

**ANTH 1804—Fall 2014**  
**Tasting Food: Politics, Science and the Senses**  
Wednesday, 3-5pm. Peabody Museum 12.  
(v1.3 SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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Office: Weatherhead Center. 61 Kirkland Street, Room 301.

Office Hours: Mondays 3-5pm, or by appointment.

This course interrogates the processes that underlie the act of eating and tasting food. We approach this question from the anthropology of science, the anthropology of the senses and political economy. We explore the ways we use our senses to taste food, and the intersection between sensual experiences and language. How do our senses interact with each other to constitute the taste experience and how do we verbalize it? How do individual sensorial experiences become part of broader social phenomena? A second strand of analysis will consider the relationship between food and systems of knowledge: how do we distinguish between safe and unsafe food and what is the difference between natural and industrial? The third strand of analysis will consider the question of how taste is formulated before it arrives to our plates. What are the conditions of production and circulation of food, and the connection between place and taste.

NOTE: I'm trying to coordinate a couple of sensory experiences for the class. It is possible that class will run overtime once or twice during the semester.

**Texts Available from the COOP (required):**

Paxson, Heather. *The Life of Cheese*

Solari, John. *Banana Cultures*

Books and readings are available from the class website and/or the reserve desk at Tozzer library.

**Course Requirements and Expectations:**

1) Class Participation. This is a discussion-based seminar of the readings and topic for the day. It is crucial that each student comes prepared and on time to participate in thoughtful and creative ways. Bear in mind that the quality of a discussion based-seminar depends on everybody, teacher and students, coming together to share their thoughts.

2) Attendance. Attendance is essential to this course. If a student misses a class, she or he needs to write a one-page paper outlining his or her thoughts on the readings for the week.

3) Plagiarism. Just don't do it. Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them as your own. Students caught plagiarizing will face severe consequences. Plagiarism also applies to cutting and pasting from websites such as wikipedia. Scholarly work is cumulative and it is perfectly normal to be in dialogue with other scholars and be inspired by their ideas, but they must be properly cited. All work submitted for this course must be your original writing. If in doubt, please consult with me.

4) Laptop/internet use. This is a discussion-based seminar and it demands an active effort to be engaged in the discussion. As such, browsing the internet is counter-productive to the goals of the course. The use of computers/tablets is allowed only to take notes and/or to refer to the readings for those of you who do not print them out. At the beginning of class, switch off the internet. Moreover, internet use is not only distracting to you but also to those around you who will be distracted by dancing cats or whatever else is on your screen. Cellphone use is prohibited. If students do not comply with the laptop etiquette for this course, I reserve the right to ban laptop use during the course of the semester.

### **Assignments:**

#### **1) Research paper. 40%**

Each student will write a research paper on a topic of their choosing that is relevant and inspired by the themes of this course. Topics must be approved by me before you embark on substantive research. Come see me during office hours or make an appointment to talk about your paper.

A project proposal is due on October 1st. It should be 1-2 pages in length and include a list of possible sources to be used in the paper.

Papers are due on December 10, and will be 10-12 pages in length for undergraduates, 15-20 pages for graduate students.

#### **2) Class Presentation/Participation. 25%**

Each student will choose a week during which they will make a ten minute presentation at the beginning of class summarizing the themes for the week. This presentation is not meant to be an exhaustive summary of the week's readings. Rather, it is meant to draw out themes that arise from the set of readings and how they relate to the course.

In addition, students are expected to actively participate in class.

#### **3) Reading Responses. 35%**

Students will write five (5) reading responses over the course of the semester. The responses should be short—no more than a single-spaced page written in 12-point font (approx. 500 words). The reading responses are an opportunity to reflect on the materials for the week ahead of class. Reading responses are due on Tuesdays at 11pm, and must be submitted on time to

receive full credit. Papers will be evaluated using a  $\sqrt{\quad}$  /  $\sqrt{+}$  /  $\sqrt{-}$  scale. You will sign up during the second week of class.

In addition, all students will write a one-page food memory to be circulated with everybody on week 4. More details will be announced in class.

### **Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the [Accessible Education Office](#) (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term (September 10). Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

## **Reading Schedule**

### **Week 1 September 3 -- Introduction**

Film: Excerpts from *Tampopo*, directed by Juzo Itami (1985)

### **Week 2, September 10 -- Experience and the senses I**

#### **Sensorial Experience: Sous-vide eggs**

Sutton, David. 2010. Food and the Senses. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 39: 209-223.

Desjarlais, Robert. 1997. Shelter Blues: Sanity and Selfhood Among the Homeless. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Read 1-27 (Available online through Hollis)

Roberts, Lissa. 2005. The Death of the Sensuous Chemist: The 'new' chemistry and the transformation of sensuous technology. In *Empire of the Senses*, edited by David Howes. Berg.

Caldwell, Melissa. 2014. Digestive Politics in Russia: Feeling the sensorium beyond the palate. *Food and Foodways*.

#### Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Brillat-Savarin, J A. 1949. *The Physiology of Taste: Or, Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*. Trans. M.F.K. Fisher Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1999

Sternsdorff Cisterna, Nicolas. 2014. Unexpected moments and the wine experience. *Food and Foodways* 22 (1-2): 90-111

### **Week 3, September 17— Experience and the senses II**

**Sensorial experience: Everyone brings a smell hidden away in a paper bag.**

Gell, Alfred. 2006. Magic, perfume, dream. In *The Smell Culture Reader*. Ed. Jim Drobnik. Berg

Drobnik, Jim. 2006. Eating nothing: Cooking aromas in art and culture. In *The Smell Culture Reader*. Ed. Jim Drobnik. Berg

Mauss, Marcel. 1979. The notion of body techniques In: *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*. Translated by Ben Brewster. London: Routledge.

Herdenstam, Anders P F, Maria Hammaren, Richard Ahlstrom, and Per-Axel Wiktorsson. 2009. The professional language of wine: Perception, training and dialogue. *Journal of Wine Research* 20 (1): 53-84.

Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Manalansan IV, Martin F. 2006. Immigrant lives and the politics of olfaction in the global city. In *The Smell Culture Reader*. Ed. Jim Drobnik. Berg

Peynaud, Emile. 2005. Tasting Problems and Errors of Perception. In *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, edited by Carolyn Korsmeyer. Berg.

**Week 4, September 24 -- Nostalgia and affect**

Law, L. 2001. Home cooking: Filipino women and geographies of the senses in Hong Kong. *Cultural Geographies* 8 (3): 264.

Heldke, Lisa. 2005. But is it authentic? Culinary travel and the search for the "genuine article". In *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*. Ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer. Berg

Sutton, David E. 2005. Synesthesia, memory, and the taste of home. In *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*. Ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer. Berg

Galbraith, Patrick. 2013. Maid cafes: The affect of fictional characters in Akihabara, Japan. *Asian Anthropology* 1-22

Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Holtzman, J D. 2006. Food and memory. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35:361-378

Marcel Proust (1913) The Madeleine. From *Swan's Way*. Reprinted in the Taste Culture Reader.

**Week 5, October 1—Connoisseurship**

**Sensorial experience: coffee cupping**

PAPER PROPOSAL DUE BY CLASSTIME

Meneley, Anne. 2014. Discourses of Distinction in Contemporary Palestinian Extra Virgin Olive Oil Production. *Food and Foodways*.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1987. *Distinction: A social critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard University Press. [Selections]

Roseberry, William. 1996. The rise of yuppie coffees and the reimagination of class in the United States. *American Anthropologist* 98 (4): 762-775.

Goldstein, Jenny Elaine. 2011. The 'coffee doctors': The language of taste and the rise of Rwanda's specialty bean value. *Food & Foodways: History & Culture of Human Nourishment* 19:135-159

Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Terrio, Susan J. 2000. *Crafting the Culture and History of French Chocolate*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press

**Week 6, October 8-- Place**

**Sensorial experience: terroir comparison**

Tracy, Megan. 2013. Pasteurizing China's grasslands and sealing in terroir. *American Anthropologist* 115 (3) 437-451.

de St. Maurice, Greg. 2012. Savoring Kyoto: Sensory Fieldwork on the Taste of Place. *Etnofoor* 24 (2): 107-122.

Besky, Sarah. 2014. The labor of terroir and the terroir of labor: Geographical indication and darjeeling tea plantations. *Agriculture and Human Values* 31 (1): 83-96. Web

Weiss, Brad. 2011. Making pigs local: Discerning the sensory character of place. *Cultural Anthropology* 26 (3): 438-461

Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Trubek, Amy B. 2008. *The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey Into Terroir*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press

Demossier, M. 2011. Beyond terroir: Territorial construction, hegemonic discourses, and french wine culture. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17 (4): 685-705

Barham, E. 2003. Translating terroir: The global challenge of french AOC labeling. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19 (1): 127-138

**Week 7, October 15— Cheese**

**Sensorial experience: cheese featured in the book**

Paxson, Heather. 2012. *The life of cheese: Crafting food and value in America*. University of California Press.

## **Week 8, October 22 -- Food and the nation-state**

Mintz, Sydney. Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom (selections)

Appadurai, Arjun. 1982. How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1): 3-24.

Wilk, Richard R. 1999. "Real Belizean food": Building local identity in the transnational Caribbean. *American Anthropologist* 101 (2): 244-255

Allison, Anne. 1991. Japanese mothers and obentōs: The lunch-box as ideological state apparatus. *Anthropological Quarterly* 64 (4): 195-208

Cullather, Nick. 2007. The foreign policy of the calorie. *The American Historical Review* 112 (2): 336-364.

### Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Clapp, J. 2008. A global outlook on food studies. *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 11 (3): 281-286

Galenba, Rebecca B. 2012. "Corn is food, not contraband": The right to "free trade" at the Mexico-Guatemala border. *American Ethnologist* 39 (4): 716-734

Kolleen M. Guy. 2003. *When Champagne Became French: Wine and the Making of a National Identity*. Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

## **Week 9, October 29-- Industrialization**

### **Sensorial experience: potato chip tasting**

Cronon, W. 1991. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. W.W. Norton: New York. [Read Chapter 3 on grain, 97-147]

Bestor, Theodore. 2002. Kaiten-zushi and konbini: Japanese food culture in the age of mechanical reproduction. In *Fast Food/Slow Food: The Cultural Economy of the global food system*, edited by Richard Wilk. Altamira Press.

Gutham, Julie. 2003. Fast food/organic food: Reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow'. *Social and Cultural Geography* 4 (1): 45-58.

Kaplan, M. 2011. Lonely drinking fountains and comforting coolers: Paradoxes of water value and ironies of water use. *Cultural Anthropology* 26 (4): 514-541

### Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Mintz, Sidney W. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books. (highly recommended if you haven't read it)

Guthman, Julie. 2007. The Polanyian way? Voluntary food labels as neoliberal governance. *Antipode* 39 (3): 456-478

### **Week 10, November 5— Bananas**

#### **Sensorial experience: baked bananas**

Soluri, John. 2006. *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States*. University of Texas Press.

### **Week 11, November 12-- Tasting Nature**

#### **Sensorial experience: debate on the most and least natural foods we can imagine.**

Takahashi, Satsuki. 2014. Hatchery Flounder Goes Wild: Authenticity, Aesthetics and Fetishism for Fish in Japan. *Food and Foodways*.

Mansfield, B. 2003. Fish, factory trawlers, and imitation crab: The nature of quality in the seafood industry. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19 (1): 9-21.

Lien, Marianne Elisabeth and John Law. 2011. 'Emergent aliens': On salmon, nature, and their enactment. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 76 (1): 65-8

Heath, D and A Meneley. 2010. The naturecultures of foie gras techniques of the body and a contested ethics of care. *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 13 (3): 421-452

#### Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Barber, Dan. 2008. A foie gras parable. TED talk available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/dan\\_barber\\_s\\_surprising\\_foie\\_gras\\_parable](http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_barber_s_surprising_foie_gras_parable)

Black, Rachel. 2012. *Vino Naturale: Tensions Between Nature and Technology in the Glass. In Wine and Culture: Vineyard to Glass.*

Bestor, Theodore C. 2004. *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World*. Berkeley: University of California Press (esp. Chapter 4)

### **Week 12, November 19-- Food and Risk.**

#### **Sensorial experience: natto and boiled okra (slime).**

Yan, Yunxiang. 2012. Food safety and social risk in contemporary China. *Journal of Asian Studies* 71 (3): 705-729.

Phillips, S D. 2002. Half-Lives and healthy bodies: Discourses on contaminated food and healing in postchernobyl Ukraine. *Food and Foodways* 10 (1-2): 27-53

DuPuis, E. Melanie (2000) Not in My Body: rBGH and the Rise of Organic Milk. *Agriculture and Human Values* 17(3): 285-295.

Sternsdorff Cisterna, Nicolas. (in submission). *Food after Fukushima: Risk and citizenship in post 3.11 Japan*.

Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Nestle, Marion. 2003. *Safe Food: The Politics of Food Safety*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010

Sato, Kyoko. 2013. Genetically modified food in France: Symbolic transformation and the policy paradigm shift. *Theory and Society* 42 (5): 477-507.

Miller, William Ian. 2005. Darwin's disgust. In *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*. Ed. David Howes. Berg

**Week 13, November 26, Thanksgiving recess, no classes**

**Week 14, December 3 -- To the future**

**Sensorial experience: vanilla—artificial, essence and bean.**

Classen, Constance et al. 2005. Artificial Flavors. In *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, edited by Carolyn Korsmeyer. Berg.

Roosth, Sophia. 2013. Of foams and formalisms: Scientific expertise and craft practice in molecular gastronomy. *American Anthropologist* 115 (1): 4-16.

Haden, Roger. 2005. Taste in the Age of Convenience: From frozen foods to meals in 'the matrix.' In *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, edited by Carolyn Korsmeyer. Berg.

Belasco, Warren. 2006. *Meals to Come: A history of the future of food*. University of California Press. [Selections]

Supplemental Reading (Optional):

Gopnik, Adam. Sweet Revolution: The power of the pastry chef. *New Yorker* online edition, January 3, 2011.

**Paper due December 10.**