Course description
We eat every day, and consider the behavior just “natural”. But what, how, where and when, and with whom we eat, all convey cultural meanings and are relevant to social identifications. Food is also very much associated with health and illness, and concepts of fitness and beauty. This course focuses on the social implications and cultural meanings of food, and together we will study how food and foodways manifest in our thoughts, behavior, and social relations. We will examine the continuity and discontinuity of traditions, and intervening factors such as globalization, colonization, religion, class, and issues of identity in the culture and politics of food.

Course objectives
Students having finished the course will:
a) have greater insight into the sources and diffusion of food culture;
b) obtain a fuller understanding of the relationship between food and different aspects of social life;
c) be able to think analytically about the politics of food, and the nature of their own food culture and choices of food.

Course requirements
Class participation: 20%
Midterm assignment: 30% (due March 5, 2019)
Final paper: 50% (due April 30, 2019)

1. Class participation:
Attendance is mandatory. It is university policy that attendance alone does not carry marks. Students should complete assigned readings before each class and take an active part in class discussion. Turn off your mobile devices during the lecture.

There will be 5 tutorials (4 marks each). Marking is based on how well you prepare and how much you contribute to the discussion. Attendance alone does not carry points. Discussion leaders receive bonus points.

2. Midterm assignment (5 pages):
Write a critique of a cookbook, based on close reading of the course readings for week 1 to 8. You should raise questions and points of discussion, and NOT summarize readings or the cookbook. Use double-spacing and 12-point font. Attach a list of references cited at the end. Submit first to VeriGuide and print out the receipt. Attach it to the hard copy of your assignment and submit in class on the due date. No late submissions will be accepted.

3. Final Paper (10 pages):
Pick a topic from the weekly themes, and write a critique of food culture in Hong Kong, incorporating
data collected on the field trip. Use double-spacing and 12-point font. Attach a list of references cited at the end. Submit first to VeriGuide and print out the receipt. Attach it to the hard copy of your paper and submit to the Anthropology Department Office (NAH407) during office hours. No late submissions will be accepted.

The paper will be graded according to: 1) organization (structure, format, and citation), 2) clarity and significance of theme, 3) logical development of arguments, application of academic works and class materials, and 4) use of supporting evidence and depth of ethnographic data.

The University adopts a policy of zero tolerance on plagiarism. Using someone else’s ideas or words without citing the source is plagiarism. (This includes material from the Internet without citing the website, and my lecture). It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the CUHK academic honesty policy at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/.

Course schedule

* = required reading

Week 1 January 8 Introduction: Studying foodways

Week 2 January 15 Glocalization of foodways

Week 3 January 22 Food and Chineseness
*1) Chang, K.C. ed. 1977. Ch.1 “Ancient China”, Ch.7 “Modern China North”, Ch.8 “Modern China South”. In Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Week 4 January 29 Food and the construction of health

Week 6 February 12 Cookbooks, memories, and cultural production

Week 7 February 19 Engendering food

Week 8 February 26 Food in the family
* 1) Tam, Siumi Maria. 2007. “Convenient-involvement foods and production of the family meal in South China”. In Sidney Cheung and Tan Chee Beng, eds, *Food and Foodways in Asia*.
Week 9  March 5  Food and politics

*2) Nestle, Marion. 2007. “Afterword: Food Politics: Five years and beyond”. In Food Politics: How the food industry influences nutrition and health. Berkeley: University of California Press.


Week 10  March 12  Milk and food security


Week 11  March 19  Food as social identity


Week 14  April 9  Food and religion


Week 15  April 16  Conclusion: What to eat?


