

Georgia Institute of Technology
School of Literature, Media, and Communication

LMC 3508 (Fall 2015)
Formations of American Culture:
Food and Eating in Early America
T/Th 9:35-10:55am, Skiles 270

Professor: Lauren Klein (lauren.klein@lmc.gatech.edu)
Office Hours: T/Th 11am-12pm, Skiles 359 (and by appointment)
Course Website: <http://blogs.iac.gatech.edu/food15/>

Course Prerequisites

ENGL 1102

Core Area

Humanities

Course Description

From the time of “first contact,” European explorers—and later, colonists and citizens—were alternately fascinated and repulsed by the new foods they encountered, and they wrote about them in their journals, narratives, histories, and letters. Early American writers, in turn, imbued acts of eating with new significance as they attempted to distinguish their social, cultural, and political identities both from their European, African, and Caribbean counterparts, and from the native American cultures that abutted their own. This course will explore how ideas about food and eating were deployed in a range of textual forms, as well as at the table, so as to direct and reflect major early American concerns. We will also devote a significant portion of the course to the study of historical recipes and cookbooks. As a final project, we will work together as a class to update and contribute to a digital historical recipe archive, updated and reframed for the Food Network age.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will become aware of the traditions and conventions of literature, film, and other forms of narrative art, and they will be able to analyze those traditions and conventions in specific cultural contexts;
- They will become familiar with a variety of social, political, and philosophical theories and be able to apply those theories to creative and scientific texts, as well as to their own cultural observations;
- They will learn to gather, organize, and express information clearly and accurately, with sensitivity to will be able to do so both by using traditional media and by tapping the potential of new digital media;
- They will study literary and cultural texts within an historical framework to become familiar with the various forces that shape artistic and commercial production. They will learn to interpret history actively, rather than passively accepting archival information;
- They can create digital artifacts with an awareness of history, audience, and context;
- They can work effectively in teams to accomplish a common goal; and
- They can communicate information and ideas to a range of audiences.

Required Course Materials

All required readings posted on the course website (above).

Additional research materials/expenses:

Ingredients for Cooking Assignment (see schedule for 9/22)

List of Graded Assignments

Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

- Participation and quizzes: 12 points
- Blogging assignments: 28 points
- Class Project:
 - Midterm project assignments: 24 points
 - Final project assignments: 36 points

When calculating final grades, I employ the following numerical conversions:

A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 70-79 D = 60-69 F = 0-59

This chart of grading characteristics, adapted from criteria developed by Professor Mark Sample of Davidson College, describes the general rubric I employ when evaluating student work:

GRADE	CHARACTERISTICS
A (3.3-4 points * multiplier)	Exceptional. The work is focused and coherently integrates examples with explanations and analysis. The work demonstrates awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers multiple perspectives when appropriate. The work reflects <i>in-depth</i> engagement with the topic.
B (2.3-3 points * multiplier)	Satisfactory. The work is reasonably focused, and explanations and/or analysis are mostly based on examples or other evidence. Fewer connections are made between ideas, and though new insights are offered, they are not fully developed. The work reflects <i>moderate</i> engagement with the topic.
C (1.3-2 points * multiplier)	Underdeveloped. The work is mostly description or summary, without consideration of alternative perspectives, and few connections are made between ideas. The work reflects <i>passing</i> engagement with the topic.
D (.3-1 points * multiplier)	Limited. The work is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous comments, and displays <i>no evidence of student engagement</i> with the topic.
F (0 points)	No Credit. The work is missing or consists of one or two disconnected sentences/scenes/etc.

Description of Graded Assignments

Reading Assignments

Because a significant learning objective of LMC 3508 is to enhance your understanding of the traditions and conventions of literature, and other art forms, you will be reading a wide range of texts—some written clearly, some more dense; some short, some long. Because these texts will inform our classroom discussions—and what you, in particular, have to contribute—it is absolutely essential that you stay on top of the reading assignments and complete them before the start of each class. Reading assignments are assessed through classroom participation, as well as the occasional quiz.

Blogging Assignments

In effort to stimulate interaction on the course blog, as well as to allow you to introduce new material into classroom discussion, we will employ an innovative format for class blogging. During the second week of the course, I will divide the class into four blogging groups. Each blogging group will rotate through the following roles (also developed by Professor Sample):

First Readers: This is akin to the standard blog post assignment: a 250-500 word response to the week's materials. There are a number of ways to approach the "first reader" response: to consider the week's material in relation to its historical or theoretical context; to write about an aspect of the week's material that you don't understand, or that you don't agree with; to formulate an insightful question or two about the material and then attempt to answer your own question; or another line of inquiry of your own choice. First readers are responsible for posting their response to the class blog 24 hours BEFORE the class meets.

Respondents: Students in this group build upon, disagree with, or clarify the first readers' posts. Respondents are required to comment on at least two posts, in comments of around (or longer than) a short paragraph. Comments are due by midnight on the night BEFORE the class meets.

Searchers: Students in this group find and share at least one relevant online resource (broadly conceived), and are responsible for providing a short (i.e. 250 word) evaluation of the resource, highlighting what makes it relevant to the class; due by midnight on the night BEFORE the class meets.

The fourth group has the week off.

At the completion of each cycle (i.e. each four weeks), you will receive 0-14 points on the basis of your contributions. At the end of the semester, these points will be combined to determine your final blogging grade.

Class Project

Over the course of the semester, you will work in small groups—and, at times, as an entire class—to complete a final project: a historical recipe archive in digital form. Your grade for this project will be determined by several components:

- Group cooking project and individual project analysis (24 points combined)
- Group final project and individual project analysis (36 points combined)

Specific information about each assignment will be distributed no later than two weeks before the due date.

Attendance, Punctuality, and Late/Skipped Assignments

You are allowed three excused absences. Beginning with the fourth absence, your overall course grade will be lowered by two points for each unexcused absence.

Please be respectful to your fellow students and arrive on time. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be considered absent for that class. If you absolutely must miss a class meeting, please contact me at least 24 hours in advance in order to make alternate arrangements.

All assignments are mandatory. Should you submit an assignment after the due date, your grade for that assignment will decrease by two points for each day that it is late. Should you fail to submit an assignment entirely, you will receive an F on that assignment and consequently, a lower grade for the course.

ADAPTS Contact Information

Students with disabilities should self-report to ADAPTS at:

Smithgall Student Services Building, Suite 220

Phone: (404) 894-2564 / TTD: (404) 894-1664

Email: adaptsinfo@gatech.edu

<http://adapts.gatech.edu/>

Writing Support

The Georgia Tech communication center, CommLab, provides professional and peer tutors to work with you to improve your writing skills. More information, including instructions for how to set up an appointment via the website, is available here:

Clough Learning Commons

Phone: (404) 894-3805

Email: commmlab@gatech.edu

<http://www.lmc.gatech.edu/writingcomm/commcenter/>

Honor Code Statement

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense. Any evidence of plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment and possibly in the course, as well as potential disciplinary action. For more information, please refer to the definition of “academic misconduct” included in the Georgia Tech honor code, available online at:

<http://www.honor.gatech.edu/>

If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me before submitting your assignment.

Class-by-Class Schedule

Introduction

Tuesday, August 18 – Overview I

- Li Young Lee, “Persimmons”

Thursday, August 20 – Overview II

- Georges Perec, “Attempt at an Inventory”

Unit I: Origins and Methods

Tuesday, August 25

- Michael Pollan, “Our National Eating Disorder”
- William Bradford, “The First Thanksgiving,” from *Of Plymouth Plantation* (ca. 1620)
- Edward Winslow on Thanksgiving, from *Mourt’s Relation* (1622)

Thursday, August 27

- James McWilliams, “Getting to the Guts of American Food”
- George Horse Capture, “Reservation Foods”
- Fernando and Marlene Divina, “Braised American Buffalo”

Tuesday, September 1 – **Blog Week 1**

- Roland Barthes, “Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption”
- Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity...* (1682) (start)

Thursday, September 3

- FIELD TRIP TO ARCHIVES

Tuesday, September 8 – **Blog Week 2**

- Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity...* (1682) (finish)

INTERLUDE: Consider the Cookbook

Thursday, September 10

- Stephen Mennell, “Taste, Culture, and History”
- Eliza Smith, “Preface” to *The Compleat Housewife* (1727/1742) (and skim recipes)
- Amelia Simmons, “Preface” to *American Cookery* (1798) (and skim recipes)

Tuesday, September 15 – **Blog Week 3**

- Arjun Appadurai, “How to Make a National Cuisine”
- Mary Randolph, “Preface” and “Introduction” to *The Virginia Housewife* (1824) (and skim recipes)
- Malinda Russell, “Preface” to *A Domestic Cookbook* (1866) (and skim recipes)

Thursday, September 17

- Kyla Tompkins, “Consider the Recipe”
- Lydia Maria Child, “Introductory Chapter” to *The Frugal Housewife* (1829) (and skim recipes)
- Catherine Ward Beecher, “The Peculiar Responsibilities of American Women,” from *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841) (and skim recipes)

Tuesday, September 22 – **Blog Week 4**

- IN CLASS: Midterm project planning session

Unit II: Making Sense of Taste

Thursday, September 24

- Carolyn Korsmeyer, “The Problem of Taste”
- Richard Ligon, “Pineapple,” from *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (1657)
- John Locke, “Of Ideas in General, and their Original,” from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689)

Tuesday, September 29 – **Blog Week 5**

- Denise Gigante, “Aesthetics and Appetite”
- Joseph Addison, “On Taste” and “On the Pleasures of the Imagination” (1712)
- Jonathan Edwards, “A Divine and Supernatural Light” (1734)

Thursday, October 1

- Anne Allison, “Japanese Mothers and Obentos”
- Benjamin Franklin, in *The Autobiography* (1771)

Tuesday, October 6 – **Blog Week 6**

- Sydney Mintz, “Time, Sugar, and Sweetness”
- James Granger, from “The Sugar-Cane” (1764)
- Phillis Wheatley, from *Poems on Various Subjects* (1773)

Thursday, October 8

- **DUE: DOCUMENTATION OF COOKING PROJECT**
- Thomas Jefferson, from *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785) and “Agreement with James Hemings” (1793)
- Virginia Randolph Trist, “Snow Eggs” (n.d.)
- Optional: Lauren Klein, “Dinner-Table Bargains”

Tuesday, October 13 – NO CLASS FALL BREAK

INTERLUDE: Reinventing the Recipe

Thursday, October 15

- **DUE: MIDTERM PROJECT AND ANALYSIS**
- IN CLASS: The Simpsons, “The Food Wife”

Tuesday, October 20

- Rachel Zarrell, “Someone Needs to Tell Martha Stewart Her Food Tweets are Disgusting”
- Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, “The Double Logic of Remediation” and “Immediacy, Hypermediacy, and Remediation”
- IN CLASS: Food and recipe blog analysis

Thursday, October 22

- Kenzi Wilbur, “Why Cookbooks are More than their Recipes”
- Alex Ketchum, “Regarding the State of [Scholarly?] Food Blogging”
- Paula Salvio, “Dishing It Out: Food Blogs and Post-Feminist Domesticity”
- IN CLASS: “Recipes @ LMC” analysis

Tuesday, October 27

- Andrew Haley, “The Nation before Taste”
- Rachel Laudon, “Getting Started in Food History”
- IN CLASS: Final project planning session

Unit III: How Eating Comes to Matter

Thursday, October 29

- James McWilliams, “A Culinary Declaration of Independence”
- Lydia Maria Child, from *Hobomok* (1824) and *The First Settlers* (1828)

Tuesday, November 3 – **Blog Week 7**

- Jessica Harris, “In Sorrow’s Kitchen”
- Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince* (1831)
- Fanny Kemble, from *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation* (1838-9)

Thursday, November 5

- Frederick Douglass, from *Narrative of the Life* (1845)
- Harriet Jacobs, from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

Tuesday, November 10 – **Blog Week 8**

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1851)
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, from *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851)

Thursday, November 12 – NO CLASS, PROFESSOR AT CONFERENCE

Tuesday, November 17 – **Bonus Blog Week**

- Emily Dickinson, selected poems and recipes (ca. 1850s/60s)
- Walt Whitman, from “Song of Myself” (1855)

Thursday, November 19

- Sarah Josepha Hale, selections on Thanksgiving (ca. 1850s/60s)
- Abraham Lincoln, “Thanksgiving Proclamation” (1864)

Tuesday, November 24 – NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

- **DUE: PROJECT BETA**

Thursday, November 26 – NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

Tuesday, December 1 – WPFE

- IN CLASS: Final project crit

Thursday, December 3 – WPFE

- IN CLASS: Final project conferences

Thursday, December 10th

- **DUE: FINAL PROJECT AND ANALYSIS**