2014

180 Sociology of Culture

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What will we learn in this course?
This course is an introduction to the study of culture through the lens of food as a social phenomenon. Using an interdisciplinary approach, we will examine culture and food from the intersecting insights of sociology, anthropology, geography, history, philosophy, and cultural studies. We will examine food both as nourishment for human physical bodies and as the locus of negotiations of complex social relationships around emotions, body, social position, and social policy. We will explore questions such as:

- What roles does food play in exerting, maintaining, and/or resisting social power?
- How do spatial relations shape the role of food in our lives?
- How are race, class, gender, age, and geographic identities shaped by food traditions?
- How do immigrants retain, modify or erase traditional food practices in new cultural contexts?
- How do “acceptable” conceptions of the body change historically and how are bodily role expectations gendered, racialized and/or influenced by class?
- How are these cultural standards communicated, reinforced, and/or challenged?
- What social movements have staked claims about how we should relate to food production, distribution, and consumption? What are these claims and how do these movements mobilize others to join their ranks?
- How do social policies on local, national and global scales, reflect any of these cultural ideas and practices surrounding food?

Over the course of the semester you will
- cultivate an understanding of your own food traditions and consumption behaviors as well as the general patterns of production, distribution, and consumption in different racial/ethnic groups and societies across the world
- become more familiar with the theoretical and methodological orientations each of these disciplines bring to an interdisciplinary approach to the study of culture
- learn how to critically examine texts, including graphics, advertisements, and documentaries, focused on these issues
- examine these issues first-hand through the collection of data using sociological research methods

What materials will we use and where can you find them?


Additional readings, websites, and documentary links are posted on our course Blackboard site. All videos are on reserve at the 3rd floor CLC desk.

How is this course structured?
Class time will involve a combination of brief lectures, class discussions, in-class group exercises, documentary screenings/listening sessions, and student presentations. As much as possible, we will practice doing sociology (and cooking and eating!), whether that involves searching online to answer further questions about a report we read, discussing the results of an interview project or fieldwork assignment, or preparing a research topic in small groups.

Please read all material for the day it is assigned and to bring those readings to class.
A detailed course schedule will be posted on Blackboard and project guidelines will be provided. While we will attempt to follow the schedule as outlined, I reserve the right to make changes to the course plan as I deem necessary. You will be given advance notice of any changes. These modifications will be announced in class, sent to you by email, and posted on Blackboard (dated). I strongly recommend that you check your email and our Blackboard site regularly for any updates to the schedule.

This course relies heavily on media (video, audio and websites) that document the issues we are exploring. If you are not interested in documentary media you might consider taking another class. All of the course material, including this media, is subject to be on the exams.

What are the assignments for this class?
10% Participation
45% Assignments
45% Exams
  Midterm (20%)
  Final (25%)

How will written assignments and group projects be graded?
Formal assignments will be graded according to the following criteria:
1. strength of application of course concepts and theories (consistent and robust)
2. use of supporting evidence from course materials and additional resources when relevant
3. clarity of writing style
4. technical accuracy (have you followed instructions and copy edited your writing?)

Scores will reflect the following:
A work shows exceptional mastery of course materials and exemplary analytical and presentation skills.

B work shows good, thoughtful understanding of course materials and above average analytical work.

C work shows adequate, though not distinctive, understanding of course materials and average analytical work.

D work shows poor understanding of course materials and incompetent critical analysis.

F work shows little or no serious engagement with course materials or analytical tasks.

How will my attendance count in this class?
I expect you to attend class. You are responsible to a large degree for how much you learn, through the decisions you make about attending class, the amount of time you invest in completing the reading and assignments, and the extent to which you actively engage in class discussions and activities. While I do not formally take attendance every session, there is a large participation component of your grade. If you are not in class, you cannot participate. From time to time I will ask you to do in-class writing or to bring brief responses to course materials (typed) to class. The latter will not be individually graded, but will be the basis of small group and class discussions. This work cannot be made up even if you have an excused absence.

In the event that you do miss class, it is your responsibility to first contact a fellow student to find out what was covered. If you need further clarification, make an appointment to see me. All media (except for media with links on our Blackboard site) is available to check out at the CLC 3rd floor circulation desk.

Consistently missing class, arriving late or leaving early, sleeping in class, or behaving disrespectfully or disruptively (including unauthorized use of your phone or computer) will negatively affect your participation score.
What does participation mean in this class and how will my participation be evaluated?

A  You were consistently well prepared for class, actively listened, and contributed thoughtful insights and questions to both group work and class discussions.

B  You were mostly prepared for class and frequently demonstrated thoughtful engagement with the material in both group work and class discussions.

C  You were inconsistently prepared for class but infrequently engaged with the material, group work, and class discussions.

D  You were minimally prepared and showed a lack of interest in the course material, group work, and class discussions.

F  You were consistently not prepared for class and showed no interest in the course material, group work, and class discussions.

What is the cumulative grading scale for this course?

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<th>Letter</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87% - 89%</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67% - 70%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 66%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60%</td>
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Here are some additional course policies and Xavier resources of significance:

Make-up exams and quizzes
I will only offer make-up exams and quizzes in cases we mutually define as emergencies. Any emergency must be officially documented. In these rare cases, I will determine a make-up exam period and process.

Communications and Office Hours
I will respond to student emails once a day during the week. I have limited office hours because it is my experience that Xavier students rarely drop by. If you need to meet with me outside of the hours I have listed, please make an appointment. I am often in my office and encourage you to drop by or schedule an appointment if you have a question or concern.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the unattributed use of the work of others. If you have additional questions about what constitutes this serious offense of Xavier’s policy on academic integrity, please consult with me and the “Preventing Plagiarism” resource on the library’s website: http://www.xavier.edu/library/xu-tutor/Preventing-Plagiarism.cfm.

Technology
All electronic devices must be turned off and stored by the beginning of class. Computers may not be used in class unless we are doing in-class research.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities
Xavier’s Disability Services Office provides assistance to qualified students who feel they need some additional help to perform at their best in the classroom. This includes note taking, exam proctoring, alternate form textbooks, sign language and C-Print, and additional assistance on in-class writing assignments. Contact Disability Services for assistance—5th floor CLC.