

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
College Seminar 235 Section 02
Spring 2008
T, Th 10:30-11:45 a.m.



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**.

The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Call Number: **TX 349 .O84 2004** – 2 vols.

The Cambridge World History of Food. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Call Number: **TX 353 .C255 2000** – 2 vols.

Encyclopedia of Food and Culture. New York: Charles Scribner, 2003.

Call Number: **GT 2850 .E53 2003** – 3 vols.

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);

"Documenting and Interpreting Early 19th-Century Rural Gardens at Old Sturbridge Village" at http://www.osv.org/explore_learn/document_viewer.php?DocID=747

(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;

Fisher and Fisher, "The Nitrogen Bomb," at <http://discovermagazine.com/2001/apr/featbomb>;

Read about "heirloom seeds" at <http://www.seedsavers.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);

Eaton, et al., "Evolution, Diet, and Health", from Ungar and Teaford, eds., Human Diet. Its Origin and Evolution, Ch 2 (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: 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

Readings: Standage, A History of the World in Six Glasses, Introduction (ER);

Lehrer, "Auguste Escoffier. The Essence of Taste," from Proust was a Neuroscientist, Ch 3 (ER);

FDA Consumer "Revealing Trans Fats" (ER)

Study McDonald's website "Facts about our Foods" at

<http://www.mcdonalds.com/usa/eat.html>: investigate "Bag a McMeal" and "Nutrition info";

Take the ecological footprint quiz at <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

Topic: Food in Asia and the Muslim World
Reading: Tannahill, Food in History, pp. 103-151;
Turner, Spice: The History of Temptation, Ch 3 (ER)

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:

Magee, "Introduction: Foreign Cookbooks," Postcolonial Studies (Jan 2005) (.pdf file will be posted to Blackboard Course Documents);
Tannahill, Food in History, pp. 322-328;
Investigate "Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project" at <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/>: browse the collection and watch the video tour.

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

Film	Showing dates/times/venue	Class discussion date
<i>Harvest of Despair</i> (Running time = 55 min)	Feb 19, 8 p.m., SC 3021 Feb 20, 8 p.m., SC 2048	Feb 21
<i>When Ireland Starved</i> (Running time = ? min)	Feb 24, 4 p.m., SC 3021 Feb 25, 8 p.m., SC 3021	Feb 26
<i>King Corn</i> (Running time = 100 min)	Feb 26, 8 p.m., SC 3021 Feb 27, 8 p.m., SC 3021	Feb 29
<i>Supersize Me</i> (Running time = 92 min)	March 4, 8 p.m., SC 3021 March 5, 8 p.m., SC 2048	March 6
<i>Our Daily Bread</i> (Running time = 92 min)	April 29, 8 p.m., SC 3021 April 30, 8 p.m., SC 3021	May 1