

SOC 232
Sociology of Food and Eating
01:920:232:01
F17

M/ Th 12:35 -1:55pm
Art History Hall (ARH) 200

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Office Hours: By appointment. Room 107 Davison Hall.

Course Description:

How can food and eating be sociological? This course draws upon a variety of perspectives to examine the social processes that shape how food is produced, prepared and consumed in the United States. We start the course by focusing on the environmental and political dynamics that characterize both global and U.S. food systems. We then turn toward the subjects of farm labor, hunger and food security, the politics of nutrition advice, and the rise of alternative food movements. Following this, we draw from theories on the sociology of the body to understand how dieting is gendered. We then look at the intersection of gender, race and social class with regard to foodwork. We end the course with a focus on food media and food culture.

The topics and readings cover diverse areas, including environmental sociology, political sociology, social inequality, sociology of science, gender, and cultural sociology. Within each of these perspectives, food is used as a lens to examine the complex social, economic and cultural relations that determine what we eat. In this course we will consider how problems in the food system, including environmental degradation, labor injustices, and unequal access to healthy food are social problems that reflect an ongoing tension between the agency of individual eaters and the power of institutions and social structures.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will learn to:

1. Apply a broad, sociological perspective to understand how food and eating practices are defined as social problems and culturally produced
2. Use food as a lens to study the reproduction of social inequality, the production of gender, race, and privilege

3. Examine how expert authority and scientific knowledge help to define how food is produced and consumed
4. Apply a sociology of food perspective to their own eating habits, food environments and food cultures.

Contacting me

My office hours are listed above. If you are not able to make these hours, please contact me and we can arrange to meet at another time. The best way to reach me is by email. I check email throughout the week (not on weekends), and I will do my best to respond within 24 hours.

****For all email messages, you must have “soc of food” at the start of your subject heading or I may not open your message. This is very important. If you emailed me and did not receive a response, double-check that your message contained the right subject heading.****

Keeping up with class material

Active participation and attendance are vital to learning the course material. I post lecture slides on Sakai, but your own notes from the lectures, documentaries and assigned readings are most important to learning the material. **AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING OF THE LECTURES IS NOT PERMITTED.** Students with a documented disability must seek special permission from me to record lectures.

If you miss multiple classes because of medical issues or personal problems, contact your **Dean of Students**, <http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/>. This office can help you manage these issues and stay on top of your schoolwork. If you are struggling to keep up with material in this course because of factors outside of your control (e.g. illness, financial aid, personal problems), I can direct you to services at the University that can assist you.

Student parents & caregivers

If you are a student parent, are pregnant, or have significant caregiving responsibilities for a child or relative, please notify me at the beginning of the semester, so I am aware of your situation. If notified in advance, we can make arrangements for missed classes related to your responsibilities. For student parents, consider connecting with the group Rutgers Students with Children: [facebook.com/studentswithchildren](https://www.facebook.com/studentswithchildren).

Student conduct

I expect students to be on time for class and to stay for the duration of the lecture. The classroom should be a place for the free exchange of ideas, and students should act with mutual respect and use common courtesy. I hope for, and indeed encourage, debate among students. I welcome thoughtful discussion and critical thinking; but discourteous remarks will not be tolerated, and disruptive students will be asked to leave. Students are expected to follow the Code of Student Conduct, which can be found here:

<https://slwordpress.rutgers.edu/studentconduct/wp-content/uploads/sites/46/2017/05/UCSC2016.pdf>

Academic integrity and Plagiarism

I take cheating on tests and plagiarism very seriously. I refer all suspected cases of cheating and plagiarism to the Rutgers Office of Student Conduct.

All students must review the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy. Refer to:
https://slwordpress.rutgers.edu/academicintegrity/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2014/11/AI_Policy_2013.pdf.

Laptops, tablets and phones:

These devices are permitted in the classroom for **note taking purposes only**. If they are used for other purposes (e.g. watching videos, looking at photos, online shopping, checking Facebook, texting etc.), **I will ask that you turn off your device and I may ask that you leave the classroom.**

On the first day of the course, you'll notice that I have assigned the *Science of Us* article on note taking. I hope it will change how you think about note taking for all of your classes, and I encourage you not to use electronic devices in class. This advice does **not** apply to students with documented learning disabilities or other issues that complicate taking notes by hand.

Disabilities

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where they are officially enrolled, participate in an intake meeting, and provide documentation:
<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/applying-for-services>

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a **Letter of Accommodations**. **Please share this letter with me as soon as possible, and discuss the accommodations with me as early as possible.**

Learning Centers

Learning center programs are highly recommended for any student who is looking to improve their grades and enhance their learning. The Learning Centers at Rutgers can provide support, guidance and assistance for all aspects of your coursework, including note-taking and writing multiple-choice exams. See: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/> Do not delay in contacting the Learning Center if you suspect that you have difficulty taking notes or writing multiple-choice exams.

Grades

The final grade is based on your total score (out of 100) calculated from all exams and assignments. A final letter grade will be allocated as follows:

A	90-100
B+	85-89
B	80-84
C+	75-79
C	70-74
D	60-69
F	59 or less

Course requirements

(1) Written Assignment (15%)

This is a written assignment requiring you to do some research and reflection using ideas from the course. More detail will be provided in class.

(2) Tests (75%)

All tests are multiple-choice, non-cumulative and cover material from the readings, lectures and films shown in class. Bring a pencil and eraser. Tests are held in our classroom. You must be on time for all tests.

Test 1 (25%): Thursday October 5th

Test 2 (25%): Thursday November 9th

Test 3 (25%): Thursday November 30th

(3) Last week of class activities (10%)

Details TBA

Missed Tests, in-class activities & assignments

Traffic, missed transit connections, sleeping-in, making a mistake about the day, time or location of the exam, workload from other courses, internet or computer problems are **not** acceptable reasons for a late assignment, missed in-class activity or missed exam. Problems with Sakai (e.g. a document did not upload properly, was not in the proper format, a turnitin.com score was not produced) is not an acceptable excuse for a late assignment. Contact the Sakai help desk if you encounter any technical problems uploading a document or need help learning how to use Sakai. Contact me if you see errors or missing items on the Sakai site.

In the case of severe weather, where the University is closed or major roadways and transit networks are closed, class will be cancelled and, if possible, tests will be rescheduled.

Make-up tests will be arranged only for students facing extenuating circumstances (valid supporting documentation is always required). If you know in advance that you will not be able to write a test, you must notify me well in advance and provide supporting documentation. If you miss a test, you must notify me immediately. Students who fail to notify me within 24 hours will not be permitted write a make-up test.

Required Readings:

- (1) Pollan, Michael. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. New York: Penguin. Available at the Barnes & Noble Rutgers Bookstore and is on reserve at Douglass Library. You can also easily find used copies online (see Amazon or Chegg.com).
- (2) Warner, Melanie. 2013. *Pandora's Lunchbox. How Processed Food Took Over the American Meal*. New York: Scribner. Available at the Barnes & Noble Rutgers Bookstore and is on reserve at Douglass Library. You can also easily find used copies online (see Amazon or Chegg.com).
- (3) Other assigned articles and book chapters that are indicated by (*) in the syllabus. These are electronically available on our class Sakai site.

You should be prepared to do all of the assigned readings and understand the material. I also expect that you have read (or at least carefully skimmed) the readings before you come to class.

Documentary Films:

We will watch several documentaries in this class. The film will be followed by a class discussion, and material from the film and our discussion will be included on all tests and exams. It is important that you attend these classes and participate in the discussions.

***The lecture schedule is subject to change. I may occasionally change the assigned readings and switch the order of lecture topics. I will always announce these changes in class and post an updated syllabus on Sakai.**

Lecture schedule

Th	7-Sep	Introduction to the course Required reading: (*) This syllabus (*) The Case Against Laptops in the Classroom (From <i>Science of Us</i>) <u>Optional:</u> Sana, Faria et al. 2013. "Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers." <i>Computers & Education</i> 62:24-31.
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Mueller, Pam A. and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. 2014. "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking." *Psychological Science* 25:1159-1168.

M	11-Sep	Film and Discussion: <i>King Corn</i> (*) Pollan, M. 2006. <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i> . New York: Penguin. Read sections of Part 1: Pp 15-56
Th	14-Sep	How is food sociological? Thinking about the contemporary food system. Pollan, M. 2006. <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i> . New York: Penguin. Read Pp 57-84 + Chpt 6. [Skip Chapter 5].
M	18-Sep	How is food sociological, continued
Th	21-Sep	(*) Howard, Phil. Food System Concentration.
M	25-Sep	Food Chains and Industrial Food Warner "Pandora's Lunchbox" Read: Intro-Chpt 4 (Pp. ix-73)
Th	28-Sep	Film: <i>Fed Up</i> (Sections)
M	2-Oct	Warner "Pandora's Lunchbox". Read chapters 5, 6 & 10
Th	5-Oct	Test 1. In-class. Bring a pencil and eraser
M	9-Oct	The rise of the alternative food movement Pollan, M. Chapter 9. Big Organic (*) Howard, Phil. Standardizing Resistance. The Organic Food Chain.
Th	12-Oct	Labor Issues in the food system (*) Holmes. S. (2013). Fresh Fruit: Broken Bodies. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. [Read: <i>Segregation on the Farm</i> . Pp. 45-87.]
M	16-Oct	Film and Discussion: <i>The Harvest/ la cosecha</i>
Th	19-Oct	Food Inequalities (*) Winne, M. 2009. Chpt 2 "Reagan, hunger..." (*) The Return of American Hunger (Atlantic Magazine)
M	23-Oct	Film and Discussion: <i>A Place at the Table</i>
Th	26-Oct	Genetically Modified Ingredients: The ever present controversy (*) Kinchy, Abby. "Seeds, Science and Struggle."

M	30-Oct	Film: <i>David vs. Monsanto</i>
Th	2-Nov	Building a new food movement (*) Broad, Garrett. “In a Community Like This.”
M	6-Nov	Topic & reading TBA
Th	9-Nov	Test 2 (30%). Bring a pencil and an eraser.
M	13-Nov	Food and the body (*) Chapman, Gwen. “From Dieting to Healthy Eating.” (*) Contois, E. 2017. “Lose Like a Man”: Gender and the Constraints of Self-Making in Weight Watchers Online. <i>Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies</i> , Vol. 17(1) (pp. 33-43)
Th	16-Nov	Foodwork and Gender (*) Beagan, B., Chapman, G. E., D’Sylva, A., & Bassett, B. R. 2008. It’s just easier for me to do it’: Rationalizing the family division of foodwork. <i>Sociology</i> , 42(4), 653-671.
M	20-Nov	Food in Popular Culture: Televised Media (*) Collins, K. 2009. “Good Television” in <i>Watching What We Eat</i> . Chapter 6 & 7
Tues	21-Nov	Note: Change in designation of class day “Ethnic” Food (*) Heldke, Lisa. “Let’s Cook Thai. Recipes for Colonialism.” (*)Why everyone should stop calling immigrant food ‘ethnic’.
Th	23-Nov	Thanksgiving Recess—No Class
M	27-Nov	Gourmet Food Culture: Foodies (*) Johnston, J and Baumann, S. 2010. <i>Foodies: Democracy and distinction in the gourmet foodscape</i> . New York: Routledge. [Read: Introduction]
Th	30-Nov	Test 3 (30%). Bring a pencil and an eraser.
M	4-Dec	Film & Discussion (TBA)
Th	7-Dec	In-class activity
M	11-Dec	Food Assignment Due by 11pm via Sakai