

Ambedkar University Delhi

Course Outline

Winter Semester

School: Undergraduate Studies

Programme with title: BA (Honours)

Semester to which offered: (I/ III/ V) IV semester

Course Title: Food and Society

Credits: 4 Credits

Course Code (new):

Course Code (old):

Type of Course:	Compulsory	Cohort	BA (H) Sociology
	Elective	yes	Cohort

For SUS only (Mark an X for as many as appropriate):

1. Foundation (Compulsory)
2. Foundation (Elective)
3. Discipline (Compulsory)
4. Discipline (Elective) X
5. Elective X

Course Coordinator and Team: Ishita Dey

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Pre-requisites:

Aim:

Food plays a ubiquitous role in our everyday lives and the sociality around food reveals a complex relationship who produces and who consumes the food. The primary objective of this course would to understand sociality of food to understand the production, distribution and branding of food. What gets considered as food and what gets excluded? How do social norms, customs and manners decide what is 'good to eat'? Who decided what is good to eat? How do caste, religion and gender relations shape the production of what is good to eat and what is not good to eat? How does food become 'symbols' of national, local identity?

In this course we will understand the emergence of food studies and interest in food as a subject of study in anthropology at the cusp of food and economic anthropology. There will be an attempt to understand the emergence of food studies within the discipline of anthropology and how has food studies contributed

to the making of the discipline. What innovative methods and theoretical frameworks do food writings in anthropology and sociology offer to understand socio-political processes that shape food and foodways, both globally and locally?

Brief description of modules/ Main modules:

Module 1: Introduction to food and foodways

In this section the students would be introduced to works to understand how eating and dietary patterns and studies on single food substances were seen as entry point of analysis. A structuralist and materialist readings of food and foodways would be helpful in understanding the semiotic and economies of food production and distribution networks. A special emphasis would be given to understand how food accounts for nutrition.

Module 2: Food biographies and sociality

In this section we will read two ethnographies which follows the making of a commodity and its power networks and an 'unfinished' commodity to understand how sociality is shaped by production networks, synesthetic reason and microbiopolitics'.

Module 3: Social stratification and culinary practices

Students acquainted with readings of sociology of India have come across references of rules of commensality, proscription and prohibition. In this section, through a gamut of readings and field visits we will try and understand how social stratification is woven into the making of food, food habits and customs.

Module 4: Foodways and globalisation

George Ritzer through his work on Mcdonaldisation builds upon Weber's idea of rationalisation and shows how global foodways have transformed the foodscape. In this section we try and understand through food and foodways how local meets global and its impacts on food production.

Module 5: Mapping food waste

One of the increasing concerns around issues of food security is about food waste. How do we understand the waste we generate in production of food crops to commercial restaurants? Is there a way to map food waste?

References:

Bestore, Theodore C. 2001. ' Supply-side Sushi: Commodity, Market and the global city', *American Anthropologist* 103(1):76-95.

Goody, Jack. 1982. *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class : A study in Comparative Sociology*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Harris, Marvin. 1978. 'India's sacred cow' *Human Nature*, Reprint in Darna L. Dufour, Alan H.

Goodman and Gretel H. Pelto. *Nutritional Anthropology. Biocultural Perspectives on Food and Nutrition*. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Iverson, Vegard and P.S. Raghavendra.2006. ' What the signboard hides: Food, Caste and employability in small South Indian eating places'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 40(3):311-341.

Levi- Strauss, Claude. 2008. 'The Culinary triangle'. In Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. *Food and culture. A Reader*. 36-43. London: Routledge.

Mintz, Sidney and Christine M. Du. Bois.2002. 'The anthropology of food and eating'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31:99-119.

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and power. The place of sugar in modern history*. New York: Penguin.

Murcott, Anne. 1999. 'Scarcity in abundance: food and non-food' *Social Research* 66 (1):305-99.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko.1993. *Rice as self. Japanese identities through time*. Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press.

Ritzer, George. 1996. *The McDonaldization of Society*. Revised ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge.

(This list is not exhaustive)

Tentative Assessment schedule with details of weightage:

S.No	Assessment	Date/period in which Assessment will take place	Weightage
1	Class test (Module 1)	Last week of January	20%
2	Class test (Module 2 and 3)	Last week of February	20%
3.	Group Project Assignment Presentation (Mid March	20%
4.	End Semester Exam	As per AUD Academic Calendar	40%