

History of Food in China



HIS 308
Spring 2018
MWF 10:00-10:50
Cooke 127A

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Office Hours: W 2-4, or by appointment

Course Description:

What is food for? This simple question invites us to ponder myriad ways that food connects to our lives, from cooking to eating, from spice to medicine, from the expression of the self to the mediation of social relationship. Not surprisingly, food constitutes a vital aspect of Chinese culture that figures saliently both in China and beyond. Even without going to China, we may all have the experience of tasting spring rolls, General-Tso's chicken, or dumplings. This course probes the deep history of food in China from antiquity to the present, exploring both the rich culture of food within China and its fast spread to the rest of the world in recent past. Topics covered in this course include food and agriculture, food and medicine, flavoring food, the techniques of cooking (we may try ourselves), the religious meanings of food, regional features, food trade, and Chinese food in the world. In the end, the course seeks to use the study of dishes and drinks in China as a gateway to not just understand the fabric of Chinese society but also illuminate our dietary habits and ways of living here and now. [No prior knowledge in Chinese language or history is required.]

Learning Outcomes:

1. To acquire the basic knowledge of the history of food in China
2. To learn various historical methods to study food in China
3. To learn the connection between historical knowledge and contemporary experience
4. To develop reading skills to critically engage in course materials (both primary and secondary sources)
5. To develop basic skills of conducting historical research, including raising good questions, identifying relevant sources, and generating convincing arguments
6. To develop writing skills to present scholarly research
7. To learn innovative methods to present scholarly research (multimedia production)
8. To develop skills of oral communication through participating in class discussion

Assessments:

- Short-paper assignment: 10%
Write a short response paper (3-4 double-spaced pages, 750-1000 words) that summarizes and analyzes a reading or a movie in Unit 1. **Due Feb. 19 in class.**
- Podcast assignment: 15%
Produce a podcast (maximal length 2 minutes) that summarizes and analyzes a primary source from the readings or lectures in Unit 2. **Due 9 PM Mar. 4 on UBLearns.**
- Short-video assignment: 15%
Produce a short video (maximal length 2 minutes) that analyzes a historical image from the readings or lectures in Unit 2. **Due 9 PM Mar. 25 on UBLearns.**
- Field report: 15%
Visit a Chinese restaurant or grocery store in the Buffalo area, and write a report (4-5 double-spaced pages, 1000-1200 words) that meaningfully connects your field experience to your learning in class. **Due Apr. 16 in class.**
- Final project prospectus: 5%
Write a short outline of your final project (max. 2 double-spaced pages, 300-500 words) that includes the research question, summary, sources, and tentative argument of the project. **Due May 4 in class.**
- Final paper or podcast/video: 20%
The research project combines course readings/lectures and your own research to explore a specific topic on the history of food in China. It may take either of the following forms:
 - (1) A paper of 8-10 double-spaced pages (2000-2500 words)
 - (2) A podcast or video of 6 minutes maximum (2 segments of up to 3 minutes each or, 3 segments of up to 2 minutes each)**Due 5 PM May 18 on UBLearns.**

- Class participation: 20%

This course is designed in the following way: The first two classes of each week (M & W) will be lecture-based, and I will leave ample time to interact with you, either asking you questions or let you ask questions. The third class of each week (F) will be discussion-based, in which we will discuss one reading together.

Active engagement in class is key to your learning.

Extra Credit:

This course allows up to 5% extra credit. You can gain it by the following three ways:

- (1) A book review of 3-4 double-spaced pages (800-1000 words), on an approved topic of your choice relevant to the course. (max. 2%)
- (2) Prepare a dish based on a historical recipe in China (upon approval), and write a two-page (~500 words) report on your experience. You will present your dish in the last class of the course. (max. 2%)
- (3) Attend an approved, out-of-class event relevant to the course (seminar, film, or cultural event) and submit a two-page (~500 words) report. (max. 1%)

On Multimedia Assignments:

One unique feature of this course is the multimedia assignments. Compared to the conventional paper-writing exercise, these alternative assignments offer you the opportunity to explore the creative use of podcasts and short videos for effective intellectual communication. If this is the first time for you to make a podcast or video, don't worry. *This is your chance to learn.* I will provide you with sufficient guidance and technical support over the course so you can master the skills and create works that edify yourself and impress your friends. I hope this will be a valuable and fun learning experience.

Technical notes: For podcasts, you can simply use the voice-recording device on your computer to do the job. You can also use more advanced software such as Audacity (for both PC and Mac) and GarageBand (for Mac). For short videos, you can use PowerPoint (for PC) or Keynote (for Mac). For editing images and videos, you can use Camtasia and Photoshop (for both PC and Mac). All of above software have tutorials on YouTube or www.lynda.com.

Course Policies:

- Finish all assigned readings before the class. As you read, take notes on key ideas and arguments, write down your questions, and particularly pay attention to the author's positions, agenda, and audiences.
- Come to class on time and plan on staying to the end. If you cannot attend class because of illness or for other pressing reasons, let me know in advance. More than one unexcused absence may impact your grade.
- The use of cell phones is strictly prohibited during class. Please turn them off or to silent, and put them away.
- Laptops are allowed in class *only for consultation of readings and for note-taking*. All other uses—from checking emails, to instant messaging, to random Internet surfing—undermine your learning, impede class discussion, distract others, and are rude.
- Submit all your assignments on time. Late submission will incur a penalty of one-third a letter grade per day of lateness (for example, from A- to B+).
- Plagiarism/Academic integrity
Please familiarize yourself with UB's policy on plagiarism:
<http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.html>
Plagiarism is defined as "copying or receiving material from any source and submitting that material as one's own, without acknowledging and citing the particular debts to the source (quotations, paraphrases, basic ideas), or in any other manner representing the work of another as one's own." This includes cutting and pasting from websites or other online sources. If you are not sure what plagiarism is, please ASK me.
- Accessibility Resources
Those of you with documented disabilities will be given the accommodation to which you are entitled based on UB policy. If you need such an accommodation, please let me know and contact the Office of Accessibility Resources, 60 Capen Hall, 645-2608. For more information, see: <http://www.buffalo.edu/accessibility>

Course Schedule:

Note: All readings are in English. [P] refers to primary sources. All readings are available on UBLearn.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO FOOD IN CHINA**Week 1: Food for Thought****Jan. 29: Course Orientation**

- Explanation of course syllabus. No reading required.

Jan. 31: Chinese Food Around Us

- Before coming to class, watch the documentary *The Search for General Tso* (dir. Ian Cheney, 2014) at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FF26VZSS4yg>

Feb. 2: Keywords and concepts

- Peter Jackson, *Food Words: Essays in Culinary Culture* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), "Authenticity," 27-30; "Cooking," 59-62; "Eating," 68-72; "Local-Global," 120-124; "Taste," 214-21.

Week 2: Food in China Today**Feb. 5: What Do Chinese Eat?**

- E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1990), Ch. 8: "Chinese Foodstuffs Today," 112-148.

Feb. 7: How Does Food Function in Chinese Society?

- E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China*, Ch. 12: "Food in Society," 199-213.

Feb. 9: Regional Food

- Sidney C.H. Cheung, "Food and Cuisine in a Changing Society: Hong Kong," in Sidney Cheung & David Y.H. Wu eds., *The Globalization of Chinese Food*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), Ch. 6: 100-112.

Week 3: Food in Chinese History**Feb. 12: General Survey**

- Françoise Sabban, "China," in Kenneth F. Kiple & Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas eds., *The Cambridge World History of Food* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), V.B.3: 1165-75.

Feb. 14: On Balance and Harmony

- Joanna Waley-Cohen, "The Quest for Perfect Balance: Taste and Gastronomy in Imperial China," in Paul Freedman ed., *Food: The History of Taste* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), Ch. 3: 99-134.

Feb. 16: Food and Philosophy

[Happy Chinese New Year!]

- Roel Sterckx, "Food and Philosophy in Early China," in Roel Sterckx ed., *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), Ch. 2: 34-61.

UNIT 2: TOPICS IN CHINESE FOOD HISTORY**Week 4: Staple Food and Agriculture**

Short-paper assignment due Feb. 19 in class.
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Feb. 19: Rice

- Te-Tzu Chang, "Rice," in *The Cambridge World History of Food*, II.A.7: 132-149.

Feb. 21: Chinese Pasta (*bing*)

- Silvano Serventi and Françoise Sabban, *Pasta: The Story of a Universal Food*, tr. Antony Shugaar (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), Ch. 9: "China: Pasta's Other Homeland," 271-311.

Feb. 23: The History of Tofu

- [P] Hsiang Ju Lin, *Slippery Noodles: A Culinary History of China* (London: Prospect Books, 2015), Ch. 21: "Bean Curd," 153-61.

Week 5: Food and Medicine**Feb. 26: Historical Ideas**

- E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China*, Ch. 11: "Traditional Medical Values of Food," 187-198.

Feb. 28: Contemporary Practices

- Judith Farquhar, *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-socialist China* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002), Ch. 1: "Medicinal Meals," 47-77.

Mar. 2: Reading *Materia Medica*

- [P] Hsiang Ju Lin, *Slippery Noodles: A Culinary History of China*, Ch. 33: "Medicines: Animal, Plant and Mineral," 246-258.

Podcast assignment due 9 PM Mar. 4 on UBLearns.

Week 6: Food and Religion**Mar. 5: Buddhism**

- Rachel Laudan, *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), Ch. 3: "Monks and Monasteries: Buddhism Transforms the Cuisine of China, 200 CE—850 CE," 146-157.

Mar. 7: Daoism

- Livia Kohn, *Daoist Dietetics: Food for Immortality* (Dunedin: Three Pines Press, 2010), Ch. 4: "What Daoists Eat," 71-95.

Mar. 9: The History of Tea

- James A. Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), Ch. 3: "Buddhism and Tea during the Tang Dynasty," 42-71.

Week 7: Toxic and Intoxicating Food**Mar. 12: Food Prohibitions**

- Vivienne Lo, "Pleasure, Prohibition, and Pain: Food and Medicine in Traditional China," in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, Ch. 8: 178-182.

Mar. 14: Making Wines

- H.T. Huang, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 6, Biology and Biological Technology, Part V: Fermentations and Food Science*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 203-221.

Mar. 16: Alcohol in Literature

- Charles Kwong, "Making Poetry with Alcohol: Wine Consumption in Tao Qian, Li Bai and Su Shi" in Isaac Yue and Siufu Tang eds., *Scribes of Gastronomy: Representations of Food and Drink in Imperial Chinese Literature* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), Ch. 4: 45-67.

Week 8: Spring Break

Short-video assignment due 9 PM Mar. 25 on UBLearns.
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Week 9: Cooking and Recipes

Mar. 26: The Art of Cooking

- E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China*, Ch. 9: "Some Basic Cooking Strategies," 149-158.

Mar. 28: The History of Chopsticks

- Edward Q. Wang, *Chopsticks: A Cultural and Culinary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Ch. 3: "Dish, Rice, or Noodle? The Changing Use of Chopsticks," 41-66.

Mar. 30: Reading Recipes

- [P] "Ni Zan, *Cloud Forest Hall Collection of Rules for Drinking and Eating*," in Victor H. Mair, Nancy S. Steinhardt and Paul R. Goldin eds., *Hawai'i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), Ch. 69: 444-55.

Week 10: Spices and Aromatics

Apr. 2: Foreign Aromatics

- Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), Ch. X: "Aromatics," 155-175.

Apr. 4: Spice Trade

- Gary Paul Nabhan, *Cumin, Camels, and Caravans: A Spice Odyssey* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), Ch. 10: "Navigating the Maritime Silk Roads from China to Africa," 264-282.

Apr. 6: Smell History

- Yan Liu, "Scented Protection: Foreign aromatics in Medieval China" (to be available at: <http://recipes.hypotheses.org>)

Week 11: Flavoring Food

Apr. 9: Soy Sauce

- [P] Hsiang Ju Lin, *Slippery Noodles: A Culinary History of China*, Ch. 28: "The Invention of Soy Sauce," 210-7.

Apr. 11: The Fifth Taste

- Ole Mouritsen & Klavs Styrbak, *Umami: Unlocking the Secrets of the Fifth Taste* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), "The fifth taste: What is umami?" 23-40.

Apr. 13: The MSG Controversy

- Jordan Sand, "A Short History of MSG: Good Science, Bad Science, and Taste Cultures," *Gastronomica*, 5:4 (2005), 38-49.

UNIT 3: CHINESE FOOD BEYOND CHINA**Week 12: Chinese Food in East Asia**

Field report due Apr. 16 in class.

Apr. 16: Japan

- Tamotsu Aoki, "The Domestication of Chinese Foodways in Contemporary Japan: Ramen and Peking Duck," in David Y.H. Wu and Tan Chee-Beng eds., *Changing Chinese Foodways in Asia* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2001), Ch. 10: 219-33.

Apr. 18: Korea

- Kim Kwang-ok, "Contested Terrain of Imagination: Chinese Food in Korea," in *Changing Chinese Foodways in Asia*, Ch. 9: 201-17.

Apr. 20: The History of Ramen

- George Solt, *The Untold History of Ramen: How Political Crisis in Japan Spawned a Global Food Craze* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), Ch. 1: "Street Life: Chinese Noodles for Japanese Workers," 15-42.

Week 13: Chinese Food in Central and Southeast Asia**Apr. 23: Central Asia**

- E.N. Anderson, *Food and Environment in Early and Medieval China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), Appendix II: "An Introduction to Central Asian Food," 289-297.

Apr. 25: Southeast Asia

- Tan Chee-Beng, "Cultural Reproduction, Local Invention and Globalization of Southeast Asian Chinese Food," in Tan Chee-Beng ed., *Chinese Food and Foodways*

in Southeast Asia and Beyond (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2011), Ch. 1: 23-46.

Apr. 27: Chinese Food in Burma

- Duan Ying, "The Chinese Foodways in Mandalay: Ethnic Interaction, Localization and Identity," in *Chinese Food and Foodways in Southeast Asia and Beyond*, Ch. 6: 141-55.

Week 14: Chinese Food in America

Apr. 30: Chinese Restaurants in America

- Paul Freedman, *Ten Restaurants That Changed America* (New York: Liveright, 2016), "The Mandarin: 'The Best Chinese Food East of the Pacific'," 209-250.

May 2: The History of Chop Suey

- Yong Chen, *Chop Suey, USA: The Story of Chinese food in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), Ch. 7: "'Chinese-American Cuisine' and the Authenticity of Chop Suey," 126-52.

Final project prospectus due May 4 in class.
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May 4: Disreputable Food

- Robert Ji-Song Ku, *Dubious Gastronomy: The Cultural Politics of Eating Asian in the USA* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), Ch. 4: "Dog Meat," 120-155.

Week 15: Summation

May 7: Review

May 9: Brainstorm Your Final Project

May 11: Present Your Dish

- Pick a recipe from *How to Cook and Eat in Chinese* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972) by Buwei Yang Chao, and cook a dish (max. 2% extra credit).

Final project due 5 PM May 18 on UBLearn.
