The rich would have to eat money if the poor did not provide food --Russian proverb

When the last tree is cut down, the last fish eaten and the last stream poisoned, you will realize that you cannot eat money--Cree Indians

You are what you eat. -American proverb

Course Description
This course is about the historical and current production (hunting / gathering and farming and animal husbandry), distribution, and consumption of food, and the ways in which we engage with food shapes the ways in which we engage with each other and the planet. We will also be looking at how the food system has become increasingly global, as opposed to local, and what are the causes and consequences of this change. Furthermore, we will explore the effects the foods we eat, based on our distinct cultures / geographies have on our bodies, our lives, as well as, on animals and the environment. The basic perspective of the course is that the ‘personal is political’, meaning that what you eat is a political act in that it both results from and maintains larger social, political and economic forces, such as in particular global capitalism, but also religion, culture, ethics...etc. All humans (living beings) need to eat and drink in order to survive and the ways we do so are fundamental to the structure of our society, as well as our physical and mental wellbeing. It is the goal of this course to make you much more aware of all that is involved in the production, distribution and consumption of food so that each of us may make better choices not only in terms of our own health but also the health of others (including animals) and the world.

Required-Books
Readings for each class will be posted on HCT on Fridays by noon for the following week.

Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply, Vandana Shiva (Stolen)
Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability Food, Health, and the Environment, Alison Hope Alkon & Julian Agyeman (Cultivating)
Stuffed and Starved, Raj Patel (Stuffed)
Bread, Body, Spirit: Finding the Sacred in Food, Alice Peck (Bread)
Recommended
*Fast Food Nation, Eric Schlosser*
*Omnivore's Dilemma, Michael Polland*
And many more…ask me if you are interested

**In addition:**
There will also be short readings and films…etc posted on HCT. Check in time to read / view them before EACH class. It is your responsibility to come to class prepared and ready to engage with the materials.

**Key Objective**
“Focusing your life solely on making a buck shows a certain poverty of ambition. It asks too little of yourself. Because it's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you realize your true potential.” President Barack Obama

In light of Obama’s quote my vision for this class is that we do more than just read and write papers. I would like to see us engage in some very difficult personal / political discussions, explorations that lead us to take a step out into ‘society’ in order to share who we are/ what we have learned / who we want to be…etc. In order to do this you must be willing to be self-reflective, honest and have the courage to share who you are and how aspects of deviance / social control have shaped you so that we can all learn from each other because key to creating a more free society is communicating who we really are as people. You will be keeping journals (see below/ HCT) that will help you in this journey of self-discovery but key to the success of this class is your willingness to speak in class, to be generous with yourself so that we can make this class a real life changing experience- together. Thus, central to this course will be learning how to THINK CRITICALLY / ANALYTICALLY / CREATIVELY about the issues of food production / distribution / consumption. Through a combination of readings, classroom lectures / discussions, group work and your own written work and portfolios you will be guided to question assumptions you have held not only about our national / global food system but about what you choose to eat and why. My approach to teaching is that we are ALL active learners (myself included) and that collectively we can explore many more issues and ideas that we can individually.

**Requirements**
This course requires a fair amount of reading (there is a lot of diversity in terms of how the topic of food is being conceptualized) all of which is essential to your understanding of the issues and for participation in class discussions. The class is big but I still expect you to all come to class prepared and ready to give your thoughts / insights / opinions / questions on the readings and to listen attentively and respectfully to each other. In order to succeed in this class you are invited to read and follow the Guidebook (on HCT). Below is a summary:
*You are required to participate in class.
*You are required to do 5 entries on the HCT discussion board (copy and print out for your final review portfolio)- topics TBA
*There is a 10-15 page group (groups of 2-3) research paper / creative project on a topic of your choice that is linked to classroom readings / discussions. Due date TBA
*Group presentation on your creative project (10 mins).
*You will also do a Learning Journal that will act as a historical record of your learning (see below and on HCT) and my record that you are doing the readings. Journals must be in a small note book and must be handed in twice before the last day of class when they are due in your portfolio.
* A Final review portfolio (pls. get a folder with pockets) in which you put your discussion board postings, your journal, your group project evaluation and your final self evaluation in terms of what final grade you think you deserve and why. You may also add anything else that you like to show me your learning…This is due on the last day of class
*There will also be a Final Exam on all the material covered in the class (TBA on HCT and in class).

Requirement Details

Buddy System

Since this is a large class and much of your learning will be dependent on your relationships with each other you will all be paired into groups of three. These groups will be the groups that you work with on your main class project and many other small projects throughout the semester. Groups will be assigned by me in order to seek as much diversity / learning as possible. This system is used by West Point, the military college, as the best way to provide “mutual support and assistance, to reduce stress, to teach team work, to develop of a sense of responsibility and accountability for fellow [students], to improve safety…. and to reduce the likelihood and opportunity for …[overall bigotry] and misconduct”. During the second week you will be assigned your ‘buddies’ and are expected to sit together and to provide each other with mutual support ..etc. We will discuss this more in class.

Group Projects

The group project is to be based on an issue of Food that your buddy group researches / experiences on campus / in the community. You will in the end hand in a 10-15 page paper as a group. All projects must involve critical thinking and analysis and are to address a Food related problem that you try to ‘solve’ / ‘seek solutions for’ by actively becoming engaged on campus / in the community. You paper (about 5 pages per person but length depends on topics) is the documentation of your process and of the problem you choose, how you went about addressing it, why you chose to address it the way that you did and how it links to the class readings. You will set up your paper in order to answer a question or make an argument and you must use references from the FIVE class books in a critical and analytical way, as well as FOUR other sources (book chapters, articles…etc ) that you feel best represents your specific issue and the perspective of the issue that you are taking. What is most important is that the readings help you understand what you have experienced – in short what does what you have experienced mean and what does it tell us about our society / food systems / our world / our thinking about food…etc. There is no specific project type – it depends on
what you are interested in (you may also do a video, engage in ethnographic research, start a community garden, work at the Soup Kitchen …etc) but the key is to document what you have done and what is the meaning of what you have done. Your final project is not due until the end of the semester but certain deadlines will be listed on the HCT calendar to make sure you are on track. Each project will involve a final presentation More details are in the Guidebook on HCT and will be discussed in class. There is a writing rubric on HCT to help you the exact structure of the paper and / or if you need more help email me or go to the Writing Center.

Also, make sure you keep a running record of all that you do in relation to your project and hand it in with your paper.

Journals
In order to explore yourself/ your thoughts on the class you are to keep Learning Journals. All journals entries must relate to a given reading on a food topic to show that you are keeping up with class materials. I will collect these several times during the semester so always bring them to class and keep up on your entries. More details are in the Guidebook on HCT.

First Journal Entry
Write an entry about your thoughts on food… What are your family’s traditional foods (link to culture/ ethnicity / race / religion…etc)? What is the history of those foods? What are your favorite foods and why? How much do you know about where your favorite foods come from and how they are made / who makes them? Do you feel connected to your food? If so why / how – if not how not and why not? Reflect on what you know about the global food system / on the North American food system – what major changes have there been over the last 10 / 20 / 30 /…years and why? You may also do an entry on what you want to learn and why which can also be posted on the HCT discussion board.

More details are in the Guidebook on HCT

Attendance and Classroom Etiquette
As for attendance you are allowed to miss two classes with no excuse, so pls let me know in advance if you can’t make it to class. More than that and you should get in touch with me to find out how you can make up missed classes (usually by doing extra journals). In addition, if you are in class I ask that you be there in mind as well as in body. This means that I require that you turn off your cell phones as I find it highly disrespectful of myself and your classmates. If you must text / take a call (due to an emergency / addiction) please leave the classroom and return when you are done. If you do want to use your computer make sure that you are still paying attention to the class and are not using it for other purposes. The reason for these rules is that being in a class is like being in a relationship and if you do not show up (both in body and in mind) the relationship suffers. In addition, my hope it that this is not ‘just a class,’ but rather a unique opportunity to understand our society, ourselves and to decide what kind of a world do we want to live in and what kind of people we want to be.

Wed. Jan 18th- Introduction
Critically Analyzing bananas …..an introduction to the sociology of food…

All other readings will be posted on HCT by Fri noon for the following week.