

Sociology 240: Sociology of Food
Tuesday & Thursday 10:00am – 11:25am
Johnson Hall 205

Instructor: John T. Lang

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 11:45am – 1:15pm, and by appointment

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Course Website: <http://moodle.oxy.edu>

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Sociology of Food! This course examines the social relations surrounding the production, distribution, preparation, and consumption of food. In doing so, we will try to understand how the issues and problems of daily life reflect larger social forces, and how our understanding and actions shape the social world. This means that we will treat several major questions facing sociology today, including inequalities and identities based on national, racial/ethnic, class and gender positions; work and family; the environment; globalization and cultural change. We will explore some of the big questions about food and talk about some of the intriguing answers that sociologists have provided.

By the end of the course, you will be able critically examine and evaluate the connections between food, culture, and society.

Prerequisite: Sociology 101.

REQUIRED READING

Readings will be available on the course website.

There are no required texts for you to buy. However, the following book is recommended. It is available at the Occidental College Bookstore or online at your favorite book seller. I've also placed it on 2+ hour reserve at Clapp Library.

Hungry Planet: What the World Eats by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio. 2007. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.
Paperback.
ISBN: 978-1580088695

GRADING

I do not give extra-credit assignments. I will base your final grade on the following:

10% = Attendance/Participation

15% = Farmer's Market Visit

30% = Film Reviews

45% = Final Paper

Attendance/Participation – 10%

Our time together is brief and we have a wealth of ideas to exchange and explore in that limited period. I expect you to come to class on time and remain here until class is over.

You may miss 4 class sessions without penalty. After that, your attendance will be penalized a full letter grade for each absence. I have this policy not for any punitive reason, but to encourage students to attend class and to do well in the course. I do not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. You are, therefore, strongly encouraged not to miss class carelessly because of the possibility of unexpected or unavoidable absences during the

semester. No matter the reason, it is always your responsibility to contact other students to learn what you've missed and to get notes.

Film Reviews – 30% – due October 2, 2008 and November 13, 2008.

There will be two film reviews, each worth 15% of your final grade. For each review, you will write a 2-3 page analysis; you will be required to apply the insights from your readings and our class discussions. Your review will be due one week after the class screening ends. Late papers will be penalized a full letter grade for each day late; those not turned in within one week of due date are still required but will not receive points.

If you miss the class screenings, you can view the film on your own time. The films are on 2+ hour reserve at Clapp Library and/or you can likely find them in a local video store.

1. Big Night (107 min)
2. Like Water for Chocolate (105 min)

Farmer's Market Visit – 15% – due as completed, no later than November 25, 2008.

You will access and utilize Los Angeles as a living lab for research and synthesizing class material. In your 2-3 page report, you will be required to apply the insights from your readings and our class discussions. You may visit any of the listed markets any day between now and November 24, 2008. Your report must be turned in no later than the start of class on November 25, 2008 though you are encouraged to turn it in sooner. Late papers will be penalized a full letter grade for each day late.

1. The Pasadena Certified Farmer's Market @ Villa Parke Center
363 East Villa Street at Garfield Avenue
Open Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
2. The Pasadena Certified Farmer's Market @ Victory Park
Sierra Madre Blvd at Paloma Street
Open Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
3. The Eagle Rock Certified Farmer's Market
2100 Merton Ave.
Open Fridays, 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Try to be adventurous and experiment with a food you've never tried before! You should hang around the market soaking things up, shopping, and eating. You'll want to bring along a notebook so you can record your observations. While visiting the market, you should pay attention to 3 themes: the foods in market, the people in market (the vendors, shoppers, and others), and the social interactions in market. Write up your observations and insights as soon as possible after the experience. While addressing the 3 themes, you should note how each of these things differ from your personal supermarket visits.

Final Paper – 45% – due December 2, 2008.

- 10% Proposal – due September 18, 2008.
- 15% First Draft exchange – due October 23, 2008
- Peer Review – due October 30, 2008.
- 20% Final Draft – due December 2, 2008.

We will talk MUCH more about this paper throughout the semester. Your final paper should be no less than 10 pages in length; it must not exceed 15 pages (not counting references). You must turn in a hard copy at the start of class on the due date. Late papers will be penalized a full letter grade for each day late.

For the final project you will make an argument in a concise and cogent manner, explore some of the big sociological questions about food, and present your results in a scholarly manner. I'm

asking you to consider food within the context of the social institutions and interactions we study in this class while writing this paper. For example, you might analyze to what extent food preferences are the properties of individuals, and to what extent they are socially structured. More specifically, you might explore, to what extent do food opportunities and patterns of food consumption reflect existing inequalities, and to what extent do food opportunities shape the structure of social inequality? This is only an example. We will discuss possible topics and ideas throughout the course. I encourage you to think broadly about what interests you. Consider this an opportunity to scrutinize your own food opportunities and food-related behavior; critically review the social science literature on food; and write about and share your findings with your peers and professor.

COURSE GRADES

Do NOT count on a curve. I will assign letter grades for the entire course as follows:

92.5 points and higher = A	72.5 to 77.49 points = C
90.0 to 92.49 points = A-	70 to 72.49 points = C-
87.5 to 89.99 points = B+	67.5 to 69.99 points = D+
82.5 to 87.49 points = B	62.5 to 67.49 points = D
80 to 82.49 points = B-	60 to 62.49 points = D-
77.5 to 79.99 points = C+	59.99 points and lower = F.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I will hold you responsible for the information in this syllabus, so I expect you to read it, understand it, and ask questions about anything you don't understand.

Office Hours: I hold three official office hours each week. I also encourage you to make an appointment outside of office hours or come by my office anytime to see if I'm available. I am happy to discuss class concepts, college more generally, musings about majors, future planning, or graduate school.

Feedback: I love getting feedback on my teaching and how the class is going. I value your input and I am willing to make changes to the class according to your preferences. Please share with me any comments, suggestions, and ideas you may have, and help me make this a great class. If you would like to do so anonymously, you can type and print out a note and drop it in my mailbox on the 3rd floor of Middle Swan.

Class Demeanor: While we may find ourselves disagreeing, we must do so with respect, a commitment to hearing what others have to say, and a willingness to think and rethink our own positions. Personal insults have no place in the college classroom.

Technology in Class: Please turn off your cell phones or set them on silent mode when you come to class. Similarly, text messaging will not be tolerated in class. You are welcome to bring your laptop to class and use it to take notes, access readings we're discussing, and the like. You are not welcome to surf the web, check email, or otherwise perform non-class-related activities during class. Here's my best advice: If you aren't using it to perform a task specifically related to what we are doing in class at that very moment, put it away.

Special Accommodations/Learning Differences: Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a disability should talk to me sometime in the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes a learning disability, I encourage you to contact the friendly folks over at the Center for Academic Excellence (x2849).

Assignments: A hard copy of all papers/assignments must be handed in at the start of class on the scheduled date. I do not accept assignments via email. Late assignments are docked 1 grade per day. Computer and printing problems are not a good excuse for

missing a deadline. Make sure to print your papers early enough to be able to address any problems before class. Keep a paper and electronic copy of everything you hand in until you receive your course grade.

Academic Integrity: As is always the case, you are responsible for your own work. If you find yourself questioning whether you have documented or cited your sources properly, it is your responsibility to come see me about these issues prior to submitting an assignment. If you are thinking about submitting work that is not your own due to pressure, frustration, perfectionism, or any other reason, please talk to me. I am here to help you resolve these issues before they become a problem for your academic career. Academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, will be taken very seriously. A description of Occidental's academic ethics policies is available in the Student Handbook and on the following webpage:

<http://departments.oxy.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/academic.policies/>

Readings

Your most basic duty in this class is to read all of the assigned texts. Be sure to read the calendar of class meetings, readings, assignments, papers, and exams. All readings are due on the day they are listed. You must have read them carefully, taken notes, and be prepared to discuss them intelligently.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Although I will do my best to keep us on schedule, it is possible that we will make some adjustments during the semester. I will give as much notice - both in class and on the course website - when changes are necessary.

AUGUST

28th Welcome to the class

SEPTEMBER

Food for Thought

2nd Berry, "The Pleasures of Eating"
Kingsolver, "Lily's Chickens"
4th Lappé, "Food, Farming, Fear"

Production

9th LeDuff, "At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die"
11th Manning, "The Oil We Eat"
Pollan, "Power Steer"
Sobal et al., "A Conceptual Model of the Food and Nutrition System"

How to Write and How to Cite

16th "ASA Style Guide"
"Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Citing Sources"
"Using Source Materials Effectively"

18th Final Paper Proposal Due

"On Writing and Criticism"

23rd 📺 Big Night

25th 📺 Big Night

Consumption

30th Block, "Foods Contributing to Energy Intake in the U.S."

O'Connor, "Study Details 30-Year Increase in Calorie Consumption"
Nestle, "The Ironic Politics of Obesity"
Spake & Marcus, "A Fat Nation"

OCTOBER

2nd Big Night reaction due

- Jordan, "The Heirloom Tomato as Cultural Object"
- Laudan, "Birth of the Modern Diet"
- 7th Ferguson & Zukin, "What's Cooking"
- 9th Pollan, "Introduction: Our National Eating Disorder" and "Chapter 1: Industrial Corn"
- 14th No Class. Fall Break.
- 16th No Class. Visit the Library to work on your First Draft.

Gender & Culture

- 21st Holden, "The Overcooked and the Underdone"
- Sobal, "Men, Meat, and Marriage: Models of Masculinity"
- 23rd First Draft exchange
 - Julier & Lindenfeld, "Mapping Men onto the Menu"
 - Mechling, "Boy Scouts and the Manly Art of Cooking"
- 28th Parasecoli, "Feeding Hard Bodies"
- 30th Peer Review due
 - Fine, "Wittgenstein's Kitchen: Sharing Meaning in Restaurant Work"

NOVEMBER

- 4th  Like Water for Chocolate
- 6th  Like Water for Chocolate

The Future of Food

- 11th Altieri & Rosset, "Ten Reasons Why Biotechnology Will Not Help the Developing World"
- Lang & Priest, "Understanding Receptivity to Genetically Modified Foods"
- McGloughlin, "Ten Reasons Why Biotechnology Will Be Important to the Developing World"
- 13th Like Water for Chocolate reaction due
 - Blank, "The End of the American Farm"
 - Balfour, "Understanding the Global Rice Crisis"
- 18th Barlett & Steel, "Monsanto's Harvest of Fear"
- 20th Belasco, "The Stakes in our Steaks"
- Paarlberg, "The Real Food Crisis"
- 25th Farmer's Market paper due
 - Wallendorf & Arnould, "We Gather Together: Consumption Rituals of Thanksgiving Day"
- 27th No Class. Thanksgiving Break.

DECEMBER

2nd Final Papers due at the start of class

Good luck! I'm looking forward to a great semester!