

-SYLLABUS-

AM ST 100.3 – INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN STUDIES:



FOODWAYS

Room: Olmsted 315E

08/25/15 - 12/13/15

Tuesday & Thursday

1:00pm-2:15pm

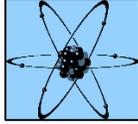


Course Summary

America struggles with hunger for 1 in 8 individuals, yet one of our major medical crises of the 21st century is obesity. Why is the American relationship with food so complex, and what does that tell us about our nation and ourselves? This course will examine the structure of our food system, from North Atlantic cod fishing to modern GMO crops, the role of food as an economic commodity, the rhetoric of the organic movement, and even folkways surrounding regional cuisine.

American Studies Areas: Ethnography, Material Culture, Popular Culture, History, Literature, Business/Economics, Folklore

Guiding Question: "How does the food we eat (and how we eat it) define us as Americans?"



Structure of the Course

Our course will use 4-5 menus from various restaurants or historical references, and break down the economics, technologies, history, sociological contexts, popular culture, and folklore of each menu. For example, we will examine a White House Thanksgiving dinner, which would explore the rhetorical symbolism of certain food choices, the history of White House entertaining, the role of commodities in bringing the food to the table (as well as the technologies like boxcar refrigeration involved in the process), and discussions of literature about such dinners, including accounts of the “first Thanksgiving.” We will look at the menus very generally in the first week and ask some questions which will help guide our later discussions.

Classes are divided between lecture & discussion days, project days, and literature review (“lit review”) days, as well as three quiz days. **Lecture & Discussion Days** are days on which your instructor will present information or perspectives which help explain the American experience and the American Studies method with relation to foodways. **Project Days** are days on which students are able to collaborate on major projects and present their findings. There are three project days built into the syllabus schedule. **Lit Review Days** are for discussion of assigned reading materials, as well as review of materials which will appear on the next quiz. There are four total Lit Review Days, the last three of which precede **Assessment Days** (with the exception of our second class period Lit Review Day), on which the periodic quizzes for the course are administered. There are three Assessment Days.



Your Instructor

Lecturer Cory Thomas Hutcheson

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Website: <http://sites.psu.edu/cthutcheson>



Instructional Method

This course is offered with a widely varied content selection, including PowerPoint lectures, audio recordings, video screenings, group discussions, and online materials. Class assignments and activities are centered on the idea that students learn best when engaged and challenged. Lectures are relatively short to leave time for discussion, although there may occasionally be more than one lecture in a class. Students are encouraged to ask questions after lectures and to arrange for meetings during office hours as needed in order to gain the maximum benefit from lessons.



My Expectations

My basic expectation is that all students are here because they have at least some interest in the subject, and are willing to do work to understand that subject better. Beyond this fundamental expectation, I also have specific expectations of all students:

1. I expect that students will complete all required readings by the day of the appropriate Lit Review. If you have not read, your attendance will not benefit you.
2. I expect all students to complete assignments, essays, and activities in their entirety, and to contribute substantially to the class's understanding of the topic.
3. I expect students to be mature and intelligent when problems arise, including conflict and frustration. If a student needs my help to resolve a problem, I will be happy to help, but I am not a mind reader, and I expect students to communicate problems to me.
4. I expect that students will be respectful of other students, the instructor, and the University.
5. I expect that students will *try* in class, both by giving the best efforts they can and by experimenting with new ideas.

If you have any questions about these expectations, please contact me and I will be glad to discuss them further.



Required Texts

BOOKS (available through the bookstore or via online purchase)

1. *American Appetites: A Documentary Reader*, by Jennifer J. Wallach & Lindsey R. Swindall (Little Rock, AR: Univ. of Arkansas Press, 2014). ISBN 978-1557286680. [REQUIRED]
2. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, by Michael Pollan (New York: Penguin, 2007). ISBN 978-0143038580. [REQUIRED]



ONLINE/OUTSIDE TEXTS (available through the class ANGEL site or the University Library)

Websites of note:

- Southern Foodways Alliance –<https://www.southernfoodways.org/>
 - [Particularly the podcast “The Gravy”](http://www.southernfoodways.org/gravy-format/gravy-podcast/)
(<http://www.southernfoodways.org/gravy-format/gravy-podcast/>)
- The Food Timeline: <http://www.foodtimeline.org/>
- *The Digest: A Journal of Foodways and Culture*: <http://digest.champlain.edu/index.html>
- The Folkstreams Film Archive (subheading “Foodways”):
<http://www.folkstreams.net/pub/FilmsBySubject.php#anchorfoodways>

The following book excerpts, articles, and essays are available on the class ANGEL site:

1. *Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project*
 - “Introductory Essay”
2. *Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville
 - “Chowder”
3. *An Alphabet for Gourmets and Serve it Forth*, by M.F.K. Fisher
 - “D is for Dining Out”
 - “Shell-shock & Richard the Third: 1900 A.D. – Europe and America”
4. *The Jungle*, by Upton Sinclair
 - Introductory Summary
 - Chapters 5, 7, & 9

5. Poetry Collection:

- Robert Frost, "Blueberries" & "After Apple Picking"
- Edna St. Vincent-Millay, "Never May the Fruit Be Plucked," "Wine from these Grapes," & "Thanksgiving Dinner"
- Anne Sexton, "Jesus Suckles" & "Jesus Cooks"
- Gwendolyn Brooks, "The Bean Eaters"
- Nikki Giovanni, "Knoxville, Tennessee," & "Cancers"
- Billy Collins, "The Fish," "This Little Piggy Went to Market," & "Old Man Eating Alone in a Chinese Restaurant"



Assignments, Quizzes, Activities, & Grading

The class grade will be based on the completion of all assignments, including a participation grade derived from in-class activities (with some outside work required in some cases) and a series of four comprehension assessments.



ASSESSMENT QUIZZES - Throughout the course, approximately every four weeks, students will take an in-class comprehension assessment. These assessments will cover material learned in previous class periods, as well as material drawn from required course reading. They will generally be a mixture of 20-30 multiple choice, fill-in the blank, and short response questions. Students will have 45 minutes to complete these assessments. These assessments are intended to demonstrate students' understanding of the forms of American religion; key movements, ideas, and figures; and American Studies methods. (*30 percent of final grade*).



WRITTEN ESSAY - Students are required to submit one (1) written essay of 1,000-1,500 words in length (approximately 4-6 pages) showing critical evaluation of a topic, person, movement, literary work, historical event, or other aspect related to American foodways. Additional information about the specific scope and topic of the essay will be provided in a separate handout within the first few weeks of class. **This essay may be turned in either October 2nd by MIDNIGHT or December 13th by MIDNIGHT (if the latter option is selected, the PROJECT MUST BE TURNED IN by October 2nd (*30 percent of final grade*)).**



SPECIAL PROJECT – Students will turn in a specialized project selected from a project list provided on a separate handout during the first few weeks of class. The project will offer you a chance to use original methods to present ideas and information related to American foodways, and is designed to help students find creative ways to communicate about difficult subjects in an intelligent, thoughtful way. Projects may be individual or collaborative. **This project may be turned in either October 2nd by MIDNIGHT or December 13th by MIDNIGHT (if the latter option is selected, the ESSAY MUST BE TURNED IN by October 2nd). (30 percent of final grade).**



ACTIVITIES – Since this course is designed to help you understand the field of American Studies generally, we will use a series of activities to explore the interdisciplinary scope of the field. This course requires students to interact with the material, the instructor, and each other to fully comprehend the subject. The class will complete (mostly in-class, but with some outside time occasionally required) a series of activities ranging from interpersonal interviews to group presentations, primarily focusing on American Studies methods related to foodways. A full list of activities is outlined below. (10 percent of final grade).

ACTIVITY LIST

Group Presentation – One of the best ways to learn something is by teaching it to others, and to that end we will have group presentations in which cadres of students will work together to offer insight into an aspect of the American food economy/ecosystem. Students will get two in-class periods to work together on planning and executing their presentation. Every member of the group must contribute, and presentations will need to be 10-15 minutes in length for each group. Additional guidelines on this activity will be handed out during the first few weeks of class.

Written Responses – This activity affords students an opportunity to apply class methods to their own experiences. Students will turn in two (2) short (250-500 word, around 1-2 pages) responses during the semester which will respond to a prompt question given in class or via email. These responses do not have to be formal or use sources the way a paper would, but they should show thought and demonstrate interdisciplinary intelligence. A guide to these responses will be available in ANGEL.

Literature Review – Students are expected to do the reading (and viewing) relevant to the class. The Lit Review Days are spaced out to provide students time to read (and view) the material. I will have some questions and discussion points ready for each Lit Review Day, but I fully anticipate that you will have your own thoughts and discussion

ideas to share on those days, so please feel free to flex your mental muscles during the Lit Review. If you haven't read, however, please know that the Lit Review sessions won't be of much use to you, and could negatively impact your grade overall.



Policies - University & Class

***NOTE: ALL POLICIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

POLICY STATEMENTS: (1) Academic Freedom; (2) Academic Integrity; (3) Attendance; (4) Cancellations due to Weather, Emergencies, and Campus Closing; (5) Confidentiality; (6) Disability Services; (7) Penn State Harrisburg Emergency Procedures; (8) Personal Digital Devices

- 1. Academic Freedom:** According to Penn State policy HR64, "The faculty member is expected to train students to think for themselves, and to provide them access to those materials which they need if they are to think intelligently. Hence, in giving instruction upon controversial matters the faculty member is expected to be of a fair and judicial mind, and to set forth justly, without supersession or innuendo, the divergent opinions of other investigators." See <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/OHR/hr64.html>.
- 2. Academic Integrity:** According to Penn State policy 49-20, Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an education objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. The instructor can fail a student for major infractions. For more information, see <http://www.psu.edu/dept/ufs/policies/47-00.html#49-20>. The instructor reserves the right to use Turnitin as a plagiarism detection tool.
- 3. Attendance:** Students are expected to complete every assignment, project, written essay, and activity in the course and are held responsible for all work covered in the course. A student whose irregular attendance causes him or her, in the judgment of the instructor, to become deficient scholastically, may run the risk of receiving a failing grade or receiving a lower grade than the student might have secured had the student been in regular attendance. Participation by students in the course should not be disruptive or offensive to other class members. See <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/42-00.html#42-27>. I interpret this policy to mean that students who miss more than four (4) classes can fail the course even if the student has passed written assignments. In

addition, if a student is absent, that student is responsible for catching up on any material covered in the class he or she missed.

4. **Cancellations Due to Weather, Emergencies, or Campus Closing:** When the Provost and Dean makes the decision to close the Harrisburg campus or delay the start of classes, the regional media will be notified at least two hours prior to the standard 8:00 a.m. reporting time for staff and before the start of the earliest scheduled class. The college will make its announcement in the following ways:
 - a. The college's web page at www.hbg.psu.edu will carry a message regarding the status of classes.
 - b. The university's email system will also be used to notify email subscribers about a weather emergency. Additionally, students, faculty, and staff are invited to register for PSUAlert at <https://psualert.psu.edu/psualert/>. The service will feature enhanced messaging capabilities and robust integration with the University's other communications platforms.
 - c. An announcement will be placed on the college's AUDIX telephone system at the 948-6000 and 948-6029 numbers.
 - d. For information on the campus's weather emergency policy, including media outlets carrying cancellation notices, see <http://www.hbg.psu.edu/hbg/weather.html>
5. **Confidentiality:** The right of students to confidentiality is of concern to your instructor and to the University. According to Penn State policy AD-11, "The Pennsylvania State University collects and retains data and information about students for designated periods of time for the expressed purpose of facilitating the student's educational development. The University recognizes the privacy rights of individuals in exerting control over what information about themselves may be disclosed and, at the same time, attempts to balance that right with the institution's need for information relevant to the fulfillment of its educational missions. Student educational records are defined as records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by The Pennsylvania State University or by a person acting for the University pursuant to University, college, campus, or departmental policy. Exclusions include: Notes of a professor concerning a student and intended for the professor's own use are not subject to inspection, disclosure, and challenge." For more information, see <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/Ad11.html>.
6. **Disability Services and Accessibility:** Any student who cannot complete requirements of the class because of physical disabilities should make circumstances known to the instructor. In cases where documentation of disability is available, alternative ways to fulfill requirements will be made. For more information, see Penn State's disability services handbook at <http://www.hbg.psu.edu/studaf/disability/dshandbook.htm>
7. **Penn State Harrisburg Emergency Procedures:** Penn State Harrisburg has an Emergency Response Plan for various disturbances and unusual events such as fires, spillage of hazardous materials, and violent behavior. For more information, see <http://www.hbg.psu.edu/EmergencyProceduresflyer.pdf> (Emergency Procedures-Quick Reference) and <http://php.scripts.psu.edu/dept/iit/hbg/police/erp.php> (Emergency Response Plan). Note the phone number for Police Services in the event of an emergency: 717-948-6232. In extreme emergencies, call 911. Offices that can provide assistance are Safety/Police Services at 717-979-7976 and Physical Plant at 717-948-6235. For campus safety policies and initiatives, see <http://btmt.psu.edu> and <http://www.police.psu.edu>.

8. **Personal Digital Devices:** Personal digital devices such as cell phones, smartphones and personal digital assistants (e.g., iPods, droids), laptop and netbook computers, iPad and tablet computers can help students in academic settings but can also distract from learning. As a matter of policy, I insist that cell phones be turned off or silenced; texting and other communication on the cell phone are strictly prohibited in class. Laptops, netbooks, and tablet computers enabling notetaking and viewing of course materials are permitted but students must not engage in non-classroom tasks such as emailing, web browsing, e-shopping, and social networking in class. If they do not abide by this guideline, use of their devices in class will be prohibited.

Policy Sources

For other policies relating to campus life and academic participation, see <http://guru.psu.edu/policies>.



Class Schedule

(Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1pm - 2:15pm)

AUGUST

25 - FIRST DAY. Introduction & Syllabus. Structure of Course (the "Menu"). Forks, Knives, Napkins (Course Etiquette). Grading & Project overviews.

27 - Lit Review Day (Menus preview). *Baking Bread!: The Construction of a Communal Bread-Oven in Cambridge, NY* (independent screening through Folkstreams.net); *Food & Economy. Home Cooking vs. Dining Out.*

SEPTEMBER

1 - Menu #1: The Camp David Thanksgiving Menu. The "First" Thanksgiving. National Thanksgiving. Feast & Famine in Early America.

3 - Cookbooks in America. Farming in American History. New World Foods: Potatoes.

8 - Drinking in America: Coffee & Tea.

10 - New World Foods: Corn & Rice. Commodities.

15 - Presentation Prep Day.

17 - Sugar & Sugarcane. New World Foods: Pumpkins & Cranberries. Thanksgiving in Pop Culture.

22 - Menu #2: Southern Church Potluck. Overview of Potlucks/Pot-Latch Suppers.

24 - Lit Review: *American Appetites* (pp.xvii-122); *Feeding America* ("Introductory Essay" - ANGEL); *An Alphabet for Gourmets*, Fisher ("D is for Dining Out" - ANGEL); *Moby Dick*, Melville ("Chowder" - ANGEL). Poetry Selections: Frost, Millay, & Sexton. *The Gravy: Episodes #2* ("Separation of Church & Coffee") and #17 ("A Charleston Feast for Reconciliation") (independent listening via The Southern Foodways Alliance podcast)

29 - ASSESSMENT #1

OCTOBER

1 - Poverty & Food. Food Communities & Regions.

FIRST PAPER/PROJECT DUE 10/2 by MIDNIGHT.

6 - Religion, Morals, & Food. Drinking in America: Prohibition & Alcohol.

8 - In-Class Screening: *Food, Inc.*

13 - Food Festivals. New World Foods: Barbecue, Hamburgers, & Hot Dogs.

15 - *Presentation Prep Day.*

20 - Menu #3: Chinese Take-Out. Ethnicity & Culinary Identity.

22 - Lit Review: *American Appetites* (pp. 123-225); *Food, Inc.* (previous in-class screening); *Dry Wood* (independent screening through Folkstreams.net); *Serve it Forth*, Fisher ("Shell-shock & Richard the Third" - ANGEL); *The Jungle*, Sinclair (ANGEL). Poetry Selections: Brooks, Giovanni, & Collins.

27 - ASSESSMENT #2

29 - Chinese Immigrants & the Western Frontier. Chop Suey. New World Foods: American Bison & Passenger Pigeons.

NOVEMBER

3 - Sushi. Fish in America. Drinking in America: Water. Soy Sauce, Sriracha, and Other Condiments.

5 - New World Foods: Fortune Cookies. Novelty Foods.

10 - Menu #4: World War II K-Rations. Rationing Food. Farm Bills & Subsidies.

12 - Victory Gardens & Home Canning. Industrial Food Processing. Drinking in America: Tang.

17 - *Activity Day: In-Class Presentations.*

19 - TV Dinners. Advertising and Food. New World Foods: Spam.

24 - *THANKSGIVING*

26 - *THANKSGIVING*

DECEMBER

1 - New World Foods: Fast Food & Junk Food. Organic Food.

3 - Drinking in America: Soda. Obesity & Nutrition. Body Image.

8 - Lit Review: *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Pollan. *Schmeckfest* (independent screening at Folkstreams.net)

10 - LAST DAY. FINAL ASSESSMENT.

13 - FINAL PAPER DUE BY MIDNIGHT.