

ANTH 270: The Social Science of Food

Spring 2013

TH 12:30–1:45 in Stratton 104

Wells College

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OFFICE HOURS: Tues right after class; Fri AM, other times by appointment

You gotta eat, right? Nothing's simpler than that!

Well, I guess that's true. However, as a social scientist, especially as an anthropologist, there's a whole lot more to think about. This class just scratches the surface of that "whole lot more" might be. This class is meant to be a smorgasbord of tiny offerings, a little taste of this theory, or smidgen of another way of looking at things. The commonality to these offerings is the anthropological perspective (holistically looking at the commonalities and diversity of humanity). It's meant to make you hungry for more.

Learning Objectives:

There are some specific things we, the Sociology/Anthropology faculty, would like you to get out of this class. There are other things you'll get out of it too. I hope. But I've constructed this class with these things in mind. So, it will be these things, broadly, that I'll be thinking about, when I look for evidence that you have learned. I'll base exams on specifics, these are generalities.

- 1) You will have experience engaging in the professional discourse of sociology and anthropology both verbally and through writing.
- 2) You will come to know several important scholars in the study of food.
- 3) You will be able to identify and articulate timely issues in the social scientific study of food.
- 4) You will gain knowledge of and practice using several theoretical frameworks to examine enduring and timely social issues.
- 5) You will gain experience using the sociological imagination and the anthropological perspective.
- 6) You will come to understand both materialist and interpretive approaches to social scientific study.
- 7) You will come to understand how social systems and systems of meaning perpetuate some social inequalities.
- 8) You will be exposed to, and hopefully come to appreciate diverse lifeways.
- 9) You will be able to better articulate the need for social justice and suggest pathways to curtail social inequalities.

Required Texts:

Counihan, Carole and Penny Van Esterik, eds.

2013 Food and Culture, 3rd edition. New York, New York: Routledge. **F&C.**

Estabrook, Barry

2012 Tomatoland. How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit.
Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing. **Estabrook.**

There will also be many readings posted on the **GLOBE**. These are as important as those in the text.

Course Requirements:

Attendance: I don't have an official attendance policy for this course, just a strong bit of advice. Come to class, unless you are ill. If so, then stay away. Coming to class will help you to get a better grade, and it will help you to think about the material, which I feel will help you become a better person, not just a better social scientist. I cannot tell you what is more important in your life, going to class or doing whatever else there is going on at that time. You're an adult, you decide. If you are interested in getting a college education coming to class is a smart idea.

I also highly recommend that you do the readings. You'll be amazed how much easier it will be to make sense of what is happening in class if you do. It'll also help you do better on exams. I promise.

Learning Assessment (i.e. grading): Some professors call the things I'm about to write about "Learning Opportunities." I sometimes do that myself. But, personally, I think everything is a learning opportunity and the things I'm about to write about are really ineffectual, unfair but necessary means of assessing whether or not you are a good student or not and who has put effort into learning from the lectures, films, readings and discussions associated with this class. So I'm just going to call these things: GRADED STUFF.

Now, Grading is inherently unfair. No matter how much we quantify it, it is an interpretation that is primarily qualitative. It is not, however, entirely subjective. There are socially constructed standards that people at Wells, and folks in academia in general, follow. Your best bet to assure fairness is to consistently perform to your highest ability. If you want to contest a grade, see me. I'll be happy to explain where you went wrong, or correct an error in grading, or to clarify a concept. .

Your grade will be based on the following rubric: (At the time of this writing there are 210 points available).

97 - 100% of possible points = A+

93 - 96% of possible points = A

89 - 92% = A-

88 - 85% = B+

84 - 81% = B

80 - 77% = C+

76 - 72% = C

71 - 68% = D+

67 - 64% = D

Below 64% = F

GRADED STUFF:

Summary and Response Papers: 10 points each = 30 points total.

There are about 30 students in this class. I will assign each of you to one of 5 groups. Each group will write a reflection essay three times over the course of the semester. Your reflection essay should: a) list the scholars and titles for each of the pieces (readings and films) we read/watched for that week, b) BRIEFLY identify the major issues of these works, c) briefly discuss your reaction to these readings as a whole in @ 2 pages and d) list three questions for class discussion based on these readings.

These summary/response papers are meant to help you as a student guide and to help you process and reflect on the information included in the readings. Your reaction to the readings should be more intellectual than superficial (i.e. "I didn't like their style," won't cut it, nor will "I think they are wrong.") I will grade these papers on your ability to recognize major issues, your ability to see their importance despite your agreement or disagreement with the author, and your ability to ask important questions based on the readings.

If you are taking this class to fulfill the Local and Global Interconnections requirement I will "spot check" your writings, and intermittently offer you the chance for a re-write. This opportunity will be random. I will also give each of your summary papers 2 grades: one for content, the other for writing style. The writing style grade that I will record will be the grade that appears on the final version of the paper. These writing style grades will count for an additional 20% of your grade. At the time of this writing that is a total of 42 points.

Exams: In-class: 20 points each = 40 points; Take-Home 30 points each = 60 points. 100 points total.

In-class exams – These will be short answer exams focusing on your knowledge of key concepts and scholars.

Take Home Exams – Both at mid-term and at the end of the semester I will ask you to write one or two essays about the course material. These are formal essays using proper AAA referencing guidelines. They will test your ability to synthesize course material. The final essay will be due during finals time. If you are taking this class for the Local and Global Interconnections requirement, I will also assign a writing style grade for these essays and might randomly offer you the opportunity to re-write these as well. These would also count within that 42 points mentioned above.

Commodity Research Paper: 30 points each half. 60 points total

Pick a food commodity and write a 10 page paper about it. The first half of the paper should focus on materialist/political economic issues, the second should cover interpretive issues. That is, the first half should discuss how the commodity fits in the

global economy, issues of labor, how it is grown/raised/synthesized, etc. The second half should cover what it means in society; what does the commodity symbolize? Does it relate to issues of gender, class, ethnicity? This half of the paper could be the results of your original research using participant- observation, a content analysis of media, or survey results.

At mid-term I will ask you for a 2 page proposal for this report **worth 10 points**. Your ideas for the first half should be well thought out by that time, and your research design planned out. This will be due on the last day of class.

Class Presentation: 20 points.

During the time our final is scheduled (Tuesday May 7 from 2-5). I will invite the campus to see your class presentations. These will be short (less than 10 minute) presentations based on your commodity research paper. I recommend Power Point, but you need not use this technology if you don't want to.

Tentative Class Schedule

PART 1: Cultural Ecology and Political Economy of Food

Week 1: Introductions, Preliminary Ideas and Cultural Ecology: How You Get Food Matters in Big Ways

Jan 22 Important things to know about this class. Who am I? Who are you? Why are we here?

Jan 24 What IS Food? Ways of Looking at Food.

READ:

Barthes: Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption, **F&C**, 23-30

Nick Fiddes: Food = Meat, **GLOBE**

Balesco: Future Notes: The meal-in-a-Pill, **GLOBE**

Van Estrik: Vintage Breast Milk, **GLOBE**, 291-298

Week 2: How You Get Food Matters in Big Ways: Industrialization and Its Effects

Jan 29 Introducing Cultural Ecology – Foragers and Agriculturalists

READ:

Dentan: Social Correlates of Food Production, **GLOBE**, 6 pgs

Colin Turnbull: The Crime of Cephu, the Bad Hunter, **GLOBE**, 94-108

Richard Lee: Eating Christmas in the Kalahari, **GLOBE**, 1-4

John Zerzan: Agriculture - Demon Engine of Civilization, **GLOBE**, 247-262

Estabrook: Begin *Tomatoland*, read up to page 19

SUGGESTED READING:

Raymond Scupin: Band Societies, **GLOBE**, 148-169

Raymond Scupin: Agricultural States, **GLOBE**, 219-238

Jan 31 Industrialization and Food

Film: *We Feed the World*

Estabrook: A Tomato Grows in Florida, 19-34

SUGGESTED READING:

Raymond Scupin: Industrial States, 240-265, **GLOBE**

Week 3: The Effects of Industrialization on Food

Feb 5 What Does Industrialization Mean Regarding Food: Workers and Health

READ:

Estabrook: Chemical Warfare, 35-72

Estabrook: From the Hands of a Slave, 73-96

Striffler, Inside a Poultry Plant, **GLOBE**

Schlosser, The Chain Never Stops, **F&C**, 485-495

Lang: Food Industrialization and Food Power, **GLOBE**

Feb 7 Globalization: A Global Division of Labor

Film: *Black Gold (1 hr. 20 min.)* or *The Harvest*

Week 4: Food and Globalization

Feb 12 Global Food Systems and Slavery

READ:

Barndt: On the Move for Food, **F&C**, 472-484

Mintz: Production, 19-74, **GLOBE**

Mintz: Being and Eating, 187-215, **GLOBE**

McClusky: Coffee: The Deep Dark Liquid's Dark but Hopeful History, **GLOBE**

McClusky: Chocolate: The Bitter History of Well-loved Sweet, 5 pgs, **GLOBE**

Check out sugar and morality in Tasteing Food Tasting Freedom

Feb 14 **Film:** Life and Debt

Week 5: Food and Globalization

Feb 19 Development, Structural Adjustments and Green Revolutions

READ:

Vandana Shiva: The High-Jacking of the Global Food Supply, 5-21, **GLOBE**

Vandana Shiva: Soy Imperialism and the Destruction of Local Food Cultures, 22-37, **GLOBE**

Feb 21 **Film:** Soul Food Junkies

Week 6: Industrialized Food and Health

Feb 26 More Health Problems with Industrialized Food

READ:

Albritton, Between Obesity and Hunger, **F&C**, 342-353

Nabhan: Rooting Out the Causes of Disease, **F&C**, 330-341

Sutton: Cooking Skills, the Senses and Memory, **F&C**, 299-319

Meiwald: The Nutritional Impact of European Contact on the Omaha, **GLOBE**, 109-123:

Feb 28 IN-CLASS EXAM

**PART 2: From Cultural Ecology and Political Economy
to Interpretive Approaches and The Meaning of Food**

Week 7: Colonialism and Meaning

March 5 The Meanings of “Colonialization”: Hybridity or Cultural Imperialism

READ:

Wilk: “Real Belizean Food,” **F&C**, 376-394

Heldke: Let’s Cook Thai, **F&C**, 394-408

Yunxiang Yun: Of Hamburger and Social Space, **F&C**, 449-471

Weiner: Consumer Culture and Participant Democracy: The Story of Coca Cola in WW II, **GLOBE**.

March 7 Classic Anthropology: Materialist vs. Symbolic Approaches
OR Ewww. Don’t EAT THAT!! Why Not? BECAUSE!!!

READ:

Mary Douglas: The Abomination of Leviticus, **F&C**, 48-59

Nick Fiddes: Pets and Other Grey Animals, **GLOBE**, 132-143

Marvin Harris: The Abominable Pig, **F&C**, 59-71

SPRING BREAK!

Week 8: SfAA Conference

March 19 TBA: The Harvest?

March 21 TBA: Food, Inc.? Fresh?

Week 9: You Are What You Eat

March 26 Food and Ideology

READ:

Jill Dubisch: You Are What You Eat, 69-77, **GLOBE**

Anne Allison: Japanese Mothers and Obentos, 296-315, **F&C**, 154-172

Clark: The Raw and the Rotten, **F&C**, 231-243

March 28 Anorexia Nervosa: The Illness of Not Eating

Film: *Thin* (120 min.) or *A Famine Within* or *Dying to Be Thin*

Week 10: Gender, Identity and Food: Symbols of Gender

April 2 Nothing For Me, Thanks, I’m Starving. (Women and Food)

READ:

Joan Jacob Brumberg: The Appetite as Voice, 159-180, **GLOBE**

O'Connor: De-medicalizing Anorexia, **F&C**, 276-283
Bynum: Fast, Feast and Flesh, **F&C**, 245-264
Bordo: Not Just a "White Girl's Thing" **F&C**, 265-275

April 4 Masculinity and Food

READ:

Swensen: Domestic Divo? **F&C**, 137-153
Buerkle: Metrosexuality Can Stuff It, TFP, 251-264, **GLOBE**
Parasecoli: Feeding Hard Bodies, **F&C** 284-298

Week 11: Food and Intimacy: Symbols of Relationships

April 9 Food and Sociality

READ:

Anna Meigs: Food as Cultural Construction, 95-107, **GLOBE**
Elisa J. Sobo: The Sweetness of Fat, 256-271, **GLOBE**
Emily Massara: Que Gordita, 251-255, **GLOBE**

April 11 Food and Sex

READ:

Jean Kilbourne: Please, Please You're Driving Me Wild, 109 – 127, **GLOBE**
Don Kulick: Porn, 77-92, **GLOBE**
Anna Meigs: Food Rules and Traditional Sexual Ideology, 17-31, **GLOBE**

Week 12: Too Much Food

April 16 Competitive Eating

Film: Crazy Legs Conti

April 18 Dumpster Diving

FILM: Dive!

Week 13: Abundance and Scarcity

April 23 Food Insecurity: A Brief Return to a Political Economy Approach

READ:

Janet Fitchen: Hunger, Malnutrition and Poverty in the Contemporary US, 384-402, **GLOBE**
Janet Poppendeick: Want Amid Plenty, **F&C**, 563-771
Edwards and Mercer: Gleaning From Gluttony, 195-210, **GLOBE**

April 25 Government Scraps

Film: Food Stamped

Week 14: Final Thoughts

April 30 Ketch-Up (Get It – hee hee)

May 2 Exam

Bibliography of readings not in the required texts.

Balesco, Warren

- 2002 Future Notes: The Meal-in-a-Pill. In Food in the USA. Carole Counihan, ed. New York: Routledge.

Brumberg, Joan Jacob

- 2002 The Appetit As Voice. In Food in the USA. Carole Counihan, ed. New York: Routledge.

Buerkle, C. Wesley

- 2012 Metrosexuality Can Stuff It. Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World. New York: Routledge.

Dentan, Robert K.

- n.d. Social Correlates of Food Production. Handout. Handout. APY 105 Introduction to Anthropology. SUNY @ Buffalo.

Dubish, Jill

You Are What You Eat

Edwards, Ferne and David Mercer

- 2012 Gleaning From Gluttony. In Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World. New York: Routledge.

Fiddes, Nick

- 1992 Food = Meat. In Meat: A Natural Symbol. New York: Routledge.

- 1992 Pets and Other Grey Animals. In Meat: A Natural Symbol. New York: Routledge.

Fitchen, Janet

- 1997 Hunger, Malnutrition and Poverty in the Contemporary US. In Food and Culture, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.

Kilbourne, Jean

- 1999 Please, Please You're Driving Me Wild. In Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way we Think and Feel. New York: Touchstone.

Kulick, Don

- 2005 Porn. In Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession. New York: Tarcher.

- Lang, Tim
2012 Food Industrialization and Food Power. In Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World. New York: Routledge
- Lee, Richard
Eating Christmas in the Kalahari.
- Massara, Emily
1997 Que Gordita. In Food and Culture, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.
- McClusky, Laura J.
n.d. Coffee: The Deep Dark Liquid's Dark but Hopeful History. Handout. Wells College. OCS 300 The Ethnographic Experience in Hawaii.

n.d. Chocolate: The Bitter History of the Well-loved Sweet. Handout. Wells College. OCS 300 The Ethnographic Experience in Hawaii.
- Meigs, Anna
1997 Food as a Cultural Symbol. In Food and Culture, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.

1988 Food Rules and Traditional Sexual Ideology. In Food, Sex and Pollution. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Meiwald, Christina
2002 The Nutritional Impact of European Contact on the Omaha. In Food in the USA. Carole Counihan, ed. New York: Routledge.
- Mintz, Sidney
1986 Production. In Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History. New York: Penguin Books.

1986 Being and Eating. In Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History. New York: Penguin Books.
- Scupin, Raymond
2011 Band Societies. In Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective. Boston: Pearson.

2011 Agricultural Societies. In Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective. Boston: Pearson.

2011 Industrial States. In Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective. Boston: Pearson.

Shiva, Vandana

2000 The High-Jacking of the Global Food Supply. In Stolen Harvest: The High-Jacking of the Global Food Supply. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

2000 Soy Imperialism and the Destruction of Local Food Cultures. In Stolen Harvest: The High-Jacking of the Global Food Supply. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Sobo, Elisa J.

1997 The Sweetness of Fat. In Food and Culture, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.

Striffler, Steve

2005 Inside a Poultry Plant. In Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Turnbull, Colin

1987 The Crime of Cephu, the Bad Hunter. In The Forest People. New York: Touchstone Books.

Weiner, Mark

2002 Consumer Culture and Participant Democracy: The Story of Coca-Cola in WW II. In Food in the USA. Carole Counihan, ed. New York: Routledge.

Van Estrick, Penny

2012 Vintage Breast Milk. In Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World. New York: Routledge.

Zerzan, John

1990 Agriculture: The Demon Engine of Civilization. In Apocalypse Culture. Adam Parfray, Ed. Port Townsend WA: Feral House Press.