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WS 400 Food, Body and Women: Analysis of Biopolitics  
Spring 2015  
TR 1:30-2:45  
Kuykendall 213

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Office hours: by appointment

### Course description

This course examines social relationships surrounding the production, distribution, preparation, and consumption of food. It explores social, economic, political, and cultural roles of what we eat and our bodies from the feminist perspectives. The first section brings feminist theories on body and biopower. We will examine ideas of being thin, being fit, and “too fat” in contemporary discourses. The second section takes a commodity analysis approach- we will use tomatoes, bananas, chicken, McDonald’s hamburgers and taro to examine race, class and gender politics behind it. Third section examines what is often called alternative agrofood initiatives- from local food, organic food to fair trade food. Final section examines the global food politics, specifically issues surrounding food aid and its relationship to global political economy, geopolitics, and scientism. Readings will include essays and books from diverse disciplines, from history, sociology, anthropology, political science, geography, political ecology, and women’s studies.

### Prerequisites

Pre: 151 or three credits of upper division WS courses

Grading will be based on the following assignments.

1. Midterm exam: 30%
2. Final exam: 35%
3. Making “cheat sheets”: 5% Summarize readings on the weekly topic (there are 13 topics) in 3X5 index card. I will bring them to the midterm and final exams so that you can use them as “cheat sheets” during the exams. There are 13 topics, so you should have twelve index cards by the end of the semester. Turn them in in class on the first day that we discuss the topic. The cards submitted later than those dates may not be used as “cheat sheets” and do not count towards the grade.
4. In-class mini presentations: 5%

Two to three students will be asked to explain assigned readings based on their index card entries above. It has to be under three minutes and you will be asked to summarize following points.

What is the author’s main argument?

What are the key concepts?

What you felt the most important/interesting points?

5. Final presentation project: 25%

More instructions to follow.

6. Class participation: 5%

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and participate in discussions and other activities.

Other rules

- ¥ Please note that each student is entitled to 4 absences throughout the semester. Each absence beyond this will result in lowering your overall grade significantly. Since I do not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences, I suggest you keep at least two of your absences on hold for illness or other unanticipated events. Students may not come into classroom 15 minutes after the class starts.
- ¥ I will not be able to give make-up exam or early exam. If you know that you cannot take the exams on the scheduled time/day, you should not take the course.
- ¥ Each student should check his or her email frequently for messages about the class. I will assume you check your email at least once a day. It is strongly recommended that you use your UH email address—I do not take responsibility for email messages that fail to arrive if you are using a non-UH email address
- ¥ If you have a physical/mental disability and you have disability access concerns, please contact the KOKUA Program.
- ¥ Please refer to the UHM website on academic dishonesty and related issues. [http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/students/conduct/impermissible\\_behavior.html](http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/students/conduct/impermissible_behavior.html).
- ¥ All cell phones and other electronic wireless devices must be off during class.

Readings:

Two required texts:

- ¥ Barndt, Deborah. *Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).
- ¥ Kimura, A. H. 2013. *Hidden Hunger: Gender and Politics of Smarter Food*. Cornell University Press.
- ¥ Other readings are posted on Laulima, under “Resources.”

Student Learning Objectives of the Women’s Studies program

1. Demonstrated ability to engage in critical and interdisciplinary thinking, analysis, and problem solving through effective written and oral communication.

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2. Evidence of ability to integrate key concepts in Women's Studies, including the social construction of gender ; intersectionalities among gender, sexuality, race, class and other vectors of power and identity; social stratification; and how these issues manifest in a Pacific-Asia context in written and oral work.
  3. Demonstrated ability to connect the classroom with "real world" feminist issues through active engagement in citizenship and civic participation.

And this is how the course helps you to achieve these goals.

1. This course will analyze politics from food using theoretical and conceptual insights from various fields. Readings are chosen from a variety of disciplines, from sociology, anthropology, history, law, to popular readings. You will have an opportunity to present and facilitate discussion on the course materials. In addition, each class will have a discussion section and your participation is very important. In addition to oral communication, the class emphasizes writing skills.
2. These are important concepts that will be discussed in the readings as well as in lecture. "Food" and "body" serve as an excellent lens through which we can examine how social, cultural, economic, and political powers operate in the contemporary society.
3. The course encourages you to use theoretical and conceptual tools learned in class to apply to the real world situation- your relationships with body, food, food production and consumption.

### Course schedule and required readings

#### Jan 13: introduction

No readings

#### Jan 15 and 19: Thin bodies

Hesse-Biber, S. N. *Cult of Thinness*. Chapter 3 and 4.

Yancey, A. K., Leslie, J. and Abel, E. (2006) "obesity at the crossroads: feminist and public health perspectives" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 31 (2): 325-443.

#### Jan 22 and 26: Fit bodies

Dworkin and Wachs. 2009. *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness*. NYU Press. Selected chapters.

#### Jan 29 and Feb 3: Discourse of obesity epidemic

Guthman J, DuPuis M, 2006, "Embodying neoliberalism: economy, culture, and the politics of fat" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24(3) 427 – 448

Firths, J. "Healthy Choices and Heavy Burdens: Race, Citizenship and Gender in the 'Obesity Epidemic'" (2012). *Journal of International Women's Studies* 13 (2) 33-50.

#### Feb 5 and 10: Cosmetic surgery

Heye, Cressida J. and Meredith Jones(eds). 2009. *Cosmetic Surgery: A Feminist Primer*. Ashgate Publishing. Selected chapters.

Feb 12 and 17: Tomato



Barndt, Deborah. *Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). Chapter 1 “across space and through time: tomato meets the corporate tomato” and chapter 6 “picking and packing for the north: agricultural workers at Empaque Santa Rosa”



Feb 19 and 24: McDonald's

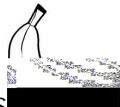
We will meet at McDonald's in Manoa on Feb 19.

Barndt, Deborah (2008). *Tangled Routes: women, work, and globalization on the tomato trail*. Rowman and Littlefield. Chapter 3 “Arch deluxe with a smile: women never stop at McDonald's”

Frank, Thomas (2015). “Chain restaurants are killing us: Billionaire bankers, minimum-wage toilers and the nasty truth about fast-food nation” Salon. January 4, 2015. Read online at [http://www.salon.com/2015/01/04/chain\\_restaurants\\_are\\_killing\\_us\\_billionaire\\_bankers\\_minimum\\_wage\\_toilers\\_and\\_the\\_nasty\\_truth\\_about\\_fast\\_food\\_nation/](http://www.salon.com/2015/01/04/chain_restaurants_are_killing_us_billionaire_bankers_minimum_wage_toilers_and_the_nasty_truth_about_fast_food_nation/)

Royle, Tony. 2010. “Low-road Americanization' and the global 'McJob': a longitudinal analysis of work, pay and unionization in the international fast-food industry.” *Labor History*. Vol. 51 Issue 2, p249-270.

Film: Food inc.



Feb 26 and March 3: Bananas

Enloe, Cynthia. (1990). *Bananas, beaches and bases: making feminist sense of international politics*. Berkeley. University of California Press. Chapter 6. “Carmen Miranda on my mind: international politics of the banana”

Hough, Phillip A. (2012) "A Race to the Bottom? Globalization, Labor Repression, and Development by Dispossession in Latin America's Banana Industry," *Global Labour Journal*: Vol. 3: Iss. 2, p. 237-264

Priet-Carron, Marina (2006) “Central American banana production: women workers and Chiquita's ethical sourcing from plantations” in *Ethical Sourcing in the Global Food System-* (eds). Barrientos and Dolan. London: Routledge.



March 5 and 10 : Chicken

Striffler, S. *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food*. (2002) Chapter 1 and 4.

Bittman, M. 2008. “Rethinking the Meat-Guzzler.” *New York Times*. Jan 27. Please read online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/27/weekinreview/27bittman.html?pagewanted=all>

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Bailey, Cathryn. (2007). "We are what we eat: feminist vegetarianism and the reproduction of racial identity." *Hypatia* 22(2): 39-59.

Film: *Food, inc.*



March 12 and 17: Biotechnology

Shiva, Vandana. *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply* (South End Press, 2002)

Chapter 5 "stolen harvest of seed"

Hawaii Seed *Facing Hawaii's Future: Harvesting Essential Information about GMOs* (Hilo HI Hawaii Seed, 2006) download the booklet at <http://www.hawaiiseed.org/in-print/publications/facing-hawaiis-future>.

Forsey, Helen. "GMOs: Globalizing Male Omnipotence." *Canadian Woman Studies* 21.4 (2002).

Film: *Mālama Hāloa: Protecting the Future of Taro and Future of Food*

March 19 Mid-term exam

--Spring break--



March 31 and April 2: Organic and local food

Neslter, Marion. (2006) *What to Eat*. North Point Press. Chapter 3 "organics; hype or hope"

Guthman, Julie (2003). Fast food/organic food: reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow' *Social and Cultural Geography* 4 (1): 44-58.

Bell, M. B. (2004). *Farming for Us All* chapter 8 "New farms, new selves".

Film: *Food inc.* and *Ingredient*

April 7 and 9: Coffee and fair trade

Bacon, Christopher M. 2010. "A spot of coffee in crisis: Nicaraguan small holder cooperatives, fair trade networks, and gendered empowerment." *Latin American Perspectives*. 37:50-71/

Lyons, Sarah (2010). "We want to be equal to them: fair trade coffee certification and gender equity within organizations" *Human Organization* 67 (3)

Film: *Birdsong & coffee*

April 14 and 16: Food crisis and food aid

Der Ploeg, J. D. "The food crisis, industrialized farming and the imperial regime" (2010). *Journal of Agrarian Change* 10(1): 98-106.

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Clapp, Jennifer (2009). "Corporate interests in US food aid policy" in *Corporate power in global agrifood governance* eds. Jennifer Clapp and Doris Fuchs.

April 21 and 23: Hunger and hidden hunger

Kimura, A. H. 2013. *Hidden Hunger: Gender and Politics of Smarter Food*. Cornell University Press.  
Selected chapters.

April 28, 30, and 5: Presentations

May 7: last day of instruction

Final exam: May 14, 12:00-2:00.