First Year Seminar
Power Hungry: Food as a Tool for Social and Political Change

Course Description

In this course we'll look at the role of food in social and political change, with an eye toward how historic events can provide a model for understanding how change can be made today. We’ll start with a unit of an historic overview of riots, initiatives, marches, and boycotts where food was integral in movements for social and political change in the United States and around the world, with students writing and presenting about a chosen topic. Then we will move to present day New York City and beyond, looking at initiatives today that are about food justice, as well as those that use food as a tool for broader justice initiatives. If scheduling permits we will visit some locations where this work is taking place across New York City, and also have guests who are using food as a tool for activism today.

*Please note that the readings and schedule below are subject to change depending on scheduling/ availability of local events and guest activists

Learning Outcomes

- Cultivate analytical and critical thinking through discussion around historic and contemporary issues of food and social and political activism
- Advance communication and presentation skills through low and high stakes written, spoken, and multimodal assignments
- Use short-form and long-form writing to explore ideas
- Introduce modes of inquiry and research in food studies, history, and social and political engagement
- Incorporate issues of ethics and diversity regarding food and social justice
- Develop intellectual curiosity through academic mentoring and engagement with the liberal arts
- Understand the interconnectedness of food as a social and political tool, historically and today
Required Course Materials

- Stirrings: How Activist New Yorkers Ignited a Movement for Food Justice by Lana Dee Povitz
- Salt: A World History by Mark Kurlansky
- Other articles and excerpts linked below, available on course portal, and/or emailed as links or documents

Final Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Riot Timeline Project (writing and presenting)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Activist/ Movement Project (interviewing, writing, and presenting)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Journal/ Event Attendance</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/ Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Overview of Major Projects
There are two major projects for this course, and both have multi-modal elements:
- Timeline Project: a dive into the historic and political context and socio-cultural aspects of a food conflict. There will be a written paper and multi-modal representation of this conflict and a requirement to present the topic to the class in an engaging and creative way (approaches may vary!).
- Modern Activist/ Movement Project: an original work of background research, interviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing the work of a current food-related activist or movement. There will also be a written and multi-modal element, and a final sharing of findings.

Formatting and Submission Procedures

- All major writing assignments must use the Modern Language Association (MLA) Style.
- Please note that all hardcopy submissions must have an appropriate MLA heading, with section time, and a title. They must be stapled. Please be in 11 or 12 pt standard font, with 1.5 or double spacing.
- All online submissions must be made through our class portal – I will NOT accept submissions via email. These must be a .doc or .docx. I will NOT accept documents as .pages, .pdf or any other types of files and failure to use appropriate file formatting will mean that your assignment was not submitted on time.
Course Policies

Attendance
Because this class is discussion and process-based consistent and on-time attendance is essential. Students who miss significant time also miss valuable information and labor that cannot be replicated outside of class. I will therefore reach out to you and to your advisor if you are absent with or without excuse 2 classes in a row. Every non-excused absence may result in a 1 point deduction from your final grade, reflected in your participation grade.

Religious observance and documented illness or family emergency are grounds for an absence to be excused.

In all cases of absence, you should communicate with me as soon as possible about arranging a schedule for completing any missed work – when possible before the absence occurs.

A missed individual meeting counts as an absence. My policy is that if you are absent the class immediately before a scheduled individual meeting your individual meeting will be canceled and that time slot given to another student. Only in rare exceptions, and with advanced communication, may you be absent during the previous class and retain your individual meeting time with me.

Please also note that when you email me that you will be absent, and/or ask what you missed, I may not respond. I can’t often encompass a full class period in an email, nor do I often want to take the time to do so. I suggest telling me in your email your plan for checking in with classmates about the day’s activities or scheduling a time to see me during office hours. In other words, be proactive about how you will make up the time, rather than asking me to do the work for you. This will also help mitigate the effect of the absence.

I understand that folks may be absent, late, or much leave early for a number of reasons, some of them to do with mental health, chronic illness, or other disability-related issues. If this is something that you are dealing with, please speak with me/ email me as soon as possible to let me know and to discuss strategies for success. Without this information I will assume that you are not in class because you don’t wish to be there, but with clear communication we can make a plan to move forward.

Timely Completion of Work
You must complete all aspects of major assignments in order to pass the course. In general, I cannot accept late work. If there are extenuating circumstances, contact me as soon as possible and we will arrange an alternate schedule for your completion of the work of the progression. (“Extenuating circumstances” are generally the same as grounds for excused absence.) Absence from class during process days or lateness of or failure to complete process work will also affect the final grade of each progression’s portfolio.
Please also note that first draft and process work due dates are not suggestions but expectations. If you do not hand in a process work on time, I will not give it comments. Failure to have appropriate process work completed on time for conferences or in-class activities will affect your participation grade.

It is my policy that grades of incomplete can only be awarded in exceptional circumstances—typically for medical reasons—and only to students who have completed nearly all the work of the course.

**Academic Integrity**
This university is “a community of scholars who value free and open inquiry” ([CAS Academic Integrity](http://example.com)). In this class, we work with ideas and language. It is deeply important to keep track of which of those you have developed (in dialogue with classmates, sources, professors, friends, and so on) and which of those have come to you from others (classmates, sources, professors, friends, the internet, and so on). To put it succinctly—and to, once again, quote the CAS statement on Academic Integrity: “Academic honesty means that the work you submit—in whatever form—is original.”

This means that you may not submit work written (even in part) by someone else as though it was written by you; and it also means that you may not submit work written for this course in another course (unless you receive permission from both that professor and from me) to do so. Please review the [EWP Statement on Academic Integrity](http://example.com) for further detail (scroll down).

**Course Expectations**
- **Class preparation:** Expectations regarding class preparation (readings, process writing assignments, drafts, group activities, presentations, etc.): It is expected that reading and all process and revised writing assignments are finished before class begins as they will be the basis of the day’s activities. This will directly affect participation and progression grade.

- **Understand and avoid all aspects of plagiarism.** Please understand NYU’s policy on academic honesty. Expectations regarding plagiarism: Don’t do it! Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment. Multiple offenses will result in a failing grade for the class. Please note the college policy.

- **Discussion:** Discussion is an important element to this class – both to help you understand your own ideas as well as to understand the ideas of your classmates. Expectations regarding in-class discussion: We will be open and respectful to all voices. Participation in discussions and group work will affect your participation grade.

- **Communication:** Expectations regarding two-way communication: I will respond to emails from you within 48 hours, perhaps slightly longer if sent over the weekend. I expect all members of the class to email me with questions, concerns and all other issues in a timely manner to keep communication open so I can help you and we can
all learn together. I am happy to answer any specific question over email or discuss any aspect of your paper during office hours. **When you do email, please put our class start time in your subject line.** My policy is that I will not respond to an entire paper (or large chunks of a paper) over email – please make an appointment at the writing center to do so if you need assistance beyond our conferences and class time. When in doubt, send an email, chat with me before or after class, or make an appointment to come to my office. I want to work with you to help you succeed!

- **Norms regarding cell phone and laptop usage in the classroom:** I am open to respectful use of technology during class, which I define as usage that does not take your attention away from the work we are doing nor distracts anyone else, including me. **This means no laptops open during discussions or presentations.** I, personally, find it distracting when I am speaking in front of the class or leading a discussion and am watching people frequently check phones, look at a laptop, or send text messages. There will be student-led discussions and I find it disrespectful to not give your peers your full attention as well. If you MUST check your phone during class, do it rarely and discreetly. If you MUST send a message, please politely leave the room to do so or do it during a transition between activities.

- **All graded assignments will be handed in on NYU Classes course portal,** although some process writing and drafts will be brought in as hard copies to work on in class and/or hand in for feedback, and some work will be done as shared google docs. If you do not give appropriate access to a shared doc, it will be counted late. Major assignments will all be handed in on Classes and I will be very clear about what should be included. Failure to follow directions will result in a lowered grade. **I will not accept any papers emailed to me** unless we have discussed it ahead of time because of rare extenuating circumstances.

- **Group Work:** There will be group and peer work throughout the semester, with a goal to help promote collaboration and provide feedback in what we’ll call Communities of Practice (CoP). Communities of Practice can be formal or informal and exist to give feedback, collaborate, or otherwise provide support while members work toward a common goal. I will ask at various points for members to reflect on working in your CoP, and the expectations are that each member gives helpful feedback on work and contributes equally to group assignments. Roles within a CoP can vary and not everyone can or will play the same role. Find a role that works for you, and I may ask that you try out a role that wouldn’t come naturally. Ultimately, however, you will all be assessed individually. If you do not get the support you need from your CoP, it will be your responsibility to look for that support elsewhere.
The Writing Center
The Writing Center provides additional support for student writers at NYU. Writing Center consultants are EWP faculty and experienced undergraduate peer tutors from a range of majors; they can provide an outside perspective on a draft, be a sounding board as you develop ideas, or help you better understand where you want to take an essay. You can book appointments at either 411 Lafayette (Washington Square) or Dibner Library (Brooklyn) in advance through the online schedulers, or walk in to either location.

Additional Resources
- Writing Affiliates [http://goo.gl/QP6wha]
- The Moses Center for Students with Disabilities [http://goo.gl/7CAcva]
- Residential International Student Engagement (R.I.S.E.) [https://goo.gl/u1E0iy]
- Academic Resource Center [https://goo.gl/4OetVO]
- NYU Libraries [http://library.nyu.edu]
- Resources for Commuter and Off-Campus Students [https://goo.gl/ij50NS]
- The Wellness Exchange [http://goo.gl/hZ9tg3]
- MLA Style Center [https://style.mla.org/]

A Note on Respect and Civil Discourse
The Program encourages you to include a statement that establishes the importance of genuine respect and engagement from the outset, and to emphasize the importance of self-awareness and inclusivity to such a community. A sample and further resources are available here.

Unit 1: Historical Context of Food as Tool for Social and Political Change

Week 1
Introduction/ Key Terms/ Historic Overview

Week 2: Bread
Discuss: What is a bread riot?
Read posted articles including “Food Riots and the Politics of Provisions in World History”

Week 3: Salt and Tea
Discuss: Food as political symbol
Read Ch 12 - 16 from Salt
Due: First Process Assignment for Historic Context Paper and Project

Week 4: Women’s Work
Discuss: Evolution of “Women’s Pages” and Food as political agency for women in the 1900s
Read posted articles including: “Justice Among the Jello Recipes: The Feminist History of Food Writing”
Week 5: The Politics of Free Breakfast (& Lunch)
Discuss: the political and social history of free lunch and the Black Panther Party Breakfast Program
Workshop Paper Draft
Read from book *Power Hungry* (PDF)

Week 6: Student Presentations

**Unit 2: Contemporary and Local Context of Food as a Tool for Revolution**

*The below dates and readings are tentative depending on schedules of local activists and guest lecturers, and perhaps opportunities for local field trips*

Week 7: Food and Race
Discuss: “Culturally appropriate” food; food as cultural identity
Read Ch. 1-3 in *Stirrings*
Introduce: Contemporary Food Activism Paper

Week 8: Food and Class
Discuss: How class affects food culture; issues around hunger, SNAP, and the right to eat
Read Ch. 4 - 6 in *Stirrings*
Intro: Interviewing and Original Research Skills

Week 9: Food and Gender
Discuss: Changing perceptions around gendered roles in food
Read posted articles including: excerpt from “Food and Gender: Identity and Power”; “Gender Norms and Food Behavior”
Due: Project Pitch

Week 10: Food and Political Theatre
Discuss: Food as political messaging and cultural signifier; pandering and dog-whistles
Read posted articles including: “Why We’re So Obsessed With What Politicians Eat”

Week 11: Food and Gentrification
Discuss: What is gentrification and Issues around food access, diversity, and availability
Read posted articles including: “Breaking Black”; “When Gentrification Isn’t About Housing”; “Food, Gentrification, and the Changing City”
Due: Sharing of Annotated Bibliography Draft

Week 12: Community Gardens
Discuss: Community gardens as activist spaces
Read posted articles including: “Community Gardens as Places of Connection and Empowerment”
Week 13: Food Waste
Discuss: Food Waste and relationship to class, urban spaces, and privilege
Read posted articles including: “A Brief Pre-History of Food Waste” & “The War on Food Waste is a Waste of Time”

Week 14: Project Workshop/ Begin

Week 15: Share Projects