

Spring 2020

SOC 358: Sociology of Food

10:30-12:30 Mondays, Westminster Room, CAPA Centre
148 Cromwell Road, S. Kensington, London

Instructor: Debra Street, PhD
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Office Hours: Monday **10-10:30; 3:30-4:00**
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REQUIRED TEXT

Food and Society: Principles and Paradoxes, 2nd edition (2017) Wiley (buy online, paper or ebook) edited by Amy E. Guptill, Denise A. Copelton and Betsy Lucal

WEEKLY REQUIRED READINGS

Additional **required** weekly readings are posted at UBLearn (UBL readings)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are.”-- Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826)

Virtually all of the world’s great cuisines (and its not-so-great ones, too) can be found in London. We will explore the central role of food in social life, considering similarities and differences in food across time and among communities, places, regions and nation-states. Our scholarly study of food will use a sociological perspective to explore it: as part of our histories, as an unavoidable part of daily life; as a major component of economic and political systems; as an important element of identity and socialization; as part of community and family structure; as a vehicle and expression of inequalities; and, as an embodiment of class, culture, age, and gender. Much of what we consider will be from an experiential perspective—beyond the classroom, collective dining experiences (shared iconic meals, “dining with Debi” [DWD], potlucks, and street/market food excursions are required components of the course).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course introduces some of the ways social scientists think about and research issues associated with food. We will begin with a brief history of food, considering how food and foodways are theoretically and empirically important to scholars. Our materials will be eclectic: I highly recommend obtaining a copy of the recommended text, but know that there will be other academic, historical and popular media readings, museum visits, film, performance, and cultural outings...and even some iconic British meals—afternoon tea, a full English breakfast, a family meal, a Sunday roast. Our exploration will be expansive: localized food cultures, food and tourism, changing patterns and significance of family meals and feasts, food insecurity, and how large scale processes like culture, politics, industrialization and globalization influence the ways sociologists think about and study food. Objectives for this course include:

Learning Objective	Assessment Method
Understand the historical and globalizing political economy of food production and consumption	Fieldwork, class participation
Learn how to adopt a sociological perspective (use sociological theories and methods) to ask/answer questions about food	Fieldwork, class participation, reading reactions, book club
Consider the roles of class, gender, age and culture in food consumption and how food patterns both reflect and shape social inequalities at different times and in different places	Fieldwork, class participation, group project, reading reactions
Use different methods and techniques to explore sociological and substantive importance of food production/consumption in the 21st century and effectively communicate findings to instructor and classmates (written/visual/oral presentations)	Fieldwork, group project, class participation

Course Requirements and Assessment

- Complete all assigned readings *before* class and contribute to class discussions. In addition to the chapters listed in the required text, supplemental readings will be posted on UBlearns
- Attend all class and required program activities and fully participate in course fieldwork
- Write several individual essays submit them electronically by deadlines
- Do your fair share in a group project (essay and PowerPoint presentation to class)

Reading reactions: Five reading reactions that demonstrate careful engagement with the literature, submission schedule provided in handout.	20%
Fieldwork: Site-specific fieldwork provided in handouts. Some fieldwork is done individually, some fieldwork is accomplished in groups.	25%
Participation: Perfect <u>on-time</u> attendance for all activities; rapid response to emails; readings completed before class; attentive listening to speakers; <u>active</u> participation in class discussion; in-class assignments. Dine arounds, book club, and film events are likely to be components of the course that will be components of the participation grade.	40%
Group Project: Written/photo/video essay including an in-class oral and visual presentation on food-related topic, delivered the last day of class.	15%

Grading standards

- **A range** grades (high distinction) are for *superior* quality work that indicates you have mastered the course material both in the sense of understanding and demonstrating *integration* of the concepts and related research literatures.
- **B range** grades (superior) demonstrate that you *know almost all* course material *very well*.
- **C range** grades (average) show you understand *many* course-related concepts and materials.
- **D range** grades (minimum passing grades) are earned by demonstrating only *limited understanding* of course material.
- **The grade F** reflects failure to demonstrate rudimentary understanding of the material.

Letter	% Equivalent	Interpretation	Letter	% Equivalent	Interpretation
A	93.0-100.0	High Distinction	C	73.0-76.9	Average
A-	90.0-92.9	High Distinction	C-	70.0-72.9	Average
B+	87.0-89.9	Superior	D+	67.0-69.9	Minimum Passing
B	83.0-86.9	Superior	D	63.0-66.9	Minimum Passing
B-	80.0-82.9	Superior	D-	60.0-62.9	Minimum Passing
C+	77.0-79.9	Average	F	Under 60	Fail

MATERIALS POSTED AT COURSE DOCUMENTS ON UBLEARNS ARE OUR CONTRACT. THEY DETAIL COURSE POLICIES, ASSESSMENT CRITERIA, ASSIGNMENTS, AND DEADLINES. They are also Debra Street's intellectual product and cannot be used other than for course purposes without my express permission.

I reserve the right to change the syllabus and program activities with appropriate prior notice to the students. Notice is by public announcement one class period before a change goes into effect and posting announcements with 24 hours' notice of any impending change on UBlearns.

COURSE CALENDAR
PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Topic	Date	Readings, notes
A brief history of food	Week 1	Introductions. Syllabus. UBL 1 Afternoon tea @ Crowne Plaza
Principles and paradoxes	Week 2	CH 1, UBL 2 Possible Friday event
Food and identity	Week 3	CH 2, UBL 3 Chinese New Year Dinner TBD
Food as spectacle	Week 4	CH 3, UBL 4 DWD* Flats 1, 2, 3
Food and family	Week 5	UBL 5 DWD* Flats 4, 5, 6
Spring Break, Week 6, Feb 14-23		
Branding and marketing	Week 7	CH 5, UBL 6 Possible Friday event
Industrialized food	Week 8	CH 6, UBL 7 Dinner @ Debi's in Camden
Food and health	Week 9	CH 4, UBL 8 Wellcome Collection (Friday)
Global food	Week 10	CH 7, UBL 9
Food Access	Week 11	CH 8, UBL 10 Sunday Roast
Current politics of food/water	Week 12	UBL 11 Possible Friday event
Food and social change	Week 13	CH 9, UBL 12 Potluck Dinner @ Goldhawk
Wrapping up	Week 14	Group Presentations

*DWD=Dining with Debi