

## SCIENCE AND FOOD IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN WORLD (1890s–1970s)



**Image:** A Coffee House in Tophane, Istanbul, late 19<sup>th</sup> century by Megerdich Jivanian (wikicommons)

Time: Wednesday (every fortnight) 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ETZ E 7

Course Instructor: Sujeet George, MA/M.Phil

Spring Semester 2020



Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich  
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This seminar course aims to offer a historical perspective on the development of modern food systems, agrarian science and global cultures of taste and eating. Looking at specific food and non-food commodities cultivated, developed and consumed across different regions in the world through the late 19th and 20th centuries, the course shall try to make sense of the aesthetic, economic and scientific assumptions inherent within the varied food palettes of our modern world. The course shall introduce students to the interlinked and overlapping histories of the development of modern agricultural science, the political economy of food production, distribution and consumption, and ideas of culinary aesthetics and national cuisines.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Evaluation will be based on active classroom participation, submission of comments before every class, and a final written assignment.

## **SESSION OUTLINE**

Session 1  
19.02.2020

**INTRODUCTORY CLASS**  
Course Description & Evaluation Requirements

Session 2  
04.03.2020

**SETTING THE TABLE – THE FOOD WE EAT**

Mintz, Sidney W. "Time, sugar, and sweetness." In *Food and Culture*, pp. 91–103. Routledge, 2013.



Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich  
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Session 3  
18.03.2020

### THE MAKING OF CUISINES – NATIONAL AND GLOBAL

Appadurai, Arjun. "How to make a national cuisine: cookbooks in contemporary India." *Comparative studies in society and history* 30, no. 1 (1988): 3–24.

Pilcher, J. "Eating Mexican in a global age: The politics and production of ethnic food." *Food chains: From farmyard to shopping cart* (2009): 158–176.

#### *Additional Reading*

Stevenson, Wendell. "The rise and fall of French cuisine." *The Guardian*, July 16, 2019.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/food/2019/jul/16/the-rise-and-fall-of-french-cuisine>

Session 4  
01.04.2020

### THE SCIENCE OF EATING: CALORIES, DIETS AND FADS

Cullather, Nick. "The foreign policy of the calorie." *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 2 (2007): 337–364.

Weinreb, Alice Autumn. "Fighting Fat: Obesity and Healthy Body in the Late Cold War." *Modern Hungers: Food and Power in Twentieth-Century Germany, 196–236*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Session 5  
22.04.2020

### THE RISE OF THE FAST FOOD AGE

Schlosser, Eric. "Why the fries taste so good." *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*, 111-132. Penguin Books, 2002.

Laudan, Rachel. "A plea for culinary modernism: why we should love new, fast, processed food." *Gastronomica* 1, no. 1 (2001): 36-44.



Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich  
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Session 6  
06.05.2020

### THE MODERN FOOD SYSTEM: ALTERNATIVE IMAGININGS

Leitch, Alison. "Slow Food and the politics of "virtuous globalization"." In *Food and Culture*, pp. 423-439. Routledge, 2012.

Guthman, Julie. "Fast food/organic food: Reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow'." *Social & Cultural Geography* 4, no. 1 (2003): 45-58.

Session 7  
20.05.2020

### THE FUTURE OF FOOD – POLITICS & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Belasco, Warren. "Food and social movements." In *The Oxford handbook of food history*. 2012.

Lohrberg, Frank, Lilli Lička, Lionella Scazzosi, and Axel Timpe, eds. *Urban Agriculture Europe*. Jovis, 2016. (Case Studies)

### LITERATURE/SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

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

Belasco, Warren. "Chapter Fourteen Food and the Counterculture: A Story of Bread and Politics." In Grew, Raymond (Ed), *Food In Global History* Westview Press: 1999.

Buettner, Elizabeth. "'Going for an Indian": South Asian restaurants and the limits of multiculturalism in Britain." *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 4 (2008): 865-901.

Clapp, Jennifer. "The political economy of food aid in an era of agricultural biotechnology." *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 11, no. 4 (2005): 467-485.

Gillespie, John. "Cold (Beer) War: The German Volksgetränk in East German Rhetoric (1945–1971)." In *Food, Culture and Identity in Germany's Century of War*, pp. 227-246. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Holtzman, Jon D. "Food and memory." *Annual review of anthropology* 35 (2006): 361-378.

Janes, Lauren, April Merleaux, Helen Zoe Veit, Alice Weinreb, and Samuel Yamashita. "World War I and the Origins of the Modern Food System." *Global Food History* 5, no. 3 (2019): 224-238.  
Lévi-Strauss, Claude. "The culinary triangle." in *Food and culture*, pp. 54-61. Routledge, 2012.

McDonnell, Erin Metz. "Food porn: The conspicuous consumption of food in the age of digital reproduction." in *Food, Media and contemporary culture*, pp. 239-265. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016.

Mintz, Sidney W., and Christine M. Du Bois. "The anthropology of food and eating." *Annual review of anthropology* 31, no. 1 (2002): 99-119.

Nestle, Marion, and Malden Nesheim. "Understanding Calories: It all Starts with the Science." *Why calories count: from science to politics*. Vol. 33. Univ of California Press, 2012, pp. 11–48.

Pilcher, Jeffrey M. "The embodied imagination in recent writings on food history." *The American Historical Review* 121, no. 3 (2016): 861-887.

Veit, Helen Zoe. "Food will Win the World: Food Aid and American Power." In *Modern food, moral food: Self-control, science, and the rise of modern American eating in the early twentieth century*. UNC Press Books, 2013.