed twice.

Response/Reflection papers
Your evaluation is also based on writing brief response or reflection papers. Each student is required to write a 300-word response paper based on each week’s readings, due in the beginning of our meeting on Canvas. Responses should demonstrate your understanding of the assigned reading, define the author’s argument and methodological approach to food history, identify the types of sources the author uses, and reflect on the strengths and limitations of the author’s argument and approach.

Final Food History Project:
‘What is in Your Kitchen Cabinet and Fridge’
Students are required to do a semester long project resulting in a significant fifteen-to-twenty-page long paper (4500 to 6000 words). The project will help to deepen the students’ understanding of the topics and concepts learned in class by critically thinking about their own experiences and thoughts regarding food. Its larger goal is to help us appreciate how each of us are connected to so many parts of the world in our everyday lives through the food that we consume.

The centerpiece of the food history project is the food items students eat at home. Over the course of several weeks prior to writing the final essay, you will need to document the food you purchase and put in your kitchen cabinet and fridge and consume. You will need to identify and describe the ingredients of the food, or the recipes fully and completely. Once a full description
of the food and ingredients are made, students then need to research the food. The research would focus on generating information about the country or countries of origin of the ingredients/food, the cultural, political, geographical, and economic forces, and institutional arrangements put in place to create and distribute it. As well, you need to investigate who the supply chains and distributors are, and how the particular food found its way to your kitchen cabinet and fridge from the agricultural field of a country, or factory, or company you are describing.

What you need to do is exactly to discuss where the food items were made, how these places become the ideal location for the production of those particular food items, who are the producers, who are the investors, what kinds of measures are there to protect this production, trade and so on in a very general way. In order to do so, you need to: (1) choose three different countries in which most of the stuff in your kitchen cabinet and fridge was produced. (Students are encouraged to choose countries from outside of Europe and North America); and (2) choose two major brand names in food industry, such as Whole Foods and American Food, from your kitchen cabinet and fridge that distribute, process and produce their goods in those countries. Your grade will be determined based on the depth and quality of your documentation, writing and analytical rigor or reflection. Details of this project will be given early in the semester.

Class Schedule
Disclaimer: Should the need arise I reserve the right to amend this syllabus. The assignments and deadlines are subject to changes due to situations such as weather emergency. We might drop, add, or exchange readings according to our specific interests. Changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance of time.

Below is the course schedule that we will follow in the course of the semester.

September 7  
Topic 1: Introduction: Food Cultures and Globalization  
Reading: Richard Wilk, *Home Cooking in the Global Village*  

September 14  
Topic 2: Food, Religion, and Identity  

Discussants______________________________

September 21  Topic 3: The Columbian Exchange and Globalization of Food
Discussants______________________________

September 28  Topic 4: Food and Race: Slavery and Soul Food
Discussants______________________________

October 5  Topic 5: Out of Africa: A Global History of Coffee
Discussants______________________________

October 12  Topic 6: Cacao and Chocolate
Discussants______________________________

October 19  Topic 7: Tomato: New World to Old World
Discussants______________________________
October 26  Topic 8: Industrializing Diet: Food and Health

Discussants______________________________

November 02  Topic 9: Fast Food/Roadside Food: A Global History
Recommended: Eric Schlosser, Fast Food Nation
Discussants______________________________

November 9  Topic 10: Food, Migration and Globalization: Ethnic Restaurants and Grocery Stores in America
Discussants______________________________

November 16  Topic 11: Alternative Food and Food Justice Movements

Discussants______________________________

**November 21**
Local Food and Vegetarianism Movements
Reading: Lierre Keith, *The Vegetarian Myth: Food, Justice, and Vegetarianism* (Crescent City: Flashpoint Press, 2009), 1-12
Class Discusses film and reading.

**November 23-26**
Thanksgiving Recess
No class

**November 30**
Topic 12: Food and Gender
Discussants______________________________

**December 7**
Outing at a local restaurant: TBA

**December 13**
End of Classes

**December 15**
Reading Day

**December 16**
The final paper is due to canvas on 16 December at 5 pm

**Course Website**
Canvas is our best means of communication. Be sure to check Canvas and your university email account on a regular basis, preferably twice a week. You will need access to the Canvas course site in order to access your grade, some of the readings, announcements, and other information of interest and importance.

**Attendance**
In accordance with the History Department policy: Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F. Recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.

**Decorum**
Course decorum is a university requirement every student must fulfil. As university students you are expected to behave as adults and act with courtesy and professionalism at all times. Express your thought and opinion in a way which is professional and does not offend anyone. Avoid any inappropriate comments. Here is the link to the student code of conduct: [https://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/processes/university-code-student-conduct](https://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/processes/university-code-student-conduct)

**Academic Integrity**
As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University’s educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/)

**Integrity Pledge**
All students are required to adhere to the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. You must include the following Rutgers Honor Code Pledge on all examinations and major course assignments and submitted for grading:

“On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment). (Name) (Signature – typing your name is fine) (Date)”.

See: [https://www.sashonors.rutgers.edu/academics/integrity-pledge](https://www.sashonors.rutgers.edu/academics/integrity-pledge).
University Resources
Your health and well-being matter, and Rutgers has put in place a number of resources that are intended to help students through the challenges that might emerge during these times. Information on many of these resources appears below. Please let me know immediately if you are experiencing circumstances that are negatively impacting your academic performance. I also strongly encourage you to contact your academic advisor.

Accommodation and Support Statement
Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

Absences: All students are responsible for timely notification of their instructor regarding any expected absences. The Division of Student Affairs can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc.) Students should refer to the University’s Course Attendance policy (10.2.7), for complete expectations and responsibilities. The office can be contacted at: (973) 353-5063 or deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with students with medical, physical, and/or mental conditions who encounter disabling barriers in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for access. Students who have completed the process with ODS and have approved accommodations are provided a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) specific to each course. To initiate accommodations for their course students must both provide the LOA to and have a conversation with the course instructor about the accommodations. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

Temporary Conditions/Injuries: The Division of Student Affairs can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request for assistance at: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

Pregnancy: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the office at (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.
Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the office at: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures located at https://uec.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/60-1-33-current-1.pdf.

Interpersonal Violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) can provide any student with confidential support. The office does not have a reporting obligation to Title IX. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based helpline available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support. Students do not need to be a victim/survivor of violence; any student can receive services, information and support.

Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a plan of support plan and address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Connect with the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-Being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If students are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out Sanvello for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support. Visit https://my.rutgers.edu/, click on Sanvello: Wellness @ RUN, and log in with your netid to begin your journey toward wellness.

Emergencies: Call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) at (973) 353-5111.

Learning Resources
Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services):
Tutoring available in a variety of math, science, technology, and business courses. Contact the Learning Center to determine whether tutoring is available for a specific course.
Room 140, Bradley Hall (973) 353-5608
learning.center@newark.rutgers.edu
https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center
Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops)
(973) 353-5847
nwc@rutgers.edu
https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center

Technology/Internet Resources for Students
https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/covid-technology-resources
https://mytech.newark.rutgers.edu/tlp