**HIS 263/W**

**The Global History of Food**

Meeting Times: TR 12:30–145

Location: Lattimore 210

Instructor:Thomas Fleischman

Office: Rush Rhees 460

Office Hours: Thursdays, 10-12 pm

[thomas.fleischman@rochester.edu](mailto:thomas.fleischman@rochester.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Carrie Knight

Office Location: Rush Rhees Great Hall

Office Hours: Mondays, 11-1pm

[cknight3@ur.rochester.edu](mailto:cknight3@ur.rochester.edu)

This seminar examines the shifting relationship between people, food, and the environment that ties them together. It asks how have distance and space between the sites of production and consumption affected the economic and social relations of food? How has geography influenced the types of food people eat? How do views of scarcity and plenty shape approaches to farming? What is the role of governments and markets in agriculture? How does food refract and transform social divisions, cultural attitudes, and daily life? Topics include rural development; subsistence gardening; famine; histories of sugar, corn, pork, fish, whales, ice cream, and anything else that fits on a dinner plate.

We will look at historical examples from the early modern era to the present day, in Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia. Topics to discuss include the legacy of the plants and animals that crossed oceans during the Columbian Exchange (potatoes, corn, cattle, pigs); the social transformation of hunting from livelihood to sport; the origins of industrial agriculture, the technologies and knowledge that re-produce it, and the dramatic change it has wrought on the myriad organisms and ecosystems of the world; we will look to the animals of the sea, like Cod, Salmon, and Whales for their role in advancing European settlement, the evolution of aquaculture, and as a source of energy at the dawn of the Industrial Era. Thematically, this course addresses several overarching questions. How have distance and space between the sites of production and consumption affected the cultural, economic, and social relations of food? How has geography influenced the types of food people eat? How do views of scarcity and plenty shape approaches to farming? What is the role of government and markets in agriculture? How does food refract and transform social divisions, cultural attitudes, and daily life?

**Required Texts:**  
Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World*

Michelle DuPuis, *Nature’s Most Perfect Food*

Courtney Fullilove, *The Profit of the Earth*

Julie Guthman, *Weighing In*

Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*

*Additional Texts:* I will provide all other readings in the syllabus as electronic documents. They will be available via the course Blackboard page.

**Guidelines and Grading Policy**

**Participation and Attendance:** Complete all assigned readings, regularly attend class and participate in discussion. Since there is no textbook for this course, your learning depends upon your participation. **No student with five absences from class will pass the course**. *Only in rare circumstances—illness, family emergency—may you miss class, and then I will need some sort of documentation*. If you plan on missing a class, please notify me in any case. These policies take effect with the first meeting.

**Weekly Responses and Google Docs:** This class is intended to help you hone your skills to think, critique, and argue about historical ideas. Therefore, you will be required to post a short (approximately 250 words) reaction to the readings, once a week. You may choose the class period for which you post—that means, either Tuesday or Thursday. **The posting is due by 10pm, the night before class.** These posts are a critical part of your participation grade, but also provide an alternative for those students more reluctant to speak in class. The blog posts are a part of your participation grade.

This is not a paper, and it won’t be graded as a paper. It’s a way to make you think about the reading before you come to class, to get your intellectual juices flowing, and to practice writing. In each reading response, you should think about the argument of what you have just read and assess its success. These papers will be graded check-plus (10/10), check (9/10), or check-minus (8/10). **This means that the only way you can get less than an 8 out of the 10 possible points in this section is by failing to turn in your reading responses.** Note that because the point of the reading response is to think about the readings before class, late reading responses will not be accepted.

**Food Journal:** Every two weeks you are required to write an entry in your food journal about any topic related to food. Possible topics include a reflection on the things you’ve eaten that week, a particular dish, food you purchased at a store, a meal in a restaurant, or even a reaction to something you read online. It’s really up to you. All I ask is that you try and relate your entry to topics or themes we have discussed in class. I will collect the food journal every week to grade your entries and will not share what you’ve written unless you give me permission. You can purchase a **“Composition Notebook”** at the Barnes and Noble with the required texts. Pick any cover/color/design you like. You will turn the journal in on the weeks designated on the syllabus as “Food Journal.”

**Reaction Papers**: write two reaction papers (5 pages each), based on an assigned reading we’ve already discussed. While the focus should be on just one of the texts, you may bring in other readings that we’ve read to your discussion. I will provide a writing prompt a week before each due date.

**Final Assignment for non “W” Students: “Feast of Ages:”**

At the end of the semester, we will hold a “feast of ages.” Each one of you will have to make one dish of your choice. The challenge will be, 1.) to cook the food, and 2.) create an annotate recipe to accompany the meal. This means you will have to write a short description of each ingredient’s origins, how it wound up in our modern food system, and the likely number and types of people whose labor produced it. After the annotation, provide an overview of the dish’s cultural origins, who started making it first, when, and the extent to which it has been influence by other cultures, economic systems, and how it has changed over time.

**You will have to give a short 5-minute presentation** on the recipe in the last week of class, and then **turn in an organized, coherent piece of writing** about your dish, with attending images, figures, or other information as necessary.

**Final Assignment for “W” students: Research Paper.** Write a research paper (3,000-4,000 word) on any food of your choosing. It must be submitted as a first draft before undergoing a final round of revision.

**Formatting** : you are expected to master the citation style that is common among historians. This style is known as Chicago Style, and is detailed in the volume by Kate Turabian.

*The guide is available in the library and online at* <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

**Formatting:** All papers must be submitted via Google Docs, and **saved with your last name first, e.g. “Fleischman Pork Paper.docx.”** Late papers lose 1/3 of a grade per day. E.g., a B paper submitted the morning after it was due, will receive a B-. **Papers more than 72 hours late will receive an F.**

**Grading Distribution:**

Participation/Attendance 10%

Reading Responses 15%

Food Journal 15%

Short Paper 1 15%

Short Paper 2 15%

**Final Project**

*For Non-“W” Students*

Annotated Recipe/Feast Dish 30%

*For “W” Students Only*

Research Paper First Draft 10%

Research Paper Final Draft 20%

**Computers** in class are allowed, indeed will be necessary for working with the GoogleDocs. You may enter new ideas/thematic highlights/new questions etc. during class.

A word of caution about computers: note taking is a matter of intellectual engagement, not transcribing lectures. To this end, a pen and paper are surprisingly useful (and ancient) technologies that will help you discern what is and isn’t worth writing down. But more than that, computers and screens can create all kinds of visual and aural pollution in the classroom. Not only is the temptation of the internet great for anyone engaging in a serious idea or thought, but the screens themselves will occupy the attention of your peers around you. So if you can, use them sparingly, and with restrain yourself from going online.

**Email:** I am available via email for questions or concerns about the class. There are types of questions, however, that I don’t generally answer. If you write an email telling me you are going to miss class, I will take note, but won’t write back. If you write with a question about an assignment or reading, and the answer is on the syllabus or assignment sheet, I will not write back. Otherwise I do my best to keep up with your questions, although occasionally an email slips through the cracks. If you don’t hear back within a few days, try me again or come up to me after class.

**Academic honesty**: Intellectual integrity is the University’s most fundamental commitment. Plagiarism of any kind will be penalized to the fullest possible extent. There is no mitigating circumstance, ever, for plagiarism. Please visit the University’s official policy on academic honesty here, <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/>.

Whenever you draw upon somebody else’s words *or ideas* to make a point, give them credit in a footnote. The most common causes of plagiarism are not deliberate dishonesty. Often it is careless note-taking. Make sure that in your notes you distinguish clearly your thoughts on the reading and the words you have copied from a secondary source. Waiting too long to do the research and the stress and confusion that may result from that rush to finish may produce mistakes that in public represent the most serious violation of academic values. You are, therefore, strongly encouraged to start assignments well in advance of the deadline.

**Disability Services:**

The University offers a number of accommodations for students in need of disability services, including special testing locations, extra time, and help with note taking. For a full list of services, please visit <https://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/faculty/accommodations-defined.html> and feel free to contact me with additional questions or requests.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1 – What is Food History**

August 30 - Introductions

**Week 2 - Maize**

September 4 – James C. McCann, *Maize and Grace*, Ch. 1-2, 4

September 6 – Michael Pollan, *Omnivore’s Dilemma*, Excerpts

**Week 3 – Sugar**

September 11 – \*Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, Chapter 1-2.

*Food Journal*

September 13 – Mintz, Chapter 3

**Week 4 - Rice**

September 18 – Judith Carney, *Black Rice*, Intro + Ch. 4, pp. 1-8; 107-141

September 20 – Carney, Ch. 5-6, pp. 142-178

**Week 5 – Milk**

September 25 – \*Dupuis, *Nature’s Most Perfect Food,* Ch. 1-4, pp. 3-89

*Food Journal*

September 27 – \*Dupuis, Ch. 5

**Week 6 - Pigs**

October 2 – Claudine Fabre-Vassas, *The Singular Beast,* Intro, Ch. 1+3, pp. 1-44; 89-94

October 4 – Simon Fairlie, *Meat: A Benign Extravagance,* Ch. 1-2; 10, pp. 1-11; 106-118

*First Reaction Paper Due, Sunday, October 7th @1159pm via Google Docs*

**Week 7 - Meat**

October 9 – William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*  “Annihilating Space”, p.

207-259.

*Food Journal*

October 11 – Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory,* Intro, Ch. 5

**Week 8 –**

October 16 – Fall Reading Days/October Break (NO CLASS)

October 18 – \*Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World,* Chapter 1-3, pp. 1-107

**Week 9 – Green Revolution**

October 23 – \*Cullather, Ch.4, 6-7, pp. 108-133; 159-204

*Food Journal*

October 25 - McCann, *Maize and Grace*, Chapter 7, “Breeding SR-52”, pp. 140-174.

**Week 10 – Obesity**

October 30 – \*Julie Guthman, *Weighing In,* Ch. 1-2, pp. 1-45

November 1 – \*Guthman, Ch. 6-8, pp. 116-184

**Week 11 - Cod**

November 6 – John Richards, *The Unending Frontier*, “Cod and the New World Fisheries,”

Paul Greenberg, *Four Fish,* Cod

*Food Journal*

November 8 – Jeffrey Bolster, *The Mortal Sea,* Prologue and Ch. 3, pp. 1-11; 88-120

*Second Reaction Paper Due, Sunday, November 11th @1159pm via Google Docs*

**Week 12 - Salmon + Blubber**

November 13 – Greenberg, *Four Fish,* Salmon

November 15 – Jakobina Arch, *Bringing Whales Ashore*, Intro and Ch. 3 – “Moving Whales from Coasts to Mountains,” pp. 3-22; 79-109

**Week 13 – Pizza**

November 20 – “Ugly Delicious” in class

*Food Journal*

November 22 – **Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 14 - Seeds**

November 27 – \*Courtney Fullilove, *The Profit of the Earth,* Prologue, Ch. 4+6,

pp. 1-12, 99-122, 151-173

November 29 – \*Fullilove, *The Profit of the Earth,* Ch. 7+8, pp. 174-212

*Research Paper First Draft Due, Sunday December 2nd @1159pm via Google Docs*

*(W STUDENTS ONLY)*

**Week 15 - Recipe Conference**

December 4– Day 1

*Food Journal*

December 6 – Day 2

**Week 16 - Feast**

December 11 – Let’s Eat

*Final Papers/Recipes Due on Scheduled Exam Day*