

Professor Malini J. Schueller

AML 3673; Section 19CF

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Fall '19

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Eating Asian America: Race, Culture, and Identity

Course Description: Food is necessary for life and hunger is a basic urge but eating and food are not simply about satisfying basic urges. Food is expressive. This course will bring food studies, psychoanalysis, and race studies to bear upon an understanding of Asian-American literary and cultural production. Anthropologists have long recognized that food is a metonym for culture and a way of expressing social identity. Food is also associated with power and control. For Asian Americans, as for other minorities food is often a marker of racial difference. Popular culture often promotes an exoticization of Asian Americans through food and ethnic restaurants in turn offer self-exoticization as a means of luring consumers: dragons abound in Chinese restaurants and geisha drinks in Japanese restaurants. In psychoanalysis images of consumption have related ideas of self to the Other: to consume the food of the Other might signify cultural assimilation and cultural cannibalism. At the same time cooking often means necessity: for Asian-American immigrants restaurants and grocery stores have often been the easiest means of earning a livelihood. This course brings together the cultural and political economies of foodways to examine Asian American literary and cultural production. We will examine works from a variety of Asian American genres including autobiographies, short stories, memoirs, novels, films, advertisements, and cookbooks.

Required Texts:

Ruth Ozeki My Year of Meats

Jade Snow Wong Fifth Chinese Daughter

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni The Mistress of Spices

Nora Okja Keller Fox Girl

Frank Chin Donald Duk

Mei Ng Eating Chinese Food Naked

Lois Ann Yamanaka Blu's Hanging

Readings on canvas

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:

Pop Quizzes	15%
Oral Presentation on readings.....	8%
Oral Presentations on Gainesville foods.....	7%
Essay # 1.....	30%
Essay # 2.....	30%
Class Participation.....	10%

Panels: Three or four students should get together to work on a panel. These panels are either intended to broaden, contextualize, or interrogate the topic being discussed in class. Many panels require you to take a position on a topic. Taking a position does not simply mean presenting an unverifiable opinion. A position must be supported by close readings of the text in question. It is best to use a powerpoint to put up specific passages (with page numbers) being discussed so students can follow. By all means, direct the class to a specific page and offer specific analyses. All panelists should e-mail a 1-2 page statement to each of the panel participants as well as to me at least 48 hours before class so I can make sure it's okay and that you're not repeating each other. During class, the panelists should read aloud their statements. Please do not pose questions to the class because this usually inhibits discussion. If I do not get your paper 48 hours before class, I will consider it late. Please submit the final statement online before class on the day of the presentation. Please practice and time yourself before you present in class. Presentations and panels will be graded on the information provided, clarity, and on the ability to elicit questions.

Presentations on Food in Gainesville: The purpose of this assignment is to have you use your analytical skills and what you have learned to read Asian American food culture/representations in town. Four or more students should get together to work on a presentation. You could choose to work on a restaurant, a grocery store, or an Asian/Asian American festival/event on campus or in town that incorporates food. Analyze the object of your study using some of the concepts you have learned during the semester. Use a powerpoint with photos to help the class get oriented to

your presentation. You can choose to have one person do the presentation or each one present different parts, but all of you should be in front of the class to answer questions.

Attendance: Please remember that this is a discussion class and that you are expected to attend every day. Attendance means bringing all reading material to class and being prepared to discuss the readings. If you come to class without the assigned readings you may be considered absent.

There is no way to simply "make up" work for missed classes. If you miss more than four hours of class, you will lose a third of a letter grade for each additional absence. The four-hour absence policy does not mean that I am encouraging these absences or that you should, indeed, miss four hours of class. **The allowed absences are meant strictly to cover emergencies (if you "use up" your absences and then have an emergency, you're out of luck). Missing eight or more hours of class constitutes failing the course.** If you are absent you are still responsible for knowing the material and turning in assignments, including responses.

Because this is an intensive discussion course the learning will take place by building upon our conversations. Class participation means contributing to the flow and interrogation of ideas or asking questions when you have difficulty. Attendance alone is not enough.

Quizzes: These will generally be given at the beginning of class although I might quiz you at the end of a class period on what was discussed during class. The quizzes are easy. If you've done the reading you'll find it simple to get an "A." I will not be able to do any makeups for quizzes but I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

Papers: You are required to write two 8-9 page papers due on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Please follow MLA guidelines for citation. Remember that any use of reference material, both in direct quote or paraphrase, must be meticulously footnoted. Plagiarism, while intentional or otherwise, will result in a failing grade. Make sure your paper has a thesis (ie something you need to prove), that there is only one thesis for the entire paper, and that your paper is not a plot summary. I will put a "Guidelines for Papers" handout on canvas as well as sample graded papers.

Turning in Papers: All papers should be turned in on canvas. Late papers will be reduced one letter grade for each class period; after one week they earn an "E."

Readings, cell phones and Laptop Use: Cell phones MUST be turned off at the beginning of class. I would prefer it if you bought hard copies of texts because discussion is far easier that way.

Laptop/media policy: I have grudgingly accepted the fact that students work with e books and like to work electronically instead of using paper. You may bring your laptops, I pads etc to class but please make sure that you are only looking at the reading being discussed. **If I see anyone looking at social media at any point in the semester I will deduct two points from your overall grade for each time this happens.** If you feel you cannot resist the urge to be on social media please print out the readings and bring them to class.

All papers and the panel must be done in order to pass the course. Work not done will receive a grade of "0"

For purposes of calculation A=93, A-=90, B+=87 etc

Announcements and Assignments will be on canvas.

You can expect things of me in return. I will be happy to answer any questions or help you with papers. If you are not free during my office hours and need help, please don't hesitate to see me after class to set up an appointment.

Tentative Syllabus: This syllabus may be changed according to the needs of the class

Aug 21: Introduction: category of Asian American.

Aug 23: Introduction: food and Asian Americans, foodways. Watch Chinese baby Jello Commercial before class.

Theorizing Food: Nature, Culture, Class, Gender

Aug 26: Aug 30: Claude Levi Strauss "The Culinary Triangle" from Food and Culture, pp. 40-47 on canvas.

Aug 28: Roland Barthes "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption" In Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, Food and Culture: A Reader, pp. 20-27 on canvas

From Wenying Xu Eating Identities: Reading Food in Asian American Literature, pp. 1-12.

Culture: Food and Authenticity

Aug 30: Screening Anatomy of a Spring Roll

Sept 2: Labor Day

Sept 4: Robert Ji-Song "Introduction" and "California Roll" from Dubious Gastronomy: The Cultural Politics of Eating Asian in the USA, pp. 1-48

Sept 6: Discussion Anatomy of a Spring Roll

Panel# 1: Does Anatomy of a Spring Roll reinforce ideas of cultural authenticity or question them?

PLEASE START READING MY YEAR OF MEATS

Sept. 9: Ruth Ozeki My Year of Meats 1-123 (end of ch 5)

Sept. 11: Ruth Ozeki My Year of Meats 124-241 (end of ch 9)

Sept. 13: Ruth Ozeki My Year of Meats 243-end

Panel # 2: What is the relationship between media and food in My Year of Meats?

Or: How is the relationship between Japan and the US mediated by food in My Year of Meats?

Food Pornography

Sept. 16: Jade Snow Wong Fifth Chinese Daughter

Sept. 18: Jade Snow Wong Fifth Chinese Daughter

Sept. 20: Jade Snow Wong Fifth Chinese Daughter

Sau Ling Cynthia Wong “Food Pornography” from Reading Asian American Literature pp. 55- 71

Panel # 3: Is Fifth Chinese Daughter a work of food pornography?

Food, Nostalgia and Homelands

Sept. 23: Anita Mannur, “Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism and Diaspora” MELUS 32 iv (Winter 2007), 11-30. On canvas

Jhumpa Lahiri “Mrs Sen’s” on canvas

Sept. 25: Jhumpa Lahiri “When Mr Pirzada Came to Dine”

Panel # 2: How is culinary citizenship negotiated in “When Mr Pirzada Came to Dine”

Orientalism, Exoticism and Food

Sept 27: Edward Said Orientalism, pp. 1-8; 38-41

Divakaruni The Mistress of Spices pp. 1-29 (end of fennel)

Sept 30: Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni The Mistress of Spices 133-236 (end of Neem)

Oct. 2: Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni The Mistress of Spices pp. 237-end.

Panel 3: Does The Mistress of Spices challenge ideas of Orientalism?

Oct. 4: Homecoming

Consuming American Plenty: Consumption and Colonialism

Oct. 7: Nora Okja Keller Fox Girl pp. 1-126 (chs 1-7)

Oct. 9: Nora Okja Keller Fox Girl pp. 127-200 (chs 8-12)

Oct 11: Nora Okja Keller Fox Girl pp. 200-290 (chs 13-end)

Ji-Yeon Yuh Beyond the Shadow of Camptown, pp. 32-41 on canvas

Panel # 5: What is the function of the Hawai'i section of Fox Girl?

Food, Consumption, and Asian American Masculinity

Oct 14: Frank Chin "Racist Love" on canvas

Oct 16: Jachinson Chan "American Inheritance: Chinese American Male Identities 2-15 From Chinese American Masculinities

Frank Chin Donald Duk pp. 1-78 (end of ch 10)

Oct 18: Frank Chin Donald Duk pp. 79-122 (chs 11-14)

Oct 21: Frank Chin Donald Duk pp. 123-172 (ch 15-end)

Panel #6: Is cooking hypermasculinized in Donald Duk? If so, how?

Second Paper Due

Oct 23: Frank Chin "Eat and Run Midnight People"

Food and Sexuality

Oct 25: Brad Kessler "One Reader's Digest: Toward a Gastronomic Theory of Literature" Kenyon Review 27 ii (2005): 148-165. On canvas

Ng Eating Chinese Food Naked pp. 1-83 (chs 1-7)

Oct 28: Eating Chinese Food Naked pp. 84-159 (chs 8-15)

Oct 30: Eating Chinese Food Naked pp. 160-end

Panel # 7: What is the relationship between food and sexual identity in Eating Chinese Food Naked?

Cultural Food Colonialism

Nov 1: Lisa Heldke “Let’s Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism” from Food and Culture, pp.

394-409 on canvas

“Introduction” and “Soups and Appetizers” from Madhur Jaffrey's An Invitation to Indian Cooking

Nov 4: bell hooks “Eating the Other”

“Introduction” The Asian Grandmothers Cookbook

Panel # 8: Does The Asian Grandmothers Cookbook invite cultural food colonialism?

(please take a look at the entire cookbook)

Nov. 6: Field work for presentations

Food, Class, and Race

Nov. 8: Watch Always Be My Maybe on your own or arranged screening

Nov. 11: Veterans Day

Nov 13: Bordieu “Distinction” from Food and Culture, pp. 31-39.

Discussion Always Be My Maybe

Panel # 9: Is Always Be My Maybe more about class or race?

Mourning and Consumption

Nov 15 Lois Ann Yamanaka Blu’s Hanging pp. 2-101 (chs 1-7)

Nov. 18: Blu’s Hanging pp. 102-174 (chs 8-12)

Nov. 20: Blu's Hanging pp. 175-260.

Panel # 11: Does food point to a relationship between Hawai'i and the mainland?

Asians and Odorophobia

Nov 22: Martin Manalansan and Anita Mannur, "Dude, what's that smell? The Sriracha shutdown and immigrant excess" From the Square, An NYU Press Blog (January 16, 2014)
<http://www.fromthesquare.org/?p=5903>

Martin Manalansan "Immigrant Lives and the Politics of Olfaction in the Global City"
(odorophobia; immigrants, race and food smells)

<http://www.centerforartandthought.org/work/item/immigrant-lives-and-politics-olfaction-global-city>

Asian American Foodways and Gainesville

Nov. 25: Presentations about restaurants

Nov. 27: Thanksgiving

Dec. 2: Presentations about grocery stores

Dec. 4: Presentations about festivals and food

Margaret Cho Asian Chicken Salad (in class)

Second Paper Due 10:00 am.