

**HIST 8: Food History**  
**Spring/2023**  
**60 Carson**  
**Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 8:50-9:55am (9L)**  
**9LX-hour, Thursday 9:05-9:55**

**Instructor:** Matt Garcia  
**Email:** [Matthew.J.Garcia@Dartmouth.edu](mailto:Matthew.J.Garcia@Dartmouth.edu)  
**Office Location/Hours:** 202 Raven/Hours, 1:30-2:30pm M/W/F

**X-hours:** I will use x-hours occasionally when I need to be out of town and for technology training.

A human being is primarily a bag for putting food into; the other functions and faculties may be more godlike, but in point of time they come afterwards. A man dies and is buried, and all his words and actions are forgotten, but the food he has eaten lives after him in the sound or rotten bones of his children. I think it plausibly could be argued that changes of diet are more important than changes of dynasty or even of religion.

--George Orwell, "The Road To Wigan Pier"

I am a farm worker. I am not embarrassed to be a farm worker. I know that my work is difficult. But many rich people eat from my labor. I work a lot and earn little. But my job is an honest job.

--Maria "Cuca" Carmona, *Mujeres Mexicanas*

**Course Catalogue Description**

We will look at issues of food production and consumption, and how our relationship to food contributes to the political and social structures that we live with. Our approach will be historical and pay special attention to the ways in which our production and consumption of food has been shaped by the movement of people over the last century. The readings explore how food creates ways for people to form bonds of belonging while also creating bonds of control and regimes of inequality.

**Course Rationale**

This is a History course that engages the crisis confronting our food system now and in the future. I believe in understanding this crisis from all perspectives—the body, the producer, the planet, and the laborer. I strive to provide information on how our system came to be and to foster an interest in fixing it.

## **Learning Outcomes (or objectives)**

We will explore the questions that have animated this growing field of study—food studies—and consider how historians, in particular, have made food a subject to organize their understanding of human relations. Some of the questions we will consider include: How does food production reinforce social divisions along racial, gender, citizenship, and class lines? How have restaurants been a site of struggle and sanctuary for communities of color? How does the goal of consuming healthy and nutritious food force societies to work together? How has the turn towards industrialized agriculture over the last century created new problems for the environment and ethical concerns for the consumer? Is there evidence of sustainable food production in our past that we can draw on to address current problems associated with a global food system? Given the predominance of livestock agriculture in our immediate surroundings, we will explore the environmental, ethical, and economic consequences of dairy, wool, and meat production in New England.

## **Pre-Requisites**

There are no prerequisites for the course. Your attendance at each class is crucial since most meetings will involve a discussion of materials either read or presented. I encourage all students to take advantage of office hours.

## **Teaching Methods or Teaching Philosophy**

We will meet within the classroom and outside of it, particularly in the farmer's markets and farmsteads that exist within the Upper Valley (i.e. Dartmouth Organic Farm; Justin Morrill Homestead). I typically include in class meetings a lecture, a media presentation (e.g. film or webview), and discussion among the students. This course will be "hybrid" by which I mean that you will experience learning in the classroom, in the field, and in the virtual world of the internet and through mobile technology.

## **Expectations**

1. Preparation. Do the reading *before* the class that covers the material and respond to Canvas discussion posts before class meeting on Friday.
2. Good listening. This enables you to respond to the matter at hand. Listen particularly to what other students are saying.
3. Engagement. Respond in a way that makes your own reaction increase understanding for everyone.
4. Respect. Be critical of other's points of view without being judgmental.
5. Conversational. Feel free to turn and talk directly to other students. You are welcome to have a conversation with each other, not just with me.

**Note about student conduct and communication:** While in class meetings I request the following behavior: do not arrive late or leave early; do not read material unrelated to the class; do not answer phones or check electronic messages (including text messages, FB, etc.) in class; do not disturb me or your fellow students by carrying on conversations not related to the discussion. Violation of any of these rules will adversely impact your grade.

In the era of the pandemic, you are required by campus rules to wear an N95 mask or equivalent at all times.

## Required Texts

### Books:

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. Hill & Wang, 1983. ISBN: 0809016346

E. Melanie DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink*. New York University Press, 2002. ISBN: 978-0814719381

Matt Garcia, E. Melanie DuPuis, and Don Mitchell (eds.), *Food Across Borders*. Rutgers University Press, 2017. ISBN: 9780813591964

Matt Garcia, *Eli and the Octopus: The CEO Who Tried to Reform One of the World's Most Notorious Corporations*, Harvard University Press. ISBN: 9780674980808

### Articles/Chapters

Greg Asbed and Steve Hitov, "Preventing Forced Labor in Corporate Supply Chains: The Fair Food Program and Worker-Driven Social Responsibility," *Wake Forest Law Review*. Vol. 52, 497-531, 507. (e-reserve)

"A Moveable Feast: The UFW Grape Boycott and Farm Worker Justice," *International Labor and Working Class History Journal*, Vol. 83, Spring 2013. (e-reserve)

Raymond Williams, *The Country and The City* (e-reserve)

### Podcast/Films

Podcast, Michael Pollan, Katherine May, *On Being*,  
<https://onbeing.org/programs/michael-pollan-and-katherine-may-the-future-of-hope-4/>

*The Biggest Little Farm* (2018)

*Forgotten Farms* (2016)

*Eating Animals* (2017)

## Grading

Your grade will reflect the extent to which you accomplished the goal of the course – to understand and articulate complex ideas about societies through the topic of food. In some cases, it will involve working alone; in others, you will be expected to collaborate with a peer. In everything, I expect meaningful, timely engagement of reading and ideas, including on Canvas.

20%?

### *Culinary Subjectivity (20%)*

According to Meredith Abarca, the foods that enter our bodies tell stories about ourselves and our past. In this way, the food we love—or our culinary subjectivity—reflect complex and complicated intimate social acts that sometimes compete with what we perceive as the “right” food or “right” way to eat. In this project, you will explore one dish, one restaurant, or one food item that makes you the person you are today. In telling me about this food, you must explore the history of how this food became a part of your diet, and why it is central to your sense of self (or culinary subjectivity). In doing so, please explore how this food comports with what you think is the “right” way of eating today, especially in an era when we are rethinking the global food system and what is good for the planet, society, and your health. Your paper should be at least 1000 words and no more than 1500 words. **Due April 13**

### *Culinary Sustainability (30%)*

Now that we have explored the past and potential future of protein production in our food system, what information most influences your consumptions moving forward? What are the most difficult challenges with this new diet, and what will be the benefits of it? Your paper should be at least 1000 words and no more than 1500 words. **Due May 4**

### *Food and Ethics podcast (30%)*

Throughout the term we will explore the ethical challenge our food systems have presented to us as a society. Cruelty in meat production, abuse of farm workers, food deserts in the Black community, and emission of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are some of the challenges that we will read about and discuss in our class. For your final project, you will work with a fellow student to create a podcast that explores one of these ethical challenges. The podcast should be at least 5 minutes and no more than 7 minute on one of the ethical challenges related to food consumption and/or production that we explored during the term. Your podcast can be driven by a review of a book or a film that grapples with one of these topics. The podcast must include script writing, mastery of recording and editing, and performance. What role best suits individuals in the team will be determined collectively. Research for the podcast will be done together, as will its recording. Possible films and readings will be shared in class. **Due May 27**

### *Canvas Weekly Discussion response (20%)*

Each week, I will post a question that should be responded to by Thursday at 11:59pm. The questions will draw on our reading for the week and anticipate the discussion we will have on Friday.

### **Academic Honor**

I will not tolerate any instances of academic dishonesty. The definition of academic dishonesty at Dartmouth can be found at: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/judicialaffairs/honor/index.html>. Academic dishonesty takes many forms, but the most common is submitting someone else’s work as your own, otherwise known as plagiarism. Be forewarned that it is much easier for me

to detect than anyone who contemplates doing it can imagine. Also, our assignments do not lend themselves well to acts of plagiarism. Still, I expect your work to be original and thoughtful. Finally, I realize that citing a source can be confusing if it is not something you have done extensively. I welcome questions about how to cite work, and encourage you to visit the guide provided by the college at:

<http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>. When in doubt, just ask.

### **Religious Observances**

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

### **Student Accessibility Needs**

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (Carson Hall 125, 646-9900, [Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu](mailto:Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu)).

Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to me. As a first step, if you have questions about whether you qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, you should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

### **Additional Support for your Learning**

The following are services that may assist you beyond the classroom or my counsel. Please do not hesitate to ask me for help.

### **Academic Skills Center (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/>)**

The Academic Skills Center is open to the entire Dartmouth Community. Here are some common reasons why you might visit the ASC:

- You're getting B's but you want to get A's
- You don't feel comfortable talking in class
- You're attending class regularly but you feel like you're missing important points
- You feel like you're a slow reader
- You're having trouble completing tests in the allotted time
- You're spending hours studying for foreign language but still not "getting it"
- You feel like you don't have enough time to get everything done
- You're not sure how to take notes
- You want to sign up for a tutor or study group
- You're not sure if you should get tested for a learning disability

## The Research Center for Writing, and Information Technology (RWiT)

<http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/support-writing-research-and-composing-technology/rwit>)

Located in [Berry 183](#), RWiT is a free service dedicated to helping members of the Dartmouth community develop more effective strategies for generating and organizing their ideas, finding and evaluating research sources, and presenting and revising compositions in a variety of media. Through informal dialogue, RWiT tutors assist writers in developing better compositions and more effective composing strategies. A collaboration between the Institute for Writing and Rhetoric, the Library, and Academic Computing, RWiT brings together faculty, administrators, staff, and students to focus on the art and science of composition.

### Dartmouth College Library (<http://library.dartmouth.edu/>)

A key to successful research is the use of reliable, high-quality information sources. While some information can be found on the open web, the best place to start your research is at the Library's Research Guides, [researchguides.dartmouth.edu/guides](http://researchguides.dartmouth.edu/guides). These research guides have categorized and organized the library's key resources - including books, databases, scholarly articles, and data sources - for your convenience. The Library's [website](#) also has information on useful research tools and services. In addition to the online information, a librarian has been assigned to this class to answer research questions, help you find appropriate resources, and assist with search techniques. Please contact your subject librarian (<http://researchguides.dartmouth.edu/subjectlibrarians>) for specialized help.

**Tentative Course Schedule:** (*May change to accommodate guest presenters & student needs*)

Date(s)	Topics or Activities	Learning Outcomes Addressed	Assignments, Exams, or Readings
3/27	Introduction	Why do we eat what we eat?	Read: Cronon, Preface, 3-15
3/29	The Pastoral Ideal	What is the "pastoral ideal" and how does it frame our conception of the past and the nation?	Read: Raymond Williams (e-reserve), Cronon, 19-33  Listen: Podcast, Michael Pollan, Katherine May, <i>On Being</i> , <a href="https://onbeing.org/programs/michael-pollan-and-katherine-may-the-future-of-hope-4/">https://onbeing.org/programs/michael-pollan-and-katherine-may-the-future-of-hope-4/</a>

3/31	No Class Meeting	What are the dangers confronting this generation?	Read: Cronon, 34-53
4/3	Feeding New England: Transformation	What are the differences between Native foodways and European ones in New England?	Read: Cronon, 54-126
4/5	Feeding New England: Commodification	What was the driving ethic behind European transformations of New England?	Read: Cronon, 127-185
4/7	New England Farming today	Why are farms disappearing?	Watch: <i>Forgotten Farms (2016)</i> Read: <i>Food Across Borders</i> , Introduction
4/10	Culinary Subjectivity	How do our palates provide evidence of our history? What makes a food “perfect”?	Read: DuPuis, 1-66; <i>Food Across Borders</i> , Chapter 2
4/12	Dairy	Why do we drink so much milk?	Read: DuPuis, 67-124
4/13	<b>Assignment</b>		<b>Culinary Subjectivity</b>
4/14	No Class Meeting	What makes milk “white”? Where is the “pastoral” in the US milk industry?	Read: DuPuis 125-209
4/17	Milk & the Body Politic (of the United States)	Does milk “do the body good”?	Read: DuPuis 201-243
4/19	Modern Dairy Farming in the Northeast	How is the border implicated in the milk we drink?	Read: <i>Food Across Borders</i> , Chapter 11

4/21	Milk as a Border-ed food	What does it mean to be food insecure? How are immigrants more susceptible to insecurity? What are farm workers entitled to?	Read: Chapter 10, <i>Food Across Borders</i> <a href="https://migrantjustice.net/">https://migrantjustice.net/</a>
4/24	Climate Change and Livestock Agriculture  <b>Guest: Niko Horster, farmer/owner, Shire Beef LLC, Vershire, VT</b>	Should we/Can we replace livestock agriculture?	Read: Julie Guthman and Charlotte Biltekoff, "Magical disruption? Alternative protein and the promise of de-materialization." <i>Nature and Space</i> (2021)  Watch: <i>Eating Animals</i> (2017)
4/26	<b>Guest: Allen Williams, Understanding Ag</b>	How can livestock agriculture be a source of repair and regeneration?	Watch: "Soil Carbon Cowboys," Peter Byck Film (2014), <a href="https://carboncowboys.org/">https://carboncowboys.org/</a> Read: "6-3-4 Explained" and "Adaptive Stewardship," Allen Williams. <a href="https://understandingag.com/the-6-3-4tm-explained/">https://understandingag.com/the-6-3-4tm-explained/</a>
4/28	<b>Horster, farmer/owner, Shire Beef LLC, Vershire, VT</b>	What is the future of livestock agriculture in the Northeast?	Read: <i>Eli and the Octopus</i> – Preface & Prologue  <i>Watch: The Biggest Little Farm</i>
4/29	Field Trip (optional)	What does managed grazing look like?	Taste for Good Farm, Thetford, VT; Shire Beef, Vershire, VT
5/1	Food as Empire	How did U.S. corporate expansion in food production shape U.S. foreign policy?	Read: <i>Eli and the Octopus</i> - Talmid
5/3	United Fruit	Why was United Fruit Company called an "Octopus"? Why did it inspire fear	Listen: <a href="#">Podcast, Throughline: There Will Be Bananas, January 9, 2020</a>



		and loathing in Latin America?	
5/4	<b>Assignment</b>		<b>Culinary Sustainability</b>
5/5	Food as Business	How did food production and consumption change during the Cold War?	Read: <i>Eli and the Octopus – An Honest Business</i>
5/8	Conglomeration	What made food an ideal business for the new conglomerate era? Which industries fit best with this structure?	Read: <i>Eli and the Octopus - Pyramids</i>
5/10	The Farm Workers Movement	Why was lettuce become the next target for the farm workers movement in the 1970s?	Read: <i>Eli and the Octopus – Shadows</i> “A Moveable Feast: The UFW Grape Boycott and Farm Worker Justice,” <i>International Labor and Working Class History Journal</i> , Vol. 83, Spring 2013.
5/12	Food As Reform, California	Why did Eli Black unite with Cesar Chavez to fight against corporate lettuce owners? Why didn't they succeed?	Read: <i>Eli and the Octopus - Israelites</i>
5/15	Food As Reform, Latin America	Can United Fruit Company be reformed?	Read: <i>Eli and the Octopus – Half a Picture</i>
5/17	The Limits of Reform	Why did Black's vision for “social responsibility” fail?	Read: <i>Eli and the Octopus – United, We Fall</i>
5/19	Corporate Driven Social Responsibility versus Worker Driven Social	How has “social responsibility” in food production changed since Eli Black? Can it	Read: <i>Eli and the Octopus – Epilogue</i>

	Responsibility in the Food Industry	survive today's business culture?	Greg Asbed and Steve Hitov, "Preventing Forced Labor in Corporate Supply Chains: The Fair Food Program and Worker-Driven Social Responsibility," <i>Wake Forest Law Review</i> . Vol. 52, 497-531, 507.
5/22	Globalization of Food	How does Free Trade influence our global food system?	Read: <i>Food Across Borders</i> , Chapter 5
5/24	Immigration and Food	What place should immigrants have in the food system today?	Read: <i>Food Across Borders</i> , Chapter 12
5/26	<b>Assignment</b>	How do we make food history accessible, transformative and entertaining?	<b>Food and Ethics Podcast</b>
5/29	<b>Memorial Day</b>		<b>No Class</b>
5/31	<b>Podcast Listening Party</b>	How do we make food history accessible, transformative and entertaining?	