

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS
University of Virginia, Academic Sponsor

Voyage: Spring 2015

Discipline: Sociology

SOC 3595-101: Sociology of Food

Upper Division

Faculty Name: Michelle M. Camacho, PhD, Full Professor University of San Diego

Credit Hours: 3; Contact Hours: 38

Pre-requisites: Introduction to Sociology (**OR** Introduction to Anthropology)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From a sociological perspective, food marks social difference. Food strengthens social bonds and signifies information about our identities, habits, taboos, and culinary heritage. This class will cross-culturally examine the social, symbolic and political-economic roles of food, including production, distribution and consumption. We will examine the meanings of food, eating, and manners across cultures. From a political-economic perspective, we will contrast inequalities in the localization and globalization of food, considering how small-scale, diversified systems of farming change. We will theorize what sociologists call, “McDonaldization” processes of food production and distribution, and contrast these by examining cases in ports. Finally, we will explore food trends, politics and social movements as they relate to social identities, including differences of class, gender, religion, race, and ethnicity.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Goal: Demonstrate a general knowledge and comprehension of food and culture from a sociological perspective, and understand food through the sociological imagination.

Learning outcome: Be able to critically discuss the relationship between social institutions, food practices and identities.

Goal 2: Understand how the production, distribution, and consumption of food reflect deeper social patterns and inequalities. Explain how food relates to social power.

Learning outcome: To display an understanding of the sociological dimensions of how food is produced, prepared, distributed and consumed in cross cultural contexts. Understand variations of food in the structure of society and how these relate to nationalities, class and gender.

Goal 3: Apply sociological methods to the analysis of food and culture.

Learning outcome: To equip students with skills and practice sociological research methods such as participant-observation and informal interviewing

REQUIRED READINGS:

Course Reader: Sociology of Food

Selected journal articles and book chapters, available via digital download

(Available on shipboard drive)

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Ensenada- January 7:

A1- January 9: Welcome & syllabus review

Film: *A World of Food: Tastes and Taboos in Different Cultures* Distributed by: University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning in Berkeley.

Discussion: What's delicious? What's disgusting? What's edible? Comparative perspectives.

A2-January 11: The sociological study of food: perspectives on US society

Harvey Levenstein (2003). Paradoxes of Plenty. In *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America*. University of California Press. Pp. 237-255.

Gabaccia, Donna (2000). What do We Eat? In *We Are What We Eat Ethnic Food and the Making of American*. Harvard University Press. Pp. 1-9.

Michael Pollan (2004). Our National Eating Disorder. *New York Times Magazine*, Oct. 17.

Critical Analysis of film: *Buffet*

Discussion of U.S. American consumption behavior and its consequences.

Questions: At some Japanese buffets, people can eat as much as they want but are required to pay for what they don't eat. How do you think Americans would experience this rule? Is overeating at the buffet a problem of self-control, or a problem of food industry design? People say buffets allow them freedom of "choice." In what ways do buffets enable freedom of choice, and in what ways do they constrain freedom of choice?

A3- January 13: Food Concepts and Theories: Part 1

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1997). The culinary triangle. *Food and culture: A reader*. London: Routledg. Pp. 28-35.

Discussion: Be prepared to discuss the binary oppositions presented in Levi-Strauss's paper: raw/cooked; fresh/rotten.

Lucy M. Long (2004). Culinary Tourism: A Folkloristic Perspective on Eating and Otherness. In *Culinary Tourism*, edited by Lucy Long. University of Kentucky Press. Pp. 20-50.

Discussion of culinary tourism in the context of Hawaii, our first port of call.

Hilo: January 14

A4-January 16: Food Concepts and Theories: Part II

Harris, M. (1997). The abominable pig. In: *Food and Culture: A Reader*. Pp. 67-79.

Sydney Mintz, (1996). Food and its Relationship to Concepts of Power. In *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past*. Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. 17-32.

Sidney Mintz (2002). Food and Eating: Some Persisting Questions. In *Food Nations*, edited by Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton. London: Routledge. Pp. 24-32.

Discussion: How does food relate to social power and meaning?

Discussion of contemporary issues on China's pork reserves/markets:

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/16/world/asia/16china.html?_r=0

<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-uk-deal-to-sell-pig-semen-to-china-is-brilliant-2013-12>

A5-January 19: Globalizing markets and tastes

Bestor, T. (2000). How Sushi Went Global. *Foreign Policy* 121: 54-63.

Bestor, Theodore. 2004. The Raw and the Cooked (chapter 4) in *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press. Pp. 126-76.

Ohnuki-Tierney. 2006. McDonald's in Japan: Changing Manners and Etiquette. In *Golden Arches East*, 2nd edition, edited by James L. Watson. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press. Pp. 161-82.

Study Day: January 21

A6- January 22, A7-January 24: Globalizing markets and tastes

Film: Jiro Dreams of Sushi

Discussion: What does this film suggest about skilled vs. nonskilled labor in the food industry? Who are the service workers? If the entry price to eat at Sukiyabashi Jiro, a 10-seat, sushi-only restaurant located in a Tokyo subway station, is 30,000 yen, what does this suggest about cosmopolitan tastes?

Yokohama: January 26-27

In-Transit: January 28

Kobe: January 29-31

A8- February 1: Food, heritage, and meanings

Nir Avieli. 2005. Roasted Pigs and Bao Dumplings: Festive Food and Imagined

Transnational Identity in Chinese- Vietnamese Festivals. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*. 46(3): 281-93.

Eve M. Tai (2008). Roadtrip to Chinatown: Tasting Your Heritage, One Bite at a Time. *Gastronomica* 8(2): 22-25.

Lisa Heldke (2001). 'Let's Eat Chinese!' Reflections on Cultural Food Colonialism. *Gastronomica* 1(1): 76-79.

Discussion: What does it mean, as Heldke suggests, to "collect" culinary adventures? Reflect on how her analysis affects your attitudes about tasting new cuisine. According to Avieli and Tai, how are tastes socially constructed? Under what conditions do these change? What makes a meal "iconic"? For Kondo, how is meaning constructed through ritual?

Shanghai: February 3-4

In-Transit: February 5-6

Hong Kong: 7-8

A9- February 9: Gender and contested cuisine

Avieli, N. (2011). Dog meat politics in a Vietnamese town. *Ethnology*, 50(1): 59-78.

Alexandra Greeley (2002). Pho: The Vietnamese Addiction. *Gastronomica* 2: 80-83.

Avieli, Nir (2011). Making Sense of Vietnamese Cuisine. *Education About Asia* 16(3): 42-45.

In-class debate: Cultural relativist perspectives on dog meat consumption vs. Western perspectives of taboo meats.

Ho Chi Minh: February 11-16

A10- February 17: Halal diet among Muslim minorities in Singapore

Marranci, G. (2012). Defensive or offensive dining? Halal dining practices among Malay Muslim Singaporeans and their effects on integration. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 23(1): 84-100.

Cheryl Lu-Lien Tan. (2013, Dec 01). Sampling a cuisine with colonial roots. *New York Times*. Discussion of *kopitiam* in Singapore.

Singapore: February 19-20

Study Day: February 21

A11-February 22: Exam

Rangoon: February 24-March 1

A12-March 2 and A13- March 4: The culinary other

Arjun Appadurai (1988). How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30(1): 3-24

In-class activity: Content analysis of culinary postcards

Uma Narayan (1995). Eating Cultures: Incorporation, Identity and Indian Food. *Social Identities* 1(1): 63-86.

Lela Nargi (2003). What I Never Ate in India. *Gastronomica* 3(2): 83-86.

Discussion: How do our palates and our cultural appetites, relate to conspicuous consumption, socio-economic position, and, in the context of our travels, to our tourist/guest status? A la Appadurai, offer cross-cultural examples of food-based characterizations of the ‘ethnic Other’.

Cochin: March 6-11

Study Day: March 12

A14-March 13:

Reflection: Cuisine, Cookbooks, Colonialism, Stratification

In-class working groups: critical analysis of menus and cookbooks

A15-March 15: Food Security: United Nations Report

Van Huis, A., Van Itterbeeck, J., Klunder, H., Mertens, E., Halloran, A., Muir, G., & Vantomme, P. (2013). Edible insects: future prospects for food and feed security. *FAO Forestry Paper (FAO)*. Pp. 1-50.

BBC Four documentary “Can Eating Insects Save the World?” (selections)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yhh5mxYT0pw>

Study Day: March 17

Port Louis: March 18

A16- March 19: Food Security: Challenges

Godfray, H. C. J., Beddington, J. R., Crute, I. R., Haddad, L., Lawrence, D., Muir, J. F., ... & Toulmin, C. (2010). Food security: the challenge of feeding 9 billion people. *Science*, 327 (5967): 812-818.

Dana Goodyear (2011). Grub: Eating Bugs to Save the Planet. *The New Yorker Magazine*, August 15 & 22: 38-46.

Film: *Feeding Frenzy—The Food Industry, Marketing & the Creation of a Health Crisis*. Media Education Foundation. (2013)

A17-March 21: Food sovereignty

Wittman, H. (2011). Food sovereignty: a new rights framework for food and nature? *Environment and Society: Advances in Research*, 2(1): 87-105.

Yen, A., & Van Huis, A. (2012). The role of edible insects in human recreation and tourism. In *The management of insects in recreation and tourism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 169-185.

A18- March 23: “Mashonzha” or Mopane Worms in South African Cuisine

DeFoliart, G. R. (1999). Insects as food: why the western attitude is important. *Annual review of entomology*, 44(1): 21-50.

Hope, R. A., Frost, P. H., Gardiner, A., & Ghazoul, J. (2009). Experimental analysis of adoption of domestic mopane worm farming technology in Zimbabwe. *Development Southern Africa*, 26(1): 29-46.

Schofield, Hugh. (2013). Insect eating creeps on to Paris menus. BBC News Magazine, Paris.

Debate: The global effort towards food security-- processing insects in industrial food production vs. developing new palates for edible insects

Cape Town: March 25-30

Study Day: March 31

A19-April 1: Reflection: South African cuisine

In-class writing assignment & discussion: South African cuisine – Draw on our earlier reading of Mintz's *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom* to theorize food in a post-apartheid context. Given your experience in Cape Town, also consider production, consumption, service work, or availability of food given space/place.

A20-April 3: Hunger and Cash Crops in Ghana

Grier, B. (1992). Pawns, porters, and petty traders: women in the transition to cash crop agriculture in colonial Ghana. *Signs* 17(2): 304-328.

Vallianatos, E. G. (2001). All of Africa's gods are weeping. *Race and Class*, 43(1): 45-58.

Vallianatos, E. (2012). The democratic and sacred nature of agriculture. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 14(3): 335-346.

A21- April 5: Food access: Informal economy

Obeng-Odoom, F. (2011). The informal sector in Ghana under siege. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 27(3-4): 355-392.

Fran Osseo-Asare (2002). 'We Eat First with Our Eyes': On Ghanaian Cuisine. *Gastronomica* 2: 49-57.

Adela Blay-Brody (2009) Rx. Pepper Soup. *Gastronomica* 9: 62-65.

Debate: Consider the pros and cons of cash crops. How do cash crops affect food access? Consider macro- and micro-level consequences.

Tema (Accra): April 7-9

Takoradi: April 10-11

A22-April 12: Photodocumentary Reports

A23: April 14: Photodocumentary Reports

A24: April 16: Review for final exam

Discussion: Associated Press (1992). First McDonald's in Africa, Arab World Opens in Casablanca. *Los Angeles Times*.

Study Day: April 18

April 19: Global Lens Exams and Study Day

Casablanca: April 20-24

A25: A Day Finals

April 29: Arrive in Southampton

FIELD WORK

Field lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field lab.

FIELD LAB (*At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.*)

PENDING:

- 1. Cape Town – Comparative analysis of food markets: Old Biscuit Mill to Mzoli's
Country: South Africa
Field Lab Description: Contrast Old Biscuit Mill—in Woodstock, an area becoming gentrified with Mzoli's, in Gugulethu Township. How are they similar? Compare the speed with which business is conducted. Consider the range of items sold to consumers. How is food distributed and served? At each marketplace, what foods are considered to be “local”? What foods are considered to be “staples”? What is missing from each market? How would you characterize the social relations among and between vendors and consumers at each site? How does gender organize social relationships? How would you comparatively characterize racial relations at each site? Where did you feel most/least comfortable and why?

OR

- Proposal Title #2: Kochin - from market to table: Food production, distribution, consumption
Country: India
Idea: Visit a large household and participate in the family process of preparing a meal; could include visit to market
Objectives: understand household division of labor for food production, understand social practices of food consumption

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

A) FIELD LAB REPORT

Type a critical reflection on our field lab experience, engaging course readings to back up your arguments. Part I) Compare and contrast the social differences in the two locations. In detail define what makes Biscuit Mill market different from M'zoli's Market. Part II) Select three similar food items from each site and describe how they are culturally and socially distinct in terms of the presentation, display, consumers, vendors,

formality/informality, accessibility, popularity, volume available, and pricing. Part III) Observe the social relations among people at each site. What role does food play in these interactions? Consider the group dynamics: Who eats together? Under what conditions? How long do customers linger at each stall and what factors affect these interactions? Part IV) How do the readings help you make sense of your field lab, and how does your field lab help you evaluate the readings?

Due two class meetings after the field lab takes place. This paper should be about 10 pages long.

B) FIELD JOURNALS

Students will write up two additional field journals based on critical reflections and observations made during two port visits: Japan & India.

Food provides an illuminating window onto the fundamental interconnections between culture and economy. Go ashore, explore, and pay attention to food: its agricultural production, processing, transportation, marketing, distribution, preparation (e.g., cooking), and consumption. Informally observe people's interactions in the marketplace, in the food service industry, in the hotel industry, at the workplace, and, when possible, at home. What can you discern about local diets? Where do people get their food — from neighboring gardens or ready-made at the supermarket or...? Does there seem to be more uniformity or more variability in what different people eat? If variability is observable, what is it marked by — class, ethnicity, religion, gender, age etc.? What constitutes a complete meal? When are meals eaten? How would you characterize their relative significance? Who does the cooking and serving? Who eats together? What do you see children eating? How do they emulate or diverge from adult eating patterns? Do tourists eat what locals eat, or not? What was your favorite thing to eat in each country? Why? What foods were new to you

Back aboard the ship, type up a journal entry for these port visits describing and analyzing food and food preparation and socialization practices you observed. Make links to readings from class. Turn in journal entries at the beginning of each class after leaving a port. Come to class ready to discuss your observations. These should be 2-3 pages in length, typed. These will be discussed in greater detail after our first port.

C) PHOTODOCUMENTARY REPORT

Photographic Documentary Report: This is a group project that draws on collaborative teamwork to produce a collection of thematically-based photo-essays.

- a. You will work in groups of four students. The grade earned will be a collective one. A portion of the grade will be comprised of a self/group evaluation in which you will provide feedback on your own role in the group, as well as identify the strengths and weaknesses of the other group members.
- b. Each group will meet with me, in advance of conducting the work, to discuss some possible sociological themes for the photodocumentary project.
- c. Once your topic has been approved, each groups' collective task is to take photos that address and highlight this theme with the goal of producing a

coherent and sociologically informed photographic essay, which will be presented visually and explained orally in class. (Students may use PowerPoint, Prezi, a video editing program, or any appropriate software for visual display.)

- d. Your presentation of this visual sociology project is due April 12, and must include the following components:
 - Introduction using sociological terminology
 - Framing the topic in the literature
 - Methodology: Overview of contexts and discussion of each members' role in producing this work
 - Insights and findings – discussion of relevant themes, what was revealed, what you want to teach the class. Strive to be innovative here; do not reiterate the obvious.
 - Reflection on challenges and limitations of this work.
 - Conclusions
- e. The group presentation will be an oral report that incorporates visual components. The presentation must demonstrate a shared and equitable distribution of labor. The presentation style should be fluent, energetic, and constrained to the time limit (to be discussed in class). For the presentation, students have great creative potential. I encourage you to be as innovative as you would like in your style.
- f. Some possible topics for your photodocumentary include:
 - food and gender — in food preparation, feeding, and eating
 - production of food; farming
 - culinary Others
 - meat — what gets eaten, how its prepared, by whom, and how does it fit into the meal/diet
 - street food & informal economy
 - McDonald's (and/or other western fast food chains)
 - edible insects
 - staple foods
 - beverages and sociality
 - food shopping — outdoor markets, supermarkets, specialty markets, etc.
 - domestic versus public eating(Homestays are recommended, particularly for topics encompassing domestic food preparation and eating.)

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- Active in class participation (see participation rubric) =10%
- Field lab participation = 5%
- Field lab report =15%
- Field Journals = 10%
- In class debates 10%
- Leading of class discussion (Students will be assigned a set of readings and will lead the class discussion on the topic) = 5%
- Photodocumentary group project = 15%

- Midterm = 15%
- Final Exam = 15%
- Total= 100%

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Sidney Mintz

TITLE: *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past*

PUBLISHER: Beacon Press: Boston

ISBN #:0-80-70-4628-0

DATE/EDITION: 1996

AUTHOR: Lang, Tim and Erik Millstone. 2008.

TITLE: *The Atlas of Food: Who Eats What, Where and Why*

PUBLISHER: Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

ISBN-13: 978-0520254091

AUTHOR: Bestor, T. C.

TITLE: *Tsukiji: The fish market at the center of the world*

PUBLISHER: Univ of California Press.

ISBN # 978-0520220249

DATE: 2004.

FILMS (to be viewed during non-contact hours):

FILM TITLE: *BBC Four documentary "Can Eating Insects Save the World?"* SOURCE:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yhh5mxYT0pw>

FILM TITLE: *Buffet Movie* <http://www.buffetmovie.com/>

FILM TITLE: *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*

FILM TITLE: *A World of Food: Tastes and Taboos in Different Cultures* Distributed by:

University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning in Berkeley.

FILM TITLE: *Feeding Frenzy--The Food Industry, Marketing & the Creation of a Health Crisis.*

Media Education Foundation. (2013) ISBN: 1-932869-86-7

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: A camera will be needed.

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."