Overview

“Eating is never a ‘purely biological’ activity (whatever ‘purely biological’ means),” the anthropologist Sydney Mintz has observed. “The foods eaten have histories associated with the pasts of those who have eaten them; the techniques employed to find, process, prepare, serve, and consume the foods are all culturally viable, with histories of their own.” Indeed, it is these histories and the meanings associated with food that will be at the heart of this class. Over the course of the semester, we will move from the origins of the global food system in the sixteenth-century Atlantic World to discussions about the future of food in the twenty-first.

During our first two weeks, we will ask the all-important question: Why Food? Through a lecture and our first class discussion, we will discuss how investigations into changing patterns of food production, distribution, and consumption provide us with innumerable insights into the past and the present. Moreover, we will explore what Sydney Mintz means when he argues that eating is about more than biology.

From week two until week five we will explore the making of the modern food system. Focusing on the conquest and settlement of the Americas, Atlantic slavery, and the development of urban, industrial capitalism, we will track not only the stories of particular food commodities but also of changing ideas about food and eating. Unlike other commodities bought and sold on the market, without food people cannot survive for long. This biological fact shapes how different societies think about food and leads us to several questions: How have peoples, states, and religious traditions understood the right to food? How and why did these ideas change in the modern era? Many other questions also abound. In what ways, for example, did peoples’ ideas about the meaning of “freshness” change with industrialization?

Moving from week six to fourteen, we will explore changes in the modern food system through a multiple vantage points. From “banana republics” to modern industrial economies at war, we use two books — Banana Cultures and The Taste of War — to “account for change” both in individual food commodity chains and in the broader food system. Here, political economy, culture, global markets, geopolitics, and ecology come into sharp focus. We once again return to a familiar set
of questions about the right to food and, of course, changes in food and its journey from farm to dinner plate.

In the final weeks of the course, we will explore broad changes in the global food system in the decades after World War II. From the “green revolution,” GMOs, and the transformation of global agricultural life to the development of a global culinary culture and a world population increasingly stuffed, starved, or both, we end our journey through the modern food system by exploring the challenges and debates facing us as we move into the future.

Learning Outcomes
Students who complete the course successfully will:

1) Identify major historical changes in the development, organization, and operation of the global food system since the sixteenth century.
2) Demonstrate knowledge and practical application of interdisciplinary approaches to historical changes and contemporary problems involved in the movement of food commodities from points of production to points of consumption.
3) Develop the critical writing and speaking skills required to argue for historically conscious analyses of contemporary challenges in the global food system through discussion-based seminars, in-class presentations, and analytical essays.
4) Develop transferable public speaking and analytical writing and thinking skills through discussions, writing assignments, and in-class presentations based on a serious, critical engagement course materials.

Class Format
Class will meet three times each week and, for the most part, students will attend two lectures prepared by the instructor and one class organized around group discussion. The relatively small size of the course will likely encourage a degree of informality that lends itself to greater student participation and discussions on days reserved for lectures.

Assessment
Students’ grades will be based on several different criteria. These include participation, two short essays, two exams, and a final project. Grades will be posted in a timely fashion on D2L.

Grading
Participation: 15%
Short Papers: 25%
Mid-Term Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 10%
Final Project: 30%

Participation – Attendance is central to participation. If a student is not present, then she/he cannot participate in class discussions. In order to participate effectively in class discussions, students must come to class prepared to talk and think critically about issues in the readings and
lectures. Our class size and limited time means that each student cannot contribute every time we meet. Though contributing to class discussions with questions and comments is a major part of your assessment, it is equally important to listen and encourage others to participate. Keeping up with assigned readings will be critical to students’ ability to make meaningful contributions to class discussions. Reading guides will be posted on D2L for all assigned readings. Participation grades will be available at the middle and end of the semester. I will assess students participation grade as follows:

3 points: Active, contributive participation & demonstrated engagement with the texts and other material

2 points: Participated infrequently & demonstrated that they had read the texts

1 point: Came to class, but did not participate in any other fashion

0 points: Came to class, but fell asleep and/or was told to stop talking or texting (or using other distracting technology) more than once. The student will receive 0 points for such rude behavior regardless of their level of participation as outlined above.

Short Papers – Analytical reading and writing are important ways that students engage course materials. Over the course of the semester, students will write a total of two 800-word essays responding to prompts on the two historical monographs we read in class. The essay on Banana Cultures is due on February 28 at 11:59 pm. The essay on The Taste of War is due on April 9 at 11:59 pm. Both essays are due on turnitin.com. Login information for turnitin.com is as follows:

   Class ID: 7452639
   Password: worldfood

Grammar and punctuation are part of the grade, but the purpose of the essay is to encourage students to critically engage academic texts. It is not necessary for the student to agree with a particular argument. It is, however, important that students take the texts seriously. Students may use their lecture notes for reference, but the bulk of their essays should explicitly deal with the text. A grading rubric will be available on D2L.

Exams – Students will complete a mid-term and a final exam. The mid-term exam will cover all assigned reading and lectures up to that point in the semester. The final exam is cumulative. Each exam is divided into two equally weighted sections. The first consists of short answer questions. The second section consists of multiple-choice questions. Each section will draw on the reading guides and lecture.

Final Project - Throughout the semester we will explore the myriad routes through which crops and animals move from farms to dinner plates, how these routes have changed over time, and the meanings associated with their preparation and consumption. Each student will select, research, and present on the history of a food commodity during the last week of the semester. Projects will focus on the history of one stage in the commodity chain (i.e., farm, factory, distribution and marketing, or consumption) and be attentive to its place in a broader food system. In addition to
the presentation, students will submit an eight-page research paper on their topic. Students are strongly encouraged (but not required) to explore a food commodity grown or raised in the United States. Interviews with farmers and other experts on the food commodity and changes in its path from farm to dinner plate may be used alongside other academic sources. At least four approved academic sources are required. The grade for the final project will be broken down as follows:

1. Proposal – 10%
   a. Students will select a topic, identify sources, submit a 300-word proposal, and meet with the instructor by February 7. Meetings must be scheduled by January 17. This section is pass/fail.
2. Rough Draft and Writing Workshop – 5% each
   a. Well-developed rough drafts of at least four pages will be submitted on turnitin.com by March 13 at 11:59 pm. This section is pass/fail.
   b. Students will bring their rough drafts to class on Friday, March 14 for a writing workshop. This section is pass/fail.
   c. Combined, these sections are worth ten percent of the total grade for the final project and are pass/fail.
3. Presentation and Paper – 40% each
   a. Final presentations should include (but are not limited to) a discussion of changes in production, distribution, and consumption as well as the broader significance of these changes to the history of the modern food system. Students’ creativity is encouraged. Each presentation will last from ten to fifteen minutes.
   b. Final essays are due on turnitin.com on April 23 at 11:59 pm.
   c. The final paper and presentations are each worth 40% of the total grade for the final project.

**Essay Format**

Students will turn in all written assignments in a standard format. Essays must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman Font and be double-spaced with one-inch margins. It is not necessary for students to include citations in their short essays, but page numbers are required if a student includes a direct quote from the text. Final essays will follow the Chicago Manual of Style.

**Outside Help**

I have listed my office hours at the beginning of the syllabus, but I am available by appointment on other days as well. I am happy to meet with students to discuss any problem or question they may have about course materials or assignments. Any student earning a C or below at the time of the mid-term must meet with me before submitting their next assignment.

**Late Papers and Quizzes/Exams**

Short essays are due on February 28 and April 9. The final essay is due on April 23. Essays will be accepted late, but students will lose one letter grade for every 24 hours. Exams are eligible for make-ups only with documentation of official absences. Students unable to attend class must notify and make arrangements with me before hand in order to be eligible for a make-up quiz or exam.
Academic Honesty
Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. In addition to being reported to the university, any student found guilty of plagiarism or cheating will receive a zero on the assignment and possibly a failing grade for the course. For more on Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College’s policies on academic dishonesty students should consult the school’s “Code of Conduct” at: http://www.abac.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ABAC-Code-of-Conduct.pdf

Attendance
Students are required to attend class. Official, university-sanctioned absences are excused only if students provide documentation before their absence. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor about rescheduling exams or quizzes. Only those students with official, university-sanctioned absences on exam or quiz days will be allowed to reschedule. Students are also responsible for all content covered in the class they missed (excused or not). It is the student’s responsibility to arrange to have a classmate take notes for them. Students may miss a total of five classes (excused or not) without incurring penalties other than those stipulated in the section above on “Late Papers and Quizzes/Exams.” Students missing six or more classes (excused or not) will earn a failing grade for the course. There will be no exceptions.

Disability Services
I fully appreciate that all of us have different learning styles. If you have a diagnosed condition requiring adjustments in the course, please set up an appointment with me during office hours so that we can work out a plan for the semester. Please meet with me as soon as possible. I will do everything I can to foster a fair and balanced learning environment. Evidence of legitimate need for this consideration must be provided. To obtain the proper documentation, please schedule an appointment with Disability Services (http://www.abac.edu/sd/disability/) by contacting Dr. Maggie Martin (mmartin@abac.edu) or her office at 229-391-5135.

Required Books

Articles and Book Chapters*


* All documents are available in PDF format on D2L.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week One**
January 8 – Introductions
January 10 – Why Food?

**Week Two**
January 13 – Accounting for Change (read: pgs. 1-32 in Mintz)
January 15 – Sugar, Spice, and the Columbian Exchange (read: pgs. 17-41 in Pilcher)
January 17 – Discussion
*Schedule meeting with instructor to discuss final project by January 17*

**Week Three**
January 20 – MLK Day — No Class!
January 22 – Sugar: Connecting Rural America and Urban Europe (read: pgs. 91-103 in Mintz)
January 24 – Discussion

**Week Four**
January 27 – Moral Economies (read: pgs. 42-49 in Pilcher)
January 29 – Globalizing Food (read: pgs. 51-70 in Pilcher)
January 31 – Discussion

**Week Five**
February 3 – Food and the Age of Empire (read: pgs. 71-78 in Pilcher)
February 5 – Globalizing “Fresh” Food (read: pgs. 18-48 in Freidberg)
February 7 – Discussion
Final Project Proposals Due on February 7

Case Study I: Bananas

Week Six
February 10 – Going Bananas (read: pgs. 1-40 in Soluri)
February 12 – Spaces of Production (read: pgs. 41-74 in Soluri)
February 14 – Discussion

Week Seven
February 17 – Working Environments (read: pgs. 75-103 in Soluri)
February 19 – Moving Bananas (read: pgs. 104-127 in Soluri)
February 21 – Mid-Term Exam

Week Eight
February 24 – Global Bananas (read: pgs. 161-192 in Soluri)
February 26 – Chain Stores to Supermarkets (read: pgs. 156-169 in Deutsch)
February 28 – Discussion
Essay on Banana Cultures due on February 28

Case Study II: Rice, Wheat, and Meat

Week Nine
March 3 – Global Food (read: pgs. 696-721 in Engel)
March 5 – Crisis and Conflict (read: pgs. 106-137 in Tauger)
March 7 – Discussion

Week Ten
March 10 – Farms, Food, and War (a) (read: pgs. 1-17 in Collingham)
March 12 – Farms, Food, and War (b) (read: pgs. 18-74 in Collingham)
March 14 – Writing Workshop
Rough Drafts Due on March 14

Week Eleven
March 17 to 21 – Spring Break!
Week Twelve
March 24 – Exporting Hunger (read: pgs. 155-213 in Collingham)
March 26 – Enduring Hunger (read: pgs. 219-257 in Collingham)
March 28 – Discussion

Week Thirteen
March 31 – Moral Economies (a) (read: pgs. 347-383 in Collingham)
April 2 – Moral Economies (b) (read: pgs. 384-411 in Collingham)
April 4 – Discussion

Week Fourteen
April 7 – The American Boom (read: pgs. 415-464 in Collingham)
April 9 – Feeding Postwar Europe (read: pgs. 467-501 in Collingham)
April 11 – Discussion
Essay on The Taste of War due on April 11

Remaking the Global Food System

Week Fifteen
April 14 – Feeding the Postwar World (read: pgs. 138-179 in Tauger)
April 16 – Eating in the Postwar World (read: pgs. 100-117 in Pilcher)
April 18 – Discussion

Week Sixteen
April 21 – Paradox of Plenty (read: pgs. 1-40 in Brumberg)
April 23 – The Future of Food (read: Collier)
April 25 – Final Presentations
Final Essay due on April 23

Week Seventeen
April 28 – Final Presentations
April 30 – Final Presentations

Final Exam – May 2, 2014 from 8:00 to 10:00