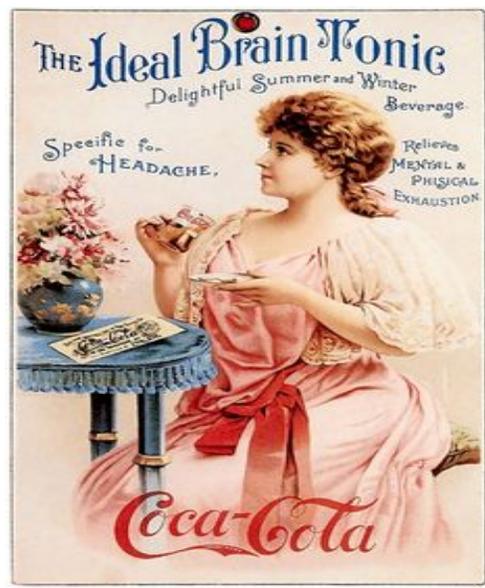


Miracle Foods

Proposed for Fall 2018
Collins Living and Learning Center
Emma McDonell (ekmcdone@indiana.edu)
[Office Hours Location and Times]



Course Description

Kale, chia, quinoa, and now kombucha. It seems that each year a new food gains catches the public's attention for its purported ability to enact some sort of miracle – hype and fanfare commence but soon subside as a new food takes hold of the miracle food slot. In the Inca Empire, quinoa was seen as a food of the gods that when offered in libations would allow communication with the powerful mountain gods. Today, quinoa lines upscale supermarket shelves across the world, marketed as a “superfood” with curative powers. In the late 1800s, an entire industry developed around the sale of cure-alls such as graham crackers, garlic powder, and snake oil. The pervasive fraudulent claims led to the creation of the US 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act which eventually led to the creation of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) which plays a central role in regulating both the food and pharmaceutical industries in the US to this day. These are just a couple of the phenomena this course will critically examine in its investigation of “miracle foods” in their varied manifestations across diverse historical and geographic contexts. We will focus on miracle foods in order to explore a range of broader issues including global food commodity chains, consumer ethics, the role(s) of diet in human evolution, gender politics, and global health disparities. While the course takes an anthropological approach, integrating socio-cultural aspects of miracle foods with biological anthropology research on human dietary evolution and the archaeology of “miracle foods” in past human societies, our readings and conversations will cross disciplinary boundaries to incorporate insights and key debates from geography, nutrition science, sociology, consumer psychology, communications, and marketing as we attempt to understand this complex and interdisciplinary

story. Broadly, the class uses food, and specifically, miracle foods as an avenue to explore a diverse range of scholarly issues.

This course operates from the conviction that food, as an entity simultaneously intimate and geopolitical, local and global, material and symbolic, natural and cultural, and collective and personal provides an exceptional site to explore complex and challenging topics while linking them to our daily lives. For instance, we will explore the rise of milk as a supposed miracle food in the 19th century to examine issues of race and class. By investigating the impact that superfood (which we will distinguish from miracle foods) trends, have on farmers we will explore the complexities of global commodity chains and ethics in producer-consumer relationships. In our exploration of the roles sacred foodstuffs played in ancient civilizations we will consider how ideas about the supernatural powers of food may not have been so different in these radically different societies than it is in ours today.

Course Objectives

While topically guided, this course also seeks to impart a number of practical and academic skills upon students that will serve them in the remainder of their undergraduate careers and post-university endeavors. We will focus on the following skills and practices:

1. *Oral communication skills.* Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively in a seminar environment while respecting different opinions. Further, students will be able to present on a defined topic to a classroom of peers and guide a class discussion with a peer on this topic. The course's reliance on inclusive discussions and emphasis on respect between students will allow students to develop this important skill over the course of the semester. The two assigned partner topic presentations, weekly class discussions with required participation, and final paper presentation are the primary means of achieving this objective.
2. *Academic research paper practices.* Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to research and write an academic research paper that integrates ideas from the course as well as their own original research. Through a multi-stage research paper, students will be guided through this process.
3. *Research and citation skills.* Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to differentiate primary, secondary, and academic sources and use IU Library's tools to find digital and non-digital sources while documenting their findings with proper citation practices. We will work on this both in class and through the multi-stage research paper.
4. *Critical inquiry and analysis skills.* Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to critically analyze advertisements using semiotic analysis and determine the primary symbols, references, as well as the explicit and implicit meanings in an ad.
5. *Writing skills.* Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to write in a clear prose up to academic standards. Through peer editing, habitual writing practice in the form of reading responses, and occasional in-class writing activities based on class readings we will work on developing students' capacities for clear, effective writing. We will also use the Food Review assignment to experiment with voice and creativity in writing.
6. *Knowledge of global issues, processes, trends, and systems.* In this course students will gain a complex understanding of a variety of global issues, processes, trends, and systems through following superfoods through global food networks of production, trade, and consumption. Issues of capital political economy, economic and nutritional inequality,

shifts in consumer food trends and their impact on food producers are all issues that students will critically investigate and learn about in this course.

Readings

This class has no required texts. All readings will be available through the online Canvas system. Readings can be found in a folder in the *Files* section of the course site labeled *Readings*. You will be expected to have read the assigned texts before class for the day they are listed and be prepared to talk about them in class. So if a reading is assigned for Tuesday, it needs to be read *before* class on Tuesday, when we will be working with the text.

Assignments and Grading

The course integrates a wide variety of assignments and class activities in order to develop a broad skillset that will serve students throughout their undergraduate career and beyond the university: informal reflective assignments like reading responses aim to cultivate writing and analytical skills through habitual practice without the pressures of formality and stringent evaluation, creative writing in the form of the Food Review will push students to develop their writing voice and consider how to write to different audiences, critical analysis in the form of the Advertisement Analysis challenges students to apply analytical techniques and theories we learn in class to analyze the food media they encounter in their daily lives, presenting on the week's assigned topic will hone public speaking, oral communication, and leadership skills, and finally, the multi-stage Research Paper will develop the skills and habits needed to manage a large class project including the capacity to manage time, set milestones, and request feedback from peers along with the formalities of university-caliber research papers such as proper citation format, argumentation, research paper organization, and library research skills.

Grading

The final grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Advertisement Analysis | 15% |
| 2. Food Review | 10% |
| 3. Final Research Paper | 40% |
| a. Prospectus (5%) | |
| b. Detailed Outline (5%) | |
| c. Annotated Bibliography (5%) | |
| d. Rough Draft (5%) | |
| e. Presentation and Final Draft (20%) | |
| 4. Reading Responses | 15% (5 times for 3% each) |
| 5. Present on Week's Topic | 10% (5% each) |
| 6. Participation | 10% |

All assignments should be turned in in the Canvas system by 8pm the day they are due. Late assignments will be penalized by 10% for each 24 hours after the due date.

The final course grade uses the standard IU breakdown:

Grade	Minimum
A+	97.0

A	93.0
A-	90.0
B+	87.0
B	83.0
B-	80.0
C+	77.0
C	73.0
C-	70.0
D+	67.0
D	63.0
D-	60.0
F	0.0

All assignments must follow the Chicago Manual of Style Guidelines and be in double-spaced Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins. The reading responses can be written directly into the Canvas system, which has its own interface and so these style guidelines do not apply to the reading responses. During the citation practices and library presentation we will go over Chicago Style citation format in detail. More information on citation styles here:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Participation and Technology Policy

Because this class is discussion-based, attendance is mandatory. Each student has **3 unexcused absences** per semester, after which **your final grade will drop by 2% for each missed class**. I take attendance every class session. Attendance is required and I will allow 1 unexcused absence. No classes can be made up. If you are more than 10 minutes late, you are counted absent.

Attendance in class does not suffice as full participation. You will be expected to contribute thoughtful remarks and/or provoking questions that show that you have read and thought about the readings or other assignments (e.g. films, websites). You will be expected to be professional in class: eating, texting, sleeping, counting Pokémon points, checking emails, and other similar behavior will reduce from your participation score. If your attention is elsewhere or if you are disruptive, you will be asked to leave and you will not receive participation points for the day.

The use of laptops is a privilege – laptops are to be used for note-taking only. If I see you doing anything besides taking notes for class, you lose this privilege. Cellphones are prohibited during class and should remain inside of your backpack or bag at all times. This will be strictly enforced. Every time I see you using your laptop or cell phone inappropriately you will lose 1% off your final grade for EACH instance.

	<i>Preparedness</i>	<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Listening</i>
<i>Excellent (A)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Always comes to class prepared</i> <i>Always attends class and arrives promptly</i> <i>Always demonstrates careful preparation of readings</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Makes thoughtful contributions more than once per class session</i> <i>Allows others to speak during lively discussions to which she/he has already contributed</i> <i>Often cites specific ideas or quotations from the reading to back up point</i> <i>Often attends office hours or</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Always listens attentively to classmates and shows full respect for differing ideas</i> <i>Body language shows uninterrupted engagement with class discussion</i>

		spoken with the professor outside class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never interrupts classmates
<i>Good (B)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always comes to class prepared with few exceptions Always attends class and arrives promptly with few exceptions Always demonstrates careful preparation of readings with few exceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes thoughtful contributions once per class session Allows others to speak during lively discussions to which she/he has already contributed Sometimes cites specific ideas or quotations from the reading to back up point Has attended office hours or spoken with the professor outside class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listens attentively to classmates and shows full respect for differing ideas with very few exceptions Body language shows sustained engagement with class discussion Never or very rarely interrupts classmates
<i>Fair (C)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always comes to class prepared Always attends class and arrives promptly Always demonstrates careful preparation of readings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes thoughtful contributions more than once per class session Allows others to speak during lively discussions to which she/he has already contributed; Often cites specific ideas or quotations from the reading to back up point <p>Regularly participates in class discussions via thoughtful or insightful email messages or conversations with the professor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listens attentively to classmates and shows full respect for differing ideas Body language shows uninterrupted engagement with class discussion Never interrupts classmates
<i>Unacceptable (D)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always comes to class prepared Always attends class and arrives promptly Always demonstrates careful preparation of readings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes thoughtful contributions more than once per class session Allows others to speak during lively discussions to which she/he has already contributed; Often cites specific ideas or quotations from the reading to back up point <p>Regularly participates in class discussions via thoughtful or insightful email messages or conversations with the professor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listens attentively to classmates and shows full respect for differing ideas Body language shows uninterrupted engagement with class discussion Never interrupts classmates

Assignments

1. Reading Responses (due Sundays at 8pm)

You will be required to write **5** reading responses over the course of the semester that should be between 150 and 250 words, excluding the questions. I will post a prompt a week ahead of time. Responses should respond to the prompt using the week's readings and can also draw on other supplementary sources to strengthen your argument. Each reading response must conclude with **2** thoughtful discussion questions. It's up to you which weeks you write responses but please keep in mind that there are no make-ups and which weeks we have other assignments due. I highly recommend not slacking the first five weeks and finding yourself with reading responses for the rest of the semester!

2. Present on the Week's Topic

Over the course of the semester, you will need to present on the topic assigned for the week **twice**. Your job is to present at the beginning of class for 8-10 minutes with a partner about the assigned readings and the topics more generally. You will need to have **2 Powerpoint slides** summarizing the issues and debates brought up in the readings, and a final slide with your discussion questions. On the first day of class we will sign up for presentation days by drawing out of a hat and I will post the schedule to Canvas.

3. Food Review (due week 3, date TBD)

Did you know people now regularly review new Oreo flavors [each time Nabisco introduces one](#)? For this assignment, you will review a miracle food of your choosing (Chia? Soylent? Kañiwa? Wheatgrass? Muscle Milk? Examples abound – try something new!). In class, we will go over examples and discuss the emergent phenomenon of the “food review” in terms of relationships between consumerism and novelty and the changing ways people come to know and learn about food. The review should describe the product in detail (think packaging, taste, smell, nutritional content), the claims made about it (it's ‘miracle’ capacity, intended use), your experience with it, and a short analysis of the product. Consider your audience as you write and vary your tone and content accordingly. The review should be 600-700 words and in class you will be expected to very briefly tell the class about the food you reviewed and your experience reviewing it. This assignment is intended to be fun and creative – sarcasm and exaggeration are permitted (even encouraged...sadly, no extra credit points). Some helpful examples and inspiration:

- a. <http://www.popsugar.com/Food-Reviews>
- b. <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/food-products/>
- c. <http://www.supermarketguru.com/reviews/>
- d. <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/health/food-and-drink-product-reviews-and-ratings/index.htm>

4. Advertisement Analysis (due end of week 7, date TBD)

In this class, we will be thinking a lot about how it is that foods come to be *constructed* as miracle foods. In regards to foods peddled as superfoods, a particular kind of miracle food, advertising plays a central role in this process. For this assignment, you will be asked to find a superfood advertisement (think magazines, television, YouTube, your Facebook feed) and analyze it using the semiotic approach we will learn in class. Explain what argument the advertisement makes, who it is aimed at, what kinds of anxieties and desires it plays into. How does the ad make meaning? What are the denotations? The connotations? Does the ad use metaphor? What paradigms does the ad invoke and create? How do the patterns of signification in the ad articulate social codes about things such as power, race, class, gender, respect, or authority? Remember that semiotics is a way to explain *how* things mean, not *what* they mean. Don't just provide a laundry list of things you notice about the ad. Use the terminology and principles from semiotics. I will provide an assignment sheet with more details two weeks before the assignment is due, but the final assignment should be 700-900 words.

5. Research paper

The most involved assignment for the course is an 8-10-page research paper focusing on a miracle food of your choice – a contemporary miracle food (e.g. Kale, Raw milk, Moringa, “Macrobiotics” or Soylent) or historical miracle food (e.g. Coca-Cola, Campbell’s soup, or SlimFast). I suggest that the paper investigate how your miracle food of choice came to be constructed as a miracle food: What “problem” did your miracle food purport to solve? What actors played key roles in constructing it as such? What arguments were used to assert its miraculous nature? What role did marketing play? How did the miracle food change with its popularity? Does it remain a miracle food? If not, what happened? However, I will be happy to support specialized topics with your original research questions about miracle foods. Additionally, think about failed miracle foods too – considering why a food never caught the public’s attention is just as important and interesting as analyzing why a food did achieve miracle food status. Because this is an involved and time-consuming assignment, I’ve broken up the task with a few milestones to keep you on task.

a. Research Prospectus (due week 6, date TBD)

The Research Prospectus is a 400-word document explaining the plan for your Research Paper. The prospectus should include the topic of choice (i.e. the miracle food) and what makes it a miracle food, your research questions, hypotheses about the answers to your research questions, and your research plan (e.g. which books, articles, and primary sources you will consult). You will need to include at least 4 sources in this initial prospectus, in Chicago citation style. We will talk in class in detail about the expectations for the Prospectus and Research paper and an assignment handout with specific details will be posted during the third week of the semester. Critically, *everyone* will need to talk to me in office hours about their topic prior to the Prospectus deadline. Slots will fill up, and so sign up in advance for your office hours slot on the Canvas site under *Forums* → *Office Hours sign-ups*.

b. Annotated Bibliography (due week 8)

At the end of week 8 you will need to complete an annotated bibliography. We will discuss in class the conventions and utility of an annotated bibliography and meet in the library to go over library resources and research paper strategy with a librarian. The annotated bibliography must include a minimum of 6 **scholarly** sources. Each source will include a summary (6-9 sentences) of the source using the following format:

- a. *Description*: provide a brief summary of the book, book chapter, or article – only summarizing the part relevant to your research. (2-3 sentences)
- b. *Evaluation*: now, assess and or critique the source. Does it seem like a reliable and current source? Why? Is the evidence well documented? Is the method fitting for the research question? Is the author qualified in this subject? Are there inconsistencies in the argument? What does the author leave out or ignore? What does their approach help us see and what does it obscure? (2-3 sentences)

c. *Utility in your research paper:* finally, consider how the source contributes to your argument and research paper's scope. How does it fit into your research? Is this a helpful resource? Is it too general or specific? (2-3 sentences)

c. Detailed Outline (due week 10, date TBD)

This assignment is a detailed outline out your final paper that should include the topic and argument of each paragraph, the evidence you draw upon, as well as a works cited page with at least 8 sources. If you are struggling with organizing your essay, please come talk with me in office hours, the sooner the better. I will be able to give some preliminary feedback, but I suggest talking about your ideas and strategy for organizing your essay with classmates and friends.

d. Rough Draft (due week 12, date TBD)

A rough draft of your paper that is at least 6 pages will be due two weeks prior to the final deadline. I will offer some feedback on this, but not grammatical editing. The final draft needs to be free of grammatical errors. In class, we will have time for group editing in which at least two classmates will read your paper in a detailed fashion paying attention to dotting the i's and crossing the t's, so to speak. I suggest you do this outside of class with friends as well.

e. Final Research Paper (due week 15, date TBD)

The final paper must be between 8 and 10 double-spaced pages (Times New Roman, 12pt font, 1 inch margins). You will need to use at least 9 *academic* sources which should be documented properly in Chicago citation format in your references page.

f. Research Paper Presentation (presentations take place during week 15 and finals week)

You will present about your research project during our final class period. I encourage you to use either Powerpoint or Prezi to keep your presentation focused. We will need to be very efficient and every person will have 10 minutes for their presentation with 2 minutes for questions. Depending on class enrollment I will adjust final presentation times. Please respect your classmates by only using your allotted time. You are encouraged, but not required, to bring a dish etc. containing the miracle food you researched.

Extra Credit

There are three ways to get extra credit, by sharing a current issues with the class, by engaging with the Writing Tutorial Services (WTS), and by attending the field trip. 6 total points of extra credit are possible.

1. *Current issues* – Read a current newspaper or magazine article related to class content and give a brief and thoughtful synopsis to the class. In addition to summarizing the article you need to clearly articulate how it relates to issues we have covered in class and the broader questions it presents. This is worth 2 points and may be repeated for a total of 4 possible points.
2. *Visit Writing Tutorial Services (WTS)* – Bring your final paper assignment to writing tutorial services and get this meeting signed off for proof. You may do this at different stages during the writing process (e.g. before the rough draft is due and again before the

final draft). This is worth 2 points each time and may be repeated twice for a total of 6 possible points.

3. *Attend field trip* – Attending the fieldtrip to Fair Oaks Farms is worth 2 points of extra credit.

Fieldtrip

On [date TBD], there will be an optional fieldtrip to [Fair Oaks Farm](#), an industrial dairy near Indianapolis that has partnered with Coca Cola to produce a “super milk” called [FairLife milk](#). We will tour the dairy and talk with staff about the multi-year process of developing this super milk. We will have a picnic and spend the afternoon analyzing this super milk in relation to class concepts such as the commodity fetish and the marketing of superfoods. See extra credit details below.

Concluding Thoughts

Disclaimer: I do not know everything and do not hold the authority on truth. This class works best if we can all openly express our thoughts and opinions, and do not always look to me for “the” answer. In order for this to work we all need to commit to listening openly and courteously to our peers and recognizing that everyone’s truth is slightly different and that we can learn something (many things surely!) from each and every person. Since we will have numerous viewpoints in class, remember to always be respectful and understanding of different beliefs and positions – being open-minded and respectful will foster a successful classroom.

My job is to help you succeed in this course and learn the material. If you are ever struggling with something at any point in time, please come talk to me outside of class. See me during my office hours and if those times do not fit with your schedule, email me and we will set a separate appointment. Feel free to ask me any questions related to the assignments or readings. Do not wait until it is too late and your grade suffers!

The best way to reach me is by e-mail. I will not respond to emails if the answer is to be found in any materials I have already given to you (syllabus, class announcements, Canvas, etc.). Please respect that I try to have a life outside this class and one way I do this is by only using email between 9am and 5pm. So emails sent at 9pm will not be answered until the next morning. If you are going to come to office hours, please try to use the sign-up sheet on Canvas. Students that have signed up will receive priority but if you forgot or at the last minute decide to come to office hours I will do my best to fit you in.

Academic Misconduct & Plagiarism

Academic misconduct is a serious issue. The Indiana University Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct defines academic misconduct as “any activity that tends to undermine the academic integrity of the institution... Academic misconduct may involve human, hard-copy, or electronic resources... The faculty member must report all cases of academic misconduct to the dean of students, or appropriate official. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, interference, violation of course rules, and facilitating academic dishonesty, among others.”

(<http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.shtml>) Please read the definition of plagiarism at <https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/definition.html>. Remember, academic misconduct can lead to expulsion. Please read the Indiana University Policy on Plagiarism at <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>. I will use “Turn It In” for **all** your

assignments, an extremely powerful program that scans for plagiarized text and has led to countless plagiarism cases here at IU. Plagiarized work will automatically receive an F on the assignment. Depending on the gravity of the circumstance, you may fail the entire course and be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs. **Plagiarism is a very serious offense and it will be treated as such.** If you have any questions on what plagiarism is, please contact me as soon as possible after reading the above links.

Students with Special Needs

If you are a student with special needs related to a learning disability, a physical impairment, or any other circumstances, please contact the Office of Disability Services for Students. Their website is <http://studentaffairs.iub.edu/dss/>. Please do this as soon as possible so you can establish your eligibility and we can make the proper arrangements and modifications. The DSS Office has great resources to make arrangements available for note-takers, test accommodations, and learning strategies. If needed, please do not hesitate to contact CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services). For questions or to make an appointment, call 812-855-5711.

Course Calendar

The course calendar and readings are subject to change with fair notice given

Part I: The Enduring Allure of the Miracle Food

Week 1 - Course Introduction and Framing “the Miracle Food”

This week will serve as an introduction to the plan, expectations, and guiding questions of the course while sketching out a preliminary framework for thinking about the diverse manifestations of miracle foods. What is a miracle food? How have miracle foods materialized in different ways across time and space? How can thinking about miracle foods help us understand about relations between culture, food, and power? We will also take care of some class business such as carefully reading over the syllabus and clarifying any confusion, signing up for topic presentations, reviewing class expectation and rules, and going through the course Canvas site as a group.

Readings (51 pages):

- Syllabus (*we will go over this in class but I recommend reading it over again at home and getting all important dates into your calendar*)
- Jarvis, William T. “Food Faddism, Cultism, and Quackery.” *Annual Reviews of Nutrition* 3 (1983): 35-52.
- Chen, Nancy. “Healing Foods and Longevity.” In *Food, Medicine, and the Quest for Good Health: Nutrition, Medicine, and Culture*. Columbia University Press, 2007. 4-38.

In class:

- Go over syllabus and course expectations.
- Sign up for Topic Presentations.
- Introduce the guiding questions of the class.
- Discuss readings.

Week 2 - Graham Crackers and Snake Oil: the Cure-All in the Western Imagination

This week we examine the rise of a specific kind of miracle food, the cure-all, in the 19th century Western imagination. Exploring the authoritative claims about the curative powers of whole grains, garlic, snake oil circulating at the time as well as the industry that arose around them, we consider how anxiety about the massive social changes occurring at the time resulted in anxiety about food and the body. We critically analyze the idea of the cure-all, thinking about miracle foods as not simply objectively “out there” waiting to be found but as discursive constructions created by the work of diverse actors. This framework serves as a foundation for how we will think about miracle foods in the remainder of the course.

Readings (39 pages)

- Belasco, Warren. “Food, Morality and Social Reform.” In *Morality and Health*, edited by Allan M. Brandt and Paul Rozin. New York: Routledge, 2010. 185-201.
- Anderson, Ann. “Street Corners and Big Tents.” In *Morality and Health*. “Origins and Influences.” In *Snake Oil, Hustlers and Hambones: The American Medicine Show*. New York: McFarland, 2000. 103-126.

In Class

- Historical advertisement activity.
- Introduce Food Review assignment.
- Discuss readings.

Week 3 - Superfoods: the “Modern” Miracle Food?

This week we consider the phenomenon of the contemporary miracle food in Western capitalist society. Looking at examples such as acai berries, quinoa, and Soylent, we consider the constant cycles of new miracle foods and relate this to the connect of the “commodity fetish.” Why are does there seem to be an endless cycle of new superfoods (a certain kind of miracle food)? How does marketing strategy figure into contemporary miracle foods? How does the miracle food manifest in the specific context of late capitalism and how can thinking about “commodity fetishes” help us understand this dynamic? How would you define the superfood concept?

Readings (44 pages):

- Chen, Nancy. “Nutraceuticals and Functional Foods” In N. Chen *Food, Medicine, and the Quest for Good Health: Nutrition, Medicine, and Culture*, 58-66. Columbia University Press, 2009.
- [Part 1] Taussig, Michael. *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*, 4-40. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

In class:

- [Pending guest lecture on Soylent and discourses of health and technification: Christopher Miles]
- Miracle foods timeline activity.
- Discuss readings.

Assignments:

- **Food Review assignment due.**

Week 4 - Nutritionism: Situating the Contemporary Miracle Food in Diet Discourse

This week we situate the contemporary miracle food within the discourse of “nutritionism.” We explore the rise of the ideology of nutritionism and how it affects the ways we understand the foods we eat and how we should go about deciding what we feed ourselves and others. What is

nutritionism and how does it differ from other ways of thinking about the relationship between humans and food? How superfoods fit within and diverge from a nutritionism ideology?

Readings (55 pages):

- Du Puis, Melanie. 2007. "Angels and vegetables: A brief history of food advice in America" *Gastronomica* 7, no. 3 (2007): 34-44.
- Scrinis, Gyorgy. 2008. "On the Ideology of Nutritionism." *Gastronomica* 8 no. 1: 39-48.
- Chen, Nancy. "Healing Foods and Longevity" In N. Chen *Food, Medicine, and the Quest for Good Health: Nutrition, Medicine, and Culture*, 21-43. Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Scrinis, Gyorgy. "Nutritionism and Functional Foods" In Kaplan, David M. *The Philosophy of Food*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. 269-287.
- Listen: Gastropod Podcast, [V is for Vitamin](#)

In class:

- Introduce Advertising Analysis assignment.
- Calorie counting activity.
- Discuss readings.

Week 5 - Semiotics, Desire, and the Body: Marketing the Miracle Food

This week we read Roland Barthes who uses fashion to show us how signs work and how miracle foods are symbolically produced in consumer society. Learning concepts such as connotation, denotation, and myth we collectively analyze a miracle foods advertisement in class and discuss issues of desire and the body in miracle foods marketing. How does a thinking about fashion shift how we see miracle foods? What does thinking about miracle foods through a "semiotic" lens reveal about desire and the body? What is "consumer society" and how does the role of food change in a consumer society?

Readings (45 pages):

- Barthes, Roland. "Introduction" *The Fashion System*. London: Cape, [1967] 1985. 1-33.
- Siró, István. "Functional food. Product development, marketing and consumer acceptance— A review" *Appetite* 51, no.3 (2008): 456-467.
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In class:

- Miracle foods print ads and YouTube ads activity.
- Introduce Advertisement Analysis assignment and discuss expectations.
- Discuss readings.

Assignments:

- *Advertising Analysis due.*

Part II: Deconstructing Race, Class and Gender in Miracle Foods

Week 6 – Cleanses, Morality, and Purity Politics

This week we read from Mary's Douglas's seminal text, *Purity and Danger*, in which she argues that all modern cultures have concepts of what is pure and impure, clean and taboo and examines the ways these notions of purity are creating and change. Applying this to the contemporary 'cleansing craze' we investigate what the popularity of miracle cleanses can reveal about American

ideas about clean/taboo and pure/impure. Expanding beyond cleanses we apply these questions to the broader phenomena of “clean eating” and interrogate links between food, the body, and morality. Linking up with our week on class – how are calls for better dietary practices among lower classes infused with moral and class ideas? How do notions of clean/dirty vary across cultures and what does Douglas argue explains this variation? How does this idea come into play in dietary cleanses and clean eating discourse? Are discussions about what to eat always implicitly moral?

Readings (55 pages):

- [Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2] Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger* New York: Routledge.
- [Introduction] DuPuis, Melanie. *Dangerous Digestion: The Politics of American Dietary Advice*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tandoh, Ruby. “[The Unhealthy Truth Behind ‘Wellness’ and ‘Clean Eating’](#)”, *Vice* May 13, 2016.

In class:

- Peer editing.
- Discuss readings.

Week 7 - Miracle Foods and Social Class

This week we explore the links between miracle foods and class distinction. We read Bourdieu’s theoretical treatise on the ways taste and class hierarchies intersect, and then apply it in class to contemporary discourses about food and health. What is Bourdieu’s main point about taste? Is there a link between health food consumption and class identity? Are superfoods in particular implicated in this dynamic and how is this related to fashion cycles?

Readings (60 pages):

- [pp.1-60] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. New York: Routledge, 1984.

In class:

- Discuss readings.

Assignments:

- Bring in 2-3 questions and/or clarifications from the Bourdieu chapter. This is a very dense, theoretical reading and we will go over the argument in detail in class guided by these points of confusion.

Week 8 - Jell-O, Domesticity, and Gender Politics

This week we explore convenience foods and labor-saving foodstuffs through the lens of miracle foods to address broader issues of gender, labor, and domesticity. In the mid-20th century, a number of foods from jell-o to “TV dinners” were introduced to American homes explicitly marketed for their labor-saving qualities. As women many transitioned into jobs in the formal economy, a growing demand for products that would ease the burden of cooking emerged. How can processed foods be linked to shifts in gender roles? In what ways was the “modern woman” reimagined in advertisements for these new food products and what can this help us see about the fluidity of gender ideals and their relationship to economics? Is gender implicated in the current backlash against processed food?

Readings (61 pages):

- Burke Odland, S. “Unassailable Motherhood, Ambivalent Domesticity: The Construction of Maternal Identity in Ladies’ Home Journal in 1946” *The Journal of communication Inquiry*. 34 no.1 (2010): 61-84.
- Lesbesco, Kathleen. “There’s Always Room for Resistance: Jell-O, Class, and Social Class” In *Cooking Lessons: The Politics of Gender and Food*, edited by Sherrie A. Inness. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield), 2001. 129-49.
- Newton, SE. “The Jell-O Syndrome: Investigating Popular Culture/Foodways” *Western Folklore* 51, no.3/4 (1992): 249-267.
- Listen: *Foodstuff* Podcast, [Aspirational Aspics](#)

In class:

- Discuss readings.
- Discussion of research paper formalities with examples.

Assignments:

- **Annotated bibliography due.**

Week 9 - Nature’s Perfect Food: milk and race in 19th century United States

This week, we build on last week’s focus on the rise of the cure-all late 19th century United States by focusing on how in this context a particular food, milk, transformed from a peasant food consumed out of necessity to a core part of the urban North American diet seen as vital to mental and physical development. We examine how ideas about the “purity” of milk fed into discourses about racial purity and the ways urbanization changed the way people eat. More broadly, we will discuss how issues of race and class discrimination intersect with food. What does the rise of milk tell us about relations between race and food? What can thinking through the biological and cultural dimensions of milk together reveal about food politics invisible when we consider these dimensions of food separately?

Readings (50 pages):

- Dupuis, Melanie. “Why Milk?” In *Natures Perfect Food*. New York: New York University Press, 2002. 3-16.
- “The Perfect Food Story.” In *Natures Perfect Food*. New York: New York University Press, 2002. 17-45.
- [Introduction] Wiley, Andrea. *Re-imagining Milk*. New York: Routledge.

In class:

- Discuss readings.
- Connecting with DuPuis’s historical analysis and Wiley’s cultural biological analysis will examine a series of audio-visual for milk in the US and India and consider how milks miracle properties intersect with ideas about race and class in different contexts today and the ways milk’s healthful properties are left unproblematized.
- Read and discuss: “[The Controversy over Infant Formula.](#)”
- Lilly Library recipe search activity.
- Coordinate fieldtrip rides and plan.

Other:

- Field trip to Coca Cola Dairy in Indianapolis (**optional**)
(<http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2014/12/25/372664332/inside-the-indiana-megadairy-making-coca-colas-new-milk>)

Part III: Situating Miracle Foods Global Webs of Relations

Week 10 - Cultural Appropriation and Native American Miracle Foods

This week we turn to the appropriation of non-Western foods into Western diets, questioning categories of Western/non-Western while considering the ways power dynamics influence debates over appropriation. When is it okay to eat the food of another culture and when is it problematic? Who gets to lay claim on particular foods? Why is the figure of “the Indian” (and other kinds of “Others” so common in miracle foods marketing?

Readings (56 pages):

- Buhner, Stephen H. “The Sacred and the Earth” In *Sacred Plant Medicine: The Wisdom in Native American Herbalism*. Rochester, VT: Bear & Co., 2010. 1-15.
- Aldred, Lisa. “Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality.” *American Indian Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (2000): 329–52.
- bell hooks. “Eating the other: Desire and resistance.” In *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992. 21–39.

In class:

- Analyze “indigenous foods” product labels.
- Discuss any outstanding challenges or confusion regarding the Research Paper.
- Discuss readings.

Assignments:

- **Research Paper Outline due.**

Week 11 - Miracle Foods in Past Societies: Chocolate and Quinoa

While in the previous weeks we’ve discussed the miracle food was a late 19th century phenomenon unique to the growth of industrial capitalism, industrialization, and European colonialism, the curative and supernatural powers of ingesting particular foods and substances takes place across space and time in diverse societies. Drawing on archaeological research on corn, quinoa, and rice, we consider different cosmologies and practices related to foods with curative and preternatural powers and expand our notion of the miracle food beyond its manifestation in Western capitalist society. Further, we consider prescriptions on the consumptions of these foods that limited their access to certain sectors of society to consider issues of power and distinction in miracle foods.

Readings (30 pages):

- Hastorf, Christine A. “Andean luxury foods: special food for the ancestors, deities and the élite.” *Antiquity* 77, no. 297 (2003): 545-554.
- Dillinger, Teresa L., Patricia Barriga, Sylvia Escárcega, Martha Jimenez, Diana Salazar Lowe, and Louis E. Grivetti. "Food of the gods: cure for humanity? A cultural history of the medicinal and ritual use of chocolate." *The Journal of nutrition* 130, no. 8 (2000).

In class:

- [Pending guest lecture on chocolate: Dr. Anya Royce]
- Food Timeline Activity (<http://www.foodtimeline.org>)
- Citation practices and library resources presentation.
- Citation practices and library resources scavenger hunt.
- Discuss readings.

Week 12 - Producing Miracle Foods: Booms, Busts, and Commodity Chains

This week we link the consumption of miracle foods to their material production, examining the effects of these consumer trends on agricultural producers. Does the fashion cycle of miracle foods necessarily create a pattern of boom-bust markets? What are some ways miracle food trends affect farmers? What can studying miracle food markets reveal to us about global commodity chains more broadly?

Readings (39 pages):

- Romero, Simon. “[Quinoa’s Global Success Creates Quandary at Home](#).” *New York Times*, March 19, 2011.
- Brondizio, Eduardo S. “From Staple to Fashion Food: Shifting Cycles and Shifting Opportunities in the Development of the Acai Palm Fruit Economy in the Amazon Estuary.” In *Working Forest in the Neotropics*, edited by D.J. Zarin, J.R.R. Alavalapati, F.E. Putz, and M. Schmink. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. 339-365
- Van Esterik, Penny. “From Hunger Foods to Heritage Foods: Challenges to Food Localization in LAO PDR.” In *Fast Food/Stow Food: The Cultural Economy of the Global Food System*, edited by Richard Wilk and Melissa Caldwell. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2006. 83-94.

In class:

- Commodity chain modeling activity using MIT Observatory of Economic Activity platform.
- Discuss any outstanding challenges or confusion regarding the Research Paper assignment.
- Peer editing in groups.
- Discuss readings.

In class:

- ***Research Paper Rough Draft due.***

Week 13 - Bioprospecting, Colonialism, and Superfoods

This week links our discussions of miracle foods in “the West” and other societies through considering colonialism and early cultural, economic, and political relationships between different cultures. We examine how issues of ownership, intellectual property, and colonialism intervene in miracle foods both historically and in the present moment. How has colonialism enabled the emergence of new miracle foods and how has exoticizing these foods feed into beliefs about their preternatural qualities? Is it ethical to hunt for and commercialize new miracle foods from around the world? What legal restrictions exist to regulate this practice? What is “benefit sharing” and does it resolve issues of injustice and inequality in the procuring of miracle foods?

Readings (52 pages):

- [Chapter 1] Schiebinger, L. 2004. *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- [Introduction] Hayden, Cori. 2003. *When Nature Goes Public: The Making and Unmaking of Bioprospecting in Mexico*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

In class:

- Discuss readings.

Week 14 - Development and Miracle Foods: “Curing” Hunger with Miracle Foods

This week we consider how miracle food narratives figure into global economic development debates. Using examples of quinoa and golden rice, we critically analyze the concept of development and the “curative metaphors” employed in development miracle food discussions. How do miracle foods enter into development practice and discourse? Who do narratives about development miracle foods benefit? What sort of issues and complexities does a curative metaphor elide in development politics? We will also learn about library resources and citation practices this week, meeting in the library with a librarian.

Readings (32 pages):

- McDonnell, Emma. 2015. “Miracle Foods: Quinoa, Curative Metaphors, and the Depoliticization of Global Hunger Politics.” *Gastronomica* 15 no.4: 70–85.
- Kimura, Aya Hirata. “Uncovering Hidden Hunger.” In *Hidden Hunger: Gender and the Politics of Smarter Foods*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013. 1-17.

In class:

- Discuss readings.
- Rough draft peer reviews.

Week 15 - Final Thoughts and Review

This week we wrap up the course by discussing recent ideas about human diet that move away from single food solutions and instead focus on lifestyle changes. How does the work of Michael Pollan and Barbara Kingsolver resist and at the same time reproduce different aspects of nutritionism and magic bullet diet solutions? We then summarize the key concepts of the course and address our outstanding questions and new curiosities. Finally, we will begin student presentations on the second class day of the week.

Readings (64 short pages):

- [Part 1] Pollan, Michael. *Food Rules* New York: Penguin, 2009.
- [“Called Home,” “Waiting for Asparagus”] Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. New York: Harper, 2007.

In class:

- Concluding thoughts and summary discussion.
- **Begin Research Paper presentations.**
- Course evaluations.
- Potluck!

Assignments:

- **Final Research Paper due *Sunday at 8pm***

Finals Week - Final Paper Presentations

In class:

- **Finish Research Paper presentations.**
- Potluck!