INSTRUCTORS:
Section 01  David Gapp (Biology) – Office: SCCT 2067
Classroom: SCCT 3021
Section 02  Franklin Sciacca (Russian Studies) - Office: Christian Johnson 208
Classroom: SCCT 1004

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Food for Thought: The Science, Culture, and Politics of Food

An interdisciplinary exploration of food. Topics include: why we eat what we eat; where our dinner comes from; the politics of food; the cultural history of cookbooks; diet fads; food and disease. Tastings, films, and field trip [Farmers’ Museum in Cooperstown]. Final course project: planning and planting an early-nineteenth-century garden on campus [“The 1812 Garden”].

COURSE OBJECTIVES

There are two sections of the course and about two-thirds of the syllabus are shared in common. The two groups will periodically meet together for common events (lectures, discussions, tastings, films) as indicated in the syllabus. (Please note that on days when we meet jointly, we will all meet in SCCT 3021.)

By the end of the semester, we hope all students will have

- successfully engaged in deep research on a particular food crop and compiled a polished and erudite wiki entry for the “1812 Garden” website.
- a clearer understanding of how your own food choices are affected by history, culture and biology.
- learned now to make more deliberate and healthy food choices.

FILMS

We will show several documentaries outside of class time (see list below). You will all be responsible for seeing these films before we discuss them in class. You will also be
posting to Discussion Board 1-2-page reactions to/assessments of each of these films before the class discussion; we will use these papers as a basis for our discussions.

FIELD TRIP
Saturday, April 26  Field trip to Farmers Museum, Cooperstown.  You must make every effort to participate in the trip.

WRITTEN AND OTHER COURSE WORK

Wiki entry (researched and written with one other member of the seminar).  A detailed schedule of due dates will be provided.  NOTE:  this project will be completed right after Spring break.  
Short written assignments (to be announced in class; these will include 1-2-page reviews of the films; for most classes you will be required to post three or so pithy sentences that highlight the key points presented in the readings)
Midterm (March 11)
Final (take-home essays)
Planting of a plot in the “1812 Garden”

BOOKS for Section 02

William Cobbett, The American Gardener (Modern Library Gardening)  
Publisher: Modern Library (2003)  
ISBN-10: 0812967372

Michael Pollan, The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals  
Publisher: Penguin (2007)  
ISBN-10: 0143038583

Vandana Shiva (ed.), Manifestos on the Future of Food & Seed  
South End Press  
ISBN 978-0-89608-777-4

Reay Tannahill, Food in History  
Publisher: Three Rivers Press (1995)  
ISBN-10: 0517884046
Sophomore Seminar 235 - Food For Thought
Syllabus – Spring 2008

Week 1

Tuesday, January 22
Topic: Introduction to the course
   Introductory questionnaire
Reading: Harper & LeBeau, “Food as a Human Value and Problem,” from Food, Society, and Environment, Introduction (ER)
In class: assignment of research topics

Thursday, January 24 (meet in 3021)
BE ON TIME and try to arrange to stay a few minutes extra. In class we will watch “The Future of Food” (88 minutes)
Topic: “The Future of Food” (1-2 page review to be posted to Discussion Board by Friday)
Reading:
Cobbett, The American Gardener, pp. 3-61

Week 2

Tuesday, January 29 (meet in the computer room Science 3039)
Assignment to be completed for Tuesday’s class:
These reference books are on reserve in Burke Library.

Search all of these titles for articles on your crop(s). Photocopy and then read carefully all pertinent materials, including the bibliographies. Compile a list of the key words you encounter, including variant and scientific nomenclature for your crop(s) (e.g. corn, maize, Zea mays, etc.) BRING this list and the photocopies of the articles to class. You are also to conduct a google search for your crop(s). Identify at least one serious website that relates to your crop(s). Print out the first page of the site and bring to class.

In class: Lynn Mayo and Glynis Asu will discuss research strategies, copyright and permission issues, and lead you through some research exercises
Thursday, January 31 (meet in 3021; after Carl Rosenfield’s presentation, we will return to our classroom)

In class: Carl Rosenfield on use of Blackboard wiki software
Topic: Agriculture in early 19th-century America
Reading:
Cobbett, The American Gardener, pp. 70-87; skim the rest of the book. Do find and study the section(s) on the crop(s) you are researching;
“Gardening in the 19th Century,” from The Heirloom Vegetable Garden (Cornell Cooperative Extension Information Bulletin 177)(Xerox handout);
(NOTE: While you are at the Old Sturbridge Village website, conduct a search for your crop… there are useful documents relating to, for example, hops etc.);
de Crevecoeur, “Letter XI: Visit to Mr. Bertram, the Botanist,” from Letters from an American Farmer (ER)

“Galaxy Dinner”
Great Room, Spencer House - 6 - 8p.m.

Week 3

Tuesday, February 5

Topic: Seeds, soil and fertilizer
Reading:
Cobbett, The American Gardener, pp. 61-70;
Seabrook, “Sowing for Apocalypse. The Quest for a Global Seed Bank,” New Yorker (Aug 27, 2007 (ER);
“Manifesto on the Future of Seed,” in Shiva (ed.), Manifestos on the Future of Food and Seed, pp. 76-102;
Read about “heirloom seeds” at http://www.seed savers.org/savingheirlooms.asp (and while you are here, explore this website. Perhaps you’d like to request a free seed catalogue. This will be one of our sources for seeds for “The 1812 Garden.”)

Thursday, February 7 (meet in 3021)

Topic: Obesity
Readings: Critser, “Up Up Up! (Or, Where the Calories Came From),” from Fat Land. How Americans Became the Fattest People in the World, Ch 1 (ER); Rappoport, “Feeding Frenzies,” from How We Eat, Ch 3 (ER)
Tasting: cheese
Week 4

**Tuesday, February 12** (meet in 3021)

**Topic:** Disordered eating

**Reading:**
Thompson and Manore, “Disordered Eating,” from *Nutrition: An Applied Approach*, Ch 13 (ER);
Walker Bynum, “Fast, Feast, and Flesh. The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women,” from Counihan and Van Esterik, eds., *Food and Culture*, Ch 12 (ER)

**Thursday, February 14** (meet in 3021)

**Topic:** Nutrition and evolution of the human diet

**Readings:**
Harper and Le Beau, “The Biological Base,” from *Food, Society, and Environment*, Ch 1 (ER);

**Tasting:** sugar and honey

Week 5

**Tuesday, February 19** (meet in 3021)

**Topic:** Chocolate with Prof. Ernest Williams

**Reading:** Coe and Coe, “The Tree of the Food of the Gods,” from *The True History of Chocolate*, CH 1 (ER)

**Tasting:** chocolate

**Feb 19-20 Tues-Wed Film:** “The Harvest of Despair” (post 1-2 pg. review by Friday)

**Thursday, February 21** (meet in 3021)

**Topic:** Famine Part 1: Case Studies-- Ukraine and China

**Readings:**
Robbins, *Famine in Russia, 1891-1892*, Ch 1 (ER, omit Ch 2);
Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, Chs 11, 12 (ER, omit Ch 16);
Dolot, *Execution by Hunger. The Hidden Holocaust*, Ch 24 (ER);
Chang, “’Capable Women Can Make a Meal without Food’—Famine (1958-1962),” from *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* (ER)

**Sun Mon Feb 24-25 Film:** “When Ireland Starved” (post 1-2 pg. review due by Wed)

Week 6

**Tuesday, February 26**

**Topic:** Famine Part 2: Hunger

**Reading:**
Pinstrup-Andersen and Cheng, “Still Hungry,” *Scientific American* (Sept 2007) (ER);
Nestle, "Hunger in the United States: Policy Implications," from Counihan, ed., *Food in the USA* (ER);
Diner, “Ways of Eating, Ways of Starving,” from *Hungering for America* Ch 1 (ER);
Fagan, “The Year without a Summer,” from *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History 1300-1850*, Ch 10 (ER)

**Tues Wed  Feb 26-27  Film: “King Corn” (post 1-2 pg. review by Friday)**

**Thursday, February 28**
Topic: The Omnivore’s Dilemma 1
Reading: Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, pp. 1-119
**Tasting: corn** (meet in 3021 for tasting)

**Week 7**

**Tuesday, March 4**
Topic: Topic: The Omnivore’s Dilemma 2
Reading: Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, pp. 123-273
In class visit: Reuben Haag, Bon Appetit
**Tasting: local products** (meet in 3021 for tasting)

**Tues Wed Mar 4-5 Film: “Supersize Me” (post 1-2 pg. review by Friday)**

**Thursday, March 6**
Topic: The Omnivore’s Dilemma 3
Reading: Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, pp. 277-411
**Start food diary today**

**Week 8**

**Tuesday, March 11**

**MIDTERM**

**Thursday, March 13** (meet in 3021)
Topic: Knowing your food and food labeling; Food labeling; “Food Diary”
Assignment: Complete “Food Diary” and write an analysis of your eating habits
Lehrer, “Auguste Escoffier. The Essence of Taste,” from *Proust was a Neuroscientist*, Ch 3 (ER);
FDA Consumer “Revealing Trans Fats” (ER)
Take the ecological footprint quiz at [http://www.earthday.net/Footprint/index.asp](http://www.earthday.net/Footprint/index.asp)
**Tasting: Taste-bud tasting**

**Spring Break**
Week 9

Tuesday, April 1 (meet in 3021)
RESEARCH PAPER DUE

In class:
Our guest will be Jim Manning, who is the Farm Business Management Educator of Cornell Cooperative Extension - Oneida County. He will discuss the farm situation in central New York and the potential impact of the Farm Bill currently before Congress.

In preparation for his visit, he asks that you read these short articles and the attached .pdf file:

http://www.sustainableagriculture.net/farm_bill_priorities.php

http://www.heritage.org/Research/Agriculture/wm1738.cfm

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2008/02/28/MNMOV5QB7.DTL

We hope that the class will be a conversation with Mr. Manning, so you must come prepared to engage him with questions and comments. You should all compile at least three substantial questions. We expect you all to be active participants!

Thursday, April 3

Topic: Food in the Ancient World
Reading: Tannahill, Food in History, pp. 43-91;
Ancient History Sourcebook: Petronius Arbiter (c.27-66 CE)
The Banquet of Trimalchio from the Satyricon at
http://www.fordham.edu/HALSALL/ancient/petronius-satyricon-feast.html
Tasting: olives, olive oil, ancient wine, fish sauces (garum-colatura, nam pla) (meet in 3021 for tasting)

Week 10

Tuesday, April 8

Topic: Food in Medieval Europe
Reading: Tannahill, Food in History, pp. 92-102, 153-195

Thursday, April 10
Week 11

Tuesday, April 15

Topic: Food in the Americas and the Columbian Exchange
Reading: Tannahill, Food in History, pp. 197-223
In class: During the second half of class both Food sections will meet together to begin discussion of the layout of the 1812 Garden.

You will work with your group partner and make a determination as to the size and configuration of the plot you need for your crop(s), as well as sunlight/shade requirements. Then we will try to plot out the garden. For inspiration-- do take a look at the 19th century garden plan that is in the Old Sturbridge Village and garden scenario PPT (#19 in Blackboard Course Documents).

To facilitate your work you should be sure to bring a copy of your wiki essay, so you can refer to the information you have gathered on growth patterns and light requirements of your crops. (If you did not address these issues substantively in your wiki research, do so by tomorrow!) You will also need to address specific soil needs and cultivation requirements.

Thursday, April 17

Topic: The Immigrant Experience: The Italian Case
Reading:
Tannahill, Food in History, pp. 281-305; Diner, “Black Bread, Hard Bread: Food, Class, and Hunger in Italy” and “’The Bread is Soft’: Italian Foodways, American Abundance,” from Hungering for America, Chaps 2 and 3 (ER)
Tasting: pizza and flatbreads

Week 12

Tuesday, April 22

Topic: Food and Farming Techniques of the Oneida Indians
Reading: Engelbrecht, “Farming and Fighting,” from Iroquoia. The Development of a Native World (ER); Jane Mt. Pleasant, “Iroquois Sustainer” and S. Lewandrowski, “Three Sisters,” from Indian Corn of the Americas (ER)(note: the Mt. Pleasant reading is listed under Pleasant);
Read Mission Statement at http://tsyunhehkwa.org/

Thursday, April 24

Topic: History of cookbooks
Reading:

Saturday, April 26  Field trip to Farmers Museum, Cooperstown

Week 13

Tuesday, April 29

Topic: Slow Food
Reading: Shiva (ed.), Manifestos on the Future of Food and Seed, pp. 1-23 and 43-75
Study the websites: www.slowfood.com and www.slowfoodusa.org
Tasting: Slow Food Ark of Taste products

Tues Wed Apr 29-30  “Our Daily Bread” (post 1-2 pg. review by Friday)

Thursday, May 1

Topic: guest speaker/discussant-- Brian Olson, the father of our own Tess Olson.

He is a Field Scientist with Crop Protection R&D, Dow AgroSciences, Geneva, NY. In class he will focus primarily on the value of fungicides to U.S. crop production.

He urges you to provide questions in advance... so do send me thoughtful queries and I will compile and e-mail them to him.

In preparation for his visit, he asks that you read these three papers (.pdfs attached).

Saturday, May 3  PLOWING! Identification of crop plots and claiming them

Week 14

Tuesday May 6

IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS
Each group will have 5 minutes to describe what they are planting, how they are enriching the soil, special planting techniques
NOTE: Between now and May14, each group is responsible to preparing its planting bed and making sure it is ready for planting day.

Thursday, May 8
Topic: Course wrap up
Reading:

Part 1 of Final exam: PLANTING DAY—May 14, afternoon

Part 2 of Final exam: Take-home essays (due….)

Film Schedule
All showings in Science Center

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Showing dates/times/venue</th>
<th>Class discussion date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Harvest of Despair</td>
<td>Feb 19, 8 p.m., SC 3021</td>
<td>Feb 21</td>
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<td>Feb 20, 8 p.m., SC 2048</td>
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<td>When Ireland Starved</td>
<td>Feb 24, 4 p.m., SC 3021</td>
<td>Feb 26</td>
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<td>Feb 25, 8 p.m., SC 3021</td>
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<td>King Corn</td>
<td>Feb 26, 8 p.m., SC 3021</td>
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<td>Feb 27, 8 p.m., SC 3021</td>
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<td>Supersize Me</td>
<td>March 4, 8 p.m., SC 3021</td>
<td>March 6</td>
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<td>March 5, 8 p.m., SC 2048</td>
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<td>Our Daily Bread</td>
<td>April 29, 8 p.m., SC 3021</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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<td>April 30, 8 p.m., SC 3021</td>
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