

**History 367:**  
**Topics in Agricultural History: America Eats**  
**Professor Riney-Kehrberg**  
**History Department**

There are very few things that everyone must do in order to survive, but eating is one of them. As a result, a huge proportion of the efforts of human beings are directed toward raising, processing, cooking and eating food. In this class, we will be studying how Americans have done these things over the course of several centuries, and the forces that have influenced why and how Americans eat. Additionally, we will be examining other issues such as the cultural meanings of food, government regulation of food and eating, and reformers' efforts to change the way that Americans eat. We will be examining these issues by way of course lectures, readings, discussions and several writing assignments. Most Friday sessions will be devoted to class discussion.

A detailed description of all *writing assignments* follows. The midterm and final *exams* will be substantial in-class essay exams. **Please note:** You are required to keep an extra copy of all written assignments, as well as copies of all graded assignments that I have returned to you. They must be retained until grades have been posted at the end of the semester, in the event of any questions.

**Books/Readings:**

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land*  
Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Farmer Boy*  
David Masumoto, *Epitaph for a Peach*  
Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*

The following readings are available on reserve.

Federal Writer's Project Slave Narratives, selections.  
Rebecca Burlend, *A True Picture of Emigration*, Chapter 4.  
Walker D. Wyman, "California Emigrant Letters."  
Knut Oyangen, "The Gastrodynamics of Displacement."  
Rowena Schmidt Carpenter and Hazel K. Stiebeling, *Diets to Fit the Family Income*.  
Jenny Barker-Devine, "Hop to the Top With the Iowa Chop."

## Assignments:

Exam One	150
Exam Two (option 1)	150
Eating Poor in the Depression (option 2)	150
Final Exam	300
Course Paper	200
Passports (10 passports @ 10 points apiece)	100
Participation	100

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Points possible 1000

Students *will choose either* to take Exam 2 or to complete the project on Eating Poor in the Depression. Students must choose one or the other. They may not do both.

### Grading Scale:

1000-930, A; 929-900, A-; 899-875, B+; 874-830, B; 829-800 B-; 799-775, C+; 774-730, C; 729-700, C-; 699-675, D+; 674-630, D; 629-600, D-; 599 or less, F.

**BLUE BOOKS.** Every student must hand in 4 blue books by the end of the second week of classes. These blue books will be redistributed on exam day. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR ANY MARKS ON THE BLUE BOOKS BEFORE HANDING THEM IN.**

**ATTENDANCE** is very important, since you will earn a grade for participation. If you are not in class, and do not participate (meaning having good questions, answers or comments **based on reading and lecture**), your participation grade will suffer significantly. Remember that lots of important things happen on Fridays – that is when most passports are due and most discussions will take place. **Please come to class on time and plan to stay for the entire period. If you know that you will need to leave early, please sit near a door so that you do not disturb others when you leave. Turn off your cell phone so you won't disturb the class. Answering phone calls or text messaging in class is absolutely forbidden. The first time I see or hear your cell phone, I will ask you to put it away. The second time I see or hear your cell phone, you will be asked to leave. You will not be allowed to return to class until you have written a 10 page research paper on changes in the Iowa State student conduct policy from 1900-2000. I AM NOT KIDDING. I do not allow laptops in class, except for those with documented disabilities who require them to take notes.** Please **do not** attend class if you are planning on

spending the hour reading your newspaper, doing homework for other classes, or talking with your neighbors. These are distracting to your classmates and the professor, and should be pursued in another location, such as Memorial Union. **In accordance with university policy, students engaging in any form of disruptive behavior will be required to leave the class.**

**Passports:** Passports are short written assignments (generally one page in length) that are due on the day that we discuss a particular reading assignment. They are called passports because they are your ticket to discussion. If you do not have a passport, you will not be allowed to attend discussion. All passport topics will be posted on Reserve. Please answer the passport question in **hard copy**, and bring it to class. While you may hand in a passport early, **there are no late passports.**

**Participation** accounts for 10% of your grade. To participate means not only to be in class, but also to have something to contribute -- either good questions or good answers. You cannot participate if you are not in class, so failure to attend will have an adverse effect upon your grade.

**Students with documented disabilities:** Iowa State University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Any student who may require an accommodation under such provisions should contact me as soon as possible and no later than the end of the first week of class or as soon as you become aware. No retroactive accommodations will be provided in this class. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Resources (DR) office, located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076, 515-294-6624.

**Please note:** Although I will attempt, in all ways, to adhere to the contents of this syllabus, I reserve the right to change either the course requirements or class schedule, should that become necessary to the functioning of the class.

**Office Hours:** My office hours are from 11-12 a.m. Monday and Wednesday and by appointment. My office number is 603 Ross Hall, and my phone number is 294-7286. Messages may also be left in the History Department office, 603 Ross Hall, 294-7266. My e-mail address is [prinkeh@iastate.edu](mailto:prinkeh@iastate.edu). Please note: I do not check my e-mail during the evenings or on weekends.

## ***Class Schedule***

- Week 1**  
**8/23-27**      **Native Eating**  
**M**    Introduction to Course.  
**W**    Why and what is a history of food and eating? See Reserve for “Introductory Reading,” and “Introductory Questions.” Passport due.  
**F**    Native American foodways  
**READING:** “Introductory Reading,” available on Reserve. Begin Cronon, *Changes in the Land*
- Week 2**  
**8/30-9/3**      **Starvation and Plenty in Colonial America**  
**M**    Eating like a colonist, I  
**W**    Eating like a colonist, II  
**F**    Discussion: *Changes in the Land*. Passport due.  
**READING:** Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, complete by Friday.
- Week 3**  
**9/6-10**        **Food in the Antebellum South**  
**M**    No Class, Labor Day  
**W**    Cooking and eating on and off the plantation  
**F**    Remembering the slave diet. Discuss the FWP Slave Narratives. Passport due.  
**READING:** Federal Writer’s Project Slave Narratives, available on Reserve, complete by Friday.
- Week 4**  
**9/13-17**      **Eating and drinking in the Antebellum North**  
**M**    Agricultural Change in the Antebellum North  
**W**    Eating in the Young Nation  
**F**    Frontier Eating in Illinois. Discuss Rebecca Burlend, *A True Picture of Emigration*, Chapter 4. Passport due.  
**READING:** Rebecca Burlend, *A True Picture of Emigration*, Chapter 4, available on Reserve. Complete by Friday.
- Week 5**  
**9/20-24**      **Food on the Trail and in the Gold Fields**  
**M**    Eating on the Overland Trail  
**W**    Dining during the Gold Rush  
**F**    Discussion of Walker D. Wyman, editor, “California Emigrant Letters.” Passport due.

**READING:** Walker D. Wyman, editor, "California Emigrant Letters," available on Reserve, complete by Friday. Begin Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Farmer Boy*.

**Week 6 Eating in the Civil War**

9/27-10/1

**M** Exam One

**W** Civil War food and eating, the home front

**F** Civil War food and eating, the soldiers.

**READING:** Continue Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Farmer Boy*.

**Week 7 Urbanizing America, 1865-1920**

10/4-8

**M** Changing agricultural technology and food supply

**W** Discuss Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Farmer Boy*. Passport due.

**F** The Rise of Home Economics and Scientific Food

**READING:** Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Farmer Boy*, complete by Wednesday.

**Week 8 Urbanizing America, 1865-1920**

10/11-15

**M** The government and food.

**W** Food Will Win the War

**F** Immigrants and food. Discuss Knut Oyangen, "The Gastrodynamics of Displacement." Passport due.

**READING:** Knut Oyangen, "The Gastrodynamics of Displacement," available on Reserve, complete by Friday.

**Week 9 The Interwar Period/Great Depression**

10/18-22

**M** Innovations in the home and rural/urban difference

**W** Fashionable eating in the 1920s, and the rise of convenience foods -- Spam and Jello

**F** Eating poor in the Great Depression. Optional paper assignment due, Eating Poor in the Great Depression.

**READING:** Rowena Schmidt Carpenter and Hazel K. Stiebeling, *Diets to Fit the Family Income*, available on Reserve, complete by Friday.

**Week 10 The Depression and World War II**

10/25-29

**M** Continuing the Great Depression -- government policy and food.

**W** Exam Two

**F** Food on the Homefront in World War II

**READING:** No additional reading

- Week 11 World War II and the Modern World of Food**  
 11/1-5 **M** Feeding the Troops  
**W** Industrialization of Agriculture: the egg  
**F** New Worlds of Marketing: Radio Homemakers and the Porkettes. Passports due.  
**READING:** Jenny Barker-Devine, "Hop to the Top With the Iowa Chop," available on Reserve. Complete by Friday.
- Week 12 Postwar Governmental Interests**  
 11/8-12 **M** Food and welfare – commodities, food stamps, school lunches and WIC  
**W** The symbolism of food and foreign food aid  
**F** The government and nutrition.  
**READING:** Begin David Mas Masumoto, *Epitaph for a Peach*.
- Week 13 The Modern Food System: Critics and Defenders**  
 11/15-19 **M** Organic, local and vegetarian. **Papers due.**  
**W** Changes in the pantry and kitchen  
**F** The market vs. quality. Discuss David Masumoto, *Epitaph for a Peach*. Passport due.  
**READING:** David Mas Masumoto, *Epitaph for a Peach*, complete by Friday; begin Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*.
- Week 14 Modern Food System, Continued**  
 11/29-12/3 **M** Problems of distribution: Food deserts  
**W** What price abundance?  
**F** The critique of fast food. Discuss *Fast Food Nation*. Passport due.  
**READING:** David Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*, complete by Friday.
- Week 15 Odds and Ends**  
 12/6-12/10 **M** View documentary, "A Hot Dog Story."  
**W** Conclude "A Hot Dog Story," discuss.  
**F** Review  
**READING:** No additional reading.
- Week 16 Final Exam – Time TBA**

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**Optional Paper Assignment: Eating Poor in the Great Depression**  
**Due October 22, 2010**

During the Great Depression, food and eating were an obsession for many. Because money was so tight, finding the resources to provide a family with healthy, satisfying meals was difficult, and sometimes impossible.

In order to complete this assignment, you will need to purchase three potatoes, an onion, and two carrots. If you have no objections to bacon, you may also purchase two or three slices of bulk bacon from the meat department. These groceries should cost very little, no more than a couple of dollars. During the depression, these were all common elements in Midwestern family diets.

During the next week, use these items to make a meal. You can use your own spices and water. If you aren't quite sure what to do with your potatoes, onion and carrots, get help. Call a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, Boy or Girl Scout leader, 4-H leader, or other person knowledgeable about cooking on a budget. Remember: in the 1930s, people relied on friends and relatives to provide them the support they needed to survive. If you are absolutely, positively stumped about how to turn these ingredients into a meal, you may spend up to \$1 on additional ingredients (the equivalent of .05 in 1933 money). If you do spend \$1 on additional ingredients, they **MUST** be ingredients that were available in 1933. In other words, you **CANNOT** buy a \$1 frozen pizza and call it dinner. You **CANNOT** buy a box of Kraft Macaroni and Cheese, since that would have cost .17 when it was first marketed in 1937. You could buy canned milk, a small portion of meat, or bread, for instance.

When you come to class on October 22, the day we discuss Eating Poor in the Great Depression, bring with you a short written discussion in essay form (3-4 pages) of your cooking and eating experience, answering the following questions.

1. How much did your ingredients cost? What did you cook with your ingredients? Did you purchase any additional items? What?
2. Did you get any help from a parent, grandparent, or other experienced cook? Remember, this is **OK**.
3. How many people did your meal feed? How many people would it feed, if you needed to feed a family on a very tight budget?
4. If this was what your family ate on a regular basis during the depression (and remember, for poor people, those on relief, and farm families, this or something like this often was), what does this tell you about what daily life was like for the poor?

To provide yourself some perspective and to see what government dieticians in the 1930s thought people *should* eat while on a budget, think about our reading assignment for the week, Rowena Schmidt Carpenter and Hazel K. Stiebeling, *Diets to Fit the Family Income*, available on Reserve.

Be prepared to discuss your cooking and eating experience with the class.

**Required Paper Assignment: A Family Eats**  
**Due November 15, 2010**

Families are the foundation of history. Families shape society, and in turn are shaped by the social, political, and economic environment. The goal of this assignment is to study the relationship between families and food history by studying a specific family's experiences in eating over three generations.

The first step in this project is to decide whose history you will be writing. This should be a three generation paper. If, for example, you chose to write about your own family, your parents would be one generation, their parents another, and so on. For the purposes of this assignment, you are interested in one generation the age of your grandparents, a second the age of your parents, and a third, your age. In order to narrow your focus, and remain within the assigned 8-10 pages (typed, double spaced, 12 point font, with a one inch margin on all sides), choose only one side of your subject family. If you do not wish to write about your own family, you may write about a friend's family history. There is no penalty whatsoever for choosing this option.

The second step is to gather as much information as possible about each generation and its eating habits. Where were they born? How were they educated? How did they work? Where have they lived? Ask questions about how everyday life has changed over three generations. What food did they eat, and where did they obtain it? What was a typical day's menu? What was a typical holiday menu? Did the family grow any food themselves? How was food cooked, and by whom? What kind of household technology was available for cooking? Where did the family eat (around the table, or in front of the television)? Did the family eat food outside the home, and if so, how often and where? How much money did the family spend each week on food, if known? How have wars, depressions/recessions, or other major national and international events shaped the way this family ate, if at all? What new innovations in food technology and food availability affected the way in which this family ate? What new ethnic foods found their way into the family diet (Mexican, Italian, Asian, etc.)? What new processed foods, if any, have entered the family diet? How have changing work patterns for women affected the family diet, if at all? What new products were



welcomed? Which were rejected, and why? Be creative in finding family connections to history.

The third step is to place your subject family (who they were, where they lived, and what they did) in historical context. As you think about the "big picture," ask yourself these basic questions: What have been the major changes in this family's food history over three generations? When you discuss how the family has changed over time, be sure to also discuss why change occurs. Also, are there any ways in which this family has NOT changed over the generations? Why haven't these factors changed? And finally, why is the current generation of the family as it is? In what ways are its tastes and eating habits similar to grandparents and parents? What is different? What historical, social, and familial forces have made the family's diet what it is? How have people's relationships to the food they eat changed, or not changed, over time? This material will most likely form the conclusion to your paper.

You should probably organize your paper **generationally**. Write the food history of the oldest generation first, followed by the middle generation, and then the youngest. (Hint: the life of the older generation does not generally end when the next arrives on the scene.) You should conclude your paper with a substantial discussion of how this family fits into the big picture. For example: has this family embraced the fast food culture of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, or rejected it? How and why?

Remember: Your paper should be grammatically correct and should contain no spelling or word choice errors. Your paper is to be typed and double-spaced. Use a standard 12 point font for your paper. It should be 8-10 pages long, with a one inch margin on each side, and numbering in the upper right hand corner or bottom center. **Do not put it in a binder, but put a title page on the paper and staple it in the upper left hand corner.**

**Late policy:** Your paper is due at 10:00 p.m. on the assigned day. If you require an extension, you are also required to notify me **before** missing the assignment, and will have to present a good excuse (meaning a **verifiable** family emergency or illness). If I ask for verification, you must provide it. In the case of a death in the family, the required verification is either an obituary or funeral card. If you do not contact me ahead of time or your excuse is unacceptable, your paper will lose 10 points for every week day that it is overdue, beginning on the due date. **Plan ahead. Last minute computer glitches are not acceptable excuses for lateness.**

## PLAGIARISM

In this class, plagiarism on written assignments will result in an **automatic F** (0 points awarded), **and probable failure of the class**. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others without giving credit where credit is due. The Iowa State University e-Library has this to say about plagiarism:

[www.lib.iastate.edu/commons/resources/copyright/copyright.html#Plagiarism](http://www.lib.iastate.edu/commons/resources/copyright/copyright.html#Plagiarism)

### Plagiarism

plagiarize : " to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : use (another's production) without crediting the source . . . to commit literary theft : present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source." (WWWebster Dictionary, [online]. Available: <http://www.m-w.com> [1998, June 23]).

You can avoid plagiarism by always citing your sources, including any and all resources and information found on the Web, via the Internet, or other electronic sources. It also helps to familiarize yourself thoroughly with ISU's policies against plagiarism. Search the Dean of Students website using the term plagiarism to locate relevant sections of the Student Handbook, Judicial Affairs Administration, and other policies.

In other words – educate yourself, know what plagiarism is, and DON'T DO IT. Give credit where credit is due, and cite the sources of ideas, paraphrases, and quotations. All quoted materials must be in quotation marks and cited appropriately. Of course, purchasing or "borrowing" a paper from someone else is equally a case of plagiarism, and will be dealt with accordingly. Under the rules of the University, plagiarism is a variety of academic misconduct, and a violation of the student conduct code. The most severe penalties include expulsion from the university. **At the least, you will fail this writing assignment, and probably this class, if you are caught plagiarizing material.**