

EATING, GROWING, CATCHING, KNOWING: Historical Perspectives on Food, Science, and the Environment

HIS 497

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Spring Term 2020

The sourcing, preparation, and consumption of food (and drink) represent essential aspects of human culture, even as these activities have long had massive implications for the planet. Science and technology are deeply implicated in the history of changing diets, and industrialized agriculture has profoundly shaped both human populations and global environmental conditions. This course aims to introduce students to a range of recent writings that take up these problems, with an emphasis on scholarship in global history and history of science, but also engaging broader questions of aesthetics, politics, and creative/collaborative/critical practices.

READINGS

It is probably worth buying these three books* (I think we can secure the other readings in PDF form):

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire* (2013)

&

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006)

&

Paul Freedman, ed., *FOOD: The History of Taste* (2007/2019)

NB: There are two editions of the Freedman book, and the paperback is a good deal cheaper (but it cannot be bought in the US by ordinary bookstores; Amazon has it for sale, though legally how they do so is a mystery to me, and to the folks at Labyrinth, who have ordered some of the hardbacks).

ASSIGNMENTS/REQUIREMENTS

This is a seminar. Class participation is essential, and represents a meaningful component of final assessments for the course; all absences must be excused (write me to explain in advance of missing any session). Because our conversations will rely on the sharing of our work in our (emergent!) community of inquiry, late assignments compromise the collective; they will not be marked, and there is no way to do a "make up."

* You may also want to own *The Food History Reader: Primary Sources*, edited by Ken Albala (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), but the excerpts we read from this text are very short, and we read a small percentage of the work as a whole, so you will not need to own the book.

Week 1: Introduction –

no assigned reading

Week 2: Food History / Food Future

W. Willett et al., "Food in the Anthropocene: The EAT-Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems," *Lancet* (Feb. 2019).

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* (Winter 2009).

Freedman, ed., *FOOD*, "Introduction: A New History of Taste."

Shelby Brewster, "Food Futures: Speculative Performance in the Anthropocene." *The Journal of American Drama and Theatre* (Spring 2017).

Week 3: Killing and Cultivation in the Neolithic

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 1,

"Mastering Grain Cookery, 20,000-300BCE."

Alan K. Outram, "Hunter-Gatherers and the First Farmers: The Evolution of Taste in Prehistory," in *FOOD*.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle" *Partisan Review* (1966).

"Cuneiform Recipes," Bottéro & Fagan, ed. and trans., from Albala, *Food History Reader*.

Steven Mithen, "Why did we start farming?" a review of James Scott's *Against the Grain*, *London Review of Books* (November 2017).

Week 4: Antiquity and the Tongue

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 2, "The Barley-Wheat Sacrificial Cuisines of the Ancient Empires, 500BCE-400CE."

Veronika Grimm, "Tastes of Ancient Greece and Rome," in *FOOD*.

Mary Douglas, "The Abominations of Leviticus," from *Purity and Danger* (1966).

Porphyry, "On Abstinence from Animal Food" (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

Galen, "On the Properties of Food" (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

Apicus, "Three Recipes" (raw dill sauce and briny sauce for boiled fish, and pig's paunch), from *De Re Coquinaria*, Vehling, trans.

Week 5: Court Cultures and the Table, Looking East

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 3, "Buddhism Transforms the Cuisines of Central and West Asia."

Joanna Waley-Cohen, "The Quest for Perfect Balance: Taste and Gastronomy in Imperial China," in *FOOD*.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (excerpt), R. Nice, trans. (1979).

The I-Li, or Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

The Book of Rites (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

Li Yu, *The Classic of Tea* (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

The Taittiriya Upanishad; "I Am Food" (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

The Sammadhitti Sutta (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

Week 6: Medieval Islamic Food, Health, and Society

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 4, "Islam Transforms the Cuisines of Central and West Asia."

H. D. Miller, "The Pleasures of Consumption: The Birth of Medieval Islamic Cuisine," in *FOOD*.

Marvin Harris, "The Abominable Pig," excerpted from *Good to Eat* (1985).

al-Baghdadi, *A Baghdad Cookery Book* (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

al-Ghazali, *On Manners* (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

Avicenna, *Canon* (excerpt), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.

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Week 7: Sanctity and Appetite in Christian Europe

- Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 5, "Christianity Transforms the Cuisines of Europe and the Americas, 100-1650CE."
- C.M. Woolgar, "Feasting and Fasting: Food and Taste in Europe in the Middle Ages," in *FOOD*.
- Caroline Walker Bynum, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women," *Representations* (Summer 1985).
- The Early Ascetics* (excerpts).
- The Rule of Saint Benedict* (excerpts).

Week 8: The Early Modern Mouth (aka *Eating and Others*)

- Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 6, "Prelude to Modern Cuisines: Northern Europe 1650-1800).".
- Brian Cowan, "New Worlds, New Tastes: Food Fashions after the Renaissance," in *FOOD*.
- Wolfgang Schivelbusch, "Coffee and the Protestant Ethic," from *Tastes of Paradise* (1992).
- Marcy Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics," *AHR* (June 2006).
- "The Vertue of the Coffee Drink" (Coffee Advertisement), from Albala, ed., *Food History Reader*.
- John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (excerpt).

Week 9: Feeding the Masses in the Industrial Age

- Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 7, "Modern Cuisines: The Expansion of Middling Cuisines, 1810-1920."
- Hans J. Teuteberg, "The Birth of the Consumer Age: FoodInnovations from 1800," in *FOOD*.
- Jack Goody, "Industrial Food: Towards the Development of a World Cuisine," from *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class* (1982).
- Wolfgang Schivelbusch, "The Industrial Revolution, Beer, and Liquor," from *Tastes of Paradise* (1992).
- Deborah Fitzgerald et al., "Agricultural History and the History of Science," *Agricultural History* (Fall 2018).
- Benjamin Cohen, "Analysis as border patrol: Chemists along the boundary between pure food and real adulteration," *Endeavour* (June 2011).
- Friedrich Accum, *A Treatise on Adulterations of Food, and Culinary Poisons* (excerpt).

Week 10: Modernity from the Field to the Kitchen

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 8, "Modern Cuisines: The Globalization of Middling Cuisines, 1920-2020."

Elliott Shore, "Dining Out: The Development of the Restaurant," in *FOOD*.

Prakash Kumar et al., "New Narratives of the Green Revolution," *Agricultural History* (Summer 2017).

Jonathan Rees, "The Early Days of Electric Household Refrigeration," and "The Completion of the Modern Cold Chain," in *Refrigeration Nation* (2013).

Francis Moore Lappé, ed., *Diet for a Small Planet* (1971; excerpt).

Week 11: Contemporary Critique

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006/20016), Part I, "Industrial Corn."

Eric Schlosser, "The Chain Never Stops," *Mother Jones* (July/August 2001).

Seth Holmes (and Philippe Bourgeois), Preface and Introductory excerpts from *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States* (2013).

Week 12: Dreams of Our Time

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006/20016), Part III, "The Forrest."

Folco Portinari, "The Slow Food Manifesto."