



SYLLABUS

BRITAIN AND FOOD IN SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

Instructor: Julie Andreshak-Behrman

Contact Hrs: 40

Language of Instruction: English

LONDON, ENGLAND

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is focused on the complex relationships between food and cuisine and society and culture and how they shape and influence each other. Drawing from the disciplines of food studies, cultural studies, anthropology and sociology, students will have the opportunity to engage with *food as culture* – in theory and in practice. Through this course, students will examine major contemporary issues around food, the history and forms of cuisine in the UK, and food as an important cultural phenomenon in all societies. Britain will be the main example, with London as a particular lens.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Instructional Goals. Through this course, students will examine major contemporary issues around food, the history and forms of cuisine in the UK, and food as an important cultural phenomenon in all societies. Britain will be the main example, with London as a particular lens.

Student Outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- recognise and explain the ways in which culture and society influence food and cookery and vice versa.
- identify key themes food and cookery in the United Kingdom in the 20th century, including the role of social class, the media, government and business.
- describe the salient elements of British cuisine and food cultures.
- analyse major national and global food issues, such as obesity and hunger, environmental impacts, animal welfare and human health.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This is essentially a classroom-based course, but it has a high level of experiential learning. Visits and tastings will be arranged as appropriate to enhance understanding the composition of British culinary tradition. In addition, students will be expected to

participate in critical analysis about food in the UK (and their home country and the world); food is controversial and stirs individual and national passions alike. London is incredibly rich in food culture. Students are strongly encouraged to explore London's food culture outside of class time.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

- 20% Attendance & Participation/Observation task
- 10% Food journal
- 30% Response paper
- 40% Final Exam (multiple choice & short answer)

Grading Scale

A = 94-100%	C = 72-75%
A- = 90-93%	C- = 70-71%
B+ = 87-89%	D+ = 66-69%
B = 82-86%	D = 62-65%
B- = 80-81%	F = 61% and below
C+ = 76-79%	

Attendance & Participation – attendance is about *quantity*, but participation about *quality*. Do NOT expect to receive full marks simply by showing up. Equally, students who speak the most are necessarily the best participants. Thoughtful comments based on good class preparation (i.e. completing the readings and doing additional outside reading and research) as well as on-time arrival is what is required for good marks in this category.

Observation task

You will be asked to complete a task involving observation of people, products, environment and behaviours at three British supermarkets. I will provide you the framework for collecting your data. We will be examining who shops where are why, how people shop and the relationship between supermarkets and British food and class identities. (This will be included in your Attendance and Participation mark).

Food Journal (Blog)

This course is about food, but I hope your overall experience in London is *a journey through food*. Your blog will be a record of *what* you are eating, *where* you are eating, *what you are observing* regarding people interacting with food, *what new discoveries* about food and culture that your are making. Thoughtful analysis – not just description – is a must. We will use a Facebook group for this purpose. **(5 entries, 250 words each)**

Response Paper

I will be providing you an article from an anthropology reader. For example, Caldwell's *Domesticating the French Fry: McDonald's and Consumerism in Moscow*. You will be required to identify the major arguments in the article and then analyse and evaluate

them. We will spend some time in class discussing what is meant by a ‘response paper’ and the paper requirements. **(3500 Words)**.

Final Exam

Lectures, visits and the readings will form the basis for a final multiple choice and short answer exam. Revision session to take place in the week prior to the exam.

NB: Specific information on these assignments will provided under separate cover.

COURSE OUTLINE

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings & Assignments</i>
12 & 13 September	<p>WEEK 1: Introduction to the course: syllabus, assignments, readings, students and instructor. Student questionnaire.</p> <p><u>Food and culture in theory: a basis for interpretation of the cultural meanings of food and food behavior:</u> What is culture? Using intercultural concepts, we will examine stereotype and generalisation, the personal, cultural and universal. We will look at ethnographic methods and tools of cultural comparison to be used to decipher the meaning of food as material culture. How do we avoid being reductionist or overly simplistic in using food as our main cultural lens? How will we and avoid the ‘food, flags, festivals’ approach to culture learning? In order to understand ‘the other’ we also must look at ‘the self’. What can be said about our home culture and its relationship with food, and what of the importance of food and cultural identity?</p>	<i>Food Culture in GB</i> , pp 1-57
Saturday, 17 September	<p>Field trip: Epicurean, Gourmets’ Foodie Walk</p> <p>Meet at Monument Station, Fish Street Hill Exit, 9.45am</p>	
19 & 20 September	<p>WEEK 2: <u>20th century perspectives on food and cooking in Britain:</u> War, industrialisation, immigration and changes in health, incomes, family life and the role of women have all shaped the way in which British cuisine has developed.</p>	<p><i>Food Culture in GB</i>, pp 59-128</p> <p><i>Ministry of Food</i>, Ch 4-6</p> <p>Blog entry #1</p>
26 & 27 September	<p>WEEK 3: <u>Meals, celebrations and regional cuisine:</u> We will examine produce, foods and the structure of meals traditional in twentieth century British food and drink. What are the major differences in food patterns among social classes in Britain, and how are the</p>	<p><i>Food Culture in GB</i>, pp 129-152</p> <p><i>Food Culture in GB</i>, pp 177-199</p>

	<p>multiple conceptions of ‘Britishness’ linked to the food we eat. We will decipher the meal as cultural unit.</p> <p>In-class tasting</p>	
3 & 4 October	<p>WEEK 4: <u>Food and the media, the phenomena of celebrity chefs:</u> With the publication of Elizabeth David’s first book on Mediterranean food and cookery, Britain’s interest in continental food was established. Unable to source most of the needed ingredients, her work represented ‘food fantasy’ and aspiration in lifestyle and culture. Television and cookery have a rich history in Britain -- from and Fanny Cradock, Graham Kerr, Keith Floyd to the cult of personality and commercialism of Britain’s ‘TV chefs’ today.</p> <p>We will also begin discussion of the articles for the response paper.</p>	<p><i>The cultural politics of food and eating</i>, Waston & Caldwell (2005), selected chapters for response paper</p> <p>Blog entry #2</p>
10 & 11 October	<p>WEEK 5: <u>London as a food capital</u> <u>British cuisine and the restaurant industry</u></p> <p>BBC 2: Michelin Stars - The Madness of Perfection</p>	<p><i>Food Culture in GB</i>, pp 153-176</p>
17-21 October	<u>WEEK 6: MIDTERM BREAK</u>	
Monday, 24 October	<p>Monisha Bharadwaj, Food writer and Indian Food and Culture Expert. Walking tour of Southall: http://www.cookingwithmonisha.com/index.html</p> <p>Meet at Southall Station at 12.45pm</p>	<p>Review section on Indian cuisine in <i>Food Culture in GB</i></p>
25 October 31 October & 1 November	<p>WEEK 7: <u>Immigration, multiculturalism, London and food:</u> London is home to immigrants from all over the world, and with the movement of peoples comes the influence of their cultures and food. Jewish, Chinese, Pakistani, Indian and Afro-Caribbean cuisine are some of the major traditions. What has been the level of acceptance of ‘foreign’ foods? What are these traditions has been the impact on how people eat? Is embracing food cultures a ‘threat’ to ‘indigenous’ food and culture? And, are we in danger of underplaying cultural complexities by viewing ethnic groups through their</p>	<p><i>Geographies of Difference</i>, Peter Jackson (2002)</p> <p><i>Bad food Britain</i>, Ch 1-5</p> <p>Blog entry #3</p> <p>*Response paper due* 1 November, 1.30pm</p>

	food?	
Monday, 7 November	Afternoon Tea, The Orangery at Kensington Palace Meet at High Street Kensington Station at 12.30	
8 November	WEEK 8: Discussion of Joanna Blythman's <i>Bad Food Britain</i>	<i>Bad food Britain</i> , Ch 6-10
14 & 15 November	WEEK 9: <u>The politics and business of food – social class and supermarkets:</u> We will examine how the ways in which people have shopped have changed in the 20 th century and to what extent the perception of a 'return' to local, seasonal and fresh is a reality. What is a true 'farmer's market'? Has the resurgence of markets meant a return to 'community'? What is the role of supermarket chains in Britain today? And, what are the social class associations with these supermarkets? Supermarket visit and task Video: BBC Panorama -- <i>Supermarkets: What Price Cheap Food?</i>	Readings to be provided Blog entry #4
21 & 22 November	WEEK 10: <u>The politics and business of food: contemporary issues in the UK and EU:</u> The four countries and countless regions of the UK are home to unique regional specialties and food traditions. From production to protection, establishing these specialties in all EU nations is important to individual producers, the economy but also to national food cultures and identities. What are the difficulties in acquiring Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status? What are the implications in not having it? What are some of the other food issues (and benefits) that the continued expansion of the EU brings about for producers and consumers?	<i>Bad food Britain</i> , Ch 10-12
28 & 29 November	WEEK 11 & 12: <u>Diet, health, social issues and globalization:</u> Contemporary issues in food include those connected to the environment, animal welfare, and human welfare. We will look at these issues within the	<i>Food Culture in GB</i> , pp 201-216 <i>Bad food Britain</i> , Ch 13-17

	British context in conjunctions with BBC documentaries such as <i>The Jamie Oliver's school meals campaign</i> , <i>Jamie's School Dinners</i> and <i>Jamie's Ministry of Food</i> . What we eat (and the choices we make as future culinary professionals and privileged individuals) are not without ethical and moral implications and can have global impacts.	Blog entry #5
5 & 6 December	WEEK 13: Final Exam Revision and Final Exam	<i>Bad food Britain</i> , Ch 16-17

COURSE READINGS

Required Texts

Mason, L. (2004). *Food culture in Great Britain*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
 Blythman, J. (2006). *Bad food Britain: How a nation ruined its appetite*. Fourth Estate: London.

Additional materials (handouts, journal articles and magazine articles will be provided in class by the instructor. Students will be responsible for the content of these additional materials for the final exam.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blythman, J. (2004). *Shopped: The shocking power of British supermarkets*. Fourth Estate: London.
- Colquhoun, K. (2008). *Taste: The Story of Britain Through Its Cooking*. Bloomsbury Publishing: London.
- Counihan, P. & Esterik, P. (Eds.). (2008). *Food and culture: A reader*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Flammang, J. (2009). *The Taste for Civilization: Food, Politics, and Civil Society*. University of Illinois Press: USA.
- Lawrence, F. (2004). *Eat your heart out: Why the food business is bad for the planet and your health*. London: Penguin.
- Lawrence, F. (2004). *Not on the label: What really goes into the food on your plate*. London: Penguin.
- Roth, K. (2001). Material culture and intercultural communication. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 25 (5), 563-580.
- Watson, J.I. & Caldwell, M.I. (Eds.). (2005). *The cultural politics of food and eating: A reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.