Course goals: Food is an essential and inescapable part of our lives. We spend a considerable amount of time thinking and talking about it, as well as actually eating it. The food we eat involves personal choice, but our choices also have social, cultural, and political implications. In this course, you will learn about food from a variety of perspectives, following it from the fields to the table. The ultimate goal is to encourage you to think more broadly and deeply about your relationship with food.

Reading: There is no required text for this class. All readings will be available online, through a direct URL, the University’s research databases, or via Electronic Reserves. You can access the main University Libraries site at http://library.gmu.edu.

Reading should be completed by the dates indicated on the schedule. Reading the material in advance will help you to get the most out of lectures and discussions.

Grading: The course grade will consist of the following required, weighted components:

- Food diary and analysis 25%
- Shopping project 10%
- Video / book review 10%
- 11 other assignments 5% each (55% total)

In addition to required work, there will be two opportunities for optional extra credit to be completed outside of class. In-class extra credit opportunities may also be available.

Projects: All assignments will be discussed in class, and detailed instructions will be provided.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period noted on the schedule, that is, by 12 noon. Late work will be docked 10 percentage points for each day it is overdue (i.e., if you earn 90% on an assignment, but turn it in one day late, your grade will be 80%).

In general, assignments will be submitted through email as Microsoft Office attachments. Exceptions will be noted in class. Work should be sent to dbitler@gmu.edu, with copies to Davis.FoodForThought@gmail.com and yourself. Please use the subject heading specified in the instructions for each assignment, to ensure that your work is properly credited.

In addition to emailing an electronic copy of each assignment for grading, please bring a hard copy or an electronic copy (i.e., on your laptop) with you to class for discussion.

Technology expectations: You must have a way to access the internet for course materials and Mason e-mail.
Official communications via GMU e-mail: Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. If you are having your Mason mail forwarded to another account, please ensure that your Mason account doesn’t exceed the assigned limit, which causes mail to bounce back to the sender.

Attendance and decorum: Class attendance is not recorded, but it is important for students who want to do well in PSYC461 to be in class, prepared, and attentive. Preparation for class includes completing reading by the assigned due date. Lectures and discussions will be more interesting and meaningful for students who have done the reading in advance. In order to be attentive, you should not engage in any multi-tasking activities during class – that means no texting, e-mail, web surfing, doing homework for other classes, etc. Please turn off all cell phones and other potential sources of disruption at the start of class. During class, laptops may be used only for taking notes. If you must arrive late or leave early, please do so as quietly as possible and be considerate of your classmates by sitting near an exit.

Disability accommodations: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me early in the semester. If you have not already done so, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please keep in mind that it might not be possible to grant last-minute requests for accommodations, so it is important to make all arrangements well before the date when the accommodation is needed.

Honor code: All students are expected to be familiar with, and abide by, the University Honor Code. As required by the Honor Code, all suspected violations will be reported.

You can find information about avoiding plagiarism, APA Style, and more the The Writing Center http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/

Important dates for fall 2012: Last day to add a class – September 4
Last day to drop a class – September 28
Selective withdrawal period – October 1 - 26

Enrollment: Every student is responsible for verifying correct enrollment. Graded work will not be returned to students who are not officially enrolled.
Preliminary Schedule

Aug 27  Introduction – Thoughts about food and eating

Aug 29  The Neolithic Revolution; Modern foodways

Due: Foodways reflections paper


Davis, S.L. (2003). The least harm principle may require that humans consume a diet containing large herbivores, not a vegan diet. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics, 16*, 387-394. [Database: Springer LINK]


Sep 3  Labor Day – no class

Sep 5  Agriculture to agribusiness

Due: Food and eating in the media assignment


Sep 10  *King Corn* (Cheney, I., & Ellis, C. (Producers). (2006). *King Corn* (Motion picture). United States: Mosaic Films.)

Due: Corn assignment


Sep 12  Industrial crops


Sep 17  Chemicals

Allen, W. (2009, May 11). Agriculture is one of the most polluting and dangerous industries. *AlterNet*. Available online at http://www.alternet.org/print/story/139962/agriculture_is_one_of_the_most_polluting_and_dangerous_industries
Sep 19  Farm workers


Sep 26  Organic and sustainable agriculture

Due: Organic versus traditional comparison


Oct 1  Meat


Oct 3  Video chat with Jonathan Foer

Due: Questions for Jonathan Foer


Oct 9  Monday classes meet Tuesday due to Columbus Day break


Oct 10  Foodborne illness

Due: Foodborne illness assignment

Oct 17  Hunger


Oct 22  Food distribution


Oct 24  Income and choice

Due: Shopping on a budget project


Oct 29  Marketing food

Due: Food advertising assignment


Oct 31  The physiology of eating


Nov 5  Nutrition

Due: Food labeling assignment

Nov 7  Disordered eating


Nov 12  Obesity – physical aspects

Due: Diet analysis assignment


Nov 14  Obesity – social aspects


Nov 19  Food preferences and aversions

Due: Preferences and aversions assignment


Nov 21  Thanksgiving break – no class

Nov 26  Food and culture


Nov 28  Cooking and cuisine

Due: Food history assignment


Dec 3  Social aspects of food


Dec 5  Final thoughts
Due: Food diary analysis

Dec 17 Final – due by 1:15 pm

Due: Video or book review