

CEAS 420: Asian American Foodways

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1. About the Course

- a. Asian American Foodways is a discussion course where students will learn about Asian American social, cultural, economic, and political history through the lens of food. Critical discussion and reflection will contemplate what makes food “Asian American,” and how Asian American identity is expressed in foodways. This student forum surveys the role of food in the culture and experiences of Asian Americans and their diasporic histories. This course provides a platform and open learning environment to explore cultural studies and sociohistorical frameworks within Asian American food and cuisine. The forum also aims to encourage students to consider contemporary issues concerning Asian Americans through the lens of food studies.

2. Course Expectations and Assignments

- a. *Class format and expectations*: This student forum is a discussion course. Readings should be completed before class so everyone can participate in weekly conversations. Students will be evaluated based on CR/U. Student work should reflect personal and academic growth in understanding how Asian American foodways contribute to Asian American culture and identity.
- b. *Weekly Online Discussion Paragraph*: Each week, a short “paragraph” response is due **before class** on the [class forum](#). Responses should generally follow the prompt for each week, but can also include discussion questions, reflections on the weekly material, or responses to posts from other students. The forum discussion links can be found on Moodle.
- c. *Midterm Reflection Essay (5-7 pages)*: Students will write a 5-7 page reflection paper on interactions with the course materials, research project progress, and/or new themes generated from class discussion.
- d. *Cumulative Presentation Project*: Students will work on components for a substantial research presentation on an Asian American food topic of their choice. Components are divided into themes based on the week’s class. The project will involve individual research, peer review, and faculty feedback. At the end of the semester, students will present their research to an external audience at a public event hosted by the forum. Additional presentation details can be found in the “Presentation Details and Rubric” document.

3. Course Materials and Schedule

[Link to Class Readings](#) // Find discussion link in each week on Moodle

Week	Topic	Readings	Project Component
01/26	Course Overview	N/A	Identify a food or foodway to present
02/02	Intro to Food Studies + Overview	- Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora (Mannur) - Understandings of Food as Culture (Dusselier)	Identify a food or foodway to present
02/09	Asian American Diaspora seen through restaurant workers	- Eating Asian America: A Life cooking for others: The work and Migration Experiences of a Chinese Restaurant Worker in New York City, 1920-1946. (Lee)	Research the diasporic or American origin for your project
02/16	(Cultural) Authenticity	- "Let's Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism." (Heldke)	Generate discussion on how your topic contributes to the authenticity debate
02/23	(Economic) Economic Power from Restaurants: Cambodian Donut Shops	- EAA Cambodian Donut Shops and the Negotiation of Identity in Los Angeles (Erin M. Curtis) - Donut King Documentary (Gu)	Analyze an economic feature of your topic
03/02	(Social) Geographic Implications	- The Politics of Food and Eating: Chap 12: "India Shopping": Indian Grocery stores, and Transnational Configurations of Belonging (Mankekar) - <i>The New Yorker</i> Passage from Crying in Hmart (Zauner)	Connect your topic to its geographic position both diasporically and within America
03/09	(Political) Food and Protest	- Filipinos' Role in Strike Is a Case of Cultural Amnesia (Bernardo) - Delano Manongs PBS Documentary (dir. Aroy)	Research connections with your topic and Asian American political identity
03/13-03/26 Spring Break			
03/20	American Perception 1: Fusion Food	- New Flavors: Upscale Ethnic, Eclectic, and Fusion Food (Goldstein and Brown) - EAA Ch. 11 Twenty-First-Century Food Trucks (Siu)	Turn in preliminary slides presentation
04/06	American Perception 2: Food reviews	- Looking for Umami, Ruth Reichl - Selected NYT Reviews (Wells, Hewitt, Claiborne)	Identify current case study/example for presentation (ie recent news story, notable figure etc)
04/13	American Perception 3: Traditional Media	- The Blood Sport of Cooking: On Asian American Chefs and Television (Oren) - The Turn to "Bad Koreans" (August and Kim)	Add to case study
04/20	American Perception 4: Social Media	- Asian American Food Blogging as Racial Branding: Rewriting the Search for Authenticity (Lopez) - Media from TikTok, Instagram, Facebook	Final Edits to final presentation (peer feedback in class)
04/27	American Perception 5: Contemporary issues in Asian American foodways	- <i>NYT</i> , Chinese Restaurants Are Closing. That's a Good Thing, the Owners Say. - <i>Eater</i> , Momofuku Controversy - <i>PBS</i> , COVID and Asian Restaurants	
05/04	Final Presentation Review	Reflect on presentations and bring food to class if able	

4. Accommodation Statement

- a. Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact Accessibility Services in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021/218, or can be reached by email (accessibility@wesleyan.edu) or phone (860-685-2332).

5. Religious Observances

- a. Faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required assignments/attendance. If this applies to you, please speak with me directly as soon as possible at the beginning of the term.

6. Honor Code

- a. All students of Wesleyan University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code of this institution. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconducts shall be reported to the Honor Code Council—Office of Student Affairs. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). The Office of Student Affairs has more information.