

## SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health  
New York University

### FOOD-GE: 2012.001: FOOD HISTORY (3 credits)

#### Course Description and Objectives:

Welcome to Food History. In this course we will examine food and diet from historical and transnational perspectives. We will, among other things, consider the origins of agriculture, the phenomenon of famine, the co-evolution of world commodities and civilizations, the international exchange and spread of foods and food technologies following Columbus, and the effects of the emergent global economy on food, production, diets and health. From this survey of food in history, students will gain a greater understanding of how food influences, and is influenced by, a myriad of factors, including politics, economics, climate, geography, technology, and culture.

#### Required Readings:

##### Books

- Albala, Ken. *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (California, 2002).  
Belasco, Warren. *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry* (Cornell, 2006).  
Carney, Judith. *Black Rice: African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Harvard, 2001).  
Crosby, Alfred, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, (Praeger, 2003, 1973).  
Diamond, Jared, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (Norton, 1999).  
Gray, Peter. *The Irish Famine* (Abrams, 1995) (out of print but available as used online)  
Mintz, Sidney. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Penguin, 1985).  
Pilcher, Jeffrey. *!Que Vivan Los Tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (New Mexico, 1998).  
Shapiro, Laura. *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (University of California Press, 2008 (reprint)).

#### General Food Histories (Recommended but not required):

- Tannahill, Reay. *Food in History* (Three Rivers Press, 1988 (1973))  
Freedman, Paul. *The History of Taste* (California, 2007)  
Fernandez-Armesto, Philippe. *Near a Thousand Tables* (2001)

All books are available at the NYU bookstore, as well as for sale at any online bookstore (Any edition is fine). They will also be on reserve at Bobst Library (in the reserve reading area on the lower level). Please let me know if for some reason you are unable to locate or purchase the books.

Additional Readings: Additional readings are not required but are for your information, and may be helpful for your research papers.

## Articles

There will be articles that I will either hand out in class or make available in .pdf format on link through the new NYU CLASSES SITE (At NYU Home click on ACADEMICS, then click on FOOD HISTORY. Readings are under RESOURCES).

## Course Schedule:

We will stick to this schedule as closely as possible, but please be advised that this calendar is subject to change. If you miss a week, it is your responsibility to get in touch with me or another class member to find out the following week's material and activities.

**Brief Assignment Each Week:** Prior to each class I will provide one or two questions to help focus your reading of the materials. Please come to class with a written page containing information/answers to those questions, as well as any thoughts or questions you have regarding that week's readings. They will be collected each week. In addition to helping me gauge your response to the readings, they will count toward your final grade.

### January 26th: Historical perspectives on the study of food

Introduction to class and overview of material

### February 5th: Food and Human Evolution: Food and Agriculture in Prehistoric Societies (PARADIGM SHIFT #1)

Reading: Diamond, *Guns, Germ, and Steel*  
Pennisi, Elizabeth. "Did Cooked Tubers Spur the Evolution of Big Brains?" *Science*, vol. 283, no. 5410(March 26, 1999): 2004-2005 (BLACKBOARD).  
Recommended: Tannahill, chapters 1-3; Mark Nathan Cohen, *Health and the Rise of Civilization* (Yale, 1989); Wrangham, et al, "The Raw and the Stolen: Cooking and the Ecology of Human Origins / Comments, *Current Anthropology*; vol. 40, no. (December 1999): 567+.

### February 12th: Food and Famine in Ancient Civilizations

Reading: ALL POSTED ON BLACKBOARD  
Feldman, Charles, "Roman Taste," *Food, Culture and Society*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 7-30.  
Flint-Hamilton, Legumes in Ancient Greece and Rome: Food, Medicine, or Poison? *Hesperia* vol.68, No 3(1999): 371-385.  
Garnsey, Peter, "Responses to Food Crisis in the Ancient Mediterranean World," in *Hunger in History: Food Shortage, Poverty and Deprivation*, Lucile F. Newman, ed. (Blackwell, 1995): 126-146.  
Mayerson, Philip, "The Role of Flax in Roman and Fatimid Egypt," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (1997) 201-207.  
Wilford, John Noble, "Researchers Paint New Portraits," *New York Times*, Feb. 10, 1998).  
Recommended: Tannahill, chapters 4-6; 8-11

February 19th: Food in Middle Ages and Early Modern Europe

Readings: Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*  
Rachel Laudan, "Birth of the Modern Diet" *Scientific American* (August 2000): 76-81 (Blackboard)  
Recommended: Matossian, *Poisons of the Past: Molds Epidemics, and History* (Yale, 1989); Tannahill, chapters 7, 12-13.

February 26th: Food in (Ancient to Early Modern) China and Japan

Readings: ALL POSTED ON BLACKBOARD  
Philippe Beaujard, "The Indian Ocean in Eurasian and African World Systems Before the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 16. No. 4(2005): 411-465.  
Nicola di Cosmo, "Ancient Inner Asian Nomads: Their Economic Basis and Its Significance to Chinese History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53,4(Nov. 1994): 1092-1126.  
Nobuo Harada, "A Peek at the Meals of the People of Edo," Parts I and II.  
Ludwig, Theodore M., "Before Rikyu: Religious and Aesthetic Influences in the Early History of the Tea Ceremony," *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 36, no. 4(Winter 1981): 367-390.  
Eric Reinders, "Blessed are the Meat Eaters: Christian Antivegetarianism and the Missionary Encounter with Chinese Buddhism," *Positions*, Vol. 12, No. 2(Fall 2004): 509-537.

Assignment due: Bring in a one-paragraph description of your research project

March 5th: 1492: The Consequences of Contact (PARADIGM SHIFT #2)

Readings: Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*  
Marcy Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics," (ON BLACKBOARD).  
Recommended: Tannahill, chs. 14-15: Coe and Coe, *The True History of Chocolate* (Thames and Hudson, 1996); John C. Super, *Food, Conquest, and Colonization in Sixteenth Century Spanish America*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988)

March 12th: The Industrial Revolution, Colonialism, and Food (Europe and the Americas) (PARADIGM SHIFT #3)

Readings: Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*  
Sucheta Mazumdar, "China and the Global Atlantic: Sugar from the Age of Columbus to Pepsi-Coke and Ethanol" (unpublished article on BLACKBOARD)  
Recommended: Stuart Schwartz, editor, *Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680* (North Carolina, 2004); Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise: A Social History of Spices, Stimulants, and Intoxicants* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

March 19<sup>th</sup>: Spring Break (no class)

March 26th: Colonialism and Slavery: The Consequences of Contact Part II (Africa and the Americas)

Reading: Judith Carney. *Black Rice*

April 2nd: Famine in the Modern World: The Irish Potato Famine as Test Case

Reading: Peter Gray, *The Irish Famine* (Harry Abrams, 1995)

Recommended: Kissane, *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History* (National Library of Ireland, 1995); Percival, *The Great Famine 1845-51* (Viewer Books, 1995)

April 9th: Food, Culture and History in Latin America

Reading: Jeffrey Pilcher, *!Que Vivan Los Tamales!*

Recommended: Bauer, Arnold J. *Goods, Power, History: Latin America's Material Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; Cotter, Joseph. *Trouble Harvest: Agronomy and Revolution in Mexico, 1880-2002*. New York: Praeger, 2003; Warman, Arturo. *Corn and Capitalism: How a Botanical Bastard Grew to Global Dominance*. Translated by Nancy L. Westrate. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003; Weismantel, Mary J. *Food, Gender, and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes*. Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, c1988.

April 16th: Industrialization and American Food: Women, Cooking, and American Cuisine (PARADIGM SHIFT #4)

Reading: Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (North Point Press, 1986, or the Modern Library edition (2001)

Recommended: Tannahill chapters 19-20; Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table* and *Paradox of Plenty*

April 23rd: The Package Cuisine Backlash: Rethinking Food in the Later Twentieth Century

Reading: Warren Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry*

April 30th: Student research presentations

May 7th: Student research presentations

Papers due on or before May 21st

**Please note:**

Please turn off and put away cell phones and all mobile devices. Laptops are permitted for note taking but please no online surfing or other use during class.

Any student who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212 998-4980, 240 Greene Street, [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd).

**Methods of Evaluation:**

Students are required to write a research paper on a topic of their choice (see below).

Class participation:	20%
Weekly reading responses:	20%
Research paper, (including rough draft and <u>Presentation as well as final paper:</u>	<u>60%</u>
Total	100%

Meaning of "participation": By participation I mean active engagement in the course: being consistently prepared for class (come having read—really read—that day's assignment); asking questions, responding to my questions; offering your own insights and opinions; attentive listening to others. And, of course, if you do not come to class you cannot participate. If for some reason you have great trouble speaking in class, please see me to discuss early on in the semester (otherwise, I will assume there is no problem).

**Research Paper and Presentation:**

For your culminating project for Food History you are to write an approximately 15 page research paper on a topic of your choice, accompanied by an oral presentation (approx. 5-7 minutes) on one of the last days of class.

Topic

You may choose to pursue further a topic that we are exploring in class, or examine an area of personal or academic interest. The following is a list of suggested topics, though you are by no means limited to these. Historical perspectives on:

- a plant or animal used as food (mushroom, corn, poultry)
- a prepared food or method of processing (bread, beer, polenta)
- an important person (Heinz, Cadbury)
- a food event (the medieval banquet, food riots and the English peasantry in early modern England, the Green Revolution)
- food issues in historical context (historical perspectives on famine relief, gluttony, food and fascism in Italy)

## Procedures and Requirements

1. Conduct a thorough search in the library (or elsewhere) for material on your topic. Check with the reference librarian, do a Bobcat/ONLINE search, explore the Internet, look through encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, archives, interview people, do an ethnographic analysis, etc. Having "too much" information, if such a thing is possible, is much less of a problem than too little. See me for ideas, visit the reference desk at the library, talk to anyone who might be of help.
2. Your bibliography must contain at least twenty (20) sources. These can be drawn from a variety of sources (books, scholarly journals, popular magazines, newspapers, cookbooks, internet) but a substantial number (over half) must be books and articles of a scholarly nature (peer-reviewed, footnotes, relatively independent of advertising, usually plain-looking with few photographs). Beware of Internet sites—not all are created equal. Be skeptical, for example, that a corporate website will tell the whole story about its product(s).
3. Try to incorporate primary data of some kind. While I realize it is impossible to conduct a substantial amount of primary research in such a short time, it is important to include, to your best ability, some element of primary data, whether old newspaper/magazine/advertisements, old cookbooks or recipe cards, restaurant menus, diaries, statistical records, interviews, or ethnographic data generated by yourself. I assume you have discussed definitions of primary and secondary data, but we will go over these in class as well.
4. Your project must be original. I will not accept a topic that you have used/are using for another class. Please no joint projects with a concurrent class.

## Mechanics

1. As with all college papers I expect your paper to be typed, double-spaced. Your paper should be stapled (no slick covers, etc), and pages numbered. It should also have a title.
2. **Make sure you have a clearly-stated thesis that provides an argument, encapsulates the scope and framework of analysis of the entire paper.** Provide examples and evidence to support any claims you make; be careful to provide citations to indicate the origin of your quotes and paraphrased references. Information, even if not directly quoted, needs to be cited with footnotes or parenthetical endnotes. I will expect at least 10 scholarly references (books, scholarly articles), as well as any other materials you use (newspapers, popular magazines, surveys, pamphlets, etc.), for a total of at least twenty sources.
3. **Check the rules of plagiarism.** NYU has a clearly stated policy on plagiarism—read and follow it please. Bottom line: changing a word or two of a sentence and

then passing it off as your own (without quotation marks) is plagiarism. I will ask you to hand your paper in having signed a statement indicating its originality.

4. Papers need to be free of typographical errors and grammatical disasters. Consult a style manual if you have questions, and make use of the Writing Center.
5. And finally, please turn your paper in on time; late papers receive a drop in grade.

### Presentation

The presentations should be of exceptional quality. You should be well-prepared, and should do your best to make the presentation interesting, informative, and worth the time of your classmates and myself. Practice beforehand so you know how much time it takes to get through, dress as if you are trying to make a good overall impression. You should include in your presentation anything that will help explain your project to the rest of the class: slides, photos, other objects, handouts, etc. Avoid the "um" syndrome. Use note cards to help you through the material. Try not to read material, but "talk" it to the audience. Look up and out to the audience, instead of down at your notes. Don't worry, your classmates will provide encouragement, support, will listen attentively, and will clap at the end of your presentation.

### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

Students are expected-often required-to build their work on that of other people, just as professional researchers and writers do. Giving credit to someone whose work has helped you is expected; in fact, not to give such credit is a crime. Plagiarism is the severest form of academic fraud. Plagiarism is theft. More specifically, plagiarism is presenting as your own:

- \*a phrase, sentence, or passage from another writer's work without using quotation marks;
- \*a paraphrased passage from another writer's work
- \*facts, ideas, or written text gathered or downloaded from the Internet;
- \*another student's work with your name on it;
- \*a purchased paper or "research" from a term paper mill.

Other forms of academic fraud include:

- \*"collaborating" between two or more students who then submit the same paper under their individual names.
- \*submitting the same paper for two or more courses without the knowledge and the expressed permission of all teachers involved.
- \*giving permission to another student to use your work for a class.

Term paper mills (web sites and businesses set up to sell papers to students) often claim they are merely offering "information" or "research" to students and that this service is acceptable and allowed throughout the university. **THIS IS ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE.** If you buy and submit "research," drafts, summaries, abstracts, or final versions of a paper, you are committing plagiarism and are subject to stringent disciplinary action. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact and not intention, it is crucial that you acknowledge every source accurately and completely. If you quote anything from a source, use quotation marks and take down the page number of the quotation to use in your footnote.

Consult The Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Guide for accepted forms of documentation, and the course handbook for information on using electronic sources. When in doubt about whether your acknowledgment is proper and adequate, consult your teacher. Show the teacher your sources and a draft of the paper in which you are using them. The obligation to demonstrate that work is your own rests with you, the student. You are responsible for providing sources, copies of your work, or verification of the date work was completed.

The academic community takes plagiarism very seriously. Teachers in our writing courses must report to the Director of the Expository Writing Program any instance of academic dishonesty in student writing, whether it occurs in an exercise, draft, or final essay. Students will be asked to explain the circumstances of work called into question. When plagiarism is confirmed, whether accidental or deliberate, students must be reported to the Dean of their School, and penalties will follow. This can result in failure of the essay, failure in the course, a hearing with the Dean, and/or expulsion from the university. This has happened to students at New York University.

For more information on avoiding plagiarism and proper use of internet citation, we recommend visiting these websites:

[“What Is Plagiarism at Indiana University?”](#) Indiana University. A tutorial that tests your ability to understand and avoid plagiarism.

Virtual Salt. [“Citing Web Sources MLA Style.”](#) By Robert Harris. Guidelines to what to cite and how to cite in Modern Language Association style.

[“How to Avoid Plagiarism.”](#) Northwestern University. A comprehensive site about academic integrity and citing sources.

**From the NYU Expository Writing Center:**  
[http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/policies\\_\\_\\_procedures.html](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/policies___procedures.html)  
[#statementacademicintegrity](#)

Please sign and attach to your paper:

### HONOR CODE

I pledge that the attached work is my own and that I have received no assistance from anyone in any way executing it. In other words, this work was neither edited nor rewritten by another. The words are my own. If I have used someone else's ideas, those ideas have been given full and proper credit. All reference works actually exist and have been fully identified. I pledge that nothing here has been disguised so as to mislead the reader. I understand that it is my responsibility to make public immediately all violations of the code by anyone.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_