

**FOOD, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY:  
TASTING FOOD, TASTING FREEDOM:**

Community and Environmental Sociology/Sociology 222

**Jack Kloppenburg (Instructor)**

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Fall Semester 2010

Tuesday/Thursday 4:00pm-5:15pm (3 cr)

Dinner Lab: Tuesday 5:30pm-7:30pm (1 cr)

Nothing is more fundamental to human survival and satisfaction than food. The production, preparation, and consumption of food involves us in intimate relations with the natural world and with each other. In this course we explore how foodways are expressions of individual and cultural identity. Special attention is given to how culinary patterns reflect the struggles and aspirations of minority and immigrant communities. Experiential learning techniques in and outside of the classroom are supplemented by a “dinner lab” in which we will cook and share a meal together each Tuesday evening. By the end of the course, I hope that you will have a better understanding of the role of food in your own life and that of the contemporary United States, and that you will have acquired a broader perspective from which to engage cultures other than your own. In addition, the class is intended to help you improve your ability to read critically, to explore new subject matter creatively and efficiently, and to communicate your ideas quickly and effectively in written and oral formats.

**ATTENDANCE (29 points).** I hope that you will find it interesting and instructive to attend all classes. I will talk some, but much of the class will be seminar-style discussion of the readings and related issues. *Your* active participation is critical if we are all to learn together. **You will receive one point for each class you attend.**

Class will start promptly at 4:00pm. **Please show me and your fellow students the courtesy of coming to class on time.**

**READINGS.** A large proportion of what you learn in this class will be transmitted by the readings. I expect you to do them all. I have selected them because they are interesting and engaging as well as informative and instructive. All readings for the course are available on-line through Learn@UW. There, the readings are arranged by week and can be identified by the author’s last name, the date of publication, and an abbreviated title (e.g., “Walker 1988 not only will your teachers appear).

**WEEKLY EXERCISES (24 points).** Though the readings are important, we will also be acquiring information and experience through interaction with a variety of guests, and through a number of field trips and activities. In order to help you process, interpret, integrate, and *digest*

these different modes of learning, you will each week be assigned one or more simple exercises. Frequently, I will pose questions or problematics raised by our reading and/or our class activities. Alternatively, I may ask you to simply reflect on your experiences. These exercises will entail you writing a few paragraphs, generally about a half page single spaced. These short exercise papers will be due in class on Thursdays, and we will use them to generate and stimulate discussion. The objective is to generate points of departure for class discussion that come from *your* thoughts and experience. I will give the papers a score of 2 (fine), 1 (could be better), or 0 (inadequate).

**TERM EXERCISE (25 points).** It is important that you learn to write well. The term exercise involves doing some research/exploration on your own. You should select an exercise from the list below, or even better, develop your own exercise. The results of each exercise will be reported in an 8-10 page (double spaced) essay. Exercises should be well organized, thoughtful, and will benefit from references to class readings and some additional research in order to make and illustrate points. **I strongly advise you to complete a first draft as early as you can and to take it to the Writing Center where you will be provided with an assessment of your writing and receive guidance on improvement.** Due dates for various parts of the term paper exercise are: Thursday, September 23, selection of paper topic  
Thursday, October 7, completion of first draft  
Thursday, October 21, draft returned to you with comments  
Thursday, November 11, final draft due.

1. **Alice Walker Seaweed Effect.** Try something new that you fear you might not like or that you have always been intrigued by but have never gotten around to tasting (oysters, Roquefort cheese, Swiss chard, seaweed, kumquats, goat cheese, yogurt, sushi, Korean food, etc.). Research the food and learn about it. Find a recipe. Cook it yourself (or have it at a restaurant). Is it what you expected? Better? Worse? Describe your reactions. Are they similar to or different from Alice Walker's (see the reading for the first day of class)? Would you eat the food again?
2. **Grace.** Research the place of food in your religion. Does your family say grace at any meals? If yes, describe the prayer/ritual. What do you think and feel about it? If your family does not say grace, why not? Do you think saying grace would add anything important to a meal? How could the precepts of your religion guide your food choices and their relation to sustainability?
3. **Cultural Alternatives I.** Visit two of the following ethnic grocery stores (Asian Midway Foods - 301 S. Park St., Yue Wah Oriental Foods - 2328 S. Park St., Oriental food Mart - 1206 S. Park St., Mercado Marimar - 2102 S. Park St., La Hispana Grocery - 3060 Fish Hatchery Rd., or other similar ones). Write an essay describing how they differ (or do not differ) from what you are accustomed to. Be an anthropologist. Be brave - talk to people, ask for advice from the staff! Buy something! In your essay, comment on product selection, smells, packaging, language, people, social activity, clothing, prices, what it feels to step into another culture, etc.

4. **Cultural Alternatives II.** Visit an ethnic restaurant whose cuisine you are not familiar with (e.g., El Pastor, Bahn Thai, Sa Bai Thong, Lao Laan-Xang, Himal Chuli, Chautara, Bandung, Buraka, Lulu's, etc.) Before going, learn about the cuisine of the country or ethnic group whose food you are sampling. Order something you've never had before. Write an essay describing how the experience differs (or does not differ) from what you are accustomed to. Be an anthropologist - comment on the food, the presentation, the decor, the ambience, the menu, other customers, smells, flavors, prices, the "authenticity," how you feel, etc.).
5. **Grocery Market Alternatives.** Visit both Whole Foods grocery and Willy Street Co-op. Describe the differences and similarities you observe between the two stores (i.e., ownership structures, management, community involvement, products, customers, prices, advertising, etc.), and how they both differ from conventional supermarkets.
6. **Fast.** Do some research on fasting. If you feel confident that you will suffer no seriously debilitating effects, fast for three days. Keep notes. Assess the physical, sensory, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the experience. Consider the reactions of your friends/family.
7. **My Menu.** Go to a My Menu store (there are four in Madison, closest to campus is at 2862B University Ave.) Buy 2 meals that you could cook. Prepare and consume the My Menu meals. Prepare and cook the same meals yourself. Compare and contrast. Reflect. Will My Menu succeed? Why or why not? Would you buy from them again?
8. **Eat Local Challenge.** For one week, do your best to eat only foods produced within 100 miles of Madison. Evaluate the experience. How difficult was it? What foods did you find? What did you learn? How did the experience affect your position on the value of "eating locally"?
9. **Supermarket Redlining?** Visit the Copp's at University Avenue. Visit the Copp's on South Park Street. Observe selection, pricing, ambience, clientele and pricing. Compare and contrast.
10. **Food Deserts?** Make up a list of the foods that you (or your family) typically buys for several days of meals. Go to the type of store you or your family typically shops at and make a list of the prices. Now suppose that you could only shop at a convenience store. Go to a convenience store (e.g., the 7-11 on Regent Street) and try to get your list of foods. What can you get? What can you not get? What are the prices? Reflect.
11. **Homegrown Thanksgiving.** Plan a menu for a Thanksgiving dinner the way your family celebrates it. Get a recipe for each dish (preferably from your parents/grandparents). Find out where you can buy the ingredients and how much they cost. Then find out how many of the ingredients you can buy in organic form, where or from whom you can get them, and how much they cost. Then find out how many of the ingredients you can find in local form (defined as produced in Dane County), where or from whom you can get them, and how much they cost. Compare.

12. **International Social Movement Web Sites.** Visit the web sites for Slow Food International <http://www.slowfood.com/> and Via Campesina [http://viacampesina.org/main\\_en/index.php](http://viacampesina.org/main_en/index.php). Compare and contrast the organizations according to what you find.
13. **Local Food Organization Web Sites.** Visit the web sites for REAP Food Group <http://www.reapfoodgroup.org/> and Growing Power <http://www.growingpower.org/>. Compare and contrast the organizations according to what you find.
14. **Follow the News.** Follow *The New York Times* for 2 weeks. Read all the articles and advertisements that relate to food. Provide a list of the articles you find. What was covered? What did you learn? How satisfied were you with the coverage and analysis provided by the articles? How useful or interesting did you find it to follow the news so closely?
15. **Uncovered Topics.** Choose a topic that is not covered in class that you would like to know more about (e.g., genetically engineered food, food and spirituality/religion, cannibalism, buying food on the web, cookbooks, food and labor, food-based social movements). Find four good readings on your topic of the type I might use in the reader for this class. Write an essay exploring the issues related to your topic that would be of relevance for the class.
16. **Commodity Analysis.** Select a food product that is available in two (or more) forms. The two forms will differ from each other on at least one important dimension (e.g., locally produced/globally produced, conventional/organic, produced by a big company/produced by a small company, you like it/you hate it, etc.) You will then trace the two versions of the food/product back through the various social and physical transformations they have undergone on the way to your mouth. The point of the paper is to explore the range of ways in which the two versions of the product differ, and to come to your own conclusions about which one you would prefer to consume, and why. Professor Kloppenburg will provide a conceptual and methodological model for this exercise.
17. **Be Creative.** Construct your own exercise. Check with me and have it approved. Do it.

**POST-PRANDIAL PRESENTATION, POSTER, AND PAPER (18 points).** At the end of the semester, each student will make a short (10 minute) presentation on some element(s) of what they have learned over the course of the semester. Presentations should be tight, well organized, and to the point. Presentations will be scored by all students in the class. You will also prepare a poster to illustrate your presentation. The poster should be an artistic, image-oriented design rather than an empirical prop filled with charts and statistics. Be creative! A one page single spaced paper should accompany the poster and explain what it is you learned and how the poster is an expression/reflection of that learning. I will arrange to have the posters and papers displayed in the Ethnic Studies Library in H.C. White Hall. The presentation, poster and paper are worth 6 points each. Your fellow students will score your presentation. You will be randomly assigned a presentation date in the last two weeks of the semester.

**PARTICIPATION (4 points).** Prof. Kloppenburg will assign each student up to 4 points for the quality of their overall participation in and contribution to class.

**GRADING.** Points are earned in a variety of ways:

1 point for every class that you attend.	29 possible points
up to 2 points for each of 12 weekly exercises completed	24 points
up to 25 points for the term exercise paper	25 points
up to 5 points for the post-prandial presentation (students score)	6 points
up to 5 points for the post-prandial presentation poster	6 points
up to 5 points for the post-prandial presentation paper	6 points
up to 5 points for quality of participation overall	4 points
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100 points total</b>

Final grades are computed according to the following table:	A = 93-100
	AB = 85-92
	B = 77-84
	BC = 69-76
	C = 61-68
	D = 55-60
	F = 0-54

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1

**Thursday, September 2 Course Introduction**

### WEEK 2

**Tuesday, September 7 Getting to Know Each Other**

Dinner Lab: cookout at Jack's house

**Thursday, September 9 Eating Your Teachers, Teaching Your Eaters**

Exercise: personal/family food history

### Readings

Walker, Alice

1988 "Not only will your teachers appear, they will cook new foods for you." Pp. 134-138 in *Living by The Word: Selected Writings 1973-1987*, San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

Rozin, Elizabeth and Paul Rozin

2005 "Culinary themes and variations." Pp. 34-41 in Carolyn Korsmeyer (ed.). *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*. New York, NY: Berg.

**WEEK 3 FOOD AND FREEDOM****Tuesday, September 14 Making a FIG Meaningful**

Guest: Peter Anderson (UW Department of Nutritional Sciences, Instructor for Nutritional Sciences 132, "Nutrition Today")

Exercise: Questions for Anderson

Dinner Lab: Anderson's Garden bounty

**Thursday, September 16 Tasting food, Tasting Freedom**

Exercise: 3 forms of food freedom

**Readings**

Berry, Wendell

1990 "The pleasures of eating." Pp. 125-131 in Robert Clark (ed.), *Our Sustainable Table...Essays*, San Francisco, CA: North Point Press.

Mintz, Sidney

1996 "Tasting food, tasting freedom" in *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Shange, Ntozake

1998 "What'd you people call that?" Pp. 5-13 in *If I Can Cook / You Know God Can* Boston: Beacon Press.

**Saturday, September 18 Field Trip:** Badger Rock School hoop house project**WEEK 4****Tuesday, September 21 Sustainable Food or Food Justice?**

Guest: Alfonso Morales, UW Department of Urban and Regional Planning

Dinner Lab: open

**Thursday, September 23 Celebrating the South Madison Farmers Market**

Activity: attend South Madison Farmers market celebration

Exercise: Digesting the Badger Rock hoop house trip

**Readings**

Moore Lappé, Frances and Anna Lappé

2002 "Taking off the cowboy hat." Pp. 244-274 in *Hope's Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet*. New York: NY: Tarcher/Putnam.

Morales, Alfonso

2010 "Growing food AND justice: dismantling racism through sustainable food systems."

Winne, Mark

2008 "Growing obese and diabetic; going local and organic." Chapter 7, pp.110-136 in *Closing the Food Gap: Resetting the Table in the Land of Plenty*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

**Saturday, September 25, Activity:** visit Dane County Farmers Market and attend the Food For Thought Festival**WEEK 5****Tuesday, September 28 Freedom to Farm, Farming for Freedom**

Guests: Robert Pierce (South Madison Farmers Market; Program for Entrepreneurial Training; Center for Resilient Cities) and Megan Taft (GreenHouse Residential Learning Community, Farley Center for Peace, Justice and Sustainability)

Dinner Lab: Robert Pierce and Megan Taft

**Thursday, September 30 Food For Thought**

Exercise: Digesting celebrations - South Madison and Food For Thought

**Readings**

Klindienst, Patricia

2006 "Freedom: the gardens of two Gullah elders." Pp. 1-32 in *the Earth Knows My Name: Food, Culture, and Sustainability in the Gardens of Ethnic Americans*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

2006 "Renewal: fours sisters garden and Monte Vista Farm." Pp. 33-63 in *the Earth Knows My Name: Food, Culture, and Sustainability in the Gardens of Ethnic Americans*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Royte, Elizabeth

2009 "Street farmer." *The New York Times Magazine* (July 5).

**WEEK 6 AN INDUSTRIAL CUISINE?****Tuesday, October 5 Is There an American Cuisine?**

Dinner Lab: open

**Thursday, October 7 A Toxic (Corporate) Food Environment?**

Exercise: Digesting toxics

**Readings**

Mintz, Sidney

1996 "Cuisine: high, low, and not at all" and "Eating American" in *Tasting food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Nestle, Marion

2002 "Introduction: the food industry and 'eat more.'" pp. 1-28 in *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Wansink, Brian

2006 "The mindless margin" and "Fast food fever" in *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*. New York: Bantam Books.

**WEEK 7****Tuesday, October 12 Soul Food Itself**

Guest: Rev. Larry Jackson (JA's Restaurant)

Dinner Lab: JA's soul food buffet

**Thursday, October 14 Soulful Talk About Soul Food**

Exercise: digesting JA's

**Readings**

Opie, Frederick Douglas

2008 "The chitlin circuit: the origins and meanings of soul and soul food." Pp. 121-138 in *Hog & Hominy: Soul Food From Africa to America*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Jones, Leroi (Amiri Baraka)

1966 "Soul food." Pp. 101-104 in *Home: Essays*. New York: William Morrow & Co.

Grosvenor, Verta-Mae

1970 "The demystification of food." Pp. xiii-xv in *Vibration Cooking, or, Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl*. Garden city, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc.

Nettles, Kimberly D.

2007 "'Saving' soul food." *Gastronomica* (Summer): 106-113.

**WEEK 8****Tuesday, October 19 Food and the Spirit I**

Guest: Jordan Rosenblum (Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies)

Dinner Lab: Latkes and Lox

**Thursday, October 21 Food and the Spirit II**

Exercise: Digesting the spirit

**Readings**

Shapiro, Samantha

2008 "Kosher wars." *The New York Times Magazine* (October 12).

Explore the web site "the jew & the carrot: jews, food & contemporary issues," at

<http://blogs.forward.com/the-jew-and-the-carrot/>

Opie, Frederick Douglas

2008 "Food rebels: African American critics and opponents of soul food." Pp. 155-173 in *Hog & Hominy: Soul Food From Africa to America*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Winckler, Suzanne

1999 "A savage life: if you want to be an omnivore, you should try killing your own meat." *The New York Times Magazine* (February 6).

**WEEK 9****Tuesday, October 26 Food and Personal Identity**

Dinner Lab: Jim Nienhuis (UW Department of Horticulture) - Chile rellenos

**Thursday, October 28 Food and Cultural Identity**

Exercise: Digesting your identity

**Readings**

Christensen, Paul

2001 "Mac and gravy." Pp. 17-39 in Sherrie A. Inness (ed.), *Pilaf, Pozole, and Pad Thai: American Women and Ethnic Food*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Nguyen, Bich Minh

2007 "Fast food Asian." Chapter 4, pp. 45-59 in *Stealing Buddha's Dinner: A Memoir*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Bentley, Amy

2004 "From culinary other to mainstream America: meanings and uses of Southwestern cuisine." Pp. 209-225 in Lucy M. Long (ed.), *Culinary Tourism*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press.

Rozin, Paul

2005 "The meaning of food in our lives: a cross-cultural perspective on eating and well-being." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 37: Supplement 2 (November-December): S107-S112.

**WEEK 10****Tuesday, November 2 Hunger at Home, Hunger Abroad**

Dinner Lab: open

**Thursday, November 4 What Should You Do? What Are You Willing to Do?**

Exercise: Singer Solution debate

**Readings**

Mittal, Anuradha

2002 "On the true cause of world hunger." *The Sun* (February): 4-13.

Singer, Peter

1999 "The Singer solution to world poverty." *The New York Times Magazine* (September 5).

Grosvenor, Verta-Mae

1970 "Forty acres and a jeep." Pp. 71-73 in *Vibration Cooking, or, Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl*. Garden city, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc.

Winne, Mark

2008 "Income disparities, poverty, and the food gap." Pp. 173-182 in *Closing the Food Gap: Resetting the Table in the Land of Plenty*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

**WEEK 11 OPEN**

**Tuesday, November 9**

Dinner Lab: open

**Thursday, November 11**

**WEEK 12**

**Tuesday, November 16 Are You Washed in the Blood of the Lamb?**

Dinner Lab: open

**Thursday, November 18 What Should You Do? What Are You Willing to Do?**

Exercise: Vegetarian debate

**Readings**

Schlosser, Eric

2001 "The chain never stops." *Mother Jones* 26:4 (July-August): 38-47, 86-87.

Pollan, Michael

2006 "The ethics of eating animals" and "Slaughter: in a glass abattoir." Chapters 17 and 12, pp. 304-333 and 226-238 in *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York, NY: The Penguin Press.

Hasselstrom, Linda M.

1991 "Butchering the crippled heifer" and "The cow versus the animal rights activist," Pp. 319-330 in *Land Circle: Writings Collected From the Land*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing Co.

Wild, Conner

2009 "The eater as conscientious objector." Paper by 222 student.

**WEEK 13**

**Tuesday, November 23**

Guest: Tory Miller and staff (L'Etoile Restaurant)

Dinner Lab: L'Etoile

**Thursday, November 25**

Exercise: digesting L'Etoile

**Readings**

Pollan, Michael

2009 “Out of the kitchen, onto the couch: how American cooking became a spectator sport, and what we lost along the way.” *The New York Times Magazine* (August 8), 26-35, 44, 46-47.

O’Neill, Molly

1993 “The Zen of cooking, or joy when time allows.” *The New York Times* (October 27).

Amster-Burton, Matthew

2004 “Learning to cook, cooking to learn.” *Best Food Writing 2004*. New York, NY: Marlow & Co.

Bourdain, Anthony

2000 “Who cooks?” Pp. 55-63 in *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly*. New York: Ecco Press.

\*\*\*\*\* **THANKSGIVING BREAK** \*\*\*\*\*

**WEEK 14**

**Tuesday, November 30 Post-prandial Presentations**

Dinner Lab: open

**Thursday, December 2 Post-prandial Presentations**

**WEEK 15**

**Tuesday, December 7 Post-prandial Presentations**

Dinner Lab: open

**Thursday, December 9 Post-prandial Presentations**

**WEEK 16**

**Tuesday, December 14 What Did We Accomplish?**

Dinner Lab: potluck at Jack’s house

**FOOD, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY - DINNER LAB**  
**Community and Environmental Sociology / Sociology 222**

**Professor Jack Kloppenburg**

Fall Semester 2010

1 Credit

Tuesday 5:30-7:30

Each student *must* take responsibility for organizing one lunch. Students may work together in teams to plan a simple meal appropriate for dinner. You will demonstrate the preparation of that meal, providing what complementary cultural/culinary commentary you can. We will then eat dinner together, during which time we will talk informally.

Grades are determined by the number of labs you attend:	13 labs	A
	12 labs	AB
	11 labs	B
	9 labs	C

Tuesday, September 7:	Cookout (Kloppenburg)
Tuesday, September 14:	Garden Bounty (Anderson)
Tuesday, September 21:	open
Tuesday, September 28:	(Robert Pierce, Megan Taft)
Tuesday, October 5:	open
Tuesday, October 12:	JA's Soul Food Restaurant
Tuesday, October 19:	Latkes and Lox (Rosenblum? students?)
Tuesday, October 26:	Chile Rellenos (Nienhuis)
Tuesday, November 2:	open
Tuesday, November 9:	open
Tuesday, November 16:	open
Tuesday, November 23:	L'Etoile
Tuesday, November 30:	open
Tuesday, December 7:	open