

FAM3000F: Food Media

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Consultation: by appointment

Course Overview:

In the decades since World War II, the “Western” world has witnessed a massive rise in Food Media, that is, the “mass” communication of food. Although original to the UK and USA, South Africa follows global trends closely. This development has happened in tangent with, if not as a direct result of, new and emerging forms of media, such as Food TV, Lifestyle programmes and the Internet. The close relationship between form and content at once suggests and confirms that Food Media involves much more than food. Celebrity chefs alone attest to the fact that entertainment, lifestyle, stardom and, not least, corporate concerns have become central to the food industry.

Objectives and Outcomes

In this course we will interrogate current trends of Food Media, including the often controversial notions of culture, identity and politics (national and international) that are central to food and, more particularly, its media representation. The course will provide a good theoretical and practical foundation for those wishing to enter the Food Media industry. Students will also acquire theoretical tools and skills applicable to more general cultural contexts and industries.

Assessment

Seminar coursework will be made up of:

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| 1. | Two essays (see calendar outline for due dates and topics) of 1,500-2,000 words, each of which will count for 30% : | 60% |
| 2. | One class (group) presentation: | 30% |
| 3. | Class participation: | 10% |

20% of each assignment mark will be allocated to written expression, grammar and spelling.

Please ensure that you hand in **two copies** of all written assignments.

Plagiarism is an offence. A **signed plagiarism declaration must be attached to all written work**.

Any work handed in late without an extension will be penalised **5%** per day.

DP Requirements: Attendance of seminars; active participation in classes; completion of all assignments. All tutorial marks are provisional.

Preparation

Readings will be made available by the tutor and students are expected to have done the required reading for each tutorial. Anyone who fails to do so will be asked to leave the class and will be marked absent for DP purposes. Students are also encouraged to bring to the attention of the class and tutor any material they find that may be relevant to the course. Finally, students are expected to read widely and pay attention to current and ongoing Food Media issues. This independent engagement with the topic will be reflected in the class participation mark. Please consult the recommended reading list for additional material which may be useful to the course.

| <i>Week</i> | <i>Topic</i> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 25-29 Feb | <i>Introduction:</i> History and Politics |
| 3 3-7 March | <i>Cultural Cuisine:</i> Food as Heritage |
| 4 10-14 March | <i>Food Writing and TV:</i> New Media and Globalisation |
| 5 17-20 March | <i>Food TV:</i> Global trends |
| 21-30 March | VAC |
| 6 31 March-4 April | <i>Celebrity Chefs and Responsibility:</i> The case of Jamie Oliver, children and chicken ** Tuesday 27 March, 9am: Essay 1 due |
| 7 7-11 April | <i>Responsibility vs. Choice:</i> The Obesity “Epidemic” |
| 8 14-18 April | <i>Green Ethics:</i> Supermarket Pastoral and The Big Organic |
| 9 21-25 April | <i>The Function of Food:</i> Do we eat foods or nutrients? |
| 10 29 April-2 May *1 May | PRESENTATIONS |
| 11 5-9 May | PRESENTATIONS |
| 12 12-16 May | <i>Review:</i> Essay Writing |
| 13 20 May | <i>Conclusion</i> ** Tuesday 20 May, 9am: Final Essay Due |
| 22-28 May | STUDY WEEK |

Important note: This timetable is provisional and subject to change depending on class progress. If you miss a class it is **your responsibility** to ensure that you prepare the correct material for the following week.

Essay/Assignment Topics:

1. Cultural Cuisine: Write an article – including recipe – on what you consider to be South Africa’s national dish. You may decide on the format: if you want to write it, eg., as a feature for a newspaper; an entry in a guide-book; tourist website; history book; school text or as an academic essay. Your chosen format must, however, be clearly specified, and the assignment must show scholarly engagement (including correct referencing, where appropriate).

1,500-2,000 words, 30%

2. Food TV: In groups of 2-4, design and storyboard a food programme (filming is optional, though not compulsory).

Class presentation, hand in production notes, 30%

3. Critical Analysis: (choose one):

a. ‘It was not that I agreed with everything he said, much to the contrary; he illustrated his belief in the possibility of genuine multiculturalism by reference to the different kinds of restaurant to be found in most large cities nowadays. (I have always suspected that, at root, multiculturalism means, at least for westerners, tapas today, tom kha kai tomorrow, and tarte tatin the day after. This is to take the idea that we are what we eat a little too seriously.)’

(Anthony Daniels, “Pundits & Panjandrums”, *The New Criterion* 23:7, March 2005)

Discuss.

b. With reference to *at least* one local and one international programme, discuss the extent to which Food TV represents another branch of Reality TV.

c. What role do media play in fostering a “national cuisine” in South Africa? (You may want to compare/contrast with another country to develop your argument)

d. Jamie Oliver was voted “Most Inspiring Political Figure” in the UK in 2006. According to UK chef Antony Worrall Thomson, colleague Delia Smith is “the goddess of TV cooks and if she was up for election, I’m sure she’d be Prime Minister”. Discuss the political role, if any, of celebrity chefs.

e. Health or hysteria? Discuss the role of the media in determining lifestyles.

f. With reference to growing “organic” markets and produce on supermarket shelves, examine the role of what journalist Michael Pollan terms “Supermarket Pastoral” in South Africa’s consumer society.

NB. Students are also encouraged to design their own essay topics, subject to approval by the tutor.

1,500-2,000 words, 30%

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Prescribed Reading

Cultural Cuisine:

Bell, D. & G. Valentine (1997) "Nation", *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat*, 167-183

McBride, David "Beef and Liberty: Roast Beef, John Bull and the English Nation (Review)"

Food Writing and TV:

O'Neill, Molly (2003) "Food Porn", *Columbia Journalism Review* 5

Celebrity Chefs and Responsibility

Lawson, Mark (2002) "The fall and rise of Jamie", *The Guardian*

Hattenstone, Simon (2005) "Never before has a boy wanted more", *The Guardian*

Robertson, Cameron (2005) "Jamie Oliver: The Silencer of the Lamb", *The Mirror*

Ungoed-Thomas, Jon (2008) "Jamie Oliver is back on the warpath", *The Times*

Moskin, Julia (2008) "Chefs' New Goal: Looking Dinner in the Eye", *The New York Times*

Gill, A.A. (2008) "Urban Turban", *The Times*

Ebner, Sarah (2006) "Real Food Isn't Real Life", *The Guardian*

Pignatelli, Stanley (2008) "Cooking classes to help British kids cut fat", *The Globe and Mail*

Smith, David (2008) "Food suppliers poised to cash in on the new 'Delia effect'", *The Observer*

Responsibility vs. Choice

Tamaki, Julie (2005) "Newest Gut Bomb in Burger Wars is Audacity on a Bun", *L.A. Times*

Shah, Saeed (2006) "McDonald's defies critics with an even bigger Big Mac", *The Independent*

Burkman, Oliver (2006) "Extreme Dining", *The Guardian*

Lyons, Rob (2006) "Jamie Oliver: what a 'tosser'", *Spiked*

Barkham, Patrick (2008) "The big McMakeover", *The Guardian*

Comins, Lyse (2007) "New food label laws 'will make SA healthier'", *IOL*

Green Ethics

Pollan, Michael (2006) "Big Organic: Supermarket Pastoral", *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, 134-151

Anon (2006) "Good Food?" *The Economist*

Parker, Heather (2008) "Carbon Footprint vs. Organic: What's a Green Girl to Do?", *Fair Lady*

Burros, Marian (2008) "More House Salads, Whether the House Likes It or Not", *The N.Y. Times*

Heam, Josephine (2008) "Pelosi pushes gourmet menu", *The Politico*

Allen, Charlotte (2008) "I'll have the free-range Jello", *L.A. Times*

The Function of Food

Nestle, Marion (2002) "Inventing Techno-Foods", *Food Politics*, 295-337

Martin, Andrew (2007) "In Live Bacteria, Food Makers See a Bonanza", *The New York Times*