

UCEAP Paris French Language and Culture Program Courses - Summer 2017  
PCC 108. **The Cultural Politics of Food in Paris**

**Prof. Cynthia TOLENTINO**

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**Lecture**

Tuesday/Thursday 14h00-16h00

**(unless otherwise indicated)**

Wednesday – Visits (times will vary)

**Office Hours**

by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores the intersection between food cultures and food politics, with an eye towards arguments and debates that have animated French culinary culture. How is food a portal for studying the changing dynamics of cities, global systems, and national identity? In what ways has food been employed to construct notions of community and belonging? Through discussions of interdisciplinary course readings, reporting and writing assignments, and excursions around the city of Paris, we will consider how food structures our identities, everyday practices, and political lives. **4.0** UC quarter units. Suggested subject areas for this course: *Sociology / Anthropology / Urban Studies*

**Student Learning Objectives:**

1. Critically engage food as a lens through which to study power and social relations in national, global and local contexts
2. Analyze French culinary concepts, debates, and institutions as contested and dynamic ideas (for example: taste and terroir; pork in school lunches and “fait maison” law, Meilleurs Ouvriers de France competition, UNESCO “intangible cultural heritage”)
3. Recognize and explain everyday food practices in Paris (examples: meal composition, “formule,” “ticket-restaurant,” designated eating and drinking spaces and times)
4. Draw comparisons between food cultures and food politics in France and the United States, building on scholarly arguments and popular debates

**Required texts:**

Course Reader [CR]

**Class Requirements:**

Your grade will be based on the following elements:

Class Participation	15%
Group Presentation	20%
2 short papers (4-6 pages), due July 11, July 25	40% (20% each)
Final Exam, in class on Aug. 3	25%

**Assignments:** The deadlines for assignments are firm. No extensions or make up assignments.

**Class Participation** is required both in the classroom and on all of our group visits. As per the UCEAP Paris Attendance Policy, excessive absences will result in a lowered final grade. Excessive absences will incur a sanction of ¼ of a letter grade for each absence

beyond the two absences allowed for medical, transport delay or emergency situations. Class participation means engaging with the course material. In order to do so, you are expected to arrive on time, have read all the readings prior to course meetings, and to actively participate during lectures, discussions, and site visits.

**A Note on Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a serious offense and could result in your dismissal from the program. All instances of suspected plagiarism will be reported to EAP for disciplinary action. If you borrow words or an idea from any source, whether it be a book, journal, magazine, the Internet, or a lecture, you need to indicate where the information came from. Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* identifies three different acts that are considered plagiarism: "(1) failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, (2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and (3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases [of other texts] into your own words" (Hacker 261). (By both citing the source of this definition of plagiarism and by "enclosing borrowed language in quotation marks," this syllabus has avoided charges of plagiarism.) If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please ask me.

**A Note on Electronic Devices**

As a courtesy to your instructor and fellow students, please do not use cell phones, laptops, tablets, e-readers, or other electronic devices during class, even to check the time. Make sure phones are turned off. Use of these devices will lower your participation grade. No recording (audio or visual) of class sessions will be permitted.

## Course Schedule

### WEEK ONE

#### Thursday, June 22 Introduction: Food, Culture, Identity

Questions: Why think about food? Are culinary perceptions and practices inborn or socially acquired? In what ways have culinary metaphors been employed to describe social differences, identity, authenticity, and belonging?

Claude Lévi-Strauss, « The Culinary Triangle. » Food and Culture. Eds. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. 3rd edition. Routledge: NY, 2012. 40-47.

Christy Shields-Argelès, “Imagining the Self and the Other: Food and Identity in France and the United States,” Food, Culture and Society, 7, 1 (2004): 14-28.

Anita Mannur, Culinary Fictions : Food in South Asian Diasporic Culture. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010. 1-3.

#### Friday, June 23 Provisioning in Paris: markets and urban space

Question : In what ways is food used to represent political change, social class and other aspects of culture? How are markets such as Les Halles linked to urban development and gentrification?

Emile Zola, The Belly of Paris. New York: Modern Library Classics, (1873) 2009. Chapter 1: 3-36.

M.L. Brayne, « Rungis: the new Paris market. » Geography 57, 1 (January 1972). 47-51.

Rosemary Wakeman, “Fascinating Les Halles.” French Politics, Culture & Society. 25, 2: (Summer 2007): 46-72.

### WEEK TWO

#### \*\*Tuesday, June 27 8h15-9h15 Visit: Marché d’Aligré\*\*

Reporting activity: who sets up/cleans up, where does food come from, stands devoted to particular foods, prepared foods, goods other than food

#### Tuesday, June 27 Hunger and Empire

Questions : What can we learn by studying the transit of a particular food over time and space? How – and to what ends - does food make other places and cultures more accessible, attractive, and « palatable » ?

Sidney W. Mintz, « Time, Sugar and Sweetness. » Food and Culture. Eds. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. 3rd edition. NY: Routledge, 2012. 91-103.

Gary Y. Okihiro, Chapter 7: « Hawaiian Pine. » Pineapple Culture: A History of the Tropical and Temperate Zones. Berkeley: UC Press, 2010. 130-152.

Simon Romero and Sara Shahriari, “Quinoa’s Global Success Creates Quandry at Home.” The New York Times, March 19, 2011.

Presentation topic: Consider the fruits, vegetables, dairy, fish, and meats in Paris markets. Where does Paris food come from? In what ways does the selection of foods reflect France’s regions and colonial empire, as well as European Union membership and Mediterranean influence?

**\*\*Wednesday, June 28**      Visit: Les Halles\*\*      **2-3pm**

Reporting activity: How is space organized in Les Halles? How would you describe the presence of retail space in relation to other kinds of spaces (municipal space, public space)? Is Les Halles still a gathering place?

**Thursday, June 29**      **Taste and French Exceptionalism**

Questions : Is taste a natural or social phenomenon ? How is taste used to argue the exceptionality of French cuisine and in what contexts are such arguments made?

Pierre Bourdieu, « Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste » Food and Culture, eds. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. 3rd edition. NY: Routledge, 2012. 31-39.

Pamela Druckerman, « You Just Have to Taste It. » French Children Don’t Throw Food. London: Doubleday, 2012. 239-267.

Film: *Babette’s Feast* (dir. Gabriel Axel, 1988, 102 min.)

### **WEEK THREE**

**Tuesday, July 4**      **Defining the Community and Its Culinary Others**

Questions: How is food used to construct notions of community and belonging? How do food and food practices provide the context for imagining the nation’s legitimate residents and Others?

Angelique Chrisafis, “Pork or nothing: how school dinners are dividing France.” The Guardian. October 13, 2015.

Joan W. Scott, Chapter 3 : Secularism. The Politics of the Veil. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2010. 90-106.

Julia Csergo, "The Emergence of Regional Cuisines." Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present. Eds. Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari. New York: Columbia University Press, (1999) 2013 500-515.

Presentation topic: Is regional cuisine viewed as French cuisine? As part of your investigation, explore food shops and restaurants around some of the major Paris train stations (Gare du Nord, Gare de l'Est, Gare de Lyon, Gare de Montparnasse, Gare Saint-Lazare). In what ways do the destinations served relate to food options in the surrounding area. On a related note, are vegan, gluten-free and vegetarian foods part of French cuisine?

### **Thursday, July 6**

### **The Gendering of Cooking**

Question: Why are women associated with cooking and kitchens and men with fine dining and artistry?

Stephen Mennell, "Male Chefs and Woman Cooks." All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present. Champaign, IL: U of I Press, 1996. 201-204.

Bob Ashley, Joanne Hollows, Steve Jones, and Ben Taylor, "Eating In." Food and Cultural Studies, London and New York: Routledge, 2004. 123-139.

Julia Moskin, "A Change in the Kitchen." The New York Times. January 21, 2014.

Film clip: Kings of Pastry (dir. Chris Hegedus and D.A. Pennebaker, 2010, 84 min.)

## **WEEK FOUR**

### **Tuesday, July 11**

### **The President's Table**

Questions: Why is food important in French politics? What perspective can be gleaned by taking into account the food preferences of political leaders? How are cooks and cooking viewed as symbols of the nation? (examples : The Great British Bake Off, the White House executive chef)

Listening assignment on French politics and the international agricultural fair in Paris: <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/03/01/517882201/in-a-heated-campaign-season-french-politicians-flock-to-paris-farm-fair>

Film: Haute Cuisine (dir. Christian Vincent, 2012, 95 min.)

\*Paper due\*

**Thursday, July 13** **Terroir: French and American Perspectives**

Questions: What is the difference between « organic » and « terroir » ? Is terroir a guarantee of quality or a marketing tool? Is terroir specific to France or can it be applied elsewhere?

Amy Trubek, Kolleen M. Guy, and Sarah Bowen, « Terroir: A French conversation with a transnational future. » Contemporary French and Francophone Studies, 14, 2 (March 2010) : 139-147.

Heather Paxson, « Locating Value in Artisan Cheese : Reverse Engineering Terroir for New World Landscapes. » American Anthropologist 112.3 (2010) : 444-457.

Presentation topic: Why seek out organic food in France? Where is it found in Paris? (Supermarket and restaurant chains or specialized shops and eateries? Subscription boxes? ) How is it labeled and certified? Is organic food mainstream in Paris?

**WEEK FIVE**

**Tuesday, July 18** **Food in Movement: A Problem or Solution?**

Question: What does France's "fait maison" law aim to achieve? Do food trucks represent unfair competition to traditional restaurants? How does delivery service redefine dining experience?

Sandra Haurant, "Will France's 'Fait Maison' Law Save Its Culinary Reputation?" The Guardian. July 15, 2014.

Lok Siu, "Twenty-First Century Food Trucks: Mobility, Social Media and Urban Hipness." Eating Asian America : A Food Studies Reader. Eds. Robert Ji-Song Ku, Martin F. Manalansan, and Anita Mannur. New York : NYU Press, 2013. 231-244.

Amar Toor, "The French Finally Embrace Delivery Service." The Verge. March 8, 2016.

Presentation topic: Explore fast food and frozen food in Paris. Has fast food been adapted to local tastes? What kind of frozen food is available? Who buys frozen food and fast food – is there an overlap? Are fast food and frozen food part of French cuisine?

**\*\*Wednesday, July 19** **8:30-9:30pm** **Visit food trucks, MK2 Bibliothèque**

Reporting activity: Consider location, food options, prices, use of space, accessibility, customers. In what ways can « le food truck » be compared with U.S. food trucks?

**Thursday, July 20** **Tradition and Authenticity**

Questions: What is the criteria for traditional cuisine? Is innovation the enemy of authenticity? Does Paris set the standard for French cuisine and gastronomy?

Pierre Boisard, Camembert: A National Myth. University of California Press, 2003. Chpt 1: "A Myth Is Born." 1-24.

Susan J. Terrio, « Crafting Grand Cru Chocolates in Contemporary France. » American Anthropologist. 98, 1 (1996) 67-79.

Megan Garber, "The Dessert We Deserve: How the French Macaron Became American." The Atlantic. October 28, 2014. 1-9.

## **WEEK SIX**

**Tuesday, July 25** **Food and Immigration in France**

Questions: How are food and immigration perceived in France and in the United States? Is immigration central to France's culinary identity?

Film clips: The Secret of the Grain (dir. Abdellatif Kechiche, 2007, 151 min.)

Presentation topic: Visit an ethnic immigrant market area, such as the rue des Rosiers in the 4th (Jewish), rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis in the 10th (Kurdish), le Triangle de Choisy in the 13th (Asian), or the quartier de la Goutte D'Or in the 18th arrondissement (North and West African). What foods are available? How is food sold? (small shops, supermarket chains, restaurants, take-out stands?) Who shops and eats there?

\*Paper due\*

**\*\*Thursday, July 27** **Lunch 1:30-3:30pm**

Questions: How is African cuisine presented to Parisian diners? What are some of the challenges and issues in the commercialization of African cuisine in Paris?

Osè African Cuisine, 10th arrondissement

## **WEEK SEVEN**

**Tuesday, August 1** **Final Review Session**

**Thursday, August 3** **In Class Final**