

CET Syllabus of Record



ChChinProgram: CET Shanghai

Course Code / Title: (SH/EAST 245) Chinese Food, Culture, and Identity

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: East Asian Studies / Anthropology, Sociology, History, Cultural Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: None

Description

How does food shape Chinese societies and cultural practices? How does “what you eat” tell us “what you are” in the context of China? What can we learn about China by studying its cuisine from evolutionary and historical perspectives? Using materials and perspectives drawn from anthropology, sociology, history, and other disciplines, this course considers factors that shape Chinese relationships with food and the role that food plays in shaping Chinese identities. It explores key issues connected to food in China including past and present foodways; human experiences of food consumption; and how those experiences and foodways are shaped by the interplay of culture, ecology, history, politics, economy, and technology.

Objectives

During this course, students:

- gain historical and cultural understandings of China through studying its food.
- develop an ethnographic sensibility toward understanding food and national identity.
- explore a range of issues in contemporary Chinese society via food.
- identify how relationships with food shape the physical environment and how that environment influences what is and has been eaten in China.
- use food-related topics to broaden critical thinking, research, and communication skills.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend each class meeting as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Active participation throughout the course is essential. Students are to read all assigned materials before class meetings and be prepared to participate thoughtfully in course discussions. Reading assignments average 50-80 pages per week. This course includes at least two field classes, which may include a local tea market, the Shanghai City God Temple, a Traditional Chinese Medicine clinic, a factory or small site of food production, or contemporary food markets.

Additional details for graded assignments are shared in class and posted on Canvas. Graded course work includes:

- Class preparation and participation. Preparation and participation is evaluated after each class according to a rubric found in the class syllabus and on Canvas. In class discussions, students should display an understanding of the assigned materials, thoughtful analysis, creative and fresh ideas, and the ability to ask questions that advance group comprehension of class themes.
- Four essays of 800 to 1,500 words on assigned topics. These short papers may be reflections on experiences, journal-type entries, or critical analyses or responses to

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assigned prompts or readings.

- A group presentation of 15 to 20 minutes, depending on class size, followed by a question and answer period. The presentation is based on a group investigative project. Students select their presentation topic from a variety of choices offered by the instructor.
- A final research paper of approximately 2,500 words. Based on their interests students choose a topic connected to the course and consult with the instructor about topic, methods, and sources. Proper citations or footnotes and bibliographic referencing is required. Students submit a preliminary outline of the paper before week ten.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

Class preparation and participation	20%
Four short essays (3 at 8%, 1 at 11%)	35%
Group presentation	15%
Final research paper (5% preliminary outline, 25% paper)	30%

Class preparation and participation is assessed according to the following guidelines:

Grade	Discussion	Reading/Preparation
A	Excellent: consistent contributor; offers original analysis and comments; always has ideas on readings and class topics and easily connects them to larger ideas. Takes care not to dominate discussion.	Demonstrates fluency with all readings; thoughtfully and critically uses resultant understanding to formulate comments and advance the class discussion.
B	Good: frequent, willing, and able contributor; offers thoughtful and critical comments and makes connections between class themes and readings. Comments tend to advance class learning through discussion.	Demonstrates knowledge of most readings; sometimes provides a competent analysis of them or makes meaningful connections to the class discussion.
C	Can Improve: sporadic contributor; comments and questions often show a lack of understanding of key concepts; comments are often of a general nature; may digress or contribute in unhelpful ways.	Displays familiarity with few readings; rarely demonstrates analytical thought.
D	Subpar: rarely contributes; tends to quote text or repeats own comments or those of others. Comments are disconnected from topics and do not advance class learning.	Little apparent familiarity with the assigned material or application to relevant topics.
F	Failing: Absent from or does not participate in class. Online or using phone during class.	No familiarity with readings and not able to apply their content in class discussion.

Readings

Anderson, Eugene N. "Traditional Medical Values of Food" and "Food in Society." In *The Food of China*, 229–261. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988.

Chang, K. C. "Introduction." In *Food in Chinese Culture. Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*, 1-21. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.

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- Cheung, Sui-Wai. "A Desire to Eat Well: Rice and the Market in Eighteenth-Century China." In *Rice: Global Networks and New Histories*, edited by Francesca Bray, Peter A. Coclanis, Edda L. Fields-Black, and Dagmar Schäfer, 84–98. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Cooper, Eugene. "Chinese Table Manners: You Are How You Eat." *Human Organization* 45, no. 2 (1986): 179-184.
- Dott, Brian R. *The Chile Pepper in China: A Cultural Biography*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020.
- Dunlop, Fuchsia. *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper: A Sweet-Sour Memoir of Eating in China*. New York: Random House, 2011.
- Farquhar, Judith. "Medicinal Meals." In *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China*, 47-78. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Farquhar, Judith, and Qicheng Zhang. "Daily Life." In *Ten Thousand Things: Nurturing Life in Contemporary Beijing*, 173-238. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2012.
- Fu, Jia-chen. "The Romance of the Bean: Rethinking the Soybean as Technology and Modern Commodity." In *The Other Milk. Reinventing Soy in Republican China*, 19-40. Seattle: Washington University Press, 2019.
- Hinsch, Bret. *The Rise of Tea Culture in China: The Invention of the Individual*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015.
- Höllmann, Thomas O. *The Land of the Five Flavors: A Cultural History of Chinese Cuisine*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
- Jing, Jun, editor. *Feeding China's Little Emperors: Food, Children, and Social Change*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Lander, Brian, and Thomas David DuBois. "A History of Soy in China: From Weedy Bean to Global Commodity." In *The Age of the Soybean: An Environmental History of Soy During the Great Acceleration*, edited by Claiton Marcio da Silva and Claudio de Majo, 29–47. Cambridgeshire, UK: White Horse Press, 2022.
- Lee, Ang, director. *Eat Drink, Man, Woman*. Taiwan: Central Motion Pictures and The Samuel Goldwyn Company in the US, 1994.
- Leung, Angela Ki Che. "To Build or to Transform Vegetarian China: Two Republican Projects." In *Moral Foods: The Construction of Nutrition and Health in Modern Asia*, edited by Angela Ki Che Leung and Melissa L. Caldwell, 221-240. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2019.
- Liu, Junru. "Seasonal Delicacies." In *Chinese Food*, 45-52. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Martin, Diana. "Food Restrictions in Pregnancy among Hong Kong Mothers." In *Changing Chinese Foodways in Asia*, edited by David Y. H. Wu and Chee-Beng Tan, 97-122. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2001.

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- Rawnsley, Ming-Yeh T. "Food for Thought: Cultural Representation of Taste in Ang Lee's *Eat Drink Man Woman*." In *Food for Thought: Essays on Eating and Culture*, edited by Lawrence C. Rubin, 225-236. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2008.
- Swislocki, Mark. "Thinking about Food in Chinese History." In *Culinary Nostalgia: Regional Food Culture and the Urban Experience in Shanghai*, 1-28. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Talhelm, Thomas, and Oishi, Shigehiro. "How Rice Farming Shaped Culture in Southern China." In *Socioeconomic Environment and Human Psychology*, edited by Ayse K. Uskul and Shigehiro Oishi, 53-76. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3199657>.
- Wang, Q. Edward. *Chopsticks: A Cultural and Culinary History*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Watson, James L. "From the Common Pot: Feasting with Equals in Chinese Society." *Anthropos* 82, no. 4/6 (1987): 389-401.
- Yan, Yunxiang. "Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald's in Beijing." *Food and Culture: A Reader, Third Edition*, edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, 449-471. Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2013.
- Zhang, Jinghong. "Introduction." In *Puer Tea: Ancient Caravans and Urban Chic*, 5-30. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013.
- Zhang, Lawrence. "Becoming Healthy: Changing Perception of Tea's Effects on the Body." In *Moral Foods: The Construction of Nutrition and Health in Modern Asia*, edited by Angela Ki Che Leung and Melissa L. Caldwell, 201-220. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2019.
- Zhang, Na, and Guansheng Ma. "Noodles, Traditionally and Today." *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 3, no. 3 (2016): 209-212.
- Zhong, Shuru, and Hongyang Di. "Struggles with Changing Politics: Street Vendor Livelihoods in Contemporary China." In *Anthropological Considerations of Production, Exchange, Vending and Tourism*, edited by D. C. Wood, 179-204. Leeds, UK: Emerald Publishing, 2017.

Outline of Course Content

Topic 1: Food Studies from Anthropological and Other Perspectives

- What food tells us about Chinese cultures, past and present
- Environmental influences on how Chinese cook and eat
- How food shapes cultural and national identities

Topic 2: Foundations of Chinese Cuisine

- Cooking methods
- The flavor and texture profiles of Chinese gastronomy
- Etiquette and table manners

Topic 3: Quintessential Foods and Drinks of China

- Rice

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- Soybeans
- Tea
- Chili peppers: The impact of the Columbian exchange on Chinese cuisine

Topic 4: Food, Rituals, and Cultural Identity

- The role of food in promoting social cohesion and reinforcing cultural values
- Food-related customs and rituals during Chinese festivals
- Regional cuisines

Topic 5: Class, Gender, and Cuisines

- Food as a cultural and symbolic representation of class
- Food and the making of gender
- Food politics and power

Topic 6: Food and Social Change

- Food and family relations
- Food, children, and social change in contemporary China
- The impact of McDonaldization on Chinese cuisine
- Accommodating and localizing the global food industry

Topic 7: Chinese Conceptions of Food and Health

- Food as part of Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Contemporary concepts of food and health

Topic 8: Food Tourism, the Market, and Consumption Culture

- Street food and snacks
- Authenticity and contemporary culinary travel
- Restaurants, nostalgia, and social memory in Shanghai