

Political Economy of Food
SOAN 249 – Fall 2007
Bob Goldman

Situating food at the intersection of political economy, society and culture, this course explores how food is produced and consumed. Topics include the relationships between society and agrifood systems; technologies of food production and ecological impacts; commodity chains and the industrialization of foods; food inequality and hunger; food and the body - e.g., diets, health, obesity, anorexia; fast food vs. slow food, farmer's markets vs. supermarkets; and cultures of food - from personal identity to ethnic identity to cuisine tourism to utopian visions.

The ways in which we produce, transport, distribute and consume food impact virtually every facet of our society, including the ways in which we construct both our own personal and group identities; the impacts on natural resources – fossil fuels, soil, water, and chemical toxicity – as well as impacts on public health; from the ways in which labor systems are organized to shaping the conditions of globalized trade. How might we assess the state of agriculture in the contemporary moment – defined by capitalist globalization? How is food related to questions of power? Who is doing the producing, who isn't (that wants to, need to)? How are they compensated? What is the relationship between transnational agricultural companies and the producers? How does technology and technology change influence the ways that we eat? And how do transnational companies shape our consumption of foods – the choices we make? And what of the waste stream of food – from its points of production to its points of consumption to its points of discharge? What risks does the current global system of production cultivate? Water shortages? Soil degradation and erosion? Chemical discharges? Bacterial infections? How does farming and the processing of foods impact ecosystems? And how do we begin to calculate the hidden costs of producing and consuming food in global political economy? How are social movements organized around food – either its production or its consumption – changing the contemporary world. Is it possible that alternative food systems will continue to develop and expand?

Required Books:

Julie Guthman, *Agrarian Dreams: The paradox of Organic Farming.*
Berkeley: University of California Press. 2004.

- Harvey Levenstein, Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America. NY: Oxford University Press. 1993.
- Fred Magdoff, John Foster, and Frederick Buttel, eds. Hungry for profit : the agribusiness threat to farmers, food, and the environment. NY: Monthly Review Press. 2000.
- Michael Pollan, The Omnivores's Dilemma: A natural History of Four Meals. NY: Penguin. 2006.
- Marion Nestle, Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2004.

Intro

- Alice Waters, "The Ethics of Eating." The Land Report, Spring 1995, no.52. pp.1-3.
- Wendell Berry, "The Pleasures of Eating," in What Are People For? San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990.
- Michael Pollan, "Unhappy meals," New York Times, January 28, 2007. <http://www.michaelpollan.com/article.php?id=87>

An Industrial Food System

- Michael Pollan, Omnivore's Dilemma. Industrial – Corn, pp.1-123.
- "Overview" pp.7-21. In Hungry for Profit: The Agribusiness Threat to Farmers, Food, and the Environment.
- William Heffernan, "Concentration of ownership and control in agriculture," pp.61-76, in Hungry for Profit.
- Miguel Altieri, "Ecological impacts of Industrial Agriculture & the Possibilities for Truly Sustainable Farming," pp.77-92 in Hungry for Profit.
- William Heffernan and Douglas Constance. "Transnational Corporations & the Globalization of the Food System." In From Columbus to Conagra: the globalization of agriculture and food. Alessandro Bonanno, et al., eds. 1994. p. 29-51.
- Fred Kirshenmann, Steve Stevenson, Fred Buttel, Tom Lyson and Mike Duffy. "Why Worry about the Agriculture of the Middle? A White Paper for the

Agriculture of the Middle Project." 2004.
www.agofthemiddle.org/archives/2005/08/why_worry_about.html

Karl Stauber, "Why Invest in Rural America – And How? A Critical Public policy Question for the 21st Century." 2001. Presented at conference hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's Center for the Study of Rural America.

Philip McMichael, "Global Food Politics," pp.125-143 in Hungry for Profit.

Farshad Araghi, "The Great Global Enclosure of Our Times: Peasants and the Agrarian Question at the End of the 20th Century," pp.146-160 in Hungry for Profit.

Vandana Shiva, "Globalization and the War Against Farmers and the Land," pp.121-139 in The Essential Agrarian Reader, Norman Wirzba ed. University Press of Kentucky, 2003.

Power and Food

Sidney Mintz, Sweetness and Power : The Place of Sugar in Modern History. New York, N.Y.: Viking, 1985, pp.151-186.

A Social History of Food in the US

Harvey Levenstein, Paradox of Plenty. Pp.9-255.

Commodity Chain Case Studies

William H Friedland. "Agrifood Globalization and Commodity Systems." International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food, 2004 12(1):5-16.

Susanne Freidberg. "On the Trail of the Global Green Bean: Methodological Considerations in Multi-Site Ethnography." Global Networks, 2001 1(4):353-368.

- Jane Collins. "New Directions in Commodity Chain Analysis of Global Development Processes." Research in Rural Sociology and Development 2005. 11:3-17.
- William H Friedland. "The New Globalization: The Case of Fresh Produce". Pp. 210-231. In From Columbus to Conagra: The Globalization of Agriculture and Food. Alessandro Bonanno, et al., eds. University Press of Kansas: Lawrence. 1994
- David Burch and Geoff Lawrence. "Supermarket Own Brands, Supply Chains and the Transformation of the Agri-Food System." International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food, 2005. 13(1):1-18.
- Susanne Freidberg, "Cleaning up down South: supermarkets, ethical trade and African horticulture," Social & Cultural Geography, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2003:27-43.
- Deborah Barndt. Tangled routes : women, work, and globalization on the tomato trail. Pp.7-53. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Pub. 2002
- Daniel Buck, Christina Get, and Julie Guthman. "From Farm to Table: The Organic Vegetable Commodity Chain of Northern California." Sociologia Ruralis 37.1 (1997):3-20.
- Environmental Justice Foundation. Global Shrimp Industry – <http://www.ejfoundation.org/page211.html>
- William Boyd and Michael Watts. "Agro-Industrial Just-In-Time: the chicken industry and postwar American capitalism." Pp. 192-225. In Globalizing Food: Agrarian Questions and Global Restructuring. David Goodman and Michael Watts, eds. London: Routledge. 1997
- John Talbot, "Tropical Commodity Chains, Forward Integration Strategies and International Inequality: Coffee, Cocoa and Tea." Review of International Political Economy 9.4 (2002): 701-34.
- Laura Reynolds, "Consumer/Producer Links in Fair Trade Coffee Networks." Sociologia Ruralis 42.4 (2002): 404-24.

Fast Food & the Placeless Meal

Eric Schlosser, Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All American Meal.
NY: Perennial Books. 2001. Excerpts.

Joanna Brewis and Jack Gavin. "Pushing Speed? The Marketing of Fast and Convenience Food." Consumption, Markets & Culture 2005 8(1):49-67.

James Watson, "China's Big Mac Attack," Foreign Affairs 79.3 (2000): 120-34.

Moore, Elizabeth S. It's Child's Play: Advergaming & the Online Marketing of Food to Children. 2006:1-52.

Agricultural Biotechnology

Movie – The Future of Food

Jonathon Rauch, "Will Frankenfood Save the Planet?" Atlantic Monthly 292.3 (2003): 103-108.

"Seeds of Doubt," The Sacramento Bee. 2004.

<http://www.sacbee.com/static/live/news/projects/biotech/>

Marion Nestle, "The Science of Plant Biotechnology," pp.277-282 in Safe Food.

Gerad Middendorf, Mike Skladny, Elizabeth Ransom and Lawrence Busch. "New Agricultural Biotechnologies: The Struggle for Democratic Choice." pp. 107-123. in Hungry for Profit.

Frederick Buttel. "Agricultural Biotechnology: Its Recent Evolution and Implications for Agrofood Political Economy." Sociological Research Online 1999, 4(3):1-15.

Dennis Doyle and Takahashi Kelso. "The Migration of Salmon from Nature to Biotechnology." Pp. 84-110 in Engineering Trouble: Biotechnology & its Discontents, edited by Rachel A. Schurman, Dennis Doyle and Takahashi Kelso. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2002.

Sustainability

James O'Connor. "Is Sustainable Capitalism Possible?" pp. 125-137. In Food for the Future: Conditions & Contradictions of Sustainability. Patricia Allen, ed. 1993.

Patricia Allen. "Connecting the Social & the Ecological in Sustainable Agriculture." pp. 1-16. In Food for the Future: Conditions & Contradictions of Sustainability. Patricia Allen, ed. 1993.

Patricia Allen. "Shifting Plates in the Agrifood Landscape: The Tectonics of Alternative Agrifood Initiatives in California." Journal of Rural Studies 2003, 19(1):61-75.

Food Regimes and Oppositional Social Movements: Organic, Local, Slow, and Vegetarian

Harriet Friedmann. "From Colonialism to Green Capitalism: Social Movements and Emergence of Food Regimes." Research in Rural Sociology and Development, 2005 11:227-264.

Michael Pollan, Omnivore's Dilemma, pp.123-273; 275-393.

Julie Guthman, Agrarian Dreams.

Wendy Parkins, "Out of Time: Fast Subjects and Slow Living," Time & Society, 2004, 13, 2-3:363-382.

Bruce Pietrykowski, "You are what you eat: the social economy of the Slow Food Movement," Review of Social Economy. V.LXII, no. 3 (September 2004):307-321.

Greta Gaard. "Vegetarian Ecofeminism." Frontiers 2002. 23(3):117-146.

Vertical Farms

<http://www.verticalfarm.com/>

The Meaningfulness of Food

Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," pp.37-54 in Counihan, Carole M., and Penny Van Esterik, eds. Food & Culture. NY: Routledge. 1997.

Georg Simmel, The Sociology of the Meal. In Simmel on Culture. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, eds. Pp. 130-135. London: Sage Publications. 1997.

Elaine Showalter, "Food: My Dinner with Derrida," The American Prospect 13.no. 1 (2002): 36-8.

Roland Barthes, "Toward a psychosociology of contemporary food consumption," pp.20-27 in Counihan, Carole M., and Penny Van Esterik, eds. Food & Culture. NY: Routledge. 1997.

Claude Fischler. "Food, Self and Identity." Social Science Information/Information Sur Les Sciences Sociales 1988, 27(2):275-292.

Tracey N. Poe, "The Origins of Soul Food in Black Urban Identity," pp.91-108 in Food in the USA, Carole Counihan, ed. 2002.

Arjun Appadurai, 1988 "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India." Comparative Studies in Society and History 30(1):3-24.

Anne Allison, "Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus." Anthropological Quarterly 1991. 64(4):195-208.

Warren Belasco. "Food & the Counterculture: A Story of Bread and Politics," pp.217-234 in Watson & Caldwell (eds.) The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating. 2004. NY: Blackwell.

Claire Pentecost, "What did you eat and when did you know it?" Art Journal, 61, 3 (Autumn, 2002): pp.46-62.

Julie Locher, et al. "Comfort Foods: An Exploratory Journey into the Social and Emotional Significance of Food." Food & Foodways: History & Culture of Human Nourishment 13.4 (2005): 273-297.

Taste & Social Class

Pierre Bourdieu, "Habitus & Life-style," in Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984.

William Roseberry. "The Rise of Yuppie Coffees and the Reimagination of Class in the United States," American Anthropologist 98(4):762-775. 1996.

Julie Guthman. "Fast food/organic food: reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow'." Social & Cultural Geography 4(1):45-58. 2003.

Anne Meneley, "Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Slow Food." Anthropologica 46.2 (2004): 165-76.

Domestic Technologies of Food

Laura Scott Holliday, "Kitchen Technologies: Promises & Alibis, 1944-1966." Camera Obscura 16.2 (2001): 79-131.

Sandy Isenstadt, "Visions of Plenty: Refrigerators in America Around 1950." Journal of Design History 11.4 (1998): 311-21.

Martin Hand and Elizabeth Shove. "Orchestrating Concepts: Kitchen Dynamics & Regime Change in Good Housekeeping & Ideal Home, 1922-2002." Home Cultures 1.3 (2004): 235-58.

Food and the Body

Susan Bordo, "Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture." Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. 139-164.

Caroline Walker Bynum, 1985 Fast, Feast, and Flesh: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women. Representations (no. 11 (Summer)):1-25.

Hunger & Food Insecurity

Amartya Sen, "Famines and Other Crises," pp.160-188 in Development as Freedom. 1999.

Janet Poppendieck. "Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality," pp.189-202 in Hungry for Profit.

Marion Nestle, "Hunger in America: A Matter of Policy." Social Research 66.1 (1999): 257-282.

Richard Goldman, 1999, "Food and Food Poverty: Perspectives on Distribution." Social Research 66.1 (1999): 283-304.

Stephen Devereux, "Climate Change and Food Security." IDS Bulletin 35.3 (2004): 22-30.

<http://www.hungerinamerica.org/> Hunger in America

<http://www.secondharvest.org/> Second Harvest

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5023829>

Obesity and Health

Adam Drewnowski and S. E. Spector. "Poverty & Obesity: The Role of Energy Density and Energy Costs." American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 79 (2004): 6-16.

Block, Jason P., Richard A. Scribner, and Karen B. DeSalvo
2004 "Fast food, race/ethnicity, and income: A geographic analysis."
American Journal of Preventive Medicine 27(3):211-217.

David M. Cutler, Edward L. Glaeser, and Jesse M. Shapiro. "Why have Americans Become More Obese?" The Journal of Economic Perspectives 17.3 (2003): 93-118.

Politics of Food Regulation

Marvin Harris, The Abominable Pig. In The Sacred Cow & the Abominable Pig: Riddles of Food and Culture. Pp. 67-87. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1985

Marion Nestle, Safe Food.

Marion Nestle, "Politics versus Science: Opposing the Food Pyramid, 1991-1992," and "Deconstructing Dietary Advice," pp.51-92. In Food Politics.

Julie Guthman, "Eating Risk: The Politics of Labeling Genetically Engineered Foods." Pp. 130-51 in Engineering Trouble: Biotechnology & its Discontents, edited by Rachel A. Schurman, Dennis Doyle and Takahashi Kelso. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2002.

Becky Mansfield, "Organic Views of Nature: The Debate over Organic Certification for Aquatic Animals," Sociologia Ruralis, 2004, 44, 2, 216-232

Assignments:

Three assignments are required; you may choose one from the list under number three. You might consider working in groups on the third project. These will constitute 60 percent of your grade.

1. Autobiography – using food as a jumping off point, write autobiographical account that is informed both by the sociological imagination and by the meanings of food in your life. 15%
2. Commodity chain research – map and analysis. 25%.
3.
 - a) Investigate relationship between fast food and obesity by social class, race, in the Portland area.
 - b) Farmer's market and local food chains - Map local food system- starting with farmer's market.
 - c) Culture of food project e.g., restaurants and the culture of dining out. 20%

Midterm Exam 20 percent

Participation 20 percent

1. Everyone (as part of small groups) will be given responsibility for leading class discussions for one week.
2. Attendance - three absences will be permitted
3. Forum discussions on Moodle.
4. Dinners