Religion 396/2 - A
FOOD AND RELIGION
Thursday 13:15-16:00
Concordia University, Fall 2016

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Description:
What we eat and how we eat contributes to what we are. In this course, the examination of food cultures and food rituals will allow us to explore religious meanings and the making of religious identities. The preparing and sharing of food defines religious community and expresses religious values. Feasts and fasts, food offerings and food prohibitions, hospitality and sacrifice present us with a vast array of opportunities to gain insight into human creativity and religious sensibility. In looking at foodways in several religions, this course will focus particularly on how food can serve as a medium of transmission and transaction, and on the roles that women and men, gods and ancestors, and other beings and forces have in these networks.

Required reading:
A course pack has been prepared for this course, containing all required readings. It is on sale at the Concordia University bookstore in the Library building. You MUST do all the readings in this coursepack!

Evaluation:
Journals (2) & class participation - -----------------------------------------------20%
Food project 1: cookbook analysis (due October 6) --------------------------------20%
Food project 2: research essay (due November 24) --------------------------------- 30%
Take-home exam (due December 15) ---------------------------------------------30%

You are expected to attend class meetings and -- having done the assigned reading in advance of each class as outlined below -- to participate in class discussions. You must keep a journal recording your own experiences, observations, and reflections related to the course content (food, religion) and hand in your journals for review on September 29, October 27, and/or November 10. You must hand in the September 29 journal. You may choose to hand in the second journal either on the October or the November deadline, but we advise the October one so you do not get overloaded toward the end of the term. If you enjoy the journal process, you may hand it in all three times. Get a small notebook for this purpose and start writing right away! You should plan to write in your journals at least twice a week.

A detailed description of the food project assignment will be handed out in the early part of the term. There are two parts to the food project assignment. The first part is the a cookbook...
analysis of approximately 1000 words (about four type-written pages), in which you will examine a cookbook for its religious and cultural content (what it conveys about values, ceremonies and rituals, the social and ethical dimensions of food preparation and consumption, etc.). The second part of the food project is a term paper (about 1500 words), which builds on part 1, exploring in more depth the place of food in the religious and cultural context you have chosen to examine.

The take-home exam will be an essay-style exam. The questions will be distributed on the last day of class (December 1), and you must hand in your exam answers by noon on December 15.

If you are unable to meet any of these deadlines, or to attend class regularly, you should discuss the situation with one of the instructors as soon as any difficulty becomes apparent. Normally extensions will be granted only for medical reasons (a doctor's note will be required) or very serious family or personal problems. All work for the course must be submitted by December 15th. If this is impossible, you must both speak to one of the two instructors and make an application for late completion at the Student Service Centre in the Library building before January 15, 2016. Absolutely no late work for this course will be accepted after December 15, 2016. The University administration has become very strict in applying the regulations concerning Incompletes, and your instructors are not in a position to grant any leeway. If there is a medical condition that necessitates a longer extension for course completion, you should apply for a MED INC grade before the end of semester.

**Code of conduct**

Please familiarize yourselves with university regulations contained in the Concordia Undergraduate Calendar concerning academic misconduct (i.e. plagiarism and multiple submissions) and other offences of conduct (i.e. discrimination, harassment, violent or threatening behaviour). Any improper use of another’s work will be reported to the Dean’s office. Concordia University has several resources available to students to better understand and uphold academic integrity. Concordia's website on academic integrity can be found at the following address, which also includes links to each Faculty and the School of Graduate Studies: [www.concordia.ca/students/academicintegrity](http://www.concordia.ca/students/academicintegrity). All incidents of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Dean’s office.

**Student Services**

Please see Concordia's web site under Student Learning Services. There are different services available to you especially writing help, such as peer writing help and writing classes.

**Grading System**

A : Superior grasp of material, well written, excellent analysis, original insight and thought provoking presentation.
B : Good understanding, clear and orderly presentation, application of concepts.
C : Adequate grasp of material, reasonably clear.
D : Evidence of reading, inadequate comprehension.
F : Indicates that the student did not do the assignment or that the material handed in lacks evidence that the work was done.
Weekly Outline

I. Introduction
September 8:
General introduction to course
Ethnographic experience

September 15:

Film

II. Ethnic and national food icons
September 22:

III. Eating a national identity
September 29: Journal Assignment #1 due
Siskind, J. The Invention of Thanksgiving, in Food in the USA: A Reader, ed. C.M.Counihan, (NY: Routledge, 2002) pp. 41-58

III. Cookbooks: texts of social-history
October 6:
Theophano, Janet. Eat My Words: Reading Women’s Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote (NY: Macmillan, 2002) ACookbooks as Collective Memory and Identity p. 49-84.
Kelly, T.M. “If I were a Voodoo Priestess: Women’s Culinary Autobiographies,” Kitchen Culture in America, ed. S. Inness (U of Pennsylvania, 2001) 251-269.

IV. Diversity in food rules and regulations
October 13: Food project part 1: cookbook analysis due

V. Feasting, Fasting and Feeding the gods
October 20

VI. Body: Engaged and denied
October 27: Journal Assignment #2 due

VII. Gender and food
November 3:
Van Esterik, P. Feeding their Faith: Recipe Knowledge among Thai Buddhist Women, in Food
VIII. Food systems and food symbols
November 10: Journal Assignment #3 (or required #2) due

PASSOVER Seder: an experience of symbolic food eating

IX. Identities, Encounters, Diaspora, Globalization
November 17:
Greenebaum, Jessica. (2012) Veganism, Identity and the Quest for Authenticity, in Food, Culture & Society, 15:1, 129-144

November 24: Food Project part 2 due.
Narayan, Uma. Eating Cultures: Incorporation, Identity, and Indian Food in her Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism (NY: Routledge, 1997) pp 159-188, 214-219
Beoku-Betts, Josephine. We got our way of cooking things: Women, Food and Preservation of Cultural Identity among the Gullah, in Gender and Society, vol. 9:5 (October 1955), pp.535-555

X. Drinks on us
December 1