

ENGL 555-951: Studies in Literature and the Other Arts  
Glenn Deer

Term 2: July 4<sup>th</sup> to August 11<sup>th</sup>  
TTh, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

## **The Culinary Imagination**

Food, cooking, and eating have long histories of being recorded, prescribed, celebrated, and mythologized through literary art and more recently through film. Contemporary audiences for discourses of food and displays of culinary art are often conscripted into positions as apprentice cooks, competing chefs, curious consumers, critical reviewers, or hungry foodie voyeurs caught in the mania of contemporary desire for food substitutes delivered in textual and filmic forms.

This course will explore food in literature, particularly life narratives, cookbook selections, and films across different cultures and borders, from the transnational to local Vancouver contexts. The production of food is essentially linked to histories of empire, colonial power, capital, racialized and gendered labour, and ecological change. Our discussions will explore these intersections.

### **Course Requirements:**

- 1) Participation in the discussion of readings, topics, and questions: 10%
- 2) One oral presentation (20 minutes) on a primary text and/or critical contexts: 15%
- 3) One short critical meditation of 750 words: 15%
- 4) One longer project (3500-4000 words, or 14-16 pages), that could emerge out of your seminar presentation, personal research interests, and/or critical meditation paper: 60%

## Topics and Readings:

### **July 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, Week 1:** Theorizing the Culinary Imagination

Gitanjali Shahani, "Introduction: Writing on Food and Literature," from *Food and Literature*, edited by G. Shahani, Cambridge UP 2018. 1-35. UBC Library online.

Roland Barthes, "Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption." From *Food and Culture: A Reader*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. New York: Routledge, 2012. 23-30. UBC Library online.

Biotext: Introduction to Fred Wah, *Diamond Grill* (NeWest 1996).

### **July 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, Week 2:** Poetic Biotext and Documentary Cinema

Biotext continued: Fred Wah, *Diamond Grill* (NeWest 1996).

Documentary film: Cheuk Kwan, *Chinese Restaurants* (2005): Disc 4, "Latin Passions" (Peru, Brazil, Argentina)

Theory/Contexts: Glenn Deer, "Eating the Eurasian Text." From *Sites of Ethnicity: Europe and the Americas*, edited by William Boelhower, Rocio Davis, and Carmen Birkle. Winter: Heidelberg, 2004. 287-302. PDF.

### **July 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, Week 3:** Rewriting Modernism and Culinary Labour

Novel: Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt* (2004)

### **July 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, Week 4:** Empires, slavery, and consumption: The case of sugar

Sidney Mintz, "Time, Sugar, and Sweetness." From *Food and Culture: A Reader*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. New York: Routledge, 2012. 91-103. UBC Library online.

Lizzie Collingham, Chapter 4, from *The Taste of Empire*: "In which Colonel James Drax holds a feast at his sugar plantation on the island"

of Barbados (1640s)" (2017, Basic Books, available as Kobo or Kindle E-book).

Austin Clarke, Introduction (1-41), from *Pigtails 'n' Breadfruit: A Barbadian Memoir* (1999).

**Aug 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, Week 5:** Reading the Labour of the Local Fishery

Long Poem and Photography: Daphne Marlatt and Robert Minden, *Steveston* (Ronsdale 2001)

<https://ronsdalepress.com/books/steveston/>

Theory/Contexts: Szabo-Jones, Lisa. "Matters of Poetics and Resiliency in Daphne Marlatt's *Steveston*." *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2018, pp. 377.

<https://go.exlibris.link/9ppB96wp>

**Aug 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, Week 6:** Transnational Culinary Cinema: Competition and Community in *Tampopo* and *Babette's Feast*

Film: Juzo Itami, *Tampopo* (1985); UBC Library streaming video.

Theory/Contexts: Michael Ashkenazi, Chapter 3, "Food, Play, Business, and the Image of Japan in Itami Juzo's *Tampopo*." From *Reel Food: Essays on Food and Film*. Ed. Anne L. Bower. New York: Routledge, 2004. 27-40. UBC Library online.

<https://go.exlibris.link/b2Mddcc3>

Film: Gabriel Axel, *Babette's Feast* (1987). Amazon Prime Video

Theory/Contexts: Margaret H. McFadden, "Gendering the Feast: Women, Spirituality, and Grace in Three Food Films," Chapter 9, from *Reel Food: Essays on Food and Film*. Ed. Anne L. Bower. New York: Routledge, 2004. 117-128. UBC Library online.

<https://go.exlibris.link/b2Mddcc3>