

Professor Fabio Parasecoli
Department of Nutrition and Food Studies
NYU Steinhardt
Spring 2019 Syllabus

Food and Culture (FOOD-GE.2191.001)

Tuesdays, 4:55-6:35
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Course Description and Objectives

In *Food and Culture* we will investigate how people use food to define themselves as individuals, groups or whole societies. We will identify the meaning and significance of food by exploring the way that ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and religion, among other factors, influence our food choices or preferences. Additionally, we will examine how culture is transmitted and preserved through food. Through reading scholarly articles, personal essays, book excerpts, newspaper articles and cookbooks we will explore the intricate relationship that people have with food.

We will look critically at the following questions: how can food have different meanings and uses for different people? How does food function both to foster community feeling and drive wedges among people? What are some prevailing academic theories that help us identify and understand subtler meanings of food?

The course includes practical component, where students will apply the concepts and theories discussed in class to assess specific cultural issues through interviews, content coding and analysis, visual ethnography, and other qualitative methods that can be used in researching food and culture.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Describe major academic theories about the relationship between food and identity.
2. Analyze how individual and collective identities are asserted and represented in the realm of material culture, food practices, and in the media.
3. Compare and contrast processes of food-based identity as they have developed around nation, region, religion, race and ethnicity.
4. Identify and explain stereotypes and archetypes about another through their food.
5. Contrast insider and outsider modes of identity claims and assignment.
6. Familiarize themselves with qualitative research tools such as various kinds of ethnographic methods as well as textual and visual analysis

Required Readings

Books:

Counihan, C. and Esterik, P.V. (Eds.), *Food and Culture: A Reader* 3rd edition (F&C)

Additional articles posted on NYU Classes (NYUC)

All assigned readings are due on the day they appear on the syllabus. You are expected to read all articles, and be prepared to discuss them critically. We will be doing close reading of the texts in class so please bring readings to class on the assigned day.

Course Schedule

January 29

Course Introduction

Overview of Course

Introduction to the applied components of the course: Ethnography of street food in New York City

Fabio will share his own past research on street food in Poland (conducted with Mateusz Halawa) and in Italy to start the conversation and to launch the visual ethnography assignment.

During the semester, post at least 13 times on Instagram with the hashtag #streetfoodnyu. For each post, you can do more than one picture on the same subject. Make sure to add also my handle @fparasecoli. Please share the handle you will be using with the rest of the class (some students prefer to create a new one just for the class). When you post, make sure to add a caption that explains what we are looking at, why you chose that subject, what it means, why it is relevant to the course topic etc.

February 5

A Case Study: Street Food

Readings:

Cate Irvin. "Constructing Hybridized Authenticities in the Gourmet Food Truck Scene," *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 40, Issue 1, pp. 43–62 (<https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/doi/10.1002/symb.267>)

Donatella Privitera and Francesco Saverio Nesci, "Globalization vs. Local. The Role of Street Food in the Urban Food System," *Procedia Economics and Finance* 22 (2015) 716 – 722 (<https://www-sciencedirect-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/science/article/pii/S2212567115002920>)

Krishnendu Ray. "Street-food, class, and memories of masculinity: an exploratory essay in three acts," *Food, Culture & Society*, 21:1 (<https://doi-org.proxy.library.nyu.edu/10.1080/15528014.2017.1398473>)

We will start planning the interviews about what are the values, attitudes, behaviors among the vendors and consumers in street food. In class we will brainstorm to formulate questions that may help guide the interviews. We will talk about analyzing and coding interviews. Please read the chapter on Interviewing, which you will find in the course material.

February 12

Food, Memory, and the Body

Readings:

Proust, Marcel, "Madeleine" excerpt (NYUC)

Sutton, David, "Sensory Memory and the Construction of Worlds" (NYUC)

De Silva, Cara. ed. In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy from the Women of Terezin (New York: Jason Aronson, 1996), ix-xvi, xxv-5. (NYUC)

Conduct one interview with a consumer of street food. Use the questions we decided on in class, but feel free to shift and follow the conversation in order to make your subject feel comfortable. Transcribed material due on February 12th

February 19

Food, Identity, Authenticity

Readings:

Clark, Dylan, "The Raw and the Rotten" (F&C)

Lewis, George H. "The Maine Lobster as Regional Icon: Competing Images Over Time and Social Class" (NYUC)

Sharon Zukin, "A Tale of Two Globals." In *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. (NYUC)

Do content analysis of the first interview: code, and identify main emerging insights and concepts. Also add ethnographic notes to the interviews: What were your impressions? What struck you at first blush? Where did the interview happen? In what context? What was the attitude of the interviewee? Please do not share the identity of the interviewees but describe who they are, their cultural and social position, what they do for a living etc. Material due on February 19

Please follow the method that you can see in <https://youtu.be/wilBzZLjZIM>. Of course you can adapt it and tweak it, but the guidelines are there. In-class workshop to assess the results of the first round of interviews and to refine the questions for the second round.

February 26

Theories of Food, Part I: The Ideal: Mentalism/Structuralism

Readings:

Levi-Strauss, Claude, "The Culinary Triangle." (F&C)
Douglas, Mary, "Deciphering a Meal." (NYUC—not the one in F&C)
Paz, Octavio, "Eroticism and Gastrosophy," *Daedalus* 117 (Summer 1998): (227-249). (NYUC) [Skim the first few pages and begin reading with earnest on page 236: "Traditional North American cooking is a cuisine with no mysteries: simple, spiceless, nutritious food."]
Barthes, Roland, "Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption." (F&C)

March 5

Theories of Food, Part II: The Material

Readings:

Harris, Marvin, "The Abominable Pig." (F&C)
Fischler, C. "Food, Self and Identity," *Anthropology of Food* (27), 2 (1988): 275-292. (NYUC)
Michel Callon, "Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay (NYUC)

Conduct one interview a vendor (possibly the owner) of a street food stall or a food truck. Transcribed material due on March 5

March 12

The Locus of Cuisine: Nation, Region, Metropole

Readings:

Rozin, Elizabeth, "The Structure of Cuisine," in Barker, Ed., *The Psychobiology of Human Food Selection* (AVI Publishing, 1982). (NYUC)
Mintz, Sidney, "Eating American." (NYUC)
Appadurai, Arjun. "How to Make a National Cuisine." (NYUC)

Do the content analysis of the second interview. Material due on March 12. In-class workshop to assess the results of the second rounds of interviews. We will identify common elements that emerge from the interviews.

March 26

Food, Gender and Sexuality

Readings:

Allison, Anne, "Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch Box as Ideological State Apparatus." (F&C)

Carrington, Christopher, "Feeding Lesbigan Families" (F&C)

Nozomi Kawarazuka et al. "Adapting to a new urbanizing environment: gendered strategies of Hanoi's street food vendors," *Environment & Urbanization* 30 (1):233–248 (<https://journals-sagepub-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/doi/full/10.1177/0956247817735482>)

Do a virtual ethnography of a street food stall or a food truck. Identify the social media and other online venues (forums, blogs, websites) where they are present, and analyze the discourse that develops around them. Who is discussing? Are vendors involved? What are the verbal and visual interactions? What values emerge? How are social media used for marketing and communication?

Material due on March 26

April 2

Food and Socioeconomic Status

Readings:

Bourdieu, Pierre, "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste" (F&C)

Ferrant, Coline, "Class, culture, and structure: Stratification and mechanisms of omnivorousness," *Sociology Compass* 2018:12

(<https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/doi/10.1111/soc4.12590>)

Halawa, Mateusz and Fabio Parasecoli, "Classing up the Potato: Revaluation of Regional and Traditional Food among Urban Foodies in Poland" (NYUC)

April 9

Otherness

Readings:

Twigg, Julia, "Vegetarianism" (NYUC)

Heldke, Lisa, "Let's Cook Thai" (F&C)

bell hooks, "Eating the other" (NYUC)

Lucy Long, "Culinary Tourism" (NYUC)

Conduct an ethnographic observation or a participant observation of street food... Spend at least four hours on location (possibly in two separate slots of two hours each, at different times/days) and describe what you see, how

people interact among themselves, with the food, and with the environment, what other behaviors they show, etc. Material due on April 6

April 16

Food and Race/Ethnicity

Readings:

Poe, Tracey, "The Origins of Soul Food in Black Urban Identity: Chicago, 1915-1947." (NYUC)

Levenstein, Harvey, "The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930)," (NYUC).

Tuchman, Gaye and Levine, Harry, "New York Jews and Chinese Food: The Social Construction of an Ethnic Pattern." in Shortridge, B. & Shortridge, J., (Eds.) *The Taste of American Place*. (NYUC)

Annotated bibliography on the ethnographic theme of the course. Provide at least five sources (both primary and secondary sources) and write a short comment for each: why and how are they relevant, etc, Due on April 16.

April 23

Food and Religion

Readings:

Bynum, Caroline Walker, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh: The Significance of Food to Medieval Women." (F&C)

Buckser, Andrew. "Keeping Kosher: Eating and Social Identity Among the Jews of Denmark," *Ethnology*, vol. 38, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 191-209 (NYUC).

Hellman, Jorgen, "The Significance of Eating During Ramadan," *Food and Foodways*, 16: 3, 201 — 226 (<https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/doi/full/10.1080/07409710802304176>)

Parasecoli, Fabio. "God's Diets: The Fat Body and the Bible as an Eating Guide in Evangelical Christianity?" *Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society*, 4:2, 141-158 (<https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/doi/full/10.1080/21604851.2015.1016780>)

April 30

Global Food Politics: Fast Food/Slow Food

Readings:

Leitch, Alison, "Slow Food and the Politics Virtuous Globalization", (F&C)

Pilcher, Jeffrey, "Taco bell, Maseca and Slow Food" (F&C)

Yan, Tunxiang, “Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald’s in Beijing” (F&C)

Class discussion of the visual ethnography

May 7

The Future of Food

Readings:

F.O.E et al. 2012. The Principles for the Oversight of Synthetic Biology (NYUC)

Marc Stierand and Paul Lynch. “The art of creating culinary innovations.” *Tourism and Hospitality Research* (2008) 8, 337–350 (<https://journals-sagepub-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/doi/pdf/10.1057/thr.2008.28>)

Nicole Davis. 2017. Bugs in the System. Harvard Public Health Magazine. https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/magazine/magazine_article/bugs-in-the-system/

Write a 1,000-word report in which you summarize your findings through the various assignments. What have you learned about street food in NYC? Anything new? Anything unexpected? Report due on May 7

Grading Criteria

Participation: discussion and attendance	10%
First interview with content analysis	15%
Second interview with content analysis	15%
#Global Brooklyn visual ethnography	15%
Virtual ethnography	10%
Observation/Participant Observation	15%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Final Report	<u>15%</u>
TOTAL	100%

The sum of the above-mentioned points will determine the final grade, as follows:

- A = 93-100
- A- = 90-92
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 73-76

C- = 70-72
D+ = 65-69
D = 60-64
No D-
F= Below 60

Participation involves coming to class, completing all of the required readings and active participation in lecture and discussion. The richness of our discussions requires involvement from everyone. Your thoughts and opinions matter.

Please note: Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to chronic psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980, 240 Greene Street, www.nyu.edu/csd ***

Check the rules of plagiarism. NYU has a clearly stated policy on plagiarism, called the Statement on Academic Integrity. Read and follow it please (below). Bottom line: changing a word or two of a sentence and then passing it off as your own (without quotation marks) is plagiarism. When you hand your paper please sign and attach the statement below indicating its originality.

Statement on Academic Integrity

Students are expected-often required-to build their work on that of other people, just as professional researchers and writers do. Giving credit to someone whose work has helped you is expected; in fact, not to give such credit is a crime. Plagiarism is the severest form of academic fraud. Plagiarism is theft. More specifically, plagiarism is presenting as your own:

- *a phrase, sentence, or passage from another writer's work without using quotation marks;
- *a paraphrased passage from another writer's work
- *facts, ideas, or written text gathered or downloaded from the Internet;
- *another student's work with your name on it;
- *a purchased paper or "research" from a term paper mill.

Other forms of academic fraud include:

- *"collaborating" between two or more students who then submit the same paper under their individual names.
- *submitting the same paper for two or more courses without the knowledge and the expressed permission of all teachers involved.

*giving permission to another student to use your work for a class.

Term paper mills (websites and businesses set up to sell papers to students) often claim they are merely offering "information" or "research" to students and that this service is acceptable and allowed throughout the university. THIS IS ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE. If you buy and submit "research," drafts, summaries, abstracts, or final versions of a paper, you are committing plagiarism and are subject to stringent disciplinary action. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact and not intention, it is crucial that you acknowledge every source accurately and completely. If you quote anything from a source, use quotation marks and take down the page number of the quotation to use in your footnote.

Consult The Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Guide for accepted forms of documentation, and the course handbook for information on using electronic sources. When in doubt about whether your acknowledgment is proper and adequate, consult your teacher. Show the teacher your sources and a draft of the paper in which you are using them. The obligation to demonstrate that work is your own rests with you, the student. You are responsible for providing sources, copies of your work, or verification of the date work was completed.

The academic community takes plagiarism very seriously. Teachers in our writing courses must report to the Director of the Expository Writing Program any instance of academic dishonesty in student writing, whether it occurs in an exercise, draft, or final essay. Students will be asked to explain the circumstances of work called into question. When plagiarism is confirmed, whether accidental or deliberate, students must be reported to the Dean of their School, and penalties will follow. This can result in failure of the essay, failure in the course, a hearing with the Dean, and/or expulsion from the university. This has happened to students at New York University.

For more information on avoiding plagiarism and proper use of internet citation, we recommend visiting these websites:

1. [“What Is Plagiarism at Indiana University?”](#) Indiana University. A tutorial that tests your ability to understand and avoid plagiarism.
2. Virtual Salt. [“Citing Web Sources MLA Style.”](#) By Robert Harris. Guidelines to what to cite and how to cite in Modern Language Association style.
3. [“How to Avoid Plagiarism.”](#) Northwestern University. A comprehensive site about academic integrity and citing sources.

From the NYU Expository Writing Center:

http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/policies__procedures.html#statementacademicintegrity