

Soc 188-26: The Sociology of Food

Fall 2022

Tufts University

Mondays & Wednesdays, 10:30-11:45 am

Packard Hall Conference Room

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Office: Braker 320

Office Hours: [Virtual sign-up on Calendly](#), Tuesdays 10-11 am and Thursdays 1-2 pm



A scene from Dewick-MacPhie, October 2016

Welcome

Food touches all of us. Our seminar provides an opportunity to think about food sociologically: what it tells us about who we are; how it brings people together and divides them; how it helps organize and give meaning to our lives; how it nourishes (and harms) people, their bodies and minds, their communities, and the larger world. Drawing on all our senses, we will focus on common food products (white bread, coffee, chocolate, beer, fast food, and more), food-related phenomena (celebrity chefs and cooking shows), cultural food traditions (soul food, “ethnic” food), and political topics and sites of struggle (fair trade, food justice movements and sovereignty, carcerality). This is a reading, writing, and discussion intensive seminar that expects the full and active participation of all seminar participants; and encourages all to think critically about their own relationship to food.

The Basics

Course Objectives

- To explore how what we consume tells us about who we are and what we care about.
- To examine how power relations embed food relations, consumption, production, distribution, and meanings.
- To reflect deeply and critically on your own relationship to food.
- To apply theories of social life to explain how individuals relate to food.

Required Materials

There are 6 required books, listed here in the order we'll read them. The first five are available at the campus bookstore. The 6th is free access on the library website.

- Bobrow-Strain, Aaron. 2012. *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Contois, Emily J. H. 2020. *Diners, Dudes, and Diets: How Gender and Power Collide in Food Media and Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Best, Amy L. 2017. *Fast Food Kids: French Fries, Lunch Lines, and Social Ties*. New York: NYU Press.
- Ewoodzie, Jr., Joseph C. 2021. *Getting Something to Eat in Jackson: Race, Class, and Food in the American South*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Orquiza, Jr., René Alexander D. 2020. *Food and the Filipino Colonial Mentality under American Rule*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Chapman, Nathaniel G. and David L. Brunsma. 2020. *Beer and Racism: How Beer Became White, Why it Matters, and the Movements to Change It*. Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press.

All individual journal articles and book chapters will be uploaded to Canvas. Please make sure you can access each reading during class.

Assignments

You'll be assessed on 6 things, a mix of low-stakes and higher-stakes assignments. The lower-stakes assessments:

- **[5% of your overall grade] Paper #1: Food and Me.** A brief 2-page reflection on what you're thinking about right now in terms of food, and how you're feeling with the new school year underway. **Due at 5 pm on Friday, September 23.**
- **[20%] Attendance and participation.** Come to class having read and watched the assigned materials carefully and prepared to discuss and ask questions. Outside of COVID, other serious health concerns, or excused absences you discuss with Freedman, you can miss two classes without penalty. Each additional absence will deduct 2% from your overall course grade.

- **[10%] Canvas reflections.** Brief reflections on the day's assigned materials, uploaded to Canvas by 9:30 am the day of class, for any 5 classes before our class visit to the Taza chocolate factory, or the period between 9/14 and 10-17 [out of 9 possible classes; 2% per reflection]. If you don't submit by 9:30 am that day, you forfeit your opportunity to post. Graded on a full-credit, partial-credit basis.

The higher-stakes papers start out narrow in scope (everyone will address the same prompt) and widen out more in scope (you'll choose what you want to write about). Graded on a traditional grading scale: A+ (100), A (94-99), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83), C+ (77-79), C (74-76) . . .

- **[15%] Paper #2: *The Bear*.** A 6-page double-spaced analysis of season 1 of the FX show *The Bear*, due at 5 pm on October 14.
- **[20%] Paper #3 and facilitation.** With 1 or 2 of your classmates, you'll be responsible for helping lead discussion for one week of class, starting around the mid-point of the semester on October 24 [worth 5%]. Then you'll write a 6-page paper on a topic of your choice, due 9 days at 5 pm on the Friday after your presentation week [worth 15%].
- **[30%] Paper/project #4: Food memoir.** A creative project that may build on your Food and Me reflection, where you can take any number of approaches: to share a brief cookbook of family meals where you explain the meaning and history behind the recipes, how food has figured in centrally to your personal and/or work lives, etc. Approximately 12 pages in length. We'll brainstorm more ideas as a class. Due at 5 pm on Monday, December 19.

Grace Period

You have 4 grace period days that you can use, however you like, across all 4 papers (excluding the Canvas reflections). You can use these days to submit assignments late without penalty. Please take advantage of these if you need. Except for extreme circumstances, extensions will not be given on written assignments. You don't need to let me know in advance that you're using the grace period for an assignment, but please do note this when you submit the assignment. You're responsible for keeping track of how many grace days you have.

Academic Honesty

Our course will abide strictly by the guidelines laid out in the Tufts Statement of Academic Integrity, [available at this link](#).

A comprehensive review of university policies is [available at this link](#). Students are expected to follow all student responsibilities and to be aware of what constitutes academic integrity. This requires you to cite appropriately, understand what constitutes plagiarism, and consult me before submitting the same paper for this class and another (past or current) class. Possible violations of the policies outlined in the Statement of Academic Honesty will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Student Accessibility

Please reach out to me if you have any accommodations.

Contacting Freeden

Feel free to email me but check first if the information you need is on this syllabus.

Resources

Basic Needs Security

I urge you to contact the Office of Student Success and Advising, your academic dean, or another campus official you trust, if you're having difficulty securing stable housing and sufficient food to eat, and especially if these difficulties are interfering with your academic performance. Please also feel free to reach out to me if I can help secure resources or put you in touch with others who can help.

Canvas

Our class relies heavily on Canvas, so make sure [you can access our course page](#) and are familiar with how it works.

Office Hours

You're welcome to stop by to talk about the class, school, or whatever else. The time will be more productive if you come prepared with specific concerns and questions. For these virtual office hours, you're encouraged to stop by with a classmate or in a small group; but the entire group has to agree before one person (and only one person has to) sign up. [You can sign up on Calendly](#). Please cancel immediately if you can't make it so someone else can sign up. Send me an email if you can't make my scheduled hours so we can find another time to meet.

Annotating

This is the process of engaging actively with a text by marking it up. Use whatever annotation system works best for you. A helpful online annotation guide [is available here](#).

Writing

There are many excellent writing resources available. As a general rule, I won't read drafts of written assignments. However, I'm happy to discuss outlines or written brainstorming in office hours, if you send me these in advance. Check out Purdue University's excellent [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#), which covers all dimensions of writing. It has a great overview of ASA formatting and style, which you should use for papers in this class.

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein have excellent suggestions for writers. Check out their [templates for basic rhetorical devices in writing](#).

Citing and Referencing

Use the [American Sociological Association's style](#) guide with your papers.

The next four items were shared by the Deans of Academic Advising and Undergraduate Studies and applies to our course:

In-Person Classroom Health and Safety Policy

Tufts is not currently mandating mask-wearing in the classroom. I'll let you know if I'll be wearing a mask, and others should feel free to do so as well. We cannot know everyone's personal or familial health situations, so please take the steps you need to feel comfortable in an in-person setting. Should the university's masking requirements change, we will update our practices as well. Here is the link to the current Tufts COVID policy: [Healthy@Tufts | Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Tufts University values the diversity of our students, staff, and faculty and recognizes the important contribution each student makes to our unique community. Tufts is committed to providing equal access and support to all qualified students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may fully participate in the Tufts experience. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, please contact the StAAR Center (formerly Student Accessibility Services) at StaarCenter@tufts.edu or 617-627-4539 to make an appointment with an accessibility representative to determine appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

Academic Support at the StAAR Center

The StAAR Center (formerly the Academic Resource Center and Student Accessibility Services) offers a variety of resources to all students (both undergraduate and graduate) in the Schools of Arts and Science, Engineering, the SMFA and Fletcher; services are free to all enrolled students. Students may make an appointment to work on any writing-related project or assignment, attend subject tutoring in a variety of disciplines, or meet with an academic coach to hone fundamental academic skills like time management or overcoming procrastination. Students can make an appointment for any of these services by [visiting the StAAR website](#).

Student Support, including Mental Health

As a student, there may be times when personal stressors or difficulties interfere with your academic performance or well-being. The [Dean of Student Affairs Office](#) offers support and care to undergraduates and graduate students who are experiencing difficulties, and can also aid faculty in their work with students. In addition, through Tufts' [Counseling and Mental Health Services](#) (CMHS) students can access mental health support 24/7, and they can provide information on additional resources. CMHS also provides confidential consultation, brief counseling, and urgent care at no cost for all Tufts undergraduates as

well as for graduate students who have paid the student health fee. To make an appointment, call 617-627-3360. Please [visit the CMHS website](#) to learn more about their services and resources.

Schedule

| DATE | AGENDA | ASSIGNED MATERIALS |
|--------|---|---|
| W 9-7 | <i>No class</i> | -- |
| M 9/12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome! ▪ Review syllabus and expectations ▪ Get oriented and excited ▪ Discuss Canvas reflections assignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Michelle Zauner, “Love, Loss, and Kimchi,” from <i>Glamour</i> magazine (2016) ▪ Watch this video of Maangchi showing you how to cook red cabbage kimchi |
| W 9/14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ubiquitous foods: White bread ▪ Discuss Paper #1, “Food and Me,” due F 9/23 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the syllabus carefully. ▪ Aaron Bobrow-Strain, <i>White Bread</i> (2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preface ○ Introduction, “Bread and Power” ○ Ch. 1, “Untouched by Human Hands” ○ Ch. 2, “The Invention of Sliced Bread” |
| M 9/19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ubiquitous foods: White bread | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aaron Bobrow-Strain, <i>White Bread</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch. 3, “The Staff of Death” ○ Ch. 5, “White Bread Imperialism” ○ Ch. 6, “How White Bread Became White Trash” |
| W 9/21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food, gender, and media: the celebrity chef ▪ Discuss Paper #2, Gender and the FX show <i>The Bear</i>, due F 10/14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gwen Hyman, “The Taste of Fame” (2008) ▪ Gordon Ramsay’s Kitchen Nightmares episode on the North End’s La Galleria 33 (2012) |

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| F 9/23 | No class | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Paper 1: “Food and Me,” due electronically at 5 pm (grace period in effect)</u> |
| M 9/26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food, gender, and the media: Foods for dudes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emily Contois, <i>Diners, Dudes, and Diets</i> (2020) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preface ○ Introduction, “Gender, Consumption, and the Great Recession Era of Corporate Food Marketing” ○ Ch. 1, “Crafting Dude Food Media” ○ Ch. 3, “Producing Foods for Dudes” |
| W 9/28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food, gender, and the media: the dude chef | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emily Contois, <i>Diners, Dudes, and Diets</i> (2020) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch. 2, “Creating a Dude Chef” ○ Conclusion, “Dude, What Happened?” ▪ “Guy Fieri Makes Trash Can Nachos,” Video on Live with Kelly and Ryan (2018) |
| M 10/3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Race, class, and the American South: The poor and homeless | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BET video, “Heart of the City: Dying to Eat in Jackson” (2009) ▪ Joseph Ewoodzie, Jr., <i>Getting Something to Eat in Jackson</i> (2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch. 15, “Studying Food, Race, and the South” (make sure to read this first) ○ Ch. 1, “Getting Something to Eat” ○ Ch. 1, “Soul Food and Jackson” ○ Ch. 3, “Smack” ○ Ch. 8, “Ms. Bea” |
| W 10/5 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joseph Ewoodzie, Jr., <i>Getting Something to Eat in Jackson</i> (2021) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Race, class, and the American South: The middle and upper-middle classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch. 9, “Davis Family—Lumpkins BBQ” ○ Ch. 10, “Davis Family—Cooking with Ava” ○ Ch. 12, “Jonathan” ○ Ch. 13, “Dorian, Adrienne, and Othor” |
| M 10/10 | <i>No Class: Indigenous People’s Day</i> | -- |
| W 10/12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Race, class, and the American South: Personal reflections ▪ <u>Visit from Dr. Joseph Ewoodzie, Jr.</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Our Two Cents” symposium in <i>Sociology of Race and Ethnicity on Getting Something to Eat in Jackson</i> (2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Freeden Blume Oeur, “Introduction” ○ Letisha Brown “Food as Soul and Survival” ○ Bobby Smith II, “Reading Ms. Bea’s Food Voice” ○ Jayson Porter, “These are the Paths We Take” ○ Catarina Passidomo, “(Un)Docile Bodies” ○ Joseph Ewoodzie, Jr. “The Foods of Black Folks: A Reply” |
| F 10/14 | <i>No Class</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Paper #2: <i>The Bear</i>, due electronically at 5 pm (grace period in effect)</u> |
| M 10/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fair trade: coffee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Connected by Coffee</i> documentary (2014) |
| W 10/19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fair trade: chocolate ▪ <u>Class private tour of the Taza Chocolate Factory, 561 Windsor St., Somerville, 11 am-noon</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>El Cacao</i> documentary (2015) ▪ Michelle Aguilar, <i>El Cacao</i> Study Guide |
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| M 10/24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group facilitation #1: How young people eat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amy Best, <i>Fast Food Kids</i> (2017) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction Ch. 1, "The Family Meal" Ch. 2, "The Cafeteria as Great Equalizer" |
| W 10/26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group facilitation #1: How young people eat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amy Best, <i>Fast Food Kids</i> (2017) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 3, "The Cafeteria as Youth Space" Ch. 5, "I'm Lovin' It" |
| M 10/31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group facilitation #2: "Ethnic" food and colonialism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Imperialism Around the World video (2013) René Orquiza, Jr., <i>Taste of Control: Food and the Filipino Colonial Mentality under American Rule</i> (2020) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction Ch. 1, "First Impressions" Ch. 2, "Menus" Ch. 3, "Travel Guides" |
| W 11/2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group facilitation #2: "Ethnic" food and colonialism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> René Orquiza, Jr., <i>Taste of Control: Food and the Filipino Colonial Mentality under American Rule</i> (2020) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 4, "Cookbooks" Ch. 5, "Education" Ch. 6, "Advertisements" |
| F 11/4 | No Class | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Paper #3 due electronically at 5 pm for Group #1 facilitators (grace period in effect). Note that facilitation papers are due 9 days (on a Friday) after the Wednesday of your facilitation.</u> |
| M 11/7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group facilitation #3: Food and carcerality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashanté Reese and Joshua Sbicca, "Food and Carcerality" (2022) Stian Rice, "Divide and Cultivate" |
| W 11/9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group facilitation #3: Food and carcerality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will McKeithen, "Carceral Nutrition" (2022) |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elissa Marek, “Recipes for Resistance and Abolition” (2022) |
| M 11/14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group facilitation #4: Indigenous food sovereignty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rowan White, “Planting Sacred Seeds in a Modern World” (2019) ▪ <i>Other readings TBA</i> |
| W 11/16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group facilitation #4: Indigenous food sovereignty | <i>Readings TBA</i> |
| M 11/21 | <i>Class cancelled</i> | -- |
| W 11/23 | <i>No Class: Thanksgiving break</i> | -- |
| M 11/28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group facilitation #5: Craft beer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nathaniel Chapman and David Brunσμα, <i>Beer and Racism</i> (2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch. 1, “Brewing Up Race” ○ Ch. 3, “The Making of the (White) Craft Beer Industry” |
| W 11/30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group facilitation #5: Craft beer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nathaniel Chapman and David Brunσμα, <i>Beer and Racism</i> (2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ch. 6, “Gentrification and the Making of Craft Beer White Spaces” ○ Ch. 7, “#WeAreCraftBeer” |
| M 12/5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food and memoir ▪ Open topics | <i>Readings TBA</i> |
| W 12/7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food and memoir ▪ Open topics | <i>Readings TBA</i> |
| M 12/12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wrapping up: final thoughts and celebrating the end of the semester ▪ Last class | -- |

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| M 12/19 | <i>No Class</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>Paper #4 due electronically at 5 pm (grace period in effect)</u> |
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