World History in A Dozen Meals
HNR 309/HIS 394, Spring, 2014

Nothing would be more tiresome than eating and drinking if
God had not made them a pleasure as well as a necessity. ~Voltaire

Instructor: Dr. Jonathan Reynolds
Office Hours: LAN 439: M/W/F 9-10, M/W 2-3
Office Phone: x5279
E-Mail: ReynolJo@nku.edu Sagiru@gmail.com
Meeting Times: M 4-6:45 Honors House 101 (and Kitchen)
Required Texts: None: Recipes to be selected from Extending the Table: A World Community Cookbook ... available in HoHo Kitchen
Additional Resources. See the Selected Books and Articles list at the end of the syllabus. I’ll make as many as possible available in the HoHo Kitchen.
Recommended: Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, Near a Thousand Tables: A History of Food (2002), Pilcher, Food in World History (2005), and Hungry Planet: What the World Eats (2007). Both are available at any number of passable bookstores or via one-line sellers. Trust me, reading these will make you look smart... not only in this class, but also in any number of other food-related settings for years to come.

Course Description: World History in A Dozen Meals will seek to examine various world regions and cultures through a series of dinner seminars. Each week’s dinner/discussion will focus on a specific world region or culture and the cooking of a representative and authentic meal from that place or group. In addition to cooking and eating, students will be expected to take turns leading discussions on different aspects of the week’s focus area or group. These discussion topics will include: a regional, national or ethnic history; an ecological and environmental history of the menu’s ingredients; and a discussion of the social aspects of the process by which the meal is produced. Also, students will take turns shopping, cooking and doing KP. Whenever possible we will arrange for a guest expert from the subject region or culture to offer responses to and insights on our discussion, as well as to critique the authenticity of our final product.

Goals of the Course: This course is based upon the assumption that cooking and eating offer a unique insight into human culture and history. By examining what and how people eat, it is hoped that all concerned will develop a greater understanding of the variety and complexity of human cultures – and how deeply even the simple process of eating is influenced by historical and global currents. Not only will students learn about “other” cultures and regions by preparing and eating their food, but students will learn more about their own lives via a self-examination of American food culture.

More specific goals: Over the course of the Semester, students who make the effort to do so will gain:
1) The degree to which apparently “indigenous” or “traditional” culinary practices are the result of global developments.
2) A sense of how cultural and ecological forces have interacted to influence the development of
human societies.
3) Insight into the scope and complexity of the economic and cultural exchanges that have occurred over the long span of human history.
4) A better sense of the complex and interconnected nature of humanity’s global history.

Each student’s progress towards these goals will be assessed via:
1) Analysis of written work, both in the form of out-of-class assignments and also in-class essay exams and quizzes. Reviews will test the student’s ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate scholarly arguments. The final paper will test the student’s ability to undertake research and organize the resulting material in a persuasive argument.
2) Careful Evaluation of contributions to each class meeting.

Attendance Policy: All students will be participants in each dinner seminar. This is an active, not a passive class. Because the success of the course will be dependent upon everyone’s participation, unexcused absences will not be tolerated. If you cannot attend class for any reason (if you are sick, for example, we don’t want you around while we eat), contact the instructor ASAP.

Readings and Course Requirements: There is no required text. We will be making frequent use of Schlabach’s Extending the Table: A World Community Cookbook, which you can pick up cheap if you want. Critical to the course is also the Cambridge World History of Food, which can be found in the reference section of the library (TX 353.c255). Because we will have to buy food for every class, there will also be a $30 course fee – paid to the instructor, who will disburse a weekly budget to the shopping team. Considering that you will get about a dozen meals out of this, it is really a pretty good deal.

Written Assignments: Each student will be responsible for handing in three written assignments. These will be:

! **One Academic Review**: of a book or article relating to food history (see “Doc Reynolds Acme Guide to Review Writing”). This will be presented to the class. The goal here is not simply to summarize the source in question, but to analyze its argument, the strength of its evidence, and access its significance to our understanding of World History. This is a big chunk of your grade, so approach it with appropriate energy.

! **A Family Food History**: This will be an informal oral history of your family or peer-group’s food culture, roles, traditions and innovations. Find something important or funky about how food has played a crucial role in your friends or family’s history (recent or deep). Four or five pages (double spaced) should be plenty. Feel free to get creative.

! **A Poster Presentation** focusing on the Global History and Impact of a particular food. The class will present en-mass during the poster session of the Celebration of Student Research. Let’s look sharp out there, people! The days of gluing pictures on poster board are over. Your poster should present a convincing argument, backed up by carefully chosen evidence, in a brief yet visually appealing manner.
Special Considerations: Anyone with dietary restrictions (cultural, medical or voluntary) must inform the instructor ASAP so that special arrangements can be made. For example – if you can’t or won’t eat rice, then you will need to be prepared to provide an alternate starch for meals requiring such a component.

Grade: Each student’s grade will be based upon the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentations, Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly Review and Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Food Essay and Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staple Food Poster and Presentation (Celebration of Undergraduate Research)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weekly Course Duties
For each class meeting, there will be Seight necessary activities. Each activity (save the review) will be shared by TWO students. Over the course of the semester, each student will perform each duty TWICE. These duties will be distributed after the first meeting of the course. Some of these activities will simply require a bit of labor. Others will require considerable research and thought. Contacting people from the region or ethnicity in question for advice is heartily encouraged. Whenever possible, each week will feature expert guests from the region or ethnicity from which the meal comes. These guests will offer insights into our presentations and the quality of the food.

1) Menu Team. The WEEK BEFORE a particular meal and discussion (at the end of the previous weeks meal), the Menu Team will present a menu for the next week. They will state why they chose the particular meal and provide the Shopping Team, Ecological and Economic presenters and Social presenters with a detailed list of ingredients. The Menu Team will be graded not only for thoroughness, but also for the authenticity of their meal (is this a combination of foods that someone would actually eat in a single sitting?) and for how UNFAMILIAR it is to the class.

2) Shopping Team. This team is responsible for making sure all ingredients required by the cooking team are fresh and ready to go for each class meeting. All meals are to be made “from scratch” to the utmost degree possible. Those lacking transportation can make arrangements with the instructor.

3) Cooking Team. Obviously enough, this team is responsible for preparing an authentic and hopefully yummy meal for the rest of the class. It is very likely that this will require considerable research into the meal in question and perhaps even a bit of practice ahead of time. Any special needs in terms of cooking equipment must be communicated to the instructor at least 48 hours prior to the class meeting.

4) Scholarly Review. See the information regarding the Review Assignment, above, under “Written Assignments.” Note that brownie points will be awarded for selecting a source that relates to the weekly focus at hand.

5) Historical and Contemporary Setting Presentation/Discussion. This is generally the toughest job of the bunch, because it requires students to “boil down” a huge amount of material into a
coherent presentation. This team will lead the class in a discussion of the region or culture’s history as well as information relating the current state of affairs for that place or culture. **The key questions to be addressed include:**

a) Where is this region, what are its important geographical features, and what cultures do we associate with it? Or, what is this culture and what region(s) do we associate with it? Why do we recognize this place or people as a coherent unit of analysis?

b) What have been, in the team’s opinion, the most important events and themes in the history of this region or group?

c) What is happening in this place or to these people today?

d) How has food played an important role for this region or culture?

6) **Ecological and Economic Presentation/Discussion.** This team will lead the class in a discussion of the ecological and economic aspects of the meal. The discussion will focus on as many ingredients of the meal as possible. Some of the key questions to be addressed could include:

a) What are the ingredients and where do they come from. Are the ingredients imported? Why? How long have these ingredients been a part of the local cuisine?

b) What sort of environment produces these ingredients?

c) What is the ecological “cost” of producing the ingredients of the meal (please also note the cost of fuel).

d) How much does this meal cost a family in dollars? As a percentage of per-capita income?

7) **Social Components Presentation/Discussion.** This team will lead the class in a discussion of the social components of the food and meal in question. Social components include issues of religious or cultural significance of food, and of social distinctions in preparation and consumption such as age, class and gender. The key questions to be addressed include:

a) When and by whom is this food eaten? Is it an everyday staple food, or is it connected to a specific time, action or event?

b) Who produces or acquires the ingredients for this meal? Why? What must be done and how long does it take?

c) Who processes the ingredients? Why? What must be done and how long does it take?

d) Who cooks this food? Why? What must be done and how long does it take?

e) How do people evaluate the quality of this meal?

f) Is this meal considered “healthy”? Why or why not?

g) Where else in the World are similar foods found? Is this significant?

8) **KP Team.** Yep, these folks gotta clean up after everybody else. Make it hard for them and I bet they will return the favor.

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1** – January 13th: Greetings and introduction. Discussion of goals of class and distribution of weekly duties. Case Study of Pizza & History. Discussion of the historical and cultural significance of Food.

**Week 2** – January 20th: Martin Luther King Day... eat something yummy on your own time. Menu Team (Menu for Week 3) – must e-mail menu to fellow class members. This can be done
through Doc R, so long as it is done in a timely fashion.

*Eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside.* – Mark Twain

**Week 3** – January 27th: Chinese New Year Feast!!!
- Specific Focus and Menu:
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting and Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
- KP Team
- Menu Team (Menu for Week 4)

*Anything that walks, swims, crawls, or flies with its back to heaven is edible.*
*(Cantonese saying. Source: *The Chinese Kitchen* by Eileen Yin-Fei Lo)*

**Week 4** – February 3rd: Caribbean Comestibles
- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
- KP Team
- Menu Team (Menu for Week 5)

**Week 5** – February 10th: Middle Eastern Munchables
- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
- KP Team
- Menu Team (Menu for Week 6)

**Week 6** – February 17th: Western Eurasian Eats
- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well. – Virginia Woolf

**Week 7 – February 24th:** Sub-Continental Subsistence
- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
- KP Team
- Menu Team (Menu for Week 8)

**Week 8 – Monday March 3rd:** African Appetizers!
- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
- KP Team
- Menu Team (Menu for Week 10)

**Week 9 – March 10th:** No Class, Spring Break

**Week 10 – March 17th:** Japanese Jaws at Work
- *Family/Friends Food Paper Due!*
- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
- KP Team
- Menu Team (Menu for Week 11)

**Week 11 – March 24th:** Kosher Kooking... Jewish Eats.
- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
Week 12 – March 31st: South American Cuisine – Latin Lunches (and Dinners)

- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
- KP Team
- Menu Team (Menu for Week 13)

Week 13 – April 7th: Mexican Meals

- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
- KP Team
- Menu Team (Menu for Week 14)

Week 14 – April 14th: Southeast Asian Suppers.

*NOTE: This is also the week of the Celebration of Undergraduate Research! Posters DUE!*

- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
- Social Components Discussion
- KP Team
- Menu Team (Menu for Week 15)

Week 15 – April 21st: Cincinnati Cuisine (Menu needn’t come from *Extending the Table*)

- Specific Focus and Menu
- Shopping Team
- Cooking Team
- Academic Review
- Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
- Ecological and Economic Discussion
Social Components Discussion
KP Team
Menu Team (Menu for Week 16)

**Week 16** – April 28th: What’s your favorite brand of food? Post-Modern Cooking... (Menu needn’t come from *Extending the Table*)
Specific Focus and Menu
Shopping Team
Cooking Team
Academic Review
Historical and Contemporary Setting Discussion
Ecological and Economic Discussion
Social Components Discussion
KP Team


**Dates of an Important Nature:**
Celebration of Undergraduate Research Poster Topics Due – Late February, usually.

March 17th: Family Food Paper Due

April 14-18: Celebration of Undergraduate Research

Additional Class Resources

**Web Materials**
*Research Center for the History of Food and Drink*
http://www.arts.adelaide.edu.au/centrefooddrink/

*Recipe Source*
http://www.recipesource.com/

**Selected Books and Articles**
Bell and Valentine (eds): *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat* (1997).


*Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*


__________

*OH COFFEE, YOU DISPEL THE WORRIES OF THE GREAT,* you point the way to those who have wandered from the path of knowledge. Coffee is the drink of the friends of God, and of His servants who seek wisdom.

As coffee steeps in the cup it gives off a musky aroma and turns the colour of ink. No one can understand the truth until he drinks of its frothy goodness. Those who condemn coffee as causing man harm are fools in the eyes of God.

Coffee is the common man's gold, and like gold it brings to every man the feeling of luxury and nobility. Coffee differs from pure, gentle milk only in its taste and colour. Take time in your preparation of coffee and God will be with you and bless you and your table. Where coffee is served there is grace and splendour and friendship and happiness.

All cares vanish as the coffee cup is raised to the lips. Coffee flows through your body as freely as your life’s blood, refreshing all that it touches; look you at the youth and vigour of those who drink it.

Whoever tastes coffee will forever forswear the liquor of the grape. Oh drink of God’s glory, your purity brings to man only well being and nobility.

by Sheik Ansari Djezeri Hanball Abd-al-Kadir, 1587