FOOD AND CULTURE

ANTHROPOLOGY 330.00 & 702.62 SPRING 2020
Tues. & Fri. 9:45-11:00am, Room 717 North

Prof. Marc Edelman

Office hours: Tues. & Fri. 11:00am-12:00pm or by appointment (706 North), tel. 212 772-5659
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This course provides a multidisciplinary, comparative, and necessarily eclectic look at the anthropology of food, with a primary focus on issues of food and power. The objective is to give students a thorough grounding in the following areas:

- Differing approaches to the anthropology of food and to understanding dietary patterns;
- Historical and contemporary “food regimes”;
- Commodity or value chain analyses and the history of commodities, such as sugar and chicken;
- Analyses of hunger, malnutrition and famine, as well as cultures of thinness and fatness;
- Debates between proponents of “the right to food,” “food security” and “food sovereignty”;
- Food and class, gender, race and region;
- Social and environmental impacts of local, regional and global food systems;
- Debates over agroecology and industrial agriculture;
- Food-related social movements.

Course requirements include:

1. **Active participation in all class discussions** (10% of course grade). I take this requirement very seriously. Please consider that the only way to not participate actively and achieve a “B” grade is if you achieve an “A” on every other assignment and examination (which for non-participators is nearly impossible). Participating actively means asking questions when you have them and sharing your knowledge and experience. What you learn in this course and how well you do will depend significantly on how deeply you engage with the material and with the other people in the course. If you are extremely shy or inhibited (as many of us are or once were), use this course as an opportunity to challenge yourself. Anthropologists need to be able to interact with people as part of their fieldwork and in academic and other professional settings (as do non-anthropologists). If you are not shy, it is very important that you contribute to creating a supportive environment for those who might be.

2. **Eight one-page, double-spaced reaction papers** on any week’s readings, to be submitted by 9:44AM on the first day of class for the week. Submit paper copies only, in class (40% of course grade). FOUR OF THE PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY MARCH 10. Papers must respond to a written question posed by the instructor (and posted on Blackboard) or, alternatively, address an issue that you view as significant in the readings. It is up to you to choose which weeks you wish to write reaction papers, but it is probably not a good idea to leave too many for the last weeks of the semester. Under no circumstances should reaction papers be more than one page, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, in twelve-point type. Papers must be well written and organized, and carefully proofread. Papers that do not meet these criteria or that are written with less than professional standards will receive lower grades.

3. **An in-class midterm examination** to be held on March 13 (25% of course grade). This exam will consist of short answer and short essay questions, some of which will be distributed in advance.
A take-home final examination due at 5:30PM on May 19 via the Blackboard “SafeAssign” feature (25% of course grade). This will consist of short essays. The text must be in Word (*.doc or *docx) format. DO NOT SUBMIT Pages or pdf files or links to Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.

Extra-credit assignment (optional, additional 10%). Students who wish may write an essay of no more than 1,200 words (not including citations) on a topic of their choice (which must be related to the theme of the course). To exercise this option, you must consult with the instructor and then submit via email a paper proposal of no more than one double-spaced page NO LATER THAN MARCH 3 that includes an abstract or outline and a preliminary list of sources. The paper itself must be submitted using Blackboard “SafeAssign” NO LATER THAN MAY 5.

Late assignments and email submissions of assignments will be accepted only under very unusual circumstances. This syllabus may be modified during the course of the semester.

BOOKS for the course are available at Shakespeare’s bookstore (Lexington Ave. bet. 68th & 69th Streets):


Other assigned readings may be obtained through web links in this syllabus or via the Library’s Electronic Reserve web page for this course. Go to [http://hunter.docutek.com/eres/](http://hunter.docutek.com/eres/) to sign in. The password is edelman330.

A NOTE ABOUT WRITING:

Students often attempt to imitate academic prose, which is lamentable, since much of it is terrible. I strongly encourage you to consult an excellent, very short guide to writing well, “Cutting Out Lard” ("lard" refers to all those excess, “clutter” or “fat” words that don’t do any communicative “work,” that ought to be trimmed, and that students and novice writers insert in their prose, thinking that this makes it sound more sophisticated or that it’s what professors want). Use simple, straightforward, clear prose and you’ll do better in this course and in your professional life. [https://people.umass.edu/curtis/academics/editingtoolbox/cuttinglard.html](https://people.umass.edu/curtis/academics/editingtoolbox/cuttinglard.html)

For those who wish to make a more serious commitment to writing clear and effective prose, these optional books are highly recommended (older editions are fine and less expensive):


A NOTE ABOUT BLACKBOARD, ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND E-MAIL:

This course will make use of a Library Electronic Reserves web page (see above) and a Blackboard web site, which registered students may access from any computer with an Internet connection. The syllabus is available on the BB site under “Course Information” and on my Hunter Anthropology website. Blackboard allows the instructor to email individual students or the entire group, but it only uses Hunter email addresses that students receive automatically when enrolling at the College. It is important that you check your Hunter email address or that you set it to forward messages to an account that you check frequently. When you correspond with the instructor, kindly use your Hunter or other CUNY email address.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call (212- 772- 4857) / TTY (212- 650- 3230).

OTHER COLLEGE SUPPORT SERVICES

Hunter College also has the following resources available for students who are experiencing academic or other difficulties:

Advising Services: East Building, room 1119, tel. 212 772-4882, AdvisingServices@hunter.cuny.edu

Reading/Writing Center: Thomas Hunter Hall, Room 416, tel. 212 772-4212, http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/

Counseling Services: East Building, room 1123, tel. 212 772-4931, PersonalCounseling@hunter.cuny.edu

These offices are staffed by highly trained professionals who are there to help you. If you are in trouble of any kind, it is imperative that you contact the appropriate office in a timely manner and receive assistance.

HUNTER COLLEGE POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Hunter Anthropology Department has a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes plagiarism. The College Senate requires that the following statement be included on all syllabi:

“Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.”

See also http://studentservices.hunter.cuny.edu/advising/advising_policies_integrity.htm
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1
Tues. Jan. 28 & Fri. Jan. 31
What is food? What is a cuisine? Why are some foods taboo? Who gets to eat?


5. READ pp. 1-3 of this syllabus.

Week 2
Tues. Feb. 4 & Fri. Feb. 7
Famines and malnutrition in history and theory


Week 3
Tues. Feb. 11 & Fri. Feb. 14
Historical and contemporary “food regimes”

Week 4
Tues. Feb. 18 & Fri. Feb. 21
Maize (or corn)


Week 5
Tues. Feb. 25 & Fri. Feb. 28
Cinematic interlude


Week 6
Tues. March 3 & Fri. March 6
Food and the Climate Crisis


5. Project Drawdown. 2019. Read at least five of the following food sector solutions:

- Reduced Food Waste
- Plant-Rich Diet
- Silvopasture
- Regenerative Agriculture
- Tropical Staple Trees
- Conservation Agriculture
- Tree Intercropping
- Managed Grazing
- Clean Cookstoves
- Farmland Restoration
- Improved Rice Cultivation
- Multistrata Agroforestry
- System of Rice Intensification
- Composting
- Nutrient Management
- Farmland Irrigation
- Biochar
Week 6
Tues. March 10 & Fri. March 13
Agroecology versus industrial agriculture
IN-CLASS MID-TERM ON FRIDAY, MARCH 13


Week 7
Tues. March 17 & Fri. March 20
Class, Race, and Gender in the Food System


Week 8
Tues. March 24 & Fri. March 27
Chicken

Week 9  
Tues. March 31 & Fri. Apr. 3  
Cultures of thinness and fatness


**NO CLASS Tues. Apr. 7 (classes follow Wednesday schedule)**

CUNY RECESS April 8-16

**Week 10**  
Fri. April 17  
Sugar, slave plantations, cheap calories and the industrial working class (I)  


**Week 11**  
Tues. Apr. 21 & Fri. Apr. 23  
Sugar, slave plantations, cheap calories and the industrial working class (II)  

Week 12
Tues. Apr. 28 & Fri. May 1
The 2008 world food crisis and the ongoing crisis


Week 13
Tues. May 5 & Fri. May 8
Right to food, food security, and food sovereignty


Week 14
Tues. May 12
Review session for take-home final exam. Bring your questions.

The take-home final examination will be due at 5:30PM on May 19. It should be submitted using the SafeAssign feature on the course Blackboard site. It must be in Word (*.doc or *.docx) format. DO NOT SUBMIT Pages or pdf files or links to Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.