

Sociology of Food

Course description. This course puts food -- something we all know a lot about -- into its social contexts. We'll explore how what we eat and the way we eat it express our social identities (as members of social classes, ethnic groups, religions, etc.); how preparing and consuming (or *not* consuming) food reproduce gender roles; how the economic system for producing and marketing food affects what (and how much) we eat; and how food is both an object of politics (e.g., a target for government regulation) and a subject for politics (e.g., a basis for social movements). Because collective identity, gender, business, and politics are all important topics in sociology, the course covers a lot of sociological ground.

Requirements. Grades will be based on an in-class midterm (40%) and final (60%). These will be "closed book" essay-type exams, with study questions (from which the test questions will be drawn) distributed a week in advance.

Extra credit option. For extra credit, you may also do some research on a food-related topic, presenting your findings in a short paper. The extra credit is 10% of the course grade (so if you got an "A" for the extra credit project, I would add 10% of those 4 grade points [.4] to your course grade, enough to bring a B+ [3.3] from the midterm and final up to an A- [3.7] for the course). The topic possibilities are wide open. You could, for example, do a case study of how a specific food (oregano, bagels, tuna noodle casserole, sports drinks, gourmet salt, bacon, whatever) is produced, marketed, or consumed. You could trace how cookbooks have changed over time. You could analyse the role of undocumented immigrants in US restaurants. Follow your interests, but you must discuss (in person or by email) your topic with me *BY THE END OF WEEK 4 (OCT. 23 BY 5 PM)* -- you can only do the extra credit paper if you meet this deadline. In addition, your research must make use of scholarly books and articles, even if you *ALSO* use more popular sources. (By "scholarly articles" I mean they must be indexed in the library's *Sociological Abstracts* database). The final paper should be no more than 10 double-spaced pages, including bibliography, and is due by 5 pm on December 1 (Tuesday of week 10). More specific guidelines will vary with the project and can be discussed with me individually.

Email. Owing to the size of this class and to budget-related cutbacks in support, you should consider email communication a **last resort**. Make sure your question hasn't been covered in class or on the syllabus. Use the time before and after class for quick questions, and office hours for lengthier ones, including any questions about exam study guides. (I will make extra office hours available before the midterm and final.) Informational email, by contrast -- for example, anecdotes or links relevant to the course that you wanted to pass along -- are always welcome. If you do email (to jhaydu@ucsd.edu) about course-related matters, be sure to **include soc 137 in the subject line**. You will get an automated reply reminding you about this email policy, but if the question complies with the policy you will also get a real reply within a day or two.

Readings.

We will be reading large chunks of two books, which are available for purchase at Groundworks and are on reserve in the Social Science Library:

Carole Counihan, ed., *Food in the USA*

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*

Other readings are available online or through e-reserves, as indicated below.

Schedule.

Part One: Food and Social Identities

Sept. 24: Introduction to course

Sept. 29: What to eat? Food, identity, and social boundaries

Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, pp. 1-11

Sharon Sherman, "The Passover Seder," in Counihan, pp. 193-204

Oct. 1: "Ethnic" food in the U.S.

Counihan anthology, essays by Gabaccia (on postmodern ethnic food, pp. 35-40), Levenstein (assimilating Italian food, pp. 75-90)

Jeffrey Pilcher, "Was the Taco Invented in Southern California?" *Gastronomica* vol. 8, no. 1 (2008), pp. 26-38. This journal is available online through UCSD's Roger

Hannah Miller, "Identity Takeout: How American Jews Made Chinese Food Their Ethnic Cuisine," *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 39, No.3 (2006), pp. 430-465. This journal is available online through UCSD's Roger

Oct. 6: Food and social class

Excerpt from documentary "People Like Us," in class

Oct. 8: National cuisines

Counihan anthology, essays by Mintz (is there an "American" cuisine? pp. 23-34), Siskind (inventing Thanksgiving, pp. 41-58), Weiner (Coca Cola and freedom in America, pp. 123-142)

Kolleen Guy, "Rituals of Pleasure in the Land of Treasures: Wine Consumption and the Making of French Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century," in Belasco and Scranton, ed., *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, pp. 34-47. On e-reserves

Oct. 13: How we eat: Minding your manners

Margaret Visser, *Rituals of Dinner*, pp. 39-68. Available at dss.ucsd.edu/~jhaydu/visser_manners.pdf

Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, pp. 20-39. On e-reserves

Oct. 15: Eating in, eating out

Oct. 20: How much we eat: over- and under-eating

Pollan, pp. 100-108

Abigail Saguy, "French Women Don't Get Fat? French News Reporting on Obesity," *Health at Every Size Journal* vol. 19, no. 4 (2006), pp. 219-234. Available at dss.ucsd.edu/~jhaydu/saguy.pdf

Julie Guthman, "Can't Stomach It: How Michael Pollan et al. Made Me Want to Eat Cheetos," *Gastronomica* vol. 7, no. 1 (2007), pp. 75-79. This journal is available online through UCSD's Roger

Oct. 22: What, how, and how much we eat: food and gender

Laura Shapiro, "I Guarantee': Betty Crocker and the Woman in the Kitchen," in Avakian and Haber, *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies*, pp. 29-40. On e-reserves

Counihan anthology, essays by Counihan (food as women's voice, pp. 295-304) and Taggart (food and masculinity, pp. 305-314)

Oct. 27: leftovers and review

Oct. 29: MIDTERM EXAM

Part Two: The Business of Food

Nov. 3: Modern food production

Pollan, *Omnivore's Dilemma*, pp. 15-99, 100-119, 134-184 (for this and next few meetings)

Selections from "Our Daily Bread," a documentary on industrialized food production, in class

Nov. 5: Rationalized and scientific food

George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*, pp. 1-20. On e-reserves

Counihan anthology, essay by Middendorf (agricultural biotechnology, pp. 373-384)

Nov. 10: Globalized food

Counihan anthology, essay by Watson (McDonald's in China, pp. 347-358)

Nov. 12: The case of GMO foods

Documentary on genetically modified food.

Part Three: The Politics of Food

Nov. 17: Regulating food

Marion Nestle, *Food Politics*, pp. 51-66 on the food pyramid. On e-reserves

Nov. 19: Food choice as personal politics

Pollan, pp. 298-333

Nov. 24, Dec. 1: Food movements -- Fighting corporate food

Warren Belasco, "Food and the Counterculture," in Watson and Caldwell, ed., *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating*, pp. 217-234. On e-reserve

Rachel Schurman, "Fighting 'Frankenfoods': Industry Opportunity Structures and the Efficacy of the Anti-Biotech Movement in Western Europe," *Social Problems* vol. 51, no. 2 (2004), pp. 243-268. This journal is available online through UCSD's Roger

April Linton, Cindy Chiayuan Liou, and Kelly Ann Shaw, "A Taste of Trade Justice: Marketing Global Social Responsibility Via Fair Trade Coffee," *Globalizations* vol. 1, no. 2 (2004), pp. 223-246. This journal is available online through UCSD's Roger

Documentary on alternative sustainable agriculture movements

Dec. 3: Review.

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, December 9, 11:30-2:30