

WGS 301: Food, Femininity, and Feminism in American Culture from Amelia Simmons to Martha Stewart
Mondays 12:00 – 2:50 pm
311 Shibles Hall

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Email: Rachel.snell@maine.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00 – 3:00 pm and by appointment

This course considers the ways in which the production and consumption of food fundamentally shaped concepts of femininity and feminism in American culture. Beginning with Amelia Simmons's publication of American Cookery in 1796, considered the first American cookbook, and continuing to the present day students will explore women's relationships with food as housekeepers, caretakers, social activists, servants, career women, and more. Through readings drawn from primary historical sources, scholarly secondary materials, and contemporary journalistic pieces along with films related to current issues around food, students will critically consider how women's associations with food served to both oppress and empower them as well as the differences between the prescriptive ideal and lived experience.

Required Reading:

Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber, From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives on Women and Food (2005) (FBFFS)
Judith Newton, Tasting Home: Coming of Age in the Kitchen (2013)
Articles and essays posted on the course Google Classroom.

Assignments:

Recipe Analysis: For each week with an assigned cookbook, students will select one recipe from the text for analysis. More information will be provided on this assignment on January 30. Analyses will be submitted in class, but students should email the instructor with the title and page number for their selected recipe by Monday at 8 am. Class will begin each week with brief reports (under five minutes) of the recipe analysis.

Weekly Response: Building on the recipe analysis for the week, students will submit a weekly response paper. This 2-page response will identify and describe, using specific examples from the reading, lecture, and discussion; a theme for the week. This will be submitted on Google Classroom.

Research Project: Throughout the semester, students will work on an individual research project utilizing the Mildred "Brownie" Schrupf collection available in Fogler Library's Special Collections. A more detailed prompt and grading rubric will be circulated in a few weeks.

Grading:

Discussion Participation	15%	Response Papers	35%
Recipe Analyses	25%	Research Project	25%

Disruptive Behavior

Please do not answer your phone, check e-mail and social media, or communicate by text message in the classroom. Such behavior will lower your participation grade. Students who make a habit of these behaviors may be asked to leave.

Academic Integrity

All students of the University are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. To falsify the result of one's research, to steal the words or ideas of another, or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process by which knowledge is advanced. Any student not meeting this standard may fail the course. For more information, see <http://umaine.edu/studentaffairs/jad/academic-honesty-and-dishonesty/>.

Student Accommodations

If you have a disability and desire an accommodation, please contact Ann Smith, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (581-2319), as soon as possible.

Sexual Discrimination Reporting

The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of **sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination** involving members of the campus, **your teacher is required to report** this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity.

If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

For confidential resources on campus: **Counseling Center: 207-581-1392 or Cutler Health Center: at 207-581-4000.**

For confidential resources off campus: **Rape Response Services: 1-800-310-0000 or Spruce Run: 1-800-863-9909.**

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:

For support services on campus: **Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207-581-1406, Office of Community Standards: 207-581-1409, University of Maine Police: 207-581-4040 or 911.** Or see the OSAVP website for a complete list of services at <http://www.umaine.edu/osavp/>

Course Schedule

January 23

Prologue: Thinking Food, Femininity, and Feminism

Reading: Sherrie A. Inness, "Introduction: Thinking Food/Thinking Gender" in [Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race](#); Kate Cairns and Josée Johnston, "Thinking through Food and Femininity: A Conceptual Toolkit" in [Food and Femininity](#).

Assignment: 2-page response paper focused on connections between food and gender

January 30

Introduction to Reading a Recipe

Readings: Susan J. Leonardi, "Recipes for Reading: Summer Pasta, Lobster à la Riseholme, and Key Lime Pie;" Barbara Ketcham Wheaton, "Cookbooks as Resources for Social History;" Janet Floyd and Laurel Forster, "The Recipe in its Cultural Contexts" in [The Recipe Reader](#).

Assignment: submit a practice recipe analysis (~1 page)

February 6

Cookbook: Amelia Simmons, [American Cookery](#) (1798)

http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_01.cfm

Tea, Pancakes, and Washington Pie: Women and the Transition from British to American to Regional Identity

Reading: Donna Gabaccia and Jane Aldrich, "Recipes in Context: Solving a Small Mystery in Charleston's Culinary History;" Nancy Jenkins, "Martha Ballard: A Women's Place on the Eastern Frontier" (FBFFS).

February 13

Cookbook: Eliza Leslie, [Directions for Cookery, in its Various Branches](#) (1840)

http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_12.cfm

Baking Cakes and Serving Status: The Emergence of the Female Domestic Ideal

Reading: Mark McWilliams, "Good Women Bake Good Biscuits;" Margaret Beetham, "Of Recipe Books and Reading in the Nineteenth Century: Mrs. Beeton and her Cultural Consequences;" Sarah A. Leavitt, "Going to Housekeeping: Creating a Frugal and Honest Home."

February 20

Cookbook: Abby Fisher, [What Mrs. Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking](#) (1881)

http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_35.cfm

Denying the Domestic Ideal: Slavery, Hired Help, and Food in the African-American Community

Reading: Andrew Warnes, "'Talking' Recipes: What Mrs. Fisher Knows and the African – American Cookbook Tradition;" Alice A. Deck, "'Now Then – Who Said Biscuits?' The Black Woman Cook as Fetish in American Advertising, 1905-1953;" select three posts from <https://afroculinaria.com/>.

February 27

Cookbook: Hattie A. Burr, Woman Suffrage Cook Book (1896)

http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_43.cfm

Expanding the Domestic Ideal: Community Cookbooks, Suffrage, and Reform

Reading: Jan Longone, "The Old Girl Network: Charity Cookbooks and the Empowerment of Women" (lecture); Anne Bower, "Cooking Up Stories: Narrative Elements in Community Cookbooks;" Alice Ross, "Ella Smith's Unfinished Community Cookbook: A Social History of Women and Work in Smithtown, New York, 1884-1922."

Introduction to Community Cookbook: Fogler Special Collections

Spring Break: March 6 - 17

March 20

Fannie Merritt Farmer, The Boston Cooking School Cookbook (1896)

http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_48.cfm

Rational Housekeeping: Technology, Industrialization, Convenience Foods, and the Domestic Science Movement

Helen Zoe Veit, "A School for Wives: Home Economics and the Modern Housewife" in Modern Food, Moral Food: Self-Control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth Century; Leslie Land, "Counterintuitive: How the Marketing of Modernism Hijacked the Kitchen Stove" (FBFFS); Barbara Haber, "Cooking to Survive: The Careers of Alice Foote MacDougall and Cleora Butler" (FBFFS).

March 27

Research Day: Brownie Schruppf and Maine Community Cookbooks

Reading: Erika Endrijonas, "Processed Foods from Scratch: Cooking for a Family in the 1950s;" articles on Brownie Schruppf; Judith Newton, Tasting Home: Coming of Age in the Kitchen, Part I.

Meet at Page Farm and Home Museum, class held at Special Collections.

April 3

Cookbook: Sarah Bosse and Onoto Watanna, The Chinese-Japanese Cookbook

http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_67.cfm

Identity and Cuisine: Food, Immigration, and Ethnicity

Reading: Sharmila Sen, "Indian Spices across Black Waters;" Carole M. Counihan, "The Border as Barrier: Food, Gender, and Ethnicity in the San Luis Valley of Colorado;" Arlene Voski Avakian, "Shish Kebab Armenians?" Food and the Construction and Maintenance of Ethnic and Gender Identities among Armenian American Feminists" (FBFFS).

April 10

Cookbook: National Organization for Women, Don't Assume I Don't Cook: Recipes for Women's Lives (Google Drive)

Feminist Resistances/Reclaiming Food

Reading: Laurel Forster, "Liberating the Recipe: A Study of the Relationship between Food and

Feminism in the early 1970s;" Kate Cairns and Josée Johnston, "Food pleasures in the postfeminist kitchen" and "Conclusion: Cooking as a feminist act?"; Laura Lindenfeld, "Women Who Eat Too Much: Femininity and Food in *Fried Green Tomatoes*" (FBFFS).

April 17

Cookbook: Catharine Dean Flint Cookbook

<http://gigi.mwa.org/netpub/server.np?quickfind=271382oct07&sorton=filename&catalog=catalog&site=manuscripts&template=results.np>

Reading: Judith Newton, Tasting Home: Coming of Age in the Kitchen, Part II-IV; Traci Marie Kelly, "'If I Were a Voodoo Priestess:' Women's Culinary Autobiographies."

April 24

Cookbook: Select Your Own

Aspirational Femininity in the 21st Century: Martha Stewart, Pinterest, and Social Media

Reading: Judith Newton, Tasting Home: Coming of Age in the Kitchen, Part V.

Assignment: Cookbook Analysis of selected cookbook

May 1

Presentation of Final Projects

Final Research Project Due: May 8th by 4:30 pm