

HI2A7-30 A Global History of Food

24/25

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Rebecca Earle

Credit value

30

Module duration

22 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Eating is a deeply human activity. Language, and the human species itself, perhaps developed out of our desire to cook and share food. Yet the way we eat now may be destroying important aspects of human society and the environment itself. How did we get into this mess?

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This 30 CATS undergraduate second-year option module explores the long history of the production, marketing and consumption of food, from ancient times to the present, from vegetarianism to the first battery chicken. It provides a framework for thinking about the place of food and eating within historical analysis. The module considers food from multiple overlapping perspectives - ethics, labour, environment, community, power, health, hunger and science - to help contextualise our current attitudes to food, and to introduce important historical concepts (from 'moral economies' to 'biopolitics') relevant to all areas of historical analysis.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

1. Introduction: Food as a Total Social Fact
2. A Brief History of Agriculture
3. Colonialism, Improvement and Economic Botany
4. Famine, Entitlement and Inequality
5. Industrial Food and Imperialism
6. Reading Week (no lecture or seminar)
7. Vegetarianism
8. The Cookbook as Document
9. Authenticity, Tradition and Nationalism
10. Restaurants
11. Calories, Vitamins and Nutritional Science
12. Cooking at Home: Technologies
13. Developmentalism, Green Revolutions, and GMOs
14. Religion
15. Feeding Cities: Markets, Supermarkets, and Urban Gardens
16. Reading Week (no lecture or seminar)
17. Neoliberalism, Food Security and Food Sovereignty
18. Dieting, Discipline and Fat as a Feminist Issue
19. The Art of Food
20. Food and the Environment
21. Revision Session

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of historical and theoretical interpretations of the study of the global history of food.
- Communicate ideas and findings, adapting to a range of situations, audiences and degrees of complexity.
- Generate ideas through the analysis of a broad range of primary source material for the study of the global history of food, including electronic resources.
- Analyse and evaluate the contributions made by existing scholarship.
- Act with limited supervision and direction within defined guidelines, accepting responsibility for achieving deadlines.
- Develop skills in using a range of source materials, including archival objects and material culture.

Indicative reading list

- Adams, Carol, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (London, 2015).
- Belasco, Warren and Philip Scranton, eds., *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies* (London, 2002).
- DiMeo, Michelle, and Sara Pennell, eds., *Reading and Writing Recipe Books 1550-1800* (Manchester, 2013).
- Floyd, Janet, and Laurel Forster, eds., *The Recipe Reader* (London, 2004).
- Gabaccia, Donna, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, 1998).
- Harris, Marvin, *Good to Eat*

Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture (1998). • Johnston, Josée, and Shyon Baumann, Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape (New York, 2009). • Khare, R.S., The Eternal Food: Gastronomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists, State University of New York (Albany, 1992). • Laudan, Rachael, Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History, University of California Press (Berkeley, 2013) • Malaguzzi, Silvia, Food and Feasting in Art (2008). • Neuhaus, Jessamyn, Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern America (Baltimore, 2003). • Orbach, Susie, Fat is a Feminist Issue, Paddington Press (New York, 1978) • Panayi, P., Spicing Up Britain: The Multicultural History of British Food (London, 2008). • Ranta, Ronald and Ichijo, Atsuko, eds., Food, National Identity and Nationalism: From the Everyday to the Global, Palgrave Macmillan (London, 2016). • Schanbacher, William, The Politics of Food: The Global Conflict between Food Security and Food Sovereignty (Santa Barbara, 2010). • Theophano, Janet, Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote (New York, 2002). • Vernon, James, Hunger: A Modern History (Cambridge, 2007). • Walvin, James, Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660-1800 (Basingstoke, 1997).

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	20 sessions of 1 hour (7%)
Seminars	20 sessions of 1 hour (7%)
Tutorials	2 sessions of 1 hour (1%)
Other activity	2 hours (1%)
Private study	256 hours (85%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking

approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Other activity description

Revision seminar.

Costs

Category	Description	Funded by	Cost to student
Field trips, placements and study abroad	The module includes the opportunity to participate in hands-on sessions in the use of material culture for the study of food history, offered by the Leamington Museum and Art Gallery, for which there is a charge,	Department	£0.00

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time
Seminar contribution	10%	
1500 word essay	10%	
3000 word essay	40%	
7 day take-home essay with citations and a bibliography	40%	

Feedback on assessment

¿ written feedback on essay and exam cover sheets\r\n¿ student/tutor dialogues in one-to-one tutorials

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History

- Year 2 of UFRA-R1VA Undergraduate French and History
- Year 2 of UGEA-R2V1 Undergraduate German and History
- Year 2 of ULNA-R4V1 Undergraduate Hispanic Studies and History
- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
 - Year 2 of V100 History
 - Year 2 of V100 History
- UPDA-Y306 Undergraduate History (Part-Time)
 - Year 2 of Y306 History (Part Time)
 - Year 2 of Y306 History (Part Time)
- Year 2 of UHIA-V102 Undergraduate History (Renaissance and Modern History Stream)
- Year 2 of UIPA-V1L8 Undergraduate History and Global Sustainable Development
- Year 3 of UITA-R3V2 Undergraduate History and Italian
- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V7 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)
- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
 - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
- Year 2 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL15 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with a term in Venice)
- UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
 - Year 2 of LA99 Liberal Arts
 - Year 2 of LA92 Liberal Arts with Classics
 - Year 2 of LA73 Liberal Arts with Design Studies
 - Year 2 of LA83 Liberal Arts with Economics
 - Year 2 of LA82 Liberal Arts with Education
 - Year 2 of LA95 Liberal Arts with English
 - Year 2 of LA81 Liberal Arts with Film and Television Studies
 - Year 2 of LA80 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
 - Year 2 of LA93 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
 - Year 2 of LA97 Liberal Arts with History
 - Year 2 of LA91 Liberal Arts with Life Sciences
 - Year 2 of LA75 Liberal Arts with Modern Languages and Cultures
 - Year 2 of LA96 Liberal Arts with Philosophy
 - Year 2 of LA94 Liberal Arts with Theatre and Performance Studies