

History BC 2380

Spring 2023 T-Th 1:10-2:25 pm

Professor Deborah Valenze

814 Milstein dvalenze@Barnard.edu

Office hrs: T 3-5 pm and by appt.

TO BE REVISED

The Social and Cultural History of Food in Europe



This course will examine changing patterns of production and consumption of food in Europe from prehistoric to modern times. Our study begins and ends with an examination of food in a global perspective; for most of the semester, we will focus on the cultural context of Europe as a site of modernizing technologies, bodies of knowledge, and patterns of consumption. Students will consider the development of settled agriculture in the history of food; the use of grains, fish, and dairy in diets across Europe; the significance of geographical location, exploration and colonialism; the impact of social stratification and ideologies of taste on food consumption; changing knowledge about health and hygiene; the involvement of the state in food security; changing modes of production of basic food commodities; the place of drink in diet and social life; the development of the science of nutrition; changes in transport and technology in the fostering the rise of consumer culture and commodification; the regulation of food safety; food and social welfare in the twentieth century; mass production of food; and finally, the globalization of food production, dietary norms, and access to markets.

Required books available at Book Culture (W. 112th St.) for purchase:

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History*. (Also available as an e-book through CLIO.)

David Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*. (Also available as an e-book through CLIO.)

Raj Patel, *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System* (2nd ed., 2012).

Course requirements:

- mandatory and alert attendance, participation in class discussions and in-class activities, responsible handling of assignments, 1-page paper proposal (10%).
- two take-home essay exams on February 24 and March 31 (30% each)
- one eight-page paper on *either* the history of a single commodity *or* the impact of technology on food consumption due on May 2nd (30%)

Learning objectives, or what you can expect to learn from taking this course:

- an appreciation for the diversity and complexity of human experience
- a critical understanding of the relationship between past events and modern life
- an ability to conduct close readings of key texts, primary and secondary
- an ability to analyze and interpret historical material
- the skill of responding constructively and critically to the views of others
- the skill of presenting arguments cogently and logically in writing and speaking

The use of laptops in class is conditional. Absolutely no cellphone use of any kind during class. If members of the class are found to be using their laptops inappropriately, we will institute a no-laptop policy. Effective notetaking does tend to enhance performance on exams, but research has shown that these devices significantly diminish the ability to listen and participate in class. Handwritten note-taking can be a more effective way of assimilating what is being said in class.

Please note: throughout the semester, we will be using blocks of time during class for discussion. Questions and comments are also welcome at every class, so please speak up if you need a point elaborated or wish to contribute to what is being discussed.

The dates of following units and reading assignments may change slightly as we progress through the semester. Please make an effort to complete each unit of reading by the day of the last lecture on the topic. Lecture content will overlap with assignments, but it will not duplicate the reading; we will spend time in class synthesizing both bodies of information. Texts marked with *'s will be posted on Canvas.

I. First Foods: From Mother's Milk to Crop Harvesting (January 18, 20)

Required reading:

*Sidney Mintz, "Food and Eating: Some Persisting Questions," in Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton, eds., *Food Nations*, pp. 24-32.

*Richard Wrangham, *Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human* (e-book available through CLIO; these chapters are also available in a Canvas folder): Chap. 4, "When Cooking Began;" Chap. 5, "Brain Foods," pp. 83-127.

A useful timeline for reference (and sometimes assigned reading) throughout the semester <http://foodtimeline.org/>

II. Food in Ancient Times (January 25)

Required reading:

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chap. 1, “Mastering Grain Cookery, 20,000-300 B.C.E.,” pp. 9-55.

*B.D. Shaw, “‘Eaters of Flesh, Drinkers of Milk’: The Ancient Mediterranean Ideology of the Pastoral Nomad,” *Ancient Society*, 13/14 [1982-3]: 5-31.

*Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, eds., *Food: A Culinary History*, Chaps. 7, 8, and 17: “Greek Meals: A Civic Ritual,” “The Culture of the Symposium,” and “Arab Cuisine and Its Contribution to European Culture,” pp. 90-105 and 207-223.

III. The Emergence of a European Food Culture (January 27, February 1, 3)

Required reading:

*Flandrin and Montanari, eds., *Food: A Culinary History*, Part Five, Introduction and Chap. 19, pp. 247-67.

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chap 5, “Christianity Transforms the Cuisines of Europe and the Americas, 100-1650 C.E.,” pp. 166-206.

David Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, Chap. 1, pp. 10-26; Chaps. 4-7, pp. 71-155.

*Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., “New World Foods and Old World Demography,” *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, 165-207.

IV. Country Food and City Food in Early Modern Times (February 8, 10)

Required reading:

David Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, Chap. 3, pp. 49-73.

*Richard Steckel, “Nutritional Status in the Colonial American Economy,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 56, no. 1 (1999), 31-52.

*Jeanette Neeson, “‘Making Freeman of the Slave’,” *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700-1820*, pp. 297-330.

*Emma Spary, “The Place of Coffee,” *Eating the Enlightenment: Food and the Sciences in Paris, 1670-1760*, 96-145.

V. Food and the Human Body: Hygiene, Morality, and the Vegetarian Option in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (February 15, 17)

Required reading:

David Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe*, Chap. 2, “Healthy Food: The Rise and Fall of Dietetics,” pp. 27-48; Chap. 6, “Vegetable Food: The Vegetarian Option,” pp. 115-31.

Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste*, beginning at “Meditation Two: Taste,” to “Meditation Six,” as far as “On Fish”:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5434/pg5434.txt>

*Timothy Morton, ed. *Radical Food: The Culture and Politics of Eating and Drinking, 1790-1820*: Vol. I, Chap. 4: Joseph Ritson, *An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food, as a Moral Duty*, pp. 188-214 only; Chap. 5: Percy Bysshe Shelley, “A Vindication of a Natural Diet,” pp. 274-84; Vol. III, Chap. 11, Thomas Trotter, “A View of the Nervous Temperament,” pp. 576-592 only.

Discussion and Review: February 22
First Take-Home Exam due on February 24
CHANGE TO EARLIER DATE??

VI. Recipe for Revolution: Bread and Potatoes (February 24, March 1)

Required reading:

*Stephen L. Kaplan, *The Bakers of Paris and the Bread Question 1700-1775*: Chap. 1, “Breadways,” pp. 23-60.

Read the Food Timeline on the French Revolution:

<http://www.foodtimeline.org/foodcolonial.html#frenchrevolution>

*Rebecca Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant*, Chap. 4, “Morality, Equality, Hospitality!” pp. 88-118.

*Redcliffe Salaman, “The Potato Famine: Its Causes and Consequences,” *The History and Social Influence of the Potato*, Chap. XVI, pp. 289-317.

*Sébastien Rioux, Chap. 1 “From National to World Food Production” in *The Social Cost of Cheap Food: Labour and the Political Economy of Food Distribution in Britain, 1830 – 1914* (2019). [e-book available through CLIO]

VII. Gender, Food, and Households in the Victorian Age (March 3, 8, 10)

Required reading:

*Mrs. Isabella Beeton, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, digital link through CLIO:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015093176843;view=2up;seq=6>

Please read the Preface, then Chaps. 1, 4, 40-41.

Film: "Babette's Feast" (watch by March 10)

*"A Middle Class Dinner," from *The Woman's Signal* (Dec. 19, 1895).

*Mark Finlay, "Quackery and Cookery: Justus von Liebig's Extract of Meat and the Theory of Nutrition in the Victorian Age," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 66, no. 3 (1992), pp. 404-18.

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 7, "Modern Cuisines: The Expansion of Middling Cuisines, 1810-1920," pp. 248-307.

March 10: Discussion: "Babette's Feast" and gendered food norms of the late nineteenth century

SPRING BREAK

VIII. The Urban Environment and the State: Food in a Modern Grid of Science (March 22, 24, 29)

Required reading:

*Chris Otter, "Civilizing Slaughter: The Development of the British Public Abattoir, 1850-1910," in *Meat, Modernity, and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse*, ed. Paula Young Lee (2008), pp. 89-106.

*Rebecca Woods, "Nature and the Refrigerating Machine: The Politics and Production of Cold in the Nineteenth Century" in *Cryopolitics: Frozen Life in a Melting World* (2017), pp. 89-116 only.

*Sébastien Rioux, Chap. 3 "Street Sellers" in *The Social Cost of Cheap Food: Labour and the Political Economy of Food Distribution in Britain, 1830 – 1914* (2019). [e-book available through CLIO]

IX. Public Interest and the Rights of Citizens (March 31, April 5, 7)

Required reading:

*Derek J. Oddy, "Food Quality in London and the Rise of the Public Analyst," *Food and the City in Europe since 1800*.

*Frank Trentmann, "Bread, Milk, and Democracy: Consumption and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Britain," in *The Politics of Consumption*, eds. M. Daunton and M. Hilton, pp. 129-63.

HAND OUT IN CLASS: *Maud Pember Reeves, *Round About a Pound a Week* (1913), Chaps. 7-10.

Please skim the following article for its argument:

*James Vernon, "The Ethics of Hunger and the Assembly of Society: The Techno-Politics of the School Meal in Modern Britain," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 110, No. 3 (June 2005), pp. 693-725.

Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, one chapter.

Paper Proposal due no later than April 19th: read *Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, Chap. 5, "Industrial Food" and Chap. 6, "Impact of a World System," pp. 154-74; 175-90 and the document posted on Canvas entitled "Commodity."

*Martin Bruegel, "How the French Learned to Eat Canned Food" and

*Jeffrey Pilcher, "Industrial Tortillas and Folkloric Pepsi: The Nutritional Consequences of Hybrid Cuisines in Mexico," in Belasco and Scranton, eds., *Food Nations*, 113-30 and 222-239.

***sample paper on fish & chips?**

XI. Nutrition and European Empires: Food in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries (April 12, 14)

Required reading:

*Corinna Treitel, Chap.2, "Being Natural," *Eating Nature: Food, Agriculture and Environment in Germany, c. 1870-2000*, pp. 53-93.

*Philippa Levine and Alison Bashford, "Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World," *Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, 22 pages.

*Corinna Treitel, "Nutritional Modernity: The German Case."

*Harry G. Day, "E. V. McCollum and Public Understanding of Foods and Nutrition," *Nutrition Today* (1987), 31-9.

*M. Worboys, "The Discovery of Colonial Malnutrition Between the Wars," in D. Arnold, ed., *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies*, 208-225.

*Nick Cullather, "The Foreign Policy of the Calorie," *American Historical Review* (April, 2007), pp. 337-64.

XII. The Nutritional Transition: The Emergence of Modern Food Consumption (April 19, 21)

Required reading:

*David Grigg, "The Nutritional Transition in Western Europe," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 21, no. 3 (1995), 247-61.

*Harmke Kamminga, "Axes to Grind: Popularizing the Science of Vitamins in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Food, Science, Policy and Regulation in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David Smith and Jim Phillips, 83-100.

Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire*, Chapter 8, "Modern Cuisines: The Globalization of Middling Cuisines, 1920-2000," pp. 308-359.

*Josef Nussbaumer and Andreas Exenberger, "Century of Hunger, Century of Plenty: How Abundance Arrived in Alpine Valleys," *The Rise of Obesity in Europe*, ed. Derek J Oddy and Peter Atkins.

Film: "Our Daily Bread" (2005) by Nikolaus Geyrhalter.

XIII. From Post-War to Food Wars: Slow Food and Beyond (April 26, 28)

*Carlo Petrini, *Slow Food: The Case for Taste*, Chap. 1, "Appetite and Thought" and Chap. 3, "Educating and Learning," pp. 1-34; 65-83.

Raj Patel, *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World's Food System*, Chap. 1, "Introduction," Chap. 7, "Glycine Rex," Chap. 8, "Checking Out of Supermarkets," Chap. 9, "Chosen by Bunnies," and "Chap. 10, "Conclusion."

*Mike Berners-Lee, *How Bad Are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything* (excerpts in Canvas folder)

**Final Commodity Project Paper
due May 2nd by 12 midnight
make this due early April?**