

## Freshman Seminar (FSEM100: 34606) Cuisine Critiques: Food Studies

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Office Hours: Tu / Th via zoom (TBA)

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## TENTATIVE SYLLABUS—SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**Course Description:** The choice of what to eat for your next meal seems simple—what do you feel like having today? But these selections—even if made impulsively or thoughtlessly—are much more complex than they might appear. Our food choices emerge out of varied cultural forces—our heritages, our families, our local community, our class identity, marketing and even our personal ethics. Moreover, these selections have consequences beyond our individual digestive systems. Food systems have environmental and political impacts; they shape economies and communities.

In this class we'll explore food from a multi-disciplinary perspective. We'll be thinking about how food operates as a cultural and class signifier and a political tool. We'll consider the ethical issues around food—resource use, the environmental impact of food production and food waste, or the labor issues food production entails. From the historical perspective we'll consider how food's links to cultural heritage have shaped and been shaped by geography, migration, and historical events. Furthermore, with a focus on the individuals' experience of food, we will interrogate food's role in family dynamics, personal identity, and travel.

## COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

Readings: Most of our readings will appear as PDF files on Blackboard or on our class Perusall portal (via Blackboard tool)  
*Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:

### **Grading Breakdown:**

Participation and Engagement	40%
Discussion Leadership	10%
Response Papers	25%
Final Project	25%

**Participation and Engagement:** This class is a seminar, designed to facilitate discussion, college-level inquiry and engagement. To that end, participation and engagement will be the most significant part of your Pass-No Pass grade. Please be present, awake and in the room (by this I mean please do avoid texting/ doing other classwork/ scrolling around on your laptop or smartphone). Make sure you read the assignments carefully and thoughtfully so you'll have something to say.

**Attendance:** We are a small seminar and thus, attendance is crucial. Seminars really rely on dialogic learning—from raising questions and having diverse conversation. So we need you here! That being said, I understand that illness or unforeseen events sometime mean missing a class. One class is no problem. More will reduce your grade (2 will be 10% off your total grade; 3 absences is 30% of the class, so that will result in a no pass). Please reach out with any difficulties or challenges.

**Discussion Leadership:** One time per semester you'll be responsible for leading the class discussion. I will model this activity. You'll need to prepare a list of 8 questions designed to facilitate discussion. You'll begin the discussion with a brief—3-5 minute presentation of what you found most compelling, eye opening or enraging about the readings. Then you'll turn to the class with your discussion questions. You will not need to turn in a response paper for the day you lead discussion.

**Response Papers:** For each class you'll have a one page informal response paper due—turned in via Blackboard before class. In these response papers you should respond to the readings in some way. You could respond critically, emotionally, imaginatively—whatever. Do be mindful of the basic conventions of college writing—proofreading, complete sentences, spellcheck and paragraphing—but otherwise you can do what you wish, as long as it engages with the readings.

**Final Project:** The final project will be 4-6 pages. Directions to follow.

## ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Plagiarism—presenting someone else’s ideas as your own either verbatim or recast in your own words without attribution—is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>).

Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and University policies on scientific misconduct (<http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>).

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE—SUBJECT TO CHANGE

	Class Activities	Readings Due	Deliverables due before class
1/11	Introduction, Expectations, Field Trip to USC Village	None	None
1/18	Industrial Food: Food and Economics / Politics – First half of <i>Finding General Tso</i>	Pollan: Omnivore’s Dilemma Part 1	Response paper
1/25	Food and Culture Identity: finish and discuss documentary <i>Finding General Tso</i>	Brammer / Food and Wine Magazine	Response paper
2/1	Food and Sustainability	Reading TBA	Response Paper
2/8	Food and Travel: <i>Parts Unknown: Thailand</i>	Heldke reading; Reading #2	Response Paper
2/15	Class postponed		
2/22	Food and Marketing – international food systems, Introducing Final Projects	McDonnell Article Food memoirs	Response Paper
3/1	Food and Race/ Food and History	Sugar article/ Miller readings	Response Paper
3/8	Chocolate- food and labor / food and history	Readings TBA	Go to the store (Target or TJs) and take photos of the labels of 2-3 chocolate bars; Response paper
3/15	Food and Gender: <i>Julia</i> episode (HBO)	Swenson reading, Reading #2	Response paper
3/22	Resisting Industrial Food	Slow Food Manifesto; Leitch reading, Reading #3	Response Paper
3/29	Last Day Celebration and Presentation of final projects	None	

## **SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

**Campus Wellness Office** A new office on campus to provide support for those who need it, and better direct our university wellness, threat assessment, and crisis response teams.  
(<https://wellbeing.usc.edu/contact/>)

### **Student Counseling Services (SCS) (213) 740-7711**

ON CALL 24/7. Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.  
(<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling>)

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255**

ON CALL 24/7. Provides free and confidential emotional support in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. (<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>)

### **Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (213) 740-4900**

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. (<https://engemannshc.usc/rsvp>)

### **Sexual Assault Resource Center <http://sarc.usc.edu>**

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website.

### **Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Compliance (213) 740-5086**

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class  
(<http://equity.usc.edu>)

### **Bias Assessment Response and Support**

Incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. (<https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/biasassessment-response-support/>)

### **The Office of Disability Services and Programs (<http://dsp.usc.edu>)**

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations.

### **Student Support and Advocacy (213) 821-4710**

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student. EX: personal, financial, and academic. (<https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>)

### **Diversity at USC <http://diversity.usc.edu>**

Information on events, programs, and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

### **USC Emergency Information <https://emergency.usc.edu/>**

Provides Safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible (<https://emergency.usc.edu/>)

USC Department of Public Safety (213) 740-4231 (UPC)

For 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. (<http://dps.usc.edu/>)