

**HIST 215: Food in World History ~ Fall 2018**

Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:00-1:20 pm/ Lillis 182

Instructor: Hannah Cutting-Jones ([hcutting@uoregon.edu](mailto:hcutting@uoregon.edu))

Office hours (McKenzie 315): Wednesdays 10-12 or by appointment

THE ONLY THING  
I LIKE BETTER  
THAN TALKING  
ABOUT FOOD IS  
EATING.

- JOHN WILKINS



**Description:**

Have you ever wondered why certain religions prohibit pork and shellfish? Or why we consider pizza and pasta to be authentic Italian cuisine although tomatoes and wheat are native to the Americas? Why is Spam so popular in Hawaii? Is Taco Bell real “Mexican” cuisine? When and why did people start eating in restaurants? When did we become obsessed with nutrition? What beliefs from the ancient world continue to shape our ideas about food today?

If these questions interest you, you’re in the right place! One of my favorite things about food history is its ability to connect us, regardless of background or ethnicity or belief. And food also connects us to the past in democratic, vibrant ways.

This course explores the history of food from ancient times to the present. It has no prerequisites, and can be taken in lieu of a more general history survey course (or at the same time). The course is divided into two parts, the first focused on ancient food practices up to the fifteenth century, and the second half on food in the modern world. In the first part of the course we will learn about

major turning points in foodways and how religion, migration, and trade shaped what people ate. In the second half we will cover the industrialization of food systems, the rise of fast food and restaurants, and the role of food in shaping ethnic, class, and gender identities. Throughout the course students will have opportunities to explore topics of particular interest and learn more about the history of specific foods and drinks here in Eugene and beyond. You'll also notice several overarching threads that connect the course. As food technologies became more advanced, for example, people rely more heavily on imported foodstuffs and less on locally produced foods, and foods travel further to reach their markets. We will also discuss ways in which food has always been a marker of cultural identity, values, and social status. I'm glad you are here, and I look forward to what you will contribute to this course.

### **Learning Objectives:**

You can expect to understand the following after taking this class:

- How foods and eating have been intertwined with religious beliefs and national, class, ethnic, and gender identities
- How cultural interactions between peoples and regions have altered practices of food production, distribution, and consumption
- How the production, distribution, and consumption of food have shaped, and been shaped by, the natural environment
- How modern societies have transformed eating practices
- How to read thoughtfully, identify authors' arguments, and engage in critical discussions about the way in which food shapes identity
- How to hone writing and interpretive skills through careful readings of sources, research assignments, and exams

**Laptop Policy:** If you need to use your laptop during class, please sit in the last two rows of the auditorium so that you do not distract your classmates. Thanks!

**Cellphone Policy:** Please do not use your phones during class. That said, if you know you might need to take a call during class sit toward the back so you can step out quietly. Thank you.

### **Grading:**

Your grade will be based on in-class participation and attendance (reflected in reading quizzes and discussions), one 3-4 page paper, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

**In-class Participation:** Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings listed on the syllabus for that date. Although this is a large lecture course, we will often break into small groups or I'll have you answer questions with your iClicker. Some days you'll have more reading than others, but I have tried to keep the assignments manageable. (Also, most of the readings for the class are on Canvas, so I have tried to keep your book costs to an absolute minimum!)

**Reading quizzes** will always be on Thursdays at the beginning of class. You will answer one question I draw from one of the reading assignments or from Tuesday's lecture (I'll post these on Wednesdays), and your lowest two quiz scores will be dropped. Hopefully this means you can

breathe a sigh of relief for that inevitable day you're running late, have an appointment, or did not have time to finish the reading.

**Paper:** You will write one 3-4 page research paper based on primary and secondary sources I provide (and that we discuss in class). The paper is due at the end of Week 10 but the prompt will be posted the first week of class.

**Midterm & Final Exams:** The midterm exam will consist of short answer, identification, and short essay questions. The final will be a take-home exam.

### **Grade Categories:**

Reading Quizzes – 20%  
In-class Assignments/Participation – 10%  
Paper 1 – 20%  
Midterm – 20%  
Final Exam – 30%

**Required Texts:** (available at the Duck Store)

Reay Tannahill, *Food in History*  
Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *Planet Taco: A Global History of Mexican Food*  
(Other readings are posted in the Modules section of Canvas.)

**Required Technology:** Computers (at Duck Store)

### **Canvas:**

This course uses the Canvas system and you can access the course website via your Canvas front page. The course website contains this syllabus, all reading assignments and questions, lecture slides, etc. Please submit your paper online, via the course website.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Any form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and students suspected of academic misconduct may face disciplinary action, as outlined in the Students' Code of Conduct: <https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx>. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with University policies regarding plagiarism and what constitutes academic misconduct: <http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>. Please come see me or one of the GEs if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic misconduct or if you are unsure how to properly cite a source.

### **Learning Accommodations:**

If you have a learning disability, please let me know. The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. I need to know if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).

### Basic Needs:

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (541-346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support. Furthermore, if you are comfortable doing so, please let me know about your situation so I can help point you in the right direction for assistance.

### Harassment or Assault

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment may seek resources and help at [su.uoregon.edu](http://su.uoregon.edu). To get help by phone, a student can also call either the UO's 24-hour hotline at 541-346-7244 [SAFE], or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator at 541-346-8136. From the SAFE website, students may also connect to Callisto, a confidential, third-party reporting center that is not a part of the university.

### Mental Health Support

College can be the best time of your life – but it can also be extremely difficult and overwhelming. If you need help dealing with anxiety or depression or need to seek counseling, please contact the Division of Student Life at 541-346-7244.

### Instructor Contact:

I am here to help you. I want you to enjoy this class and to do well. I encourage you to come see me during my scheduled office hours or, if you can't make those, let me know and I'm happy to find another time to meet. You can also see me to talk about any of the material covered in class, a reading you didn't quite understand, or if there's some aspect of history you'd like to know more about. I'm also glad to read early drafts of your paper and make suggestions for improvements. Or, you can just stop by to chat. Email is the best way to get ahold of me. I will respond to all student emails within 24 hours.

### Weekly Schedule: (subject to change)

#### Week 1: Food in Ancient History

Tuesday, Sept. 25: A Matter of Taste? Hunters, Gatherers, and the Agricultural Revolution

Reading: *Food*, 6-29 (optional); Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Delightful, Delicious, Disgusting," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Summer, 2002), pp. 217-225. (Canvas)

Thursday, Sept. 27: Egypt and the Gift of the Nile

Reading: *Salt*, Chapter 2 (Canvas); *Food*, 43-55





## Week 2: Religion & Food Taboos

Tuesday, October 2: Keeping Kosher, Eating Halal, and Sacred Cows of India

Readings: “On meat eating,” from the *Angkor Wat Sutra: A Mahayana Text*, ed. and trans. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (Canvas); Marvin Harris, “Pig Lovers and Pig Haters” in *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches*, 33-57. (Canvas)

Thursday, October 4: Gifts of the Gods: Food in Classical Greece & the Alexandrian Exchange  
Reading: *Food*, 60-70; Gratzner’s *Terrors of the Table*, chapter 3 “The Beginning” (Canvas)

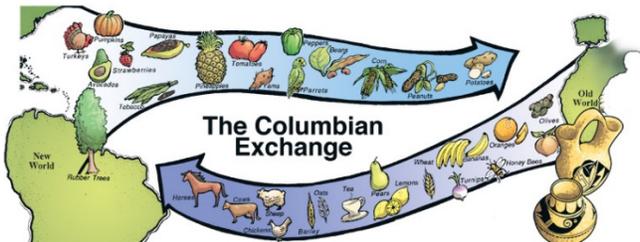
## Week 3: Early Empires & Food

Tuesday, October 9: Imperial Rome; Feasting and Fasting in Early Christianity (including Russia)  
Reading: *Food*, 71-91; Dennis Smith, “Food and Dining in Early Christianity” (Canvas)

Thursday, October 11: Yin and Yang of Classical Chinese Cuisine  
Reading: *Food*, 124-140; *Salt*, chapter 1 (Canvas)

### **DUE (by midnight): Paper #1**

Essay prompt: What influences were most important in shaping ancient religious food taboos – cultural, economic, or environmental factors? In your paper you must cite at least one primary source and one secondary source.



## Week 4: Colonization and Globalization

Tuesday, October 16: Worlds Collide: The Columbian Exchange (1200-1600)

Reading: Alfred W Crosby, “New World Foods and Old World Demography,” in *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003); 165-207. (Canvas)

Thursday, October 18: Aztecs and the Roots of Mexican Cooking

Reading: *Food*, 199-223; *Planet Taco*, Chapter 1; Coe, “The Aztecs: People of the Fifth Sun,” in *The True History of Chocolate* (Canvas)

## Week 5: African Cuisine & Midterm

Tuesday, October 23: African Cuisine; Sugar and Slavery

Reading: Jessica B. Harris, "Out of Africa" (Chapter 1), *High on the Hog*; Excerpt, Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin, 1985); Robert Brown, "Eating the Dead" (Canvas)

Thursday, October 25: MIDTERM EXAM

## Week 6: The Industrialization of Food

Tuesday, October 30: History of the Restaurant, Mass-Production and the Modern Diet

Reading: *Food*, 283-305; Rachel Laudan, "Birth of the Modern Diet" (Canvas)

Thursday, November 1: Modern Japanese Cuisine

Guest Speaker, Professor Julie Hessler

Reading: Kararzyna J Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine*, pp.13-34 (Canvas)

## Week 7: Environmental Impact of Modern Food Production

Tuesday, November 6: In Meat the Trust

Reading: William Cronon, *Natural Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (Norton, 1991), pp. 207-259 (Canvas). Excerpt from Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (in class)

Thursday, November 8: Lewis, Noodles, Avocados, & Bananas – Novel Foods Travel Abroad

Reading: John Soluri, "Accounting for Taste"; Article on Avocados & marketing (Canvas); Excerpt, *Slurp!*

## Week 8: Migration, Food, and War

Tuesday, November 13: War, Nutritionism, and the Great Depression

Reading: *Food*, 332-346; *Planet Taco*, chapter 2

Thursday, November 15: WWII & Fast Food in the Cold War

Reading: Collingham, *Taste of War* (Canvas) / "Making White Bread by the Bomb's Early Light" (Canvas)

## Week 9: Gender and the Domestic Politics of Food

Tuesday, November 20: The Au Vaine & Chile Queens: Food and Gender in Developing Economies

Reading: *Planet Taco*, chapters 3 & 4



Thursday, November 22: THANKSGIVING! ☺

## Week 10: Food and Identity

Tuesday, November 27: Globalization and the Fight over “Authenticity”

Reading: *Planet Taco*, Chapter 6; *Food*, 336-35; Yunxiang Yan, “Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald’s in Beijing,” *Cultural Politics of Food and Eating Reading*

Thursday, November 29: Modern Trends in Food History

Reading: Michael Pollan, “Unhappy Meals”; Marion Nestle, “Eat More to Eat Less,” *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 31-50.

Sample Only