Subject description:

Food history is an exciting new area of scholarship that draws on social, economic, cultural and political histories to help explain how and why practices and patterns of consumption have changed over the centuries. This course will explore the idea that everything has a history – even habitual actions like cooking and eating and seemingly mundane foodstuffs like rice and chili. Food history challenges the boundaries of nationalist histories to demonstrate long histories of trans-cultural connections and culinary collaborations. Students will learn how food can be used as a lens to understand complex cultural, political, social, economic, and environmental phenomena.

Prerequisites: HH1001
Academic Units: 3AUs

Teaching Staff:

Associate Professor Hallam Stevens
Office: HSS-05-07
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Course Meetings and Attendance requirements:

Students will be expected to attend one 3-hour seminar per week to be held:

Wednesdays 2.30pm-5.30pm, HSS TR+1.

Each seminar will be structured roughly as follows:
1) During the first hour, there will be either:
   a. A lecture related to the theme for the week (these weeks are marked with a “L” below);
   b. Or I will give you a primary source related to the theme for the week. You read this text and write a short response, which will be handed in at the end of the hour.
2) The second hour will be used for discussion of the readings for that week.
3) The final hour will be used for student presentations and other activities such as experiments and tastings (weeks with demonstrations, experiments, and tastings are marked with a “D” below).

Website and Readings:

The course Blackboard website is an important source of information for this subject. Useful resources such as this subject guide, links to further readings, details of assessment, and subject announcements will be available through this website. Check the website regularly for subject announcements and updates.

Copies of the required readings will be made available on the website.

Expectations:

I have made a concerted effort to keep the readings around an average of 75pp. per week and to make them as interesting as possible. Required readings represent the minimum expected for you to participate effectively in class.

In class work with primary sources will also comprise a significant component of your grade. There will be no way to make up for missed classes. Coming to class prepared for these exercises is also a basic expectation.

Assessment:

a) Group presentation – 20%

b) Menu – 20%

c) In-class writing exercises – 30%

d) Feature article (final written project) – 30%

Group Presentation (20%)

Once during the semester you will be called upon to make a presentation in class. The topics for the presentations will be provided by the end of the second week of the semester (ie. before add-drop). The organization of groups and timing of the presentation will depend on the size of the class and will also be worked out by the second week of class. They should be thoroughly researched – this requires going to the library, not just looking up a few things online. If you have difficulty with your topic, consult with Prof. Stevens.

Menu (20%)
This assignment will require you to prepare a menu for a meal based on what you have learned in a particular week of the class. For example, you might do some further research to learn what a typical meal might have looked like in one of the first civilizations (when settled agriculture was just beginning). Or you might imagine a meal prepared in Europe using spices or ingredients imported from the New World. Or you might think about how gender has influenced menus in the twentieth century. There are many possibilities. This is supposed to be a creative project, but it is also supposed to be based on your own reading and research. The presentation of the menu will also be taken into consideration in the grading.

It should be based on a topic or set of readings that is different from your research paper.

**Due date: Wednesday September 21st, 2016, at the beginning of class.**

**In-class writing exercises (30%)**

In non-lecture weeks (with the exception of the first week, the last week and the week the menu is due), the class will complete a writing exercise during the first hour. These will usually be based on primary sources and are designed to give you practice working with such sources. At the end of the hour I will expect you to hand in the completed exercise. The exact nature of the exercise will vary from week to week. If I suspect that people are not completing the reading, this may evolve into a mini-quiz on the readings.

These will be graded on a 1, 2, 3 scale: 1 for below-average work; 2 for average work; 3 for outstanding work. Each exercise will contribute to approximately 5% of your grade. There will be no make-up for missed exercises (that is, if you are absent for any reason, including with an MC, you will forfeit the grade for that week).

**Feature Article (30%)**

Each student is required to write a 2500-3000 word “feature article.” This should be in the style that would appear in a literary periodical such as *The New Yorker, The Atlantic, The London Review of Books, The New York Review of Books*, or similar (with the exception that I expect you to follow the citation conventions of an academic paper). Several examples of such writing are part of the reading for the course, but encourage you to familiarize yourself with other examples too.

**Due date: Last day of semester, Friday 11th November 2015, 5pm.**
Plagiarism

Ensure that you follow appropriate citation conventions for all assignments and familiarize yourself with the University’s policies on plagiarism and collaboration. The University had recently clarified and strengthened its rules regarding plagiarism. Plagiarism does not have to be intention in order for it to count as an infringement. Be careful. Start work early so you are not rushing to complete things at the last minute. An breaches will be taken very seriously and – in addition to any grade penalties – a permanent citation will be made on your student file.

Late Work and Extensions:

Any assessable material that is late will lose marks at the rate of 10% (of the maximum grade) per day. Missing a presentation or not scheduling a presentation will result in a zero grade that component.

Extensions will only be granted in very special cases and only then when requested at least one week in advance of a deadline.

Week-by-week Guide:

** Indicates that these readings are examples of “feature articles” in the style that will be required for your final writing assignment for the module.

L = weeks in which there will be a lecture.
D = weeks in which there will be a food demonstration, tasting, or experiment.

Meeting I (Wednesday August 10th): Introduction: Themes in Food History (L)

No readings.

Watch: Eat Drink Man Woman (1994)

Meeting II (Wednesday August 17th): Food, Biology, and Evolution (D)

Read: [84]

Taste: Cheese

Meeting III (Wednesday August 24th): The Rise of Agriculture (D)

Read:
• Jared Diamond, “To Farm or Not to Farm” and “How to Make an Almond” from Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

Taste: Bread dough.

Meeting IV (Wednesday August 31st): Trade, Colonialism, and Globalization (L, D)

Read:

Taste: Chocolate

Meeting V (Wednesday September 7th): Health and Medicine

Read:
**Taste:** Bring to class a food that you consider healthy.

**Meeting VI (Wednesday September 14th): Ritual and Religion**

**Read:**
- Frederick J. Simoons (1994) *Eat Not This Flesh: Food Avoidances From Pre-History to the Present*, 2nd ed. (University of Wisconsin Press) [Chapter 9, pp. 297-328]

**Taste:** Bring to class a food item you would never eat.

**Meeting VII (Wednesday September 21st): Gender and Domesticity (D)**

**Read:**
- **Laura Shapiro, “Do Women Like to Cook?”** *Granta* 52 (Winter, 1995), 153-62.

**Taste:** Bring to class a food you consider ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’

**Mid-Semester Break!**

**Meeting VIII (Wednesday October 5th): Aesthetics and Connoisseurship (L, D)**

**Read:**
Taste: Patisserie

Meeting IX (Wednesday October 12th): Manners and Customs

Read:

Meeting X (Wednesday October 19th): Sustainability, Diversity, and GMOs (L)

Read:

Taste: Bananas

Meeting XI (Wednesday October 26th): Food Inc. (L, D)

Read:

Taste: Spam, American cheese, canned versus fresh vegetables

Meeting XII (Wednesday November 2nd): Diets, Fads, Food and Body Image
Read:

  [http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/12/the-end-of-food](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/12/the-end-of-food)

Taste: Nothing.

Meeting XIII (Wednesday November 9th): Cooking, Food Science, and Molecular Gastronomy (L, D)

Read:

- Herve This (2009) Building a Meal: From Molecular Gastronomy to Culinary Constructivism (Columbia University Press) [Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-38]
  [http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/03/21/incredible-edibles](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/03/21/incredible-edibles)

Taste: Spheres