

***Food, Film and Fiction:
Barcelona and Madrid***

***One Credit
(Connected With Study Tour to Spain)***

DIS Fall 2007

Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.

A. Brillat-Savarin

Man is what he eats.

L. Fuerbach

*If you are what you eat and you don't know you are eating,
do you know who you are?*

C. Fischer

*"I'm eating vegetation. 'cause of Fast Food Nation. I'm wearing uncomfortable shoes
'cause of globalization."*

Popular song

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Rafael Chabrán, Ph.D., Department of Literature, University of California, San Diego, 1985. Whittier College Resident Director and Visiting Faculty at DIS. Professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Whittier College (California). Researched and published extensively on the history of science (botany), history of medicine (materia medica) during the 16th and 17th centuries in Spain and Mexico, as well as in US Latino Studies.

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DIS CONTACTS

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CLASS MEETINGS

Friday, 10:05 – 11:25, Vestergade 10, staircase B, room 25

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class/study tour is a survey of a few selected Spanish and Latin American literary texts and films as well as a Danish film, which deal with food, cooking and eating. This class finds itself at the intersection of the history of literature, history of film and history of food. Students will read and study selections by Cervantes, Don Quixote, L. Esquivel, Like Water for Chocolate, as well as culinary representations in the films based on these novels.

This class explores the ways in which foods serve as energy sources for humans as well as the ways in which humans use food in symbolic and cultural fashion to cement social bonds and establish hierarchy. We will examine food as a manifestation of culture and as cultural production. While the bulk of our time will be spent on the food of Spain and Latin America, we will begin the class by reflecting on food and eating in the US today. Central to the latter consideration will be a discussion of the ideas and arguments put forth in the text *Fast Food Nation* and the film *Supersize Me*.

In addition, the class will examine food and food history from a cross-cultural perspective and consider why certain people eat and like to eat certain foods and why. The class is meant to whet students appetites and get them to think about why certain cultures have appetites for certain foods. Students will be asked to consider the sensory properties of foods—taste, texture, color and smell—as we study the representations of foods and cooking in films and literature. Students will also be asked to consider the role of specific cultural contexts and their relation to appetite.

Food has been a popular and versatile novelistic and film prop for a long time in both Spain and Latin America. Students will be asked to explore the following questions: What can we learn about the history and culture of Spain and Latin America by studying the themes of food in eating in novels and films? Are food and eating just novelistic and cinematic props? Are they just background elements or are they the central characters in understanding the main elements of the themes and plots of novels and films? In the specific works which we are studying, in what ways does food relate to specific themes such as gender, sex, politics, and history?

REQUIRED READINGS/TEXTS

M. Cervantes. *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (Selected chapters). Cervantes. *Don Quixote*. Trans. E. Grossman. New York: HaperCollins, 2003: Part I, Chapter 1 “Which Describes the Condition and Profession of the Famous Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha” (19-24);

Laura Esquivel. *Like Water for Chocolate. A Novel in Monthly Installments With Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies*. New York: Random House, 1992: 5-19; 25-41-47-60; 65-81. **Check out links page on class forum site for more information**

R. Chabrán, “Medieval Spain in Regional Cuisines of Medieval Europe: A Book of Essays edited by M. Weiss Adamson.” New York: Routledge, 2002: pp. 125-152. (Handout)

R. Chabrán (2000): "Five Special Texts: Cacao, Chilli, Corn, Tabacco, and Tomato" in *The Mexican Treasury. The Writings of Dr. Francisco Hernández* edited by Simon Varey. Trans. by Rafael Chabrán, Cynthia L. Chamberllin and Simon Varey. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 200: 107-116.

E. Schlosser, "Introduction from *Fast Food Nation* (Handout)

Check out links page on class forum site for more information

Michael Pollan. *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006), "Introduction: Our National Eating Disorder" (pp. 1-11) and "The Meal: Fast Food" (pp. 109-119.)

Claude Fishler. "The McDonalization of Culture in J. L. Flondrin and Massimo Montanari. *Food: A Culinary History From Antiquity To The Present.*" New York: Penguin (1996; 1999): 531-547.

Karen Blixen, "Babette's Feast" from *Anecdotes of Destiny*. New York: Random House, 1958.

FILMS

Check out links page on class forum site for more information on the films.

Morgan Spurlock. "Super Size Me" (2004). Optional.

Alonso Arau. "Like Water for Chocolate" (1992). **Required**

Pedro Almodovar, "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (1988). Optional

Gabriel Axel, "Babette's Feast" (1987/1988). **Required.**

Guillermo del Toro, "Pan's Labyrinth" (2006). Optional

Cedric Klapisch, "The Spanish Apartment" ("L, Auberge espagnole", 2002). Optional

NOTE ON FILMS: Two films are required for this class (Alonso Arau. "Like Water for Chocolate" (1992) and Gabriel Axel, "Babette's Feast" (1987/1988). These will be viewed on Wed. September 5 and September 19, respectively during "field study" times. All other films are optional and will be on reserve in the DIS library and can be viewed independently.

COURSE FORMAT

In this class there will be few formal lectures. The bulk of the course will be organized around discussions of readings and topics for the day and in class pre-writing, writing and peer evaluation activities. Keeping up with the reading and participating in the discussions is a central requirement for this class. The class will follow the schedule as set forth in the syllabus. Students must do reading and writing assignments.

What goes on in class presupposes that you have read and understood the assigned readings. We will spend most of our class time thinking aloud about what we have read. In addition, class members will give reports during the term. Finally, students are expected to keep

journals for class and for exercises specified in the Syllabus. Students must participate in all in-class writing, collaborative learning and peer evaluation activities.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance and participation in class and all class activities is mandatory. Thinking and verbalizing develop the thinking and verbalizing skills we are concerned with, not only by hearing others talk about them but by entering into the discourse. Your attendance and participation is crucial in the activities of the seminar. As we are involved in collaborative learning, absences and lack of participation will not be tolerated.

PARTICIPATION

The faculty and your classmates will evaluate participation in discussions. Participation is not to be confused with mere attendance; nor is quantity of talking the benchmark. Qualitative judgments of a student's contribution will be made using the following criteria:

1. Engagement with the material. Is the student enthusiastic, interested, bored or dismissive? Is the student authentic in presenting his or her own views, or does the student treat the material as an abstraction or game? Does the student bring active, critical judgment to bear on issues or respond passively?
2. Preparation for discussion. Does the student manifest having done the reading, completed assignments, addressed study questions, etc.? Does the student exhibit having reflected upon the topic under discussion rather than "winging it" with prior preparation?
3. Willingness to participate. Does the student speak regularly and thoughtfully? Is he/she reticent? Does he/she speak carelessly or too often? Does the student volunteer for a fair share of assignments or is he/she a reluctant participant?
4. Listening ability. Is the student engaged and attentive or distracted and uninvolved? Does he/she listen to others seriously and respectfully or casually, not attending to the other's point?
5. Contribution to class. Is the student engaged in, willing to lead, and supportive of discussions, or is his/her participation marginal, passive or disruptive? Does he/she help keep the discussion on track or lead it to, or follow it on tangents?
6. Quality of analysis and/or argument. Does the student supply systematic reasons for positions or merely express feelings or conclusions? Does the student bring originality and balance in their reasoning? Does he/she see weaknesses in arguments or positions in the literature or in class?

7. Questioning. Does the student courteously challenge others and him/herself? Are the questions probing and advance the discussions, or do they tend to be reiterative, disruptive or irrelevant?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

- To enable the students to know and understand the history and characteristics of Spanish and Latin American food and its connection to fiction and film;
- To think about the history of food and develop critical concepts for discussing food culture;
- To reflect on the different food cultures and situate them in their historical and cultural contexts;
- To think about food from a culturally pluralistic rather than an ethnocentric perspective;
- To help the student to improve his or her abilities to analyze information and explore new ideas;
- To read, write and reflect upon the texts, which we are reading;
- To connect writing as process to critical thinking;
- To experience what R. Barthes has called the "pleasure of the text."

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Essay 1: Critical review of an article/Letter to a Friend. Using the format of a personal letter to a friend, write a critical review of one of the articles which we have read in this class. This essay is meant to be analytical and not merely descriptive. Your essay should cite and discuss the major points of the article and the line of reasoning used to put forth the thesis or argument. In addition, you should mention other articles that we have read in the class. Remember your audience. Situate your essay within the general context of the class.

Due: November 16

Length: 2-3 pp.

Letter of Self-Evaluation: Your essay should include a Letter of Self-Evaluation.

Drafts, outlines and brainstorming: Your essay must include all rough drafts, outlines and brainstorming.

Learning Log/Food Journal: Write what you eat, drink and read. Students are required to keep a learning log/journal to document this class experience. A learning log is a professional diary that students keep during the semester and is a useful tool to collect material for classroom discussions, essays, group assignments and exams. It is also beneficial for self-reflection as well as personal and academic growth. I strongly recommend that students use the class journals every week and write down experiences, thoughts, observations, questions and reflections. While the journal or learning log will be important throughout the semester, it will be of special importance during the Study Tour in Spain, when you will document what you see and experience in relation to your own background, culture and education. Food is to

be a central theme of the journal and as such I am asking you to write down what you eat every day or at least of summary of your meals. Finally, your journal should also include your reading notes and summaries of class discussions.

Will be checked periodically throughout the course.

Final Project/Presentation (Team-Group Projects). One of the following:

- (1) Class Web Page or
 - (2) Multimedia/video (CD) on the class
- Power point/Text
 - Visuals/Music
 - Bibliography

Due: November 23rd with Class Presentations

COURSE GRADE EVALUATION

Participation	20%
Essay	25%
Midterm Essay	15%
Learning Log/Food Journal	10%
Group project/presentation	30%

THE USE OF CRITICAL THINKING IN THE GRADE EVALUATION

In addition to points and grade percentages, you will receive a grade on your ability to use the critical thinking process which as we will be using in this class.

A grade of "A" indicates that the writer demonstrates knowledge of the material including specific bits of information, facts, chronological sequence and generally accepted generalizations and relevant concepts and facts, and explains important relationships (connections) among them. The writer also explores the implications and broader significance of the questions or problems being investigated, and/or evaluates the significance, quality of alternative ways of looking and the problem or issues.

A grade of "B" indicates that writer demonstrates knowledge of the basic material, and makes some attempts at appropriate analysis, or evaluation. Implications of ideas are not explored.

A grade of "C" indicates that the writer recalls bits of information, general patterns and or generalizations. There is little or no attempt at analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. Implications of ideas are not explored.

A grade of "D" indicates that the writer has difficulty recalling and communicating information.

A grade of "F" indicates that the writer has little understanding of the basic material, important concepts, and generalizations, makes factual errors, or communicates so poorly as to convey little of the material.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Friday, August 31

Prologue: Slow Food and Fast Food. The History of Food and Global Food History. Food and Culture. Food and Literature. Food and Film. Food and sustenance in fiction and film. The appeal of Food as the subject of study. You and your food history. The US as *Fast Food Nation* and *Supersize Me*.

Introduction to the class and the approach. The study of culture through history, food, literature and film. Approach: Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary, and Transdisciplinary. History of Food, History of Film and History of Literature in Spain and Latin America. Texts and Contexts. The Situation of texts (food, films, literature) within their socio-cultural, historical contexts. The Natural History of your meals: From The USA to Europe. Overview of the class, readings, films and the syllabus. The class and the Spain Study Tour.

Journal Writing:

Write for 10 mins. on the following. Do some brainstorming and outlining before you begin.

What do you expect or imagine this class to be about?

Why did you select this class?

What special expertise do you bring to the class that will contribute to the outcomes of the class?

What languages do you speak or can you use?

Readings:

--Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*. *The Dark Side of The All-American Meal*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Comp. (2001): Chapter 1, "Introduction" (pp. 1-10).

--Michael Pollan. *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006), "Introduction: Our National Eating Disorder" (pp. 1-11).

Wednesday, September 5

Film: Alonso Arau. "Like Water for Chocolate" (1992). Required. (DIS 7-41)

Friday, September 7

Election of two Class reps.

Discussion of first lecture, readings and film.

Mestizo Food: The Making of Mexican and Mexican American Food. Regional Cuisines of Mexico. L. Esquivel and *Like Water for Chocolate*. The novel, film and the food.

Recipes from the novel and the film.

Reading:

Laura Esquivel. *Like Water for Chocolate*. A Novel in Monthly Installments With Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies. New York: Random House, 1992: 5-19.

Friday, September 14 NO CLASS

Wednesday, September 19

Film: "Babette's Feast." Required. (DIS 7-41)

Friday, September 21

Danish Food, film and Fiction. "Babette's Feast:" The story, the film and the food. Recipes from The Feast: French food in Danish. The history of herring and cod in Danish history. A comparison of Northern European and Southern European Food.

Reading:

--Karen Blixen, "Babette's Feast" (short story)

Discussion questions:

Who was Karen Blixen/Isak Dinesen (1885-1962) and what were her contributions to Danish literature and culture?

Compare and contrast the short story and the film "Babette's Feast" What are the most striking similarities and differences?

Friday, September 28

MIDTERM EXAM in class

Midterm Class evaluation Due

Midterm Self-Evaluation Due

Friday, October 5

From the Natural History of meals to the History of Spanish Food. The early origins of Spanish cultural history and geography. Early Iberians. The Coming of the Celts. The Celtic-Iberians: An early fusion. Phoenicians and Greeks. The invasion of the Goths and Visigoths. Early Spanish Cultural History and Food: Roman Spain. The substratum of Spanish Food: olives, olive oil, cheese, bread and wine. Spain in the Middle Ages.

Christians and the Coming of Islam. The Foundations of Al-Andalus. Islamic Spain: 711-1492 and Food History. Arabic food in Andalucia/Southern Spain. The Contributions of Arabic culture to the History of Spanish food: Rice, Citrus and Saffron.

Discussion questions:

What did the Romans in Spain eat?

In what ways was Roman cuisine the foundations of present day Spanish cuisine?

Describe the contributions of Arabic culture to Spanish cuisine and food culture.

Reading:

-- Rafael Chabrán. "Medieval Spain" in *Regional Cooking of Medieval Europe. A Book of Essays*. Edited by Melitta Weis Adamson. New York: Routledge, 2002: 125-130; 135-142.

--Cervantes. *Don Quixote*. Trans. E. Grossman. New York: HaperCollins, 2003: Part I, Chapter 1 "Which Describes the Condition and Profession of the Famous Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha"(19-24);

Friday, October 12

Spanish Food History during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Golden Age. Christians and Conversos. The 16th and 17th centuries. The History of Early Spanish Cookbooks. Miguel de Cervantes and His Spain. Cervantes and Don Quixote. An Introduction to Cervantes, s classic novel: questions of genre, themes and structure. Cervantes and Food: What did Don Quixote and Sancho eat? Food in the Age of Cervantes

How to eat and drink in Spain: A Practical Guide. Tapas and Tapeo. The History of Tapas and Tapa bars. The Tortilla española and how to make it. Bars, Cafes and Restaurants in Spain: An Introduction.

-----Mid-Semester Break-----

October 28 --November 3: Study Tour to Spain (Barcelona-Madrid)

Friday, November 9

The Americas before the Coming of the Spanish. Mexico becomes New Spain. The Colombian Exchange. Death, Disease and New World plants. What did the Aztecs eat before the coming of the Spanish?--No meat or cheese on the tacos. Spanish Food and the introduction of New World Food Products: Corn, Potatoes, Tomatoes and Peppers.

Reading:

--Chabrán (2002): 143-146.

--Chabrán (2000): "Five Special Texts: Cacao, Chilli, Corn, Tobacco, and Tomato" in The Mexican Treasury. The Writings of Dr. Francisco Hernández edited by Simon Varey. Trans. by Rafael Chabrán, Cynthia L. Chamberllin and Simon Varey. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 200: 107-116.

Friday, November 16

****Essay Due****

Self-Evaluation Due. Class summary and conclusion. Class evaluation.

Friday, November 23

Final Projects/Team (Group) presentations.

LIBRARY REFERENCES

- S. H. Kats (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*. New York: Charles Scribner,s Sons. 2003. 2 vols.
- A. F. Smith (ed.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*. Oxford: Oxford University: 2004. 2 vols.
- R. Chabrán and R. Chabrán. *The Latino Encyclopedia*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1996. 6 vols.

INTERNET SOURCES

Web Site: Food and Drink in the Movies Bibliography:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/foodbib.html>

-- Check this site for bibliography on Esquivel,s Like Water for Chocolate

Gastronomy Web Site:

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/library/guide/hum/history/Gastronomy.html>

Other Latin American Authors on Food:

Isabel Allende. *Aphrodite*.

More Spanish Films which deal with Food (For Spanish Majors and Minors):

L. Buñuel. *Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie*

L. Buñuel. *Viridiana*

L. Buñuel. *El ángel exterminador*

L. Vadislao. *Marcelino pan y vino*

Bigas Luna. *Jamón, jamón*

L. Garcia Brellanga *La Vaquilla*

Pedro Almodóvar, *Pepi Licy Bon y otras chicas del montón*

Pedro Almodóvar, *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?*

Pedro Almodóvar, *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de niervos*

Selected Bibliography On Food in Film and Literature

--G. Poole. *Reel Meals, Set Meals: Food in Film* (1989)

--M. A. Schofield. *Cooking by the Book: Food in Literature*. (1988)

Films on Food from other Cultural Traditions:

Babette's Feast

Tampopo

Drink Man Woman

Le Grande Bouffe
Who is Killing the Great Chiefs of Europe
The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and her Lover
Masala

Selected Themes:

Food and history
Food and social history
History of Food
Food and geography
Food and regionalism
Food and sex
Food and love
Food as text
Food and art
Food and literature
Food and film
Food and music

Food as metaphor
Food and culture
Food and identity
Food and ethnicity
Food and nationalism
Food and globalization
Food and family
Food and memory
Food and childhood
Fast Food and culture
Sociology of food
Sociology of taste