

## **HIST 410/510; HUM 399: Food in Chinese Culture**

Ina Asim

Winter 2007

CRN 22453

41 Knight Library

MW 10-11:20

Office: 317 McKenzie Hall; PLC 218

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Office Hours: MW 1:30-3:00 (Wednesdays: PLC 218)

This is an experimental course which aims to introduce the specific qualities associated with food and the diverse roles that food plays in Chinese cultural history. The course begins with a chronological survey on the function of food sacrifices in Early China and continues by looking at how food and the lack of food influenced the formation, development, and dissemination of Chinese culture and determined politics well into the 20th century. This topical survey will include dietary rules, social rules of etiquette and banqueting, as well as regional differences in cuisine. It will conclude with an outlook on the availability of food, and the possibility to feed the increasing population in the future.

"The Chinese... have probably fed more people, more successfully, than any other culture in world history. How they developed the cultural capital to do this is well worth our study."

(David Keightley in "What made the Chinese 'Chinese'? Some Geographical Perspectives." *Education About Asia*, vol. 9, number 2, fall 2004, p. 22).

### **Course Requirements for Undergraduate Students**

1. Regular attendance and participation in class discussions. 20%
2. One paper of 10-12 pages. Topic options will be discussed during the first and second class meetings. The paper topic will be introduced to the class in a short presentation. A summary of the most important points concerning the research will be sent in as a Word attachment to the instructor at least one day before the presentation. The summary will be made available to all class participants on this class webpage. Final versions of papers are due in week 7 to ensure sound presentations and class handouts. Paper & presentation: 40%.
3. Weekly response to questions concerning reading assignments in short website supported quizzes. 40%

### **Course Requirements for Graduate Students**

Each student will prepare two at least five page, double-spaced, book review of each of the two books assigned to her or him. Reviews are due as arranged with the instructor, latest by Wednesday of week 9.

In your reviews you should demonstrate a command of the content of the book and the sources the author relies on. Explain the objective of the main thesis developed in the book and the methodology applied by the author. Consult as many professional reviews in relevant periodicals for Asian Studies (Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, Journal of Asian Studies, T'oung Pao etc.) as possible but cite and acknowledge wherever you refer to them. Reading reviews by other authors will help you to place the book in its historical context and guides you to express your own observations.

As a general outline when preparing the review you can follow the pattern given below. Add other important information that will enhance the understanding of the reader of your review whenever further aspects of the book need to be covered.

1. Bibliographical data
2. Summary of content / summary of authors argument
3. Sources and methodology
4. Most valuable contribution to the topic
5. Most important shortcomings and questions that are left unanswered
6. Your suggestions (for comparisons with other works by the same author/ other authors; further reading; improvements for future editions; regarding the audience of the book etc.)

### **Required Readings**

The following text is available for purchase at Black Sun Books on Hilyard and 24th Street:  
Eugene Anderson, *The Food of China*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press 1988.  
Further readings are on reserve in the Copy Shop on 13th St as well as on reserve.

### **How to navigate the website:**

For access to the latest keynotes on our website [<http://ssil.uoregon.edu/hum399>], please click the respective date on the calendar on this page. Please also check the categories 'Readings', 'Image gallery', and 'Test questions' every week because they contain information to prepare your weekly tests.

### **Course Outline**

#### **Week 1**

01/08 M 1. Introduction. Feast or Famine?

01/10 W 2. The Natural Environment, Prehistory and the Dawn of History

(Anderson, 1-28; Food and Drink in History. Selections from *Les Annales*; course packet)

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#### **Week 2**

01/15 M 3. The Crucial Millenium: Zhou through Han

(Anderson, 29-56)

01/17 W 4. Foods from the West: Medieval China and the Shaping of the Food System

(Anderson, 56-93)

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### **Week 3**

01/22 M 5. The Climax of Traditional Agriculture in Late Imperial China

(Anderson, 94-136; Bray, Images of Rice in Imperial China; course packet)

01/24 W 6. Chinese Foodstuffs Today

(Anderson, 137-181)

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### **Week 4**

01/29 M 7. Cooking Strategies, Regional and Local Cuisines

(Anderson, 182-228)

01/31 WH 8. Food as Medicine

(Anderson, 229-243)

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### **Week 5**

02/05 M 9. Shi, se, xing ye. Appetite for food and sex is nature.(D.C. Lau)/

[It goes without saying that] appetites for food and sex are innate. (J. Farquar)

(Wang Ping, Aching for Beauty; course packet)

02/07 W 10. Film: Red Sorghum

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### **Week 6**

02/12 M 11. Food as medicine (Anderson, 229-243)

The qualities "hot" and "cold" in Chinese cuisine

(Anderson; handout); Food in Society

(Anderson, 244-261)

02/14 W 12. Food as Performance

(West, Playing with Food: Performance, Food, and the Aesthetics of Artificiality in the Sung and Yuan; course packet)

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**Week 7**

02/19 M 13. The Chinese Art of Tea

(Blofeld; on reserve; handout: Lu Yu: The Classic of Tea)

02/21 W 14. Presentations; Avoiding Famine

(Mazumdar, The Impact of New World Food Crops on the Diet and Economy in China and India, 1600-1900; course packet)

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**Week 8**

02/26 M 15. Presentations; Cannibalism

(Keynotes)

02/28 W 16. Presentations; Lu Wenfu: The Gourmet (course packet)

Excursion to Portland: Chinese New Year

Friday, March 2. We will visit the Chinese Garden, have tea in the Teahouse, and enjoy Dim Sum in Chinatown during the Lantern Festival days of the Chinese New Year celebration.

Details will be discussed with the group of participants.

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**Week 9**

03/05 M 17. Presentations; Famine

TIMELINE: contains Smil; and Becker: Hunger in Modern Times

03/07 W 18. Presentations; Traditional Famine Prevention

(Song Yingxing; handout);

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**Week 10**

03/12 M 19. The Globalization of Chinese Food; Tea ceramics

(Wu, Cheung; course packet)

03/14 W 20. FILM: Eat Drink Man Woman

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