Description and Objectives

In this course, we focus on the food industry in order to understand how it has restructuring American society, how we live, who we are, how we define leisure time and prosperity, and how and where people work. The food industry has also reshaped (literally) our bodies and our health. The fast food industry in particular has meant a wholesale transformation of food production (agriculture), the restaurant business, and the eating and health habits of the population. We take a further look at processed food, since it produces many of the same results as does fast food. Related to this are two further studies: the low-waged world on which the food industry is heavily dependent, and the impact of automobiles on the dimensions and quality of everyday life. The automobile industry led to the decline of public transportation systems, the abandonment of the cities for the suburbs, and a government-financed expansion of the highway system. Life today is very different from what it was in the past.

Besides weekly readings, we view films during each class meeting. This is a discussion class, not a lecture (despite its size). If you haven’t read the material, you won’t be able to participate in discussions. Therefore, … and bring the relevant book to class.

Books (required):


*Books are also on Reserve at Dana Library.

Evaluations

Quizzes: Every class begins with a 20-minute graded writing assignment based on the reading for that day. While everyone takes the quiz, only some students will have them graded (for instance, one class it might be everyone whose last name begins with A-D; the next class it might be M-S). The system is random.

--Until February 13, quizzes count as a single grade. After then, all quizzes count as double grades.

--All quizzes are judged according to their organization, command of themes and details, and length. Your final grade is an average of your quiz grades, plus participation and attendance.

Participation: Grades default down, except if participation is used to round your grade up. The discussions, of course, presuppose that you have read the assigned material already. You will not be penalized if you do not participate, but regular and active participation will count in your favor.

Attendance: Everyone is allowed two absences, no justifications necessary. Three or more absences and your final grade may be reduced one or more levels.

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Electronics: You are welcome to use electronic devices for class-related purposes. Please turn off your cell phone and refrain from texting and emailing during class and during films especially. These activities are very distracting.

Skills: This class places heavy emphasis on developing the following skills: close reading, speed writing, persuasive conversation. You are not expected to be a master of these skills at the start of the class, but we will work systematically at developing these skills over the course of the semester.

Cheating: What is true for this class is true for every class that you take – cheating of any sort is VERBOTEN and will result in an F grade on a quiz, possibly an F grade for the course, and possible further sanctions by the Dean’s Office. In other words, don’t cheat.