CUNY New York City College of Technology

AFR 3301ID: Around the Dinner Table: The Visual Culture & Art of African Diaspora Foodways

Online, Asynchronous Class, Spring 2021

Professor Emilie Boone: [**ecboone@citytech.cuny.edu**](mailto:ecboone@citytech.cuny.edu)

Office Hours: Zoom, tbd

This course explores the intersections between foodways (defined as the cultural, social and economic practices relating to food) and the visual culture/art history of the African Diaspora. The focus is on the African American and African Diasporic engagements with food that have shaped Black culture from the 19th century to the present. Particular attention is paid to scholarship that illustrates the importance of images and artistic practice within this discourse on food. There will be three guest lectures, who will present to students through the zoom online platform. For Spring 2020, they will include Claire Stewart (City Tech) Week 9, Susan Philips (City Tech) Week 13, and Jean Claude (City Tech) Week 11. Although this class is asynchronous, there will be one or two required synchronous sessions at the very beginning of the seminar. These dates are TBD, but will be announced on Blackboard.

***Assignments and Evaluation***

1) Zoom Class Participation: 20%

2) Midterm: 20%

3) Final Exam: 20%

4) Interactive Blackboard writing assignments: 20%

5) Experimental Learning Assignment: 20%

**Learning Outcomes: Assessment Methods:**

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| Students will be able to discuss and describe the major concepts and themes that inform African Diaspora Foodways and the study of images from the African Diaspora through essay questions and slide identification exercises | Midterm and final exam |
| By considering images in class and  during their experimental learning assignment, students will be able to take the lead on visual and cultural analysis exercises | Class discussions and museum field trip  report and experimental learning assignment report |
| Students will develop critical  readings and analytical skills through an exposure to texts chosen from scholarship important to the emerging field of foodways and art history | Weekly blackboard discussion |

**General Education Learning Outcomes:**

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| Skills: Acquire and use the communication tools needed for analyzing culture and art history | Prerecorded classroom lectures, exams, Experimental  learning assignment |
| Values, Ethics, and Relationships: Understand and apply diverse perspectives and values in cultural and global domains | Interactive weekly blackboard discussion |
| Integration: Work productively within and across the disciplines of foodways, African American Studies, and art history | Prerecorded class discussions |

**READINGS:**

Students will be able to find all readings and materials for the class within Blackboard. The zoom pre-recorded lectures, which will address the readings, will be available to students via blackboard as well. During the lectures you will hear directly from me, your professor. In addition, during the pre-recorded session, please be ready to complete in class writing assignments on your own. These in-class assignments will be explained in the lecture.

**ONLINE BLACKBOARD WRITING ASSIGNMENT:**

Once each week (with the exception of the week before the midterm, final, and museum assignment due date) please submit the following:

Please choose ONE quote from the reading assignment(s) for this week. Retype and post the quote in the Blackboard “Discussion” board. Along with the quote, please write a paragraph of 3 or 4 sentences explaining why this quote is important or relevant. For example, you can analyze the article's argument; comment on how the quote illustrates an important foodways or art historical theme we've discussed in class; explain how it brought to mind new ideas or connections such as the importance of material, place, identity, narrative, history, etc.; explain how the quote led to a question; connect your thoughts with those already posted by your class colleagues. This is your opportunity to engage with a quote while being able to observe what your class colleagues are thinking about. This is an interactive assignment that is meant to put you into dialogue, asynchronously, with your peers and the professor.

The grading rubric for this assignment is as follows: 9-10 assignments posted: A, 7-8 assignments posted: B, 5-6 assignments posted: C, 1-4 assignments posted: D. Although this is my rubric and writing assignment, colleagues in the AFR department are welcomed to created their own.

**EXPERIMENTAL LEARNING TRIP ASSIGNMENT:**

You are asked to spend an hour or more at an online museum, archive, or cultural institution to complete the EXPERIMENTAL LEARNING ASSIGNMENT, which will be discussed in class. Suggested online locations will also be discussed in class. This assignment is central to the students’ intellectual development because such online visits allow each student to hone and increase his/her ability to individually take responsibility for the process of learning outside of the classroom context.

**ZOOM CLASS CONDUCT**

Students must turn off cell phones and all other computer distractions before the zoom class begins. Points will be deducted from the final average, if students consistently do not answer when called on through zoom. Please note **plagiarism** is the act of taking someone else’s words and ideas and passing them off as your own.

**New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity:** Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in formation literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found

in the catalog.

**Week 1: INTRODUCTION**

**Week 2: What does it mean to study the intersections of Foodways and Art History?**

Psyche Williams-Forson, “Chickens and Chains: using African American foodways to understand black identities” in Anne Bower, ed., *African American Foodways: Explorations of History and Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009, 126-138.

Psyche Williams-Forson, "Who dat say chicken in dis crowd": Black men, visual imagery, and the ideology of fear” in Building houses out of chicken legs: Black women, food, and power. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006, 38-79.

**Week 3: How did sugar build the British and American empires and inform Kara** **Walker’s contemporary artistic practice?**

Mimi Sheller, “Europe’s Sweet Tooth,” *Consuming the Caribbean.* London and

New York: Routledge, 2003, 81-88.

ONLINE: Catherine Keyser, "The Sweet Tooth of Slavery." *Transition: an International Review*. (2014): 143-153. [www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/transition.115.143](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/transition.115.143).

**Week 4: What is the connection between jugs made by slaves, food, and the contemporary artist Theaster Gates?**

Jill Koverman, “The Ceramic Works of David Drake aka Dave the Potter.” American Ceramic Circle Journal, Volume 13, 2005, pages 83-98.

Cinda Baldwin, “The African American Presence in Edgefield” in *Great & Noble Jar: Traditional Stoneware of South Carolina*. Columbia, SC: McKissick Museum, The University of South Carolina, 2014, 71-90.

**Week 5: How did historically black colleges and Universities (HBCUs), such as Tuskegee Institute, lead the way both visually and philosophically when it came to the growing and production of food?**

ONLINE: B. D. Mayberry “The Tuskegee Movable School: A Unique Contribution to National and International,” Agricultural History, Vol. 65, No. 2, The 1890 Land-Grant Colleges: A Centennial View (Spring, 1991): 85-104. [www.jstor.org/stable/3743710](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3743710).

ONLINE: Jeannene M. Przyblyski “American Visions at the Paris Exposition, 1900: Another Look at Frances Benjamin Johnston's Hampton Photographs,” Art Journal, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Autumn, 1998): 60-68. [www.jstor.org/stable/777972](http://www.jstor.org/stable/777972).

**Week 6: In what ways did Washington Carver impact the history of food studies in the United States and how do portraits of him reflect his contributions?**

ONLINE: Zafar, Rafia, “Carver’s Food Movement: How the Famous Botanist Paved the Way for Today’s “Sustainable Agriculture”, The Common Reader: A Journal of the Essay, the Food, GMO & Obesity Issue. May 8, 2015. <https://commonreader.wustl.edu/c/carvers-food-movement/>

**Week 7: Midterm prep, Midterm**

**Week 8: What is the connection between the quilts of Gee’s Bend, Alabama and the** **Southern food from that area?**

Kelsey Scouten Bates “Comfort in a Decidedly Uncomfortable Time: Hunger, Collective Memory, and the Meaning of Soul Food in Gee's Bend, Alabama,” Food and Foodways Vol. 20, Issue 1, 2012, 53-75.

ONLINE: Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. “Anatomy of a Quilt: The Gees' Bend Freedom Quilting Bee.” *Anthropology Today*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2003, 15–21. [www.jstor.org/stable/3695166](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3695166).

**Week 9: What is the history of the Aunt Jemima and the Uncle Ben figure and how have artists engaged her/his history?**

Guest Lecture: Claire Stewart

Michael D. Harris, “Aunt Jemima, the Fantasy Black Mammy/Servant,” in *Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 83-96.

ONLINE: Kimberly D. Nettles-Barcelón, Gillian Clark, Courtney Thorsson, Jessica Kenyatta Walker and Psyche Williams-Forson, “Black Women’s Food Work as Critical Space,” Gastronomica , Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter 2015): 34-49. [www.jstor.org/stable/26362295](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26362295).

**Week 10: TRIP TO NYU SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, online**

**Why is the relationship between African American Cook books and visual culture important?**

ONLINE: Rafia Zafar, “The Signifying Dish: Autobiography and History in Two Black Women's Cookbooks” Feminist Studies, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer, 1999), pp. 449-469. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3178690.

Tipton Martin, selections from *The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks*. Austin: University of Texas Press,2015.

**Week 11: What can food teach us about the Civil Rights Era?**

Guest Lecture: Jean Claude (materials TBD)

**Week 12: Why were posters and illustrations central to the Black Panther Party and their Breakfast Program?**

ONLINE: Nik Heynen “Bending the Bars of Empire from Every Ghetto for Survival: The Black Panther Party's Radical Antihunger Politics of Social Reproduction and Scale,” Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 99, No. 2 (Apr., 2009), 406-422. [www.jstor.org/stable/25515206](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25515206).

ONLINE: Emory Douglas and Jarrel Phillips, “Where Revolution Abounds,” Race, Poverty & the Environment, Vol. 21, No. 2, Conversations on Race & Resistance (2017), 48-53. [www.jstor.org/stable/44687757](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44687757).

**Week 13: How is food used in African Diasporic religion and its material culture?**

Guest Lecture: Susan Philips

Elizabeth Perez, “Crystallizing Subjectivities in the African Diaspora: Sugar, Honey, and the Gods of Afro-Cuban Santería,” in *Religion, Food, and Eating in North America*, 175-94, edited by Benjamin Zeller et al., Columbia University Press, 2014.

ONLINE: David H. Brown, "Thrones of the Orichas: Afro-cuban Altars in New Jersey, New York, and Havana." *African Arts*. 26 (1993): 44-59. [www.jstor.org/stable/3337075](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3337075).

**Week 14: What can we learn Around the Dinner Table?**

ONLINE: Vivian Patterson, “Carrie Mae Weems Serves Up Substance” Gastronomica , Vol. 1, No. 4 (Fall 2001), 21-24. [www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/gfc.2001.1.4.21](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/gfc.2001.1.4.21).

**Week 15: Final prep/Final**