

**CULTURAL POLITICS OF FOOD AND EATING (4CP3)  
Fall Term 2020**

**Instructor:** Kee Howe Yong

**Email:** yongk@mcmaster.ca

**Lecture:** Mon. 11:30 a.m. – 2: 20 p.m.  
Online virtual classroom

**Office:** Virtual office

**Office Hours:** Mon. 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. or by  
appointment – Online virtual classroom

*We will be using Zoom platform for this course. Lecture seminars and office hour will go through Zoom. Access to recorded lectures will be posted on Avenue To Learn*

**Course Description and Objectives**

The study of food parallels the birth of many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Food is not just about eating, it is a medium that illuminates a wide range of practices – of marriages, exchange theory, religion, conquest, and so on. For example, the impact of colonialism and migration - often forced-migration - has brought about exchange of food: the import of staple products and other food stuffs from the colonized to the colonizing countries and vice versa. Rather than focusing on the topic of food as a general subject, we will concentrate on the relationship of food onto a complex field of relationships, expectations, and choices that are contested, negotiated, and often unequal. In our study of the transformations in food production and consumption, we will examine the passage of “new world” foods into Europe and Asia, the rise of commercial agriculture, the advent of fast food culture, and alternative food movements.

**Course Policy**

All readings must be completed before the week in which the given topic(s) is being discussed. Class attendance and active participation is part of the grade. Students who are absent more than two times will have a point taken off their final grade. Latecomers may, at the discretion of the instructor, incur an official absence. Students must accept the responsibility to respect the ethical standards in meeting their academic assignments and are encouraged to be active co-producers of knowledge. Students will hand in four one-page summaries, a midterm and final essay. Essay questions will be distributed in advance. Late essays will only be accepted in extenuating circumstances.

**Weekly discussions**

Students should be prepared to participate in class discussion during the entire term. In addition, each student will be responsible for one presentation from the assigned book chapters or journal articles and leading subsequent class discussion. Presentations must outline the main arguments in the text, provide some supporting examples for these arguments from the text and beyond.

**Course Evaluation – Overview**

Attendance, participation, discussions	20%
Four one-page summaries	10%
Midterm essay	30%

Final essay

40%

### **Four one-page summary, Midterm, and Final essays**

Students are also expected to hand four one-page summary, a mid-term and final essay. The one-page summary is a brief description of an article/chapter. Essay questions for the midterm and final essays (and their due dates) will be distributed in advance. Written essays must be handed in on the assigned due date. Late essays will only be accepted in extenuating circumstances.

*You may hand in any of your one-page summary anytime during the course of the semester, so long as I have all of four of them by December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The due dates for your midterm and final essays are October 30<sup>th</sup> and December 11<sup>th</sup> respectively.*

### **Instructor Responsibilities**

To present class material in clearly understandable language, to assist students in thinking critically about concepts and ideas, to respect student opinion and value each student's contributions equally, and to give feedback on student progress early and often; to be accessible during office hours, and to return all course materials, graded, in a timely fashion.

### **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

*All reading materials, including my weekly lecture notes are accessible on Avenue to Learn. On Avenue, go to "Content," then "Reading Materials," and "e-Reserves" for reading materials. On Avenue, go to "Content," then "Lecture Notes" for my weekly lecture notes.*

**Week 1 - Sept. 14:** Introduction to the course

#### **Historical-anthropological study of food.**

In this section we will concentrate on one of the first cash crops in modern history, sugar. How did sugar transform not only the British societies and Europe, but also the world?

**Week 2 - Sept. 21:**

Text: Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books.

- Chapter Two
- Chapter Three

**Week 3 - Sept. 28: Social History of Eating.**

Do all societies feel the same way about food: what it means to eat; how eating is being human; and what is eating properly? This section touches on food history, and by extension, about social history.

Text: Mintz, Sidney. 1996. *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Chapter Two

- Chapter Three

**Week 4 – Oct. 5:** Food is not just about eating; it is also about economics and politics. For example, was the genocide in Rwanda a politicized ethnic issue or was the political economy of coffee part of the reasons?

- Robbins, Richard. 2013. Chapter 6: “Hunger, Poverty, and Economic Development.” In *The Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism* (6<sup>th</sup> Edition). Allyn and Bacon Publishing Inc.
- Kamola, Isaac. 2007. The Global Coffee Economy and the Production of Genocide in Rwanda. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28(3): 571-592

**Week 5 – Oct. 12: Mid-term Recess**

**Week 6 - Oct. 19: Economics and Politics of Food.**

Text: Roberts, Ian. 2010. *The Energy Glut: The Politics of Fatness in an Overheating World*. London: Zed Books.

- Chapter Two
- Chapter Four

**Week 7 - Oct. 26:**

Text: James Watson and Melissa Caldwell (eds.). 2005. *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*. Ma: Blackwell Publishing.

- Watson, James. 2005. “China’s Big Mac Attack.” In *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*. Edited by James Watson and Melissa Caldwell, pp. 70-79. MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Roseberry, William. 2005. “The Rise of Yuppie Coffees and the Reimagination of Class in the United States.” In *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*. Edited by James Watson and Melissa Caldwell, pp. 122-143. MA: Blackwell Publishing.

**Week 8 – Nov. 2:** What are the social and cultural meanings of eating together, or to word it slightly differently, of gathering around the table?

- Bahloul, Joëlle. 2016. Jewish Foods at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century. In *The Handbook of Food and Anthropology*. Edited by Jakob Klein and James Watson, pp. 94-114. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- West, Harry. 2016. Artisanal Foods and the Cultural Economy: Perspectives on Craft, Heritage, Authenticity and Reconnection. In *The Handbook of Food and Anthropology*. Edited by Jakob Klein and James Watson. Bloomsbury Publishing.

➤ **MIDTERM ESSAY due (30% of total grade)**

**Midterm Essays are to be handed in as a Microsoft Word document via email.**

**Week 9 – Nov. 9: Fair or Free Trade?**

- Jaffe, Daniel. 2007. Chapter One: A Movement or a Market? In *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival*. Berkeley: UC Press.
- Poppendieck, Janet. 2013. “Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality.” In *Food and Culture: A Reader* (Third Edition). Edited by Counihan, Carole and Penny Van Esterik, pp. 563-571. New York, Routledge.

**Week 10 - Nov. 16: Food and Gentrification**

- Myers, Justin Sean, Prita Lal, and Sofya Aptekar. 2019. “Community Gardens and Gentrification in New York City: The Uneven Politics of Facilitation, Accommodation, and Resistance. In *A Recipe for Gentrification: Food, Power, and Resistance in the City*. Edited by Allison Hope Alkon, Yuki Kato, and Joshua Sbicca. New York: New York University Press.
- Hyde, Zachary. 2019. ““Ethical” Gentrification as a Preemptive Strategy: Social Enterprise, Restaurants, and Resistance in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.” In *A Recipe for Gentrification: Food, Power, and Resistance in the City*. Edited by Allison Hope Alkon, Yuki Kato, and Joshua Sbicca. New York: New York University Press.

**Week 11 - Nov. 23: Food and Culture**

- Allison, Anne. 2013. Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus. In *Food and Culture: A Reader* (Third Edition). Edited by Counihan, Carole and Penny Van Esterik, pp. 154-172. New York, Routledge.
- Heldke, Lisa. 2013. Let’s Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism. In *Food and Culture: A Reader* (Third Edition). Edited by Counihan, Carole and Penny Van Esterik, pp. 394-408. New York, Routledge.

**Week 12 - Nov. 30: Local Food and Current Trend**

- DeLind, Laura. 2011. Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? *Agric Hum Values* 28: 273-283 (DOI 10.1007/s10460-010-9263-0)
- Mount, Phil. 2011. Growing local food: scale, and local food systems governance. *Agric Hum Values* (DOI 10.1007/s10460-011-9331-0)

**Week 13 - Dec. 7:**

- Specter, Michael. 2014. Seeds of Doubt: An Activist’s Controversial Crusade Against Genetically Modified Crops. *The New Yorker* (August 25): 46-57 (**placed on A2L**)
- Goodman, Michael et. al. 2010. Ethical foodscapes?: premises, promises, and possibilities. *Environment and Planning A*. 42: 1782-96.

**Week 14: Dec. 14:**

➤ **FINAL ESSAY DUE (40% of final grade)**

**Final essays are to be handed in as a Microsoft Word document via email.**

**Grades**

Based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

**Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

*Some courses may* use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For

more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Courses with an On-Line Element**

**Some courses may** use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Online Proctoring**

**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work**

**McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF):** In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office *normally within 10 working days* of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

*[latest update August 4, 2020]*