

JCB's World-Famous Books that Cook Class! This Summer!

Meets Upper-Level English and WGSX Requirements



English 390: Books that Cook: Summer Edition

18 May – 5 June 2009

9.00* AM – 12.10 PM, M - R

Given their sensory nature, cookbooks and culinary narratives suggest an implicit relationship between author and audience beyond the bounds of mere reading. When one person writes down a recipe for another, a moment of cultural work has been enacted: the giver imparts a history of region, family, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, whereas the receiver re-enacts these multiple histories the moment she or he cooks and consumes the dish. In this course, we will discuss such cultural work by exploring how different literary genres (recipes, cookbooks, memoir, fiction, and film) represent the production and presentation of food. For instance, we will examine how literatures of food reveal relationships; construct regions, ages, or ethnicities; express love or anger; record history or fairytales and fantasies; and serve as articulations of sexual, social, or artistic power through the acts of reading about and performing food.

Texts will comprise selections from various cookbooks such as *The Joy of Cooking*, *The Enchanted Broccoli Forest*, *Soul Food*, or *The Naked Chef*; a few children's books—for example, *Pumpkin Soup*, or *Cook-a-Doodle-Do*; at least one memoir, probably *The Omnivore's Dilemma*; four modern-day food novels, which may include *The Priest Fainted*, *The Debt to Pleasure*, *Heartburn*, *Like Water for Chocolate*, *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*, *Secrets of the Tsil Café*, *Keeping House*, **OR** *Chocolat*; and one film, which will almost certainly be *Big Night*. In addition to reading and discussing these texts, students will perform a bit of cookery as well as write both critical and creative pieces on food, including their own piece for a final, collaborative cookbook, which will be published. Our collaborative literary cookbook will be unveiled at a final class reading and potluck extravaganza.

***Because we will have field trips in the class to a local restaurant and a local farm, we will begin class each day at 9.00 AM rather than 8.00.**

For more information, please contact: JCB at jcognard@smcm.edu