

**Geography 88GE:
Geography of Food and Agriculture
UCLA, Winter 2008**

Instructor: Nicholas Bauch
Meeting time: Tuesdays from 9:00-11:50
Email: nbbauch@ucla.edu
Office Hours: Monday 1:00-2:00; Tuesday 1:00-2:00
Office: A-121 Bunche Hall, in the Palm Court

Course Description

This is a 5-unit “seminar sequence” about agricultural production and food consumption. This course operates in a seminar fashion, meaning that each week students come prepared to discuss a shared set of readings about the topic for that week. Students spend the majority of class time sharing ideas about the readings in order to help each other design and write the final research paper. It is a 5 unit GE credit course.

Objectives

This is an intensive writing course. In it, students learn how to frame research projects and how to conduct scholarly research from the perspective of food production and consumption. The course prepares students to critically assess where their food comes from, to talk about the historical contingency of the meaning of healthy foods and diets, and to see food as a cyclical part of the natural and cultural world that has real impacts on ecological landscapes and labor regimes throughout the United States and the world.

Assignments

To help foster discussions, each week students bring a prepared written piece (*between 325-375 words; typed; double spaced*) that briefly reviews the readings, points out what in the readings is particularly useful for the individual final research paper, and highlights the most amazing thing that he/she did not know before completing the readings for the week. There are nine weeks in which we have readings; students must hand in their written responses each week *at the beginning of class*. *Assignments handed in after the beginning of class receive no credit*. On occasion the normal weekly written assignment is replaced by another assignment described at the time. Students are allowed one free “miss” of the nine weeks (i.e. during the quarter I allow you to skip *only one* weekly assignment if you need to for any reason).

For the final project students choose any food that they find interesting and want to learn more about. The foods can range from a fruit, to a vegetable, to canned goods, to desserts, to grains, to meats, or processed foods – whatever you want! In researching and writing the final research project students use this food to frame a larger discussion about how human groups have related to the natural environment, and the ways food is brought from the land to our bodies, including the cultural mediators in that process. Readings and discussions in the seminar meetings further develop and refine each student’s project. *The paper must be at least 3,200 words, typed, double spaced, and printed out. The final*

research paper is due on MONDAY, MARCH 17 AT NOON IN MY MAILBOX. Late papers receive no credit and the student does not pass the course.

Attendance is expected at all meetings for the entire quarter. I take attendance at every meeting. I allow one absence without deduction from your grade. I make no distinction between an “excused” and an “unexcused” absence. This means you do not have to tell me why you were or will be gone. If you miss because of sickness or any other reason it is the same. For example, if you think you will be sick at the end of the quarter, or know you will be gone on a certain day, I suggest saving your one absence. In the case that you do miss a meeting you are responsible for obtaining the information missed either from me or another student. For each absence after the free one, 15 points will be deducted from your final grade.

Points breakdown

500 points total for the course

Final research paper: 250 points

Each week’s written piece: 20 points (160 total)

Participation/preparation/attendance: 90 points

Week 1 – January 8 – Intro

No readings

In class: Syllabus discussion; introduce each other; slide show of different countries’ foods
Professional development: Cookbooks

Part I: Where does food come from?, or Agricultural production strategies

Week 2 – January 15 – Beef & Pork

Schlosser, Eric. 2001. *Fast Food Nation: The dark side of the all-American meal*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Cronon, William. 1991. *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W. W. Norton.

In class: Animated Video “The Meatrix,” 10 min.
Professional development: Doing library research at UCLA

Week 3 – January 22 – Oranges

Hamilton, Shane. 2003. Cold Capitalism: The political ecology of frozen concentrated orange juice. *Agricultural History* 77:557-581.

McPhee, John A. 1967. *Oranges*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

In class: Orange meditation with Diana Winston from the UCLA Meditation Center
Professional development: Academic vs. popular sources

Week 4 – January 29 – Industrial Agriculture

Walker, Richard. 2004. *The Conquest of Bread: 150 years of agribusiness in California*. New York: New Press.

Bell & Valentine, “Consuming Geographies,” chapter: City

In class: Film viewing of “Our Daily Bread” (Nikolaus Geyrhalter, Germany, 2005, 92 min.)
Professional Development: The vices and virtues of Internet research (e.g. Google scholar, Wikipedia)
Extra assignment: Hand in 100-word final project proposal, including your food, why you chose it, and the story you want to tell about it in your final paper.

Part II: Alternative Agriculture

Week 5 – February 5 – Localism: “Here foods”

Kloppenburg, Jack, John Hendrickson, and G Stevenson. 1996. Coming in to the Foodshed. *Agriculture and Human Values* 13 (3):33-42.
Nabhan, Gary Paul. 2002. *Coming Home to Eat: The pleasures and politics of local foods*. New York: Norton.

In class: Guest from the UCLA Food Systems Working Group – Lorna Apper
Professional development: How to skim readings for pertinent information; or what to do when you have a lot to read in a little time

Thursday, February 7, 3:00pm: Field Trip to Westwood Farmer’s Market

Week 6 – February 12 – Tourism: “there foods” {terroir}

Bauch, Nicholas. 2005. “Food and Place: Consuming Parma, Italy.”
Wilson, James E. 1998. *Terroir: The role of geology, climate, and culture in the making of French wines*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

In class: Tasting banquet of authentic geographically indicated foods
Professional development: Writing – getting started on a draft – note taking while reading

Week 7 – February 19 – California Organics

Guthman, Julie. 2004. *Agrarian dreams: The paradox of organic farming in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Pollan, Michael. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A natural history of four meals*. New York: Penguin.

In class: Rachel Corbin from KNEAD Bakery – Ventura, CA
Professional development: Writing – how and when to cite. Using reference software

Part III: Food and American History

Week 8 – February 26 – Soil

Worster, Donald. 1979. *Dust Bowl: The southern plains in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Steinbeck, J. *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Week 9 – March 4 – Food and Obesity

Schwartz, Hillel. 1986. Chapter 8 from *Never satisfied: A cultural history of diets, fantasies, and fat*. New York: Free Press.
Pollan, Michael. 2003. The agricultural contradictions of obesity. *New York Times Magazine*, October 12.
Guthman, Julie. 2007. Can't Stomach It: How Michael Pollan et al. made me want to eat Cheetos. *Gastronomica* 7 (3):75-79.

Activity: Read and discuss in class the Oxford English Dictionary entry for “diet.”

Week 10 – March 11 –Sociology of eating/dining

Levenstein, Harvey. 2003. *Paradox of Plenty: A social history of eating in modern America*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Viewing of Films

In class: Alex O’Flinn from the UCLA Film School – food in film