

**Emory University
Department of English**

**ENG 389W (Fall 2021)
Eating in the Archive
T/Th 11:30am-12:45pm, Tarbutton 106**

**Professor: Lauren Klein (lauren.klein@emory.edu)
Teaching Assistant: Margy Adams (marguerite.adams@emory.edu)**

Land Acknowledgment

Emory University is located on Muscogee (Creek) land. Emory was founded in 1836, during a period of sustained oppression, land dispossession, and forced removal of Muscogee (Creek) and Ani'yunwi'ya (Cherokee) peoples from Georgia and the Southeast. Emory owes an immense debt to the Muscogee, Ani'yunwi'ya and other original peoples, and their descendants, who have cared for and inhabited these lands.

Read the full [Land Acknowledgment and History Statement](#) developed by Emory faculty.

Professor Office Hours:

Tuesdays 2:30-3:30pm, Callaway N310 or via Zoom

Wednesdays 1:15-2:15pm, Zoom only

Book here: <https://lkle.in/officehours>

TA Office Hours:

Wednesdays, 2-3pm

Location: Peet's Coffee, Woodruff Library, 1st floor

Course Description

Eating is among the most universal of human activities: it is both necessary for survival and immensely meaningful, encoding personal memories, cultural values, political ideologies, and more. And yet, to study the significance of eating in past eras often presents a methodological challenge, in that there is no eating—or at least no food—preserved in the archive. This course takes the archive of the early United States as its focus in order to explore the challenges and opportunities of studying the food cultures of past eras. We will investigate how ideas about food and eating were represented in a range of textual forms, including letters, narratives, poems, novels, and cookbooks. To contextualize these works, we will read theories of the archive as well as scholarship on the social and cultural significance of eating. We also attempt to cook some historical recipes of our own. Over the course of the semester, we will learn how these accounts of eating from the early United States, when enriched by social, cultural, historical, and theoretical context, can be made to speak to some of the most significant debates of the time, including questions about race and slavery, democracy and nationhood, and about the human itself.

Required Materials

- Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad* (2016), ISBN: 978-0345804327
- Ingredients for cooking assignment (see below)

All other required materials will be posted on Canvas and/or are available online.

List of Graded Assignments

Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

- Reading Assignments and Class Participation: 10%
- Discussion Prompts: 5%
- Food memoir: 25%
- Cooking assignment: 30%
- Final paper/project: 30%

Description of Graded Assignments

Reading Assignments

You will be reading a wide range of texts—some written clearly, some more dense; some short, some long. Because these texts will inform our classroom discussions—and what you, in particular, have to say about them—it is absolutely essential that you stay on top of the reading assignments and complete them before the start of each class. Reading assignments are assessed through classroom participation (more on this below), as well as the occasional canvas post. At the end of the semester, you will receive a letter grade (A-F) that reflects your in-class engagement with the reading assignments.

Discussions Prompts

In effort to stimulate classroom discussion, as well as to allow each of to you to introduce new material into the course, you will each provide a set of prompts for class discussion two times during the semester. During the second week of the semester, I will distribute more information about the discussion prompt assignment as well as a sign-up sheet.

You will receive a whole letter grade (A, B, C, D, F) upon the completion of each set of discussion prompts. If you would like additional feedback on your discussion prompts or the grade you receive, please schedule a meeting with the professor during office hours.

Written Assignments

Over the course of the semester, you will complete three major written assignments: a 3-5pp “food memoir” about a food that’s significant to you; a historical cooking project involving a 3-5pp analysis of the experience; and a final research paper/project (approx. 8-10pp) that provides an in-depth exploration of a topic or text related to the course. More information about each of these written assignments will be distributed no less than two weeks before the due date. Assignments must be submitted via Canvas by the date and time listed on the syllabus. You will receive a letter grade (A-F) on the basis of your submission, as well as written feedback.

Attendance, Punctuality, and Late/Skipped Assignments

In ordinary years, I allow three excused absences, no questions asked, with your grade beginning to be lowered with the fourth absence. However, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, I do not want to pressure you to come to class if you might be sick. Therefore, this year, I will allow unlimited absences in this course.

With that said, you are responsible for finding out what was discussed in the course on any days that you miss; I do not provide copies of my lecture notes. In addition, beginning with the fourth absence, you must email me to let me know that you will be missing class for health reasons.

Finally, please be respectful to your fellow classmates and arrive on time. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be considered absent for that class.

All assignments are mandatory. Should you submit an assignment after the due date, your grade for that assignment will decrease by a 1/3rd letter grade for each day that it is late (e.g. B becomes B-). Should you fail to submit an assignment entirely, you will receive an F on that assignment and consequently, a lower grade for the course. Should you need an extension, please contact me *in advance* to discuss your situation.

Grading Process

At the end of the semester, I will convert each of your letter grades to a 12 point GPA scale (e.g. A = 12, A- = 11, B+ = 10) and weight each of these numbers according to the percentage listed above. On Canvas, the letter grade—NOT the numerical/percentage grade—will reflect your grade in the course.

Grading Rubrics*Class Participation*

“Class participation” is often assumed to be a hazy concept, but it actually involves a careful assessment in five distinct areas. Here are short descriptions of each of these areas, adapted from grading criteria developed by Dr. Mark Sample of Davidson College:

- **Preparation:** Reading/reviewing any assigned material before class.
- **Presence:** Being verbally and nonverbally engaged during class.
- **Focus:** Avoiding distractions during class (both in person and online).
- **Asking questions** in class and in office hours, as well as via email when appropriate.
- **Specificity:** Referring to specific ideas from readings and prior class discussions when contributing to class discussion and/or in conversations during office hours.

Written Assignments

This chart of grading characteristics, also adapted from Dr. Mark Sample, describes the general rubric I employ when evaluating written work:

GRADE	CHARACTERISTICS
A	Exceptional. The work is focused and its premise is sound. It clearly conveys the stakes of its research question. It coherently integrates direct quotations from the text(s) with explanations and analysis, and offers new insights into the research question. The work demonstrates awareness of the implications and/or limitations of its argument, and it incorporates secondary scholarship when appropriate. The work reflects <i>in-depth</i> engagement with the topic.
B	Satisfactory. The work is reasonably focused and its premise is reasonably sound. It attempts to convey the stakes of its research question, but those stakes are not articulated as clearly as they could be. The work includes direct quotations from the text(s), and secondary scholarship when appropriate, but the accompanying explanations and/or analysis are not developed as fully as they could be. While new insights are offered, they are also not fully developed. The work demonstrates some awareness of the implications and/or limitations. The work reflects <i>moderate</i> engagement with the topic.
C	Underdeveloped. The work is mostly description or summary and/or not very well focused. There is little to no consideration of the stakes of the research question. The work includes little to no direct quotations from the text(s), and underdeveloped explanations and/or analysis. It offers few insights, and it does not consider the implications and/or limitations of the argument. The work reflects <i>passing</i> engagement with the topic.
D	Limited. The work is unfocused or incomplete, and displays <i>no evidence of student engagement</i> with the topic.
F	No Credit. The work is missing or consists of one or two disconnected paragraphs/lines/etc.

Office of Accessibility Services

Office of Accessibility Services works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact OAS. It is the responsibility of the student to register with OAS. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and that disability accommodations are not provided until an accommodation letter has been processed. Students registered with OAS who have a letter outlining their academic accommodations, are strongly encouraged to coordinate a meeting time with your professor that will be best for both to discuss a protocol to implement the

accommodations as needed throughout the semester. This meeting should occur as early in the semester as possible. Students must renew their accommodation letter every semester they attend classes. Contact the Office of Accessibility Services for more information at (404) 727-9877 or accessibility@emory.edu. Additional information is available at the OAS website at <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html>.

Writing Center and ESL Program

Tutors in the Emory Writing Center and the ESL Program are available to support Emory College students as they work on any type of writing assignment, at any stage of the composing process. Tutors can assist with a range of projects, from traditional papers and presentations to websites and other multimedia projects. Writing Center and ESL tutors take a similar approach as they work with students on concerns including idea development, structure, use of sources, grammar, and word choice. They do not proofread for students. Instead, they discuss strategies and resources students can use as they write, revise, and edit their own work. Students who are non-native speakers of English are welcome to visit either the Writing Center tutors or the ESL tutors. All other students in the college should see Writing Center tutors. Learn more and make an appointment by visiting the websites of the ESL Program and the Writing Center. Please review tutoring policies before your visit.

Honor Code

The Honor Code applies to all work submitted for courses in Emory College. Students who violate the Honor Code may be subject to a written mark on their record, failure of the course, suspension, permanent exclusion, or a combination of these and other sanctions. The Honor Code may be reviewed online at: <http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>.

If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me before submitting your assignment.

A Note about COVID

By the time this course begins, it will have been 18 months since the coronavirus pandemic began. I am operating under the assumption that we have all experienced our share of hardships in different ways, and that we are all—again, in different ways and to different degrees--exhausted. My goal is to make this course meaningful and informative, and certainly not to contribute to our collective (and ongoing) difficulties. If you are having trouble related to the course in any way, *please let me know*. By the same token, we will all need to adapt as the situation continues to evolve. I ask for your flexibility and understanding should the format of the course or assignments need to change in response to new or unexpected developments.

Contacting your Professor and TA

Both your professor and your TA can be reached via their Emory email addresses. We respond to email M-F 9am-5pm, and outside of those hours only if our schedules allow. Please allow 24 hours for a response, and 48 hours if your message is sent over the weekend.

Class-by-Class Schedule

Class schedule subject to change.

Please consult Canvas for the most current class schedule.

August 26 – Course Overview

Unit 1: Setting the Table

August 31 – Food and Language

Read: Li-Young Lee, "[Persimmons](#)"

DUE: Video intro

September 2 – Food and Memory

Read: Jessica Harris, "[The Culinary Seasons of my Childhood](#)"; Jhumpa Lahiri, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine," from *The Interpreter of Maladies* (PDF)

September 7 – Food and History

Read: Michael Pollan, "Our National Eating Disorder," from *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (PDF); Michael Twitty, "No More Whistling Walk for Me," from *The Cooking Gene* (PDF); George P. Horse Capture, "Reservation Foods," from *Foods of the Americas* (PDF)

September 9 – Food Across Media

Read: Ruth Reichl, "[The Other Side of the Bridge](#)," from *Comfort Me with Apples*

Watch: Anthony Bourdain, *Parts Unknown*, "[Hanoi](#)" (season 8 ep 1) – focus on last 15 min

Explore TikTok links embedded in: Taylor Lorentz, "[TikTok, the Fastest Way on Earth to Become a Food Star](#)"

Unit 2: What is an Archive?

September 14 – What is "the archive"?

Read: Jacques Derrida, from "Archive Fever" (PDF)

September 16 – What is an archive?

DUE: Food Memoir

[In class: Hercules exercise]

September 21 – Archives and Power

Read: Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "The Power in the Story," from *Silencing the Past* (PDF)

September 23 -- The Archive of Slavery

Read: Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts" (PDF);

Optional: Marisa Fuentes, "Introduction" from *Dispossessed Lives* (PDF)

[In class: Mary Prince, from *A History of Mary Prince* (PDF)]

September 28 – The Archive of Eating

Read: Roland Barthes, “Towards a Psychosociology of Food Consumption” (PDF); James McWilliams, “[Getting to the Guts of American Food](#),” from *A Revolution in Eating*

Unit 3: The Archive and the Recipe

September 30 – The “First” American Cookbook

Read: Amelia Simmons, *American Cookery* (read preface and skim recipes) (PDF)

Optional: Diana Taylor, “Acts of Transfer” (PDF)

October 5 – The “First” Southern Cookbook

Read: Mary Randolph, *The Virginia Housewife* (read preface and intro; skim recipes) (PDF)

Optional: Psyche Williams-Forson, “Taking the Big Piece of Chicken,” from *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs* (PDF)

October 7 – The “First” Black Cookbook

Read: Malinda Russell, *Domestic Cookbook* (read “Short History of the Author” and “Rules and Regulations of the Kitchen” and skim recipes) (PDF)

Optional: Kyla Tompkins, “Consider the Recipe” (PDF)

[FALL BREAK]

Unit 4: The Archive of Taste

October 14 – Theories of Taste

Read: Carolyn Korsmeyer, “Philosophies of Taste,” from *Making Sense of Taste* (PDF); David Hume, “[Of the Standard of Taste](#)”

October 19 – Taste at the Table

Read: James Hemings, “[Inventory of Kitchen Utensils](#),” Thomas Jefferson, “[Agreement with James Hemings](#),” “[Thomas Jefferson to William Evans, 22 February 1801](#),” “[Francis Say to Thomas Jefferson, 23 February 1801](#),” “[William Evans to Thomas Jefferson, 27 February 1801](#),” “[Thomas Jefferson to William Evans, 31 March 1801](#),” “[Thomas Jefferson to William Evans, 1 November 1801](#),” “[William Evans to Thomas Jefferson, 5 November 1801](#),” Virginia Jefferson Randolph Trist, “[Snow Eggs Recipe](#)”

October 21 – Cooking project, part 1

DUE: Cooking project – part 1

[In class: Discussion of cooking project]

October 26 – Taste, Race, and Racism

Read: Thomas Jefferson, “[Query XVIII: Manners](#)” and “[Query XIV: The Administration of Justice and Description of the Laws?](#)”; Phillis Wheatley, “[On Imagination](#)”

October 28 – Transacting in Taste

Watch: High on the Hog, episode 3 (“Our Founding Chefs”)

November 2 – Cooking project, part 2

DUE: Cooking project – part 2

[In class: Paul Jennings, [*A Colored Man’s Reminiscences of James Madison*](#)]

Unit 5: The Limits of Taste

November 4 – Appetite

Read: Benjamin Franklin, from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (PDF)

November 9 – Appetite

Read: Olaudah Equiano, from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (PDF)

November 11 – Sympathy

Read: Harriet Jacobs, [*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*](#), through “The Loophole of Retreat”

November 16 – Sympathy

Read: Jacobs, through end

Coda: Reimagining the Archive

November 18 – Imagination

Read: Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad*, through “Georgia”

Optional: Madhu Dubey, “Speculative Fictions of Slavery” (PDF)

[THANKSGIVING BREAK]

November 30 – Imagination

Read: Whitehead, through “Ethel”

December 2 – Imagination

Read: Whitehead, through end

December 7 – Course wrap-up

December 14 -- Final paper/project due