

SPRING 2004

**THEME-BASED INQUIRY SEMINAR**  
*FOOD, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT*

Instructor name

Office: Radford Hall

Office phone

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Office hours: MWF: 9.10-10.10, 11.30-12.30, and after 3.00 by appointment

**Required Texts:**

*The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

*Food and Culture: A Reader* eds. Counihan and Esterik

*The World Is Not For Sale* by Jose Bove and Francois Dufour

**Course Description:**

This course is primarily designed to help you become a stronger reader, writer, critical thinker and researcher. The content focus of the course is food, culture and environment. Using food as a lens, we will examine our role as members of our families, communities, the nation and the world. Although food seems to occupy a mundane position in our lives, the subject of food crosses many conceptual boundaries, and our readings will help you discover many disciplinary approaches to it. Food is not simply a need; it is a practice laden with cultural beliefs, and one that has economic, political and environmental implications.

**Some Questions Raised in the Course:**

- How is food tied to identity?
- How is food an enactment of gender?
- How does food mark social differences?
- What are the social and cultural meanings of food consumption?
- What effect does advertising have on our self- image?
- Why is McDonalds at the heart of so many controversies ranging from food safety, treatment of animals, to globalization?
- What is the impact of a "fast-food nation" to our health and the image of America abroad?
- What ethical and political issues arise from our eating habits?
- What is the environmental cost of a meat-centered diet?
- What is the human cost of food?
- What are globalization and free trade doing to economies and agriculture around the world?

**Course Objectives:**

**Reading:** Students will do readings listed in the syllabus and come well prepared for class discussion and writing. In addition they may be directed to web sites, ereserves and library materials.

**Writing:** Students will write essays and participate in presentations as part of their grade. They will revise and interact with group members in the writing process. They will write journal entries to enact a variety of skills and enlarge their ideas creatively.

**Thinking:** Students are encouraged to think critically and make connections between readings, class discussion, and ideas acquired through education and experience.

**Research:** Students will have an introductory knowledge of the fundamentals of library research. They will learn to use and document sources, recognize and avoid plagiarism, and use research within a context of their own ideas.

**Assignments:** (details in handouts)

1. Based on journal reactions, class discussion and writing responses, write an essay on *The Things They Carried* (and/or *Heaven and Earth*) that explores some aspect of the novel in a focused and well developed way. DUE: 2/18
2. Write an essay that explores some aspect of American culture through its consumption practices. This can be a personal narrative essay, or an analysis of a reading and your journal response to it, suitably developed into an original essay. DUE: 3/26
3. A group presentation based on research surrounding a food related controversy; eg. the GMO debate, organic vs. industrial farming, vegetarianism, etc. DUE: 4/16
4. A research paper on topics suggested by reading Bove and Dufour that requires at least 3 sources, and uses MLA documentation. DUE: 5/14

Grading:

Essay # 1-----	15%
Essay # 2-----	15%
Presentation-----	15%
Research paper-----	20%
Class participation-----	10%
Quizzes-----	15%
Journals-----	10%

**Classroom activities:** TBIS is primarily a discussion and group work class. Students will read and critique each other's drafts, work collaboratively for their presentations, and share journals in response to readings and films.

**Students are required to activate their Novell accounts and memorize passwords for use in the Radford teaching lab. Check with Dempsey 307. You will need to do this the first day of class.**

**Essays are due at the beginning of class. All essays must be handed in with a rough draft and peer review. Please staple sheets together.**

**Journals:** These will sometimes be assigned on specific topics, and sometimes left to your own response to a reading and discussion. They are intended to help you think through ideas by writing, developing, offering examples, and making connections and comparisons. You are not graded on grammar and correctness but on creativity and critical ability. They should be a minimum of ONE PAGE TYPED. **Title and date each entry.** I will collect them, along with in class writing at midterm and finals week. You must write them ON THE DATES ASSIGNED. Be prepared to share your work in class!

#### CLASS CALENDAR TBIS –FALL 2003

- 2/2 M      Introductions and group assignments.  
Read “Dulce et Decorum Est” in class  
For Wed. look up background information on the Vietnam War  
(Using a search engine such as *Google*, check the CIA fact sheet and the  
pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam site for primary documents under the  
*References* link)  
Read *The Things They Carried* (TTTC) 1-61  
Journal: what did/does Vietnam mean to you; take into  
account why you may have spent little time on it in High School(1)
- 2/4 W      Read Journal entry in class  
Writing in class in response to reading.  
For Fri. read TTTC 62-116; using bookrags.com.(or any  
other reading guide, each group  
prepare 2 discussion questions for class presentation.
- 2/6 F      presentations  
For Mon. read TTTC 117-161  
Journal: write a response to **two** primary documents that **defend**  
and **oppose** the Vietnam War, explaining why each person holds the views  
they do(2)
- 2/9 M      Quiz (a) and presentations  
For Wed. read TTTC 162-218  
Journal: Explain and analyze O’Brien’s purpose in writing the chapter  
“Good Form”; use quotations from the text to support your point(3)
- 2/11 W      Quiz (b) and class discussion  
For Fri. read TTTC 219-246  
Prepare a rough draft of an essay on TTTC
- 2/13 F      Quiz ©  
Discuss reading  
Discuss rough draft

- 2/16 M Review rough draft (your review will be handed in and counts for grade)
- 2/18 W **Final draft Essay # 1 due** (hand in with rough draft, peer review, and all journal and response writings.)  
Intro. To TBIS  
For Fri. Read *Food and Culture* (F&C) the foreword, pages 1-2(1<sup>st</sup> 2 paras.) and read Mead 11-19  
Journal: what you expect a course entitled Food, Culture and Environment to be about (4)
- 2/20 F Class meets in Radford Teaching Lab (basement)  
quiz on reading(d)  
For Mon. read Barthes 20-27 and bring some print ads for food/drink that equate the product with a mood, a lifestyle, or status  
Check [www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/index.html](http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/index.html) for basic terminology; please read from alphabetical index under s for Semiotics, and linked terms *code*, *ideology* and *Marxist ideology*.
- 2/23 M Class discussion and quiz on reading(e)  
For Wed. read Douglas 36-44 and skim to the end  
Journal: what in your opinion constitutes “a proper meal”? Where did you learn this? Is this definition changing, and why? Offer examples. (5)
- 2/25 W Share journal and quiz on reading(f)  
For Fri. read Soler 55-66  
Journal: how can food create solidarity but also exclusion? Use examples from your own experience to explain (think school cafeteria). What does Soler mean in the very last sentence of his essay? What do dietary laws have to do with Israel and Jewish identity? Who is excluded? (6)
- 2/27 F Discuss reading.  
Read and discuss the poem “Assimilation”(overhead)  
For Mon. read from reserves “Food as Selves and Others in Cross Cultural Perspective” by Ohnuki Tierney  
Journal: Extend your discussion in Journal # 6, taking the poem “Assimilation” and Ohnuki Tierney’s essay on food and identity as texts to elaborate and complicate your ideas. Use quotations to Support your discussion. (7)
- 3/1 M .Quiz on reading Ohnuki Tierney (g)  
Journal: “the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach”(8)  
For Wed. read Bynum 138-158 and also read the Introduction pages 3-5 for the editor’s explanation on the way the theme of gender intersects with the other readings in the textbook.
- 3/3 W View film (Kilbourne)

Journal: what connections do you see between Bynum's thesis and modern women as shown in the film? Take into account 500 years between the subjects; consider the aspect of *control* in women's lives(9)  
For Fri. read Brumberg 159-179 including the footnote #16, p. 175  
Find and read the online text of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper." (You may also read some critical essays on this well-known and much studied story if you are planning to write on this for the next assignment.) Plan group presentations on any one issue

3/5 F Presentations and discussion!!!!  
For Mon. read Devault 180-199  
Journal: create your own topic in response to the reading!(10)

3/8 M Share journals  
For Wed. read Powdermaker 203-210  
Do some research on facts and statistics on obesity in children and adults, and links to disease in the U.S.

3/10 W class meets in Radford lab  
Presentations and writing  
For Fri. read Bordo 226-250 and footnote # 9  
Journal: create your own topic in response to reading(11)

3/12 F quiz on reading(h)  
prepare the rough draft for an essay on the topic food and gender;  
your thinking should be informed by the readings and journals, but must reflect original ideas. You could also use ideas from Bordo, Bynum, Brumberg etc. to analyze an aspect of Gilman's story.

-----SPRING BREAK -----

3/22 M Review rough draft of Essay # 2

3/24 W Exercise: integrating quotations

3/26 F **Essay # 2 due**  
read poems in class  
For Wed. read Counihan 283-295 and also the intro page 281 for an overview of the chapter on the political economy of food  
Journal: describe "the ethic of consumption"(292) in your own society(12)

3/29 M Quiz on reading(i)  
share journal  
For Wed. read Allison 296-214  
Journal: Explain Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatus using examples from American society(13)

- 3/31 W Quiz on reading(j)  
share journal  
For Fri. read Mintz 357-369  
Journal: how does Mintz lend historical perspective on that familiar contemporary office routine, the coffee break?(14)
- 4/2 F discuss reading/ quiz(k)  
For Mon. read Van Esterik 370-383  
Read ereserve article “Mother’s Milk” and find articles on the abuse of power by corporations like World.com and the indictment of CEOs.
- 4/5 M Class meets in Radford lab  
Discuss readings and findings/ quiz (l)  
For Fri. read Fitchen 384-401  
Research facts and statistics on hunger in Wisconsin
- 4/7 W present findings/ quiz (m)  
For Fri. read Lappe and Collins 402-411  
Research F. M. Lappe and the thesis of *Diet for a Small Planet*
- 4/9 F present findings  
For Mon. research the GMO debate
- 4/12 M Gather research materials for in-class debate
- 4/14 W Practice in class
- 4/16 F **Debate presentation (#3)** Please hand in notes and outline of your arguments  
For Mon. Read Bove and Dufour 3-49  
Read about McDonald’s long litigation with a British couple on [www.mcspotlight.org](http://www.mcspotlight.org) (check the Mclibel link and others)
- 4/19 M Discuss reading and web site  
For Wed./Fri. read Bove Chp. 4 53-77  
Also read the article on McDonaldization at [www.umsl.edu/~rkeel/010/mcdonsoc.html](http://www.umsl.edu/~rkeel/010/mcdonsoc.html)
- 4/21 W Library orientation (meet in the foyer of Polk)
- 4/23 F Discuss readings  
Discuss the research paper  
For Mon. read Chp. 5 78-105

- 4/26 M summary/paraphrase exercise/avoiding plagiarism  
For Wed. read Chp. 6 & 7 106-144
- 4/28 W citation exercise  
read Chp. 8 145-170
- 4/30 F **Research topic due**  
For Mon. read Chp 9 171-193, and appendix 2 202-204
- 5/3 M Discuss reading
- 5/5 W Bibliography due
- 5/7 F **Prospectus due**
- 5/10 M Review first rough draft
- 5/12 W Review second rough draft
- 5/14 F Final paper (and typed journals) due