

**SOC 3115**  
**Food, Gender & Health**

**Dr. Barbara Parker**  
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**Office Hours: Tuesday 11-12pm**

**Class Time: Monday 2:30 - 5:30pm**  
**Place: Zoom**

"Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are."  
— Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826)

Welcome to **SOC 3115: Gender, Health & Food!** In this course we will explore the intersections of gender, health and food. We will explore how ideas about food including our memories, experiences and what we have learned about food (i.e. Canada's Food Guide or Diet Culture) shape our beliefs about health, healthy bodies and good citizenship. We will learn how the shared socio-cultural meanings about food and health further construct, embed and reproduce ideas about gender, social class, able-bodiedness, ethnicity, race, sexuality, among other social identities. The social meanings produced about bodies have material consequences and as such, we will also explore the social conditions of food and eating practices, including food security and food sovereignty. We will also undertake a critical and reflexive journey of our own embodied and material experiences of food and health by exploring memories and experiences with food, recipes and the kitchen.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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- Learn how gender and other axis of identity are socially constructed through food;
- Explore the connections between identity, health and food practices;
- Explore the concepts of nutritionism and healthism;
- Explore connections between health, food systems, food security and food sovereignty;
- Develop communication, facilitation and presentation skills; and
- Learn university-level research, analytical and writing skills.

### **TEXTBOOK** (available through the University Bookstore)

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*Feminist Food Studies, Intersectional Perspectives*. 2019. Edited by B Parker, J Brady, E Power and S Belyea, Toronto & Vancouver: Women's Press.

The text is available in the bookstore, or through the Patterson library.

In addition to the book, all required readings are posted on the Desire to Learn (D2L) course website that accompanies this course.

## HOW THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED

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This class is synchronous. Our class will meet on Monday's at 2:30 on Zoom (zoom links are available on the D2L course site). Because we only meet once a week, your attendance and full participation in class is required. Before logging on each Monday, you should complete the required readings and come prepared to discuss the topic at hand. We will work in small groups regularly and this work will contribute to your participation grade.

Our classes will consist of lectures, in-class discussions and small group work. Your participation grade will be assigned based on your contributions in the zoom classroom. I encourage you to work across distance and undertake learning with your classmates through the D2L course site.

Please be advised that for each hour of class time, students will typically spend another 2 hours outside the classroom in preparation. This means that on average, per week, you can expect to spend about 6 hours reading and completing assignments in addition to our 3 hour class time.

**Email:** Please consider email equivalent to any other form of written communication. Students who write to their professors and teaching assistants (TAs) are expected to follow rules of spelling, grammar and punctuation. In addition, please include a proper greeting, such as "Dear Dr. Parker," and a closing that includes your full name, such as "Sincerely, Anita Cocktail." In the subject heading, please put the Course Number: SOC 3312. Email failing to meet these standards may be returned unanswered. ***Please note that I will only respond to emails sent from a Lakehead university email account.***

If you have questions, at any time during this course, please visit me in my Office Hours (as listed above) or contact me through email at: [barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca)

**ZOOM ETIQUETTE:** I ask that you participate in our Zoom class with your video link turned "on" and your sound "muted" unless you are speaking. This will minimize the sound distractions of many microphones while enabling us to see one another, which will help us get to know one another. If you are unable to keep your video on throughout class (personal, technological or other reasons), upload a pic to your Zoom profile. As a courtesy to your peers and myself, please turn off or mute all phones while in our Zoom Room.

**LEARNING ACCOMODATIONS:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please visit: <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

**PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with what it means to plagiarize the words or ideas of others and your responsibilities as a student at Lakehead University.

Please review Section IX Academic Misconduct:

<http://csdc.lakeheadu.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=27&chapterid=8325&loaduseredits=False>

**Copyright Compliance:** I understand and agree that all instructional, reference, and administrative materials to which I am given access in this course (the "course materials"), whether they consist of text, still or kinetic images, or sound, whether they are in digital or hard copy formats, and in whatever media they are offered, are protected in their entirety by copyright, and that to comply with this copyright and the law.

(1) I may access and download the course materials only for my own personal and non-commercial use for this course; and

(2) I am not permitted to download, copy, store (in any medium), forward or share, transmit, broadcast, show, post or play in public, adapt, or change in any way any text, image, or sound component of the course materials for any other purpose whatsoever except as expressly authorized, and only to the extent authorized, in writing, by the course instructor.

I further understand and agree that, if I infringe the copyright of the course materials in any way, I may be prosecuted under the Lakehead University Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity, which requires students to act ethically and with integrity in academic matters and to demonstrate behaviours that support the University's academic values.

**Exam/Assignment Integrity:** I understand and agree that:

(1) Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, I must complete the assignments in this course without the assistance of anyone else.

(2) Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, I must not access any sources or materials (in print, online, or in any other way) to complete any course exam.

I further understand and agree that, if I violate either of these two rules, or if I provide any false or misleading information about my completion of course assignments or exams, I may be prosecuted under the Lakehead University Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity, which requires students to act ethically and with integrity in academic matters and to demonstrate behaviours that support the University's academic values.

If you have questions, consult the professor.

## COURSE EVALUATION

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1. Class Participation..... 10% (ongoing)
2. Weekly Encounters..... 20% (ongoing)
3. Reading Response Papers x 2..... 20%  
    Due Date 1 - before Week 6 (Feb 22)  
    Due Date 2 - Week 7 to Week 12 (March 29)
4. Presentation: Recipe & Analysis..... 25% (sign-up required)
5. Final Assignment..... 25% (due: April 13th)

## EVALUATION INFORMATION

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All assignments will be discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to ask questions about expectations.

**Formatting:** All assignments/papers will be typed double-spaced with 2.54cm margins (default setting usually). As well, your assignments must have a separate title page and references page.

**Referencing:** You are required to use ASA (American Sociological Association) Referencing Style (see the D2L course website for ASA resources).

**Late Penalties:** All assignments are to be submitted to the Assignments Folder on D2L by 11:59pm on the due date. Assignments received after the due date will be penalized 5% per day. Requests for extensions must be made prior the due date and will only be given if there are extenuating circumstances and may require documentation (eg. a doctors note).

### 1. Class Participation (10 marks - ongoing)

Your class participation mark will be based on your attendance, your engagement in class discussions and weekly encounters, and your completion of various in-class activities and small group work.

### 2. Weekly Encounters (20 marks)

***How have you encountered course content this week?*** Each week you are asked to come to class with an example of a 'life encounter' with the course material. This can be something you come across on social media, in the news or on a website, through a podcast or in a film that *connects* with the weekly course materials. Bring your example to class each Monday on 1 ppt slide (maximum no exceptions). I will call on students randomly to present their encounter to the class, where you will have an opportunity to share your slide (via screensharing in Zoom). You will be given 2-3 minutes to share your slide and talk about how you connect your encounter with the course materials that week.

You must hand your slide in each week to the D2L Folder. We will begin this in Week 2.

### **3. Reading Response Papers (2@10 marks each for a total of 20 marks)**

Reading Response papers are meant as an opportunity for you to engage more deeply in critical reflection of the Weekly Readings. Over the course of the term you will write two (2) Reading Response Papers, one of which will be handed in **before Week 6 (Feb 22nd)** and the second of which will be handed in **between Week 7-12 (March 29)**.

1. Each Reading Response Paper will deal with the Required Readings for the week. Once you are familiar with the main themes of the weekly readings, write a thesis statement to guide your paper. Include the thesis statement in your introduction (as a guide for your paper).
2. Briefly summarize how the theme, or concept or theory is covered in the readings. I suggest you use a direct quote (or two), properly referenced, to anchor your ideas.
3. Relate the material to your own experience. Use the theory or concept to make a connection with your life! Similar to our weekly encounters, you can explain how the theme, concept or theory connects with an issue or event that you have heard about in the media, through friends/family and through your everyday interactions.
4. Finally, be sure to have a proper conclusion where you loop back to the thesis statement in your introduction. As well, be sure to reference properly using in-text citations and a reference list using ASA.

Each Reading Response Paper will be 5 pages, double-spaced with a separate title page and references page.

### **4. Recipe Presentation & Reflection Paper (25 marks)**

Recipes reflect popular culture and offer us a glimpse into the socio-cultural and historical contexts in which they were produced. Recipes are everywhere; they are available online and through social media, in our favourite cookbooks, passed down from family members and friends. Recipes can remind of us of home, a special meal, a holiday or an important event or person. To this end, recipes do more than teach us how to make a particular dish, rather they shape beliefs about health, culture, and identity (gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age, and geography, or where we come from) and inform our social interactions.

This assignment requires you to choose a recipe to analyze. You will make a 10 minute presentation to the class about the recipe, and hand in a paper following your presentation.

Choose a recipe that is important to you in some way. Use the questions below to guide your thinking about the recipe and analysis.

Consider these questions in choosing the recipe. Is it something you regularly prepare or only rarely? Why or why not? Does it represent a memory of a special event or holiday? Do you think the dish is good for you? Why or why not? Is it a complicated recipe or easy to make? Where did you learn about it? What ingredients are central to the recipe? Is it a seasonal recipe? Why did you choose to present this recipe?

1. In responding to the above questions, you will also want to consider the social, cultural, economic, environmental or geographic contexts of the recipe and ingredients? Place the recipe and ingredients in historical context if you can. Where and when does the recipe originate from? What forms of measurement, technology, utensils, and techniques are called for in the recipe? How do these relate to the historical context? What might this also tell us about the assumed cooking ability, gender and/or class status of the recipe's readership?
2. In preparing your presentation, think about the various meanings that are transmitted through the recipe. What does it say about health, identity (gender, social class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion or region) and culture? Who is the intended eater of the dish being prepared through the recipe? How are gender roles prescribed and transgressed within the recipe? Does the recipe produce racialized or classed meanings about the dish (food) or ingredients?
3. Engage with the themes, concepts and theories covered in class using course readings to build your analysis. Pay careful attention to intersectionality as a lens through which to think about the recipe and the ingredients in your recipe.

A sign-up sheet for presentations will be available in Week 2. Upon completion of the presentation, you are required to hand in a 5-page double-spaced Reflection Paper.

## 5. Final Assignment (25 marks)

**Due: April 13**

For this assignment, you may choose one of the following:

### A. Auto-ethnography Paper

**Autoethnography is “research, writing, story and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political”** (Ellis, 2004, p. xix). Autoethnography is powerful because you are able to connect your personal experiences; in this case your own food practices, with what you have learned about ‘public issues’ or structural constraints that are social, cultural and political, which we have learned about through the course readings and your own reading of peer reviewed journal articles and books which connect with the themes of your self-reflexive analysis. To do this assignment well, you will need to think about the themes covered in course readings, your own food practices,

and consider the many facets of food, health and identity through an intersectional and autoethnographic analysis.

### **B. Looking Forward Creative Paper / Project**

This final creative paper / project is an opportunity for you to synthesize what you have learned through this course. Specifically, I want you to reflect on what we have read, discussed, learned and describe or explain how you will use this knowledge and information in the future. You can be as creative as you wish with this assignment!

### **C. Research Paper**

A final research paper will be organized around a course related topic or theme of your choice. This paper is an opportunity for you to critically engage with the theories and concepts covered through the course.

**Note:** Regardless of your choice, the final assignment will be 8-10 pages double spaced and follow all formatting requirements.

I encourage you to ask questions either in class or in my office hours!

## **READINGS BY WEEK**

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Please note readings can change with notice of the Professor

### **Week 1 - Jan 11**

#### **Welcome & Introductions**

- Introductions
- Review Syllabus

#### Readings:

1) Parker, B., Brady, J., Power, E., & Beylea, S., 2019. "Feminist Food Studies: An Introduction", in Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 1-12. **Textbook / On D2L**

### **Week 2 - Jan 18**

#### **Exploring Food, Gender, Health & the Body**

#### Readings:

1) Brady, J. GIngras, J. and Power E., 2012. Still Hungry: A Feminist Perspective on Food, Foodwork, the Body and Food Studies, In Koc, M., Sumner, J. and Winson, A. (eds.), *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies* (122-135) 2nd Edition, Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press. **On D2L**

Listen:

1) Podcast - Cairns, K. Food & Femininity. The Racist Sandwich, Episode 5, June 29, 2016. <http://www.racistsandwich.com/episodes/2016/6/29/e5-food-femininity-with-dr-kate-cairns>

### **Week 3 - Jan 25**

#### **Gender & Food: Introducing Intersectionality Theory**

Readings:

1) Williams-Forsen, P., & Wilkerson, A., 2011. Intersectionality and Food Studies, *Food, Culture & Society*, 14(1), pp. 7-28. **On D2L**

2) Swan, E. 2020. COVID-19 Foodwork, Race, Gender, Class and Food Justice: An Intersectional Feminist Analysis, *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 35(7/8): 693-703. **On D2L**

Watch:

1) Crenshaw, K. The urgency of intersectionality, TEDWomen 2016 (Oct). [https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality)

2) Akilah Obviously. 2015. [On Intersectionality in Feminism and Pizza](#)

### **Week 4 - Feb 1**

#### **Feminist Activism & Food Justice**

Readings:

1) Julier, A. 2019. Critiquing Hegemony, Creating Food, Crafting Justice: Cultivating an Activist Feminist Food Studies. In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 13-32. **Chapter 1 in the Textbook**

Listen:

1) Interview: Williams-Forsen, P. Exploring the Roots of Soul Food (9:42 min)



## Week 5 - Feb 8

### Intersectionality, Constructing Femininity and Food Practices

#### Reading:

- 1) Cairns, K. and Johnston, J., 2015. Thinking through food and femininity: A conceptual toolkit, *Food and Femininity*, (23-41), New York: Bloomsbury. **On D2L**
- 2) Martin, B., Mycek, M.K., Elliot, S., & Bowen, S. Low Income Mothers and the Alternative Food Movement: An Intersectional Approach. In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 183-204. **Chapter 9 in the Textbook**

#### Listen:

- 1) Podcast CBC Tapestry: Pressure Cooker: Why Home Cooking Won't Solve Our Problems & What We Can Do About It

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/tapestry/around-the-dinner-table-struggles-and-rewards-in-family-life-1.5094214/home-cooking-is-not-a-solution-to-modern-family-woes-says-sociologist-1.5094656>

## Week 6 - Feb 15

### READING WEEK - NO CLASS

## Week 7 - ~~Feb 22~~ MARCH 1

### Intersectionality, Constructing Femininity and Food Practices II

#### Reading:

- 1) Ternikar, F. 2019. Feeding the Muslim South Asian Immigrant Family: A feminist analysis of culinary consumption. In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 145-162. **Chapter 7 in the Textbook**
- 2) Phillips, D. 2019. The Struggle Plate at the Intersection, In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 163-182. **Chapter 8 in the Textbook**

## Week 8 - ~~March 1~~ March 8

### Performing Intersectional Identities through Veganism

#### Reading:

- 1) Pirani, D., & Fegitz, E. 2019. How Veggie Vlogging Looks Like: Intersections of Gender, Race and Class in Western Mainstream Veganism. In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist*

*Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 57-78. **Chapter 3 in the Textbook**

2) Overend, A., 2019. Is Veganism a Queer Food Practice, In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 79-101. **Chapter 4 in the Textbook**

Listen:

1) Podcast - The Secret Feminist Agenda: Episode 3.17 On Veganism

<https://secretfeministagenda.com/2019/02/08/episode-3-17-on-veganism/>

## Week 9 – ~~March 8~~ **March 15**

### Constructing Gender, Health and Bodies in Diet Culture

Readings:

1) Contois, E., 2019. Lose like a Man: Gender and the Constraints of Self Making in Weight Watchers Online, In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 123-144. **Chapter 6 in the Textbook**

2) Cairns, K. and Johnston, J., 2015., Choosing health: embodied neoliberalism, postfeminism and the “do-diet”, *Theory and Society*, 44: 153-175. **On D2L**

Listen:

1) Podcast: Christy Harrison (episode 121): [The Truth About Diet Culture with Emily Contois](#)

## Week 10 - ~~March 15~~ **March 22**

### Challenging "Obesity" and Resisting Normative Ideas about the Bodies

Reading:

1) Brady, J., Gingras, J., & LeBesco, K. 2019. Because ... "Obesity". Reframing Blame in Food Studies, In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 103-122. **Chapter 5 in the Textbook**

Watch:

1) Body Positivity Workshop with Foodshare (out of Toronto)

<https://youtu.be/iTCP3lkheJg>

## Week 11 - ~~March 22~~ **March 29**

### Conceptualizing Indigenous Food Sovereignty through Intersectional & Indigenous Feminisms

Readings:

- 1) Pictou, S., Robin, T., Parker, B., & Brady, J., 2021 (forthcoming). Pestiewink / Wihokewin: Invitation to Indigenous and Intersectional Feminist Food Studies, In Koc, M., Sumner, J. and Winson, A. (eds.), *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, 3rd Edition, Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press. **On D2L**
- 2) McGuire-Wood, L. 2019. "Waiting to be Fed": Reading Memories of Hunger in the Tsilhqot'in Land Claim Trial Transcripts and Tracey Lindberg's *Birdie*, In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 205-223. **Chapter 10 in the Textbook**

Watch:

- 1) Watch: Winona LaDuke + Naomi Klein: Land Rights and Climate Change  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDo-KtOKYZE>

**Week 12 - April 5**  
**NO CLASS - EASTER**

**Week 13 - ~~March 29~~ April 12**  
**Intersectionality, Anthropocentrism and Fermentation**

Reading:

- 1) Lloro-Bidart, T. "The Bees Wore Little Fuzzy Yellow Pants": Feminist Intersections of Animal and Human Performativity in an Urban Community Garden, In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 33-56. **Chapter 2 in the Textbook**

- 2) Hey, M. 2019. Fermentation and the Possibility of Reimagining Relationality, In Parker, B. et. al., (eds.), *Feminist Food Studies: Intersectional Perspectives*, Women's Press, pp. 249-268. **Chapter 12 in the Textbook**

Watch

- 1) Youtube: Lauren Fournier, PhD, on approaching contemporary feminist practices through microbial transformation  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tf4rZcC01EM>

- Class Conversation and Evaluation

*Enjoy your summer break!*