

# Cooking Culture and Cannibalism

Lang College, Fall 2006

LCST 4015A

Dominic Pettman

## Course Description:

This course explores the essential role that food plays in our personal and public lives. Beginning with the phrase, “you are what you eat,” the syllabus offers a cultural history of gastronomy, questioning the assumptions behind this expression, as well as tracing the various ways in which food functions as an open category, deployed in specifically coded ways (for instance, via gender, nation, ethnicity, etc.). Seminars begin with a focus on different culinary taboos, unpacking the cultural logic behind what “we” can eat, and what we *can't* eat. Then, having addressing metaphors of incorporation and consumption, they move to the primarily colonial trope of cannibalism, in order to ask what happens when such a fraught figure is transplanted into the contemporary metropolis. The notion of food as a cultural medium returns students full circle to the question of collective identity.

## Required Texts:

John Lanchester, *The Debt to Pleasure*

James Watson & Melissa Caldwell, *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating*

Jean-Louis Flandrin, et al (eds), *Food: A Culinary History*

Bookstore: These titles have been ordered for you and are available at Bluestockings Books. {172 Allen Street between Stanton and Rivington :: 212.777.6028}. A representative from the store will bring the text book to our first class, so this is the most convenient time to buy it.

All other readings are available online through Blackboard. Free printing is available from the Academic Computing Center, on 13<sup>th</sup> St., between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.

## Additional Cost:

We are also going to dinner during the penultimate class. Please be aware that this will cost around \$15 (no more than \$20).

## Course Requirements/Assessment:

1. Your ability to participate depends on coming to class with the readings done and notes taken. Interaction with peers and meaningful discussion is necessary in order for you to get the full benefit of the course.
2. Class Presentation 25%
3. Midterm paper (2,000-2,500 words): 25%, due October 19.
4. Final research paper (4,000-5,000): 50%, due December 21.

*Hardcopies only. No emailed papers, please.* Lateness will be reflected in a lower final grade.

## SYLLABUS

### Week 1 (Sep 7): Introduction

1. Discussion: Most memorable meals + Are you really what you eat?

### Week 2 (Sep 14): Prescriptions and Prohibitions

1. Douglas, Mary, "The Abominations of Leviticus" in *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York and London: Routledge, 2006.
2. Douglas, Mary, "Deciphering a Meal," in *Implicit Meanings: Selected Essays in Anthropology*. New York and London: Routledge, 1999.
3. Soler, Jean, "Biblical Reasons: The Dietary Rules of the Ancient Hebrews" in Flandrin and Montanari (eds.), *Food: A Culinary History*. New York and London, 1999.
4. Garnsey, Peter, "Otherness" and "Forbidden Foods" in *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

### Week 3 (Sep 21): Civilized Meals

1. Montanari, Massimo, "Food Systems and Models of Civilization" in Flandrin and Montanari.
2. Dupont, Florence, "The Grammar of Roman Dining" in Flandrin and Montanari
3. Cortonesi, Alfio, "Self-Sufficiency and the Market: Rural and Urban Diet in the Middle Ages" in Flandrin and Montanari.
4. Greico, Allen, "Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy" in Flandrin and Montanari.
5. Schivelbusch, Wolfgang, "Chocolate, Catholicism, Ancien Regime" in *Tastes of Paradise: A Social History of Spices, Stimulants, and Intoxicants*. New York: Pantheon, 1992.

### Week 4 (Sep 28): Digesting Alterity

1. Péhaut, Yves, "The Invasion of Foreign Foods" in Flandrin and Montanari.
2. Rosenberger, Bernard, "Arab Cuisine and Its Contribution to European Culture" in Flandrin and Montanari.
3. Longo, Ordoni, "The Food of Others" in Flandrin and Montanari.
4. Barthes, Roland, "Water and Flake," "Chopsticks," and "Food Decentered," in *The Empire of Signs*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.
5. Itami, Juzo *Tampopo* (film)

### Week 5 (Oct 5): A Matter of Taste

1. Bell, David & Gill Valentine, "Body," and "Community" in *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997.
2. Certeau, Michel de, "Bread and Wine," "The Nourishing Arts," and "Plat du Jour" in *The Practice of Everyday Life, Part Two: Living and Cooking*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

3. *Tupperware* (film)

### **Week 6 (Oct 12): What's at Steak?**

1. Ritvo, Harriet, "Mad Cow Mysteries" in Watson and Caldwell (eds), *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.
2. Adams, Carol, "The Patriarchal Texts of Meat," in *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.
3. George, Kathryn, "A Feminist Argument Against Ethical Vegetarianism" in *Animal, Vegetable, or Woman? : A Feminist Critique of Ethical Vegetarianism*. Albany, NY, State University of New York Press.
4. Tisdale, Sallie, "Meat" in *A Slice of Life: Contemporary Writers on Food*, edited by Bonnie Maranca, New York: Overlook Duckworth, 2003.
5. *They Are Made of Meat* (film) + The Meatrix.com

### **Week 7 (Oct 19): Innovations and Ennervations**

1. Marinetti, F. T., (Extracts), *The Futurist Cookbook*, Edited by Lesley Chamberlain. San Francisco: Bedford Arts, 1989.
2. Laudan, Rachel, "A Plea for Culinary Modernism: Why We Should Love Modern, Fast, Processed Food" in *A Slice of Life: Contemporary Writers on Food*, edited by Bonnie Maranca, New York: Overlook Duckworth, 2003.
3. Adria, Ferran, *E Bulli* (film) + *The Future of Food* (film)

### **\*\*Mid-Term Paper Due October 19\*\***

### **Week 8 (Oct 26): Gastronomic Globalization**

1. Bester, Theodor, "How Sushi Went Global" in Watson and Caldwell
2. Watson, James, "China's Big Mac Attack" Watson and Caldwell
3. Yan, Yunxiang "Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald's in Beijing" Watson and Caldwell
4. *Darwin's Nightmare* (film) or *Our Daily Bread* (film)

### **Week 9 (Nov 2): Consuming Fictions**

1. Lanchester, John *The Debt to Pleasure*. London and New York: Picador, 2000
2. Stacy, Michelle, "A New (and Old) Way of Eating: Rediscovering Pleasure" in *Consumed: Why Americans Love, Hate and Fear Food*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.

### **Week 10 (Nov 9): Binge and Purge**

1. Atwood, Margaret, *The Edible Woman* (extract)
2. Goody, Jack, "Food, Family and Feminism," in *Food and Love: A Cultural History of East and West*. New York and London: Verso, 1998.

3. Counihan, Carole, "An Anthropological View of Western Women's Prodigious Fasting" and "What Does It Mean To Be Fat, Thin, and Female in the United States?" in *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*. Harwood: 1998.
4. Walton, Priscilla, "Diet Disorders" in *Our Cannibals, Ourselves*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
5. *Daisies* (film)

### **Week 11 (Nov 16): Feast and Famine**

1. Kafka, Franz, "A Hunger Artist," 1924  
<http://www.mala.bc.ca/~Johnstoi/kafka/hungerartist.htm>
2. Brownell, Susan "Food, Hunger, and the State" in Watson and Caldwell
3. Paarlberg, Robert, "The Global Food Fight" in Watson and Caldwell
4. Bordo, Susan, "Hunger as Ideology" in *Eating Culture* (Scapp and Seitz, eds), Albany: State University Press, 1998.
5. McIntosh, Alex, "The Family Meal and Its Significance in Global Times," in Raymond Grew (ed.), *Food in Global History* (Boulder, CO, 1999)
6. *La Grande Bouffe* (film)

### **\*\*Week 12 (Nov 23): Thanksgiving: No Classes This Week\*\***

### **Week 13 (Nov 30): Incorporations**

1. hooks, bell, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance" in *Eating Culture* (Scapp and Seitz, eds), Albany: State University Press, 1998.
2. Montaigne, "On Cannibals" in *Essays*. London: Penguin, 2004
3. Arens, William, "Rethinking Anthropophagy," in Barker, F., P. Hulme, et al. *Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, Cambridge University Press. 1998
4. Kilgour, Maggie. "The Function of Cannibalism at the Present Time," in Barker, F., P. Hulme, et al. *Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
5. *Soylent Green* (film) + *Delicatessan* (film)

### **Week 14 (Dec 7): People Who Eat People**

1. Swift, Jonathon, "A Modest Proposal", 1729.  
<http://art-bin.com/art/omodest.html>
2. King, Stephen, "Survivor Type" in *Skeleton Crew*. 1985.
3. Sanday, Peggy Reeves, "Cannibalism Cross-Culturally" and "Raw Women and Cooked Men: Fijian Cannibalism in the Nineteenth Century" in *Divine hunger : cannibalism as a cultural system*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1986.
4. Scott, Riddley, *Hannibal* (film) + *Trouble Every Day* (film) + *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (film)

### **Week 15 (Dec 14): Our First and Last Supper**

\*Big Onion culinary walking tour of Lower East Side, followed by a Kosher Vegan meal.

## Week 16: (Dec 21): Review

1. Lingis, Alphonso, "Appetite" in *Eating Culture* (Scapp and Seitz, eds), Albany: State University Press, 1998.
2. Stacy, Michelle, "A Pinch of Anxiety, A Dash of Sin: *Fin de Siecle* Eating in America," in *Consumed: Why Americans Love, Hate and Fear Food*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
3. Finkelstein, Joanne, "Dining Out: The Hyperreality of Appetite" in *Eating Culture* (Scapp and Seitz, eds), Albany: State University Press, 1998.

## **\*\*Final Papers due: Dec 21\*\***

Please Note: You are also encouraged to read the following before the end of the course:

1. Bartolovich, Crystal, "Consumerism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Cannibalism" in Barker, F., P. Hulme, et al. *Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
2. Dwyer, Kevin, "Alimentary Delinquency in Cinema" in *Eating Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Food* (Doring et al, eds). Heidelberg: Universitatsverlag, 2003.
3. Fox, William. "An Address to the People of Great Britain, On the Utility of Refraining From the Use of West India Sugar and Rum - 1791," in *Radical Food: The Culture and Politics of Eating and Drinking*, Timothy Morton (ed.). New York and London: Routledge, 2000.
4. Obeyesekere, Gananath, "Cannibal Feasts in Nineteenth-Century Fiji: Seaman's Yarns and the Ethnographic Imagination," in Barker, F., P. Hulme, et al. *Cannibalism and the colonial world*. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
5. Perles, Catherine, "Prehistoric Eating Strategies" in Flandrin and Montanari.
6. Weiss, Allen S., "Edible Architecture, Cannibal Architecture" in *Eating Culture* (Scapp and Seitz, eds), Albany: State University Press, 1998.

Available via E-Reserves and your text books.

## Office Hours and Contact Information

Tuesdays, 2-4

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