

# **History 2158B**

## **Food in World History**

### **Winter 2025**

Instructor: **Dr. Sara Morrison**

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This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

#### **Course Description**

This course explores the role of food in world history with an emphasis on international exchange and cultural interaction following the discovery of the Americas. Students will consider the impact and influence of food upon politics, trade, conflict, and other aspects of society and culture.

#### **Course Syllabus**

What do vegetarians and cannibals have in common? What is the link between sugar and slavery? How did an African beverage cultivated in South America end up being sold by Tim Horton's as a distinctly Canadian product? In an age of globalization why are we so concerned with sourcing local food products? These are some of the questions that History 2158B will address by looking critically at the place of food in world history.

We all require food to survive, and we all have our favourite foods. Some foods are staples and others are luxuries. In this course you will learn where many of the staple foods originated, how they were grown, and how they came to influence global tastes, thereby entering food production, and arriving on your dinner table. Through lectures, readings, films and discussions, students will consider the impact and influence of food upon politics, trade, conflict, and other aspects of society and culture. Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Think historically about food and understand how tastes and perspectives have changed over time and recognize that the past may be interpreted from different perspectives.
2. Outline the historical development of key concepts in the history of food (industrialization, globalization) and how this impacted economic development and social and cultural change.
3. Critically read, summarize, and analyze secondary sources.
4. Connect food-related issues with their historical roots.

#### **Methods of Evaluation**

Students must complete two exams to pass this course:

Mid-term exam	40%	6 February 2025	In-Class
Final exam	60%	Date & Locations:	TBA -April Exam Period

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## Exams

Students must take two exams: one two-hour in-class mid-term during class time on Thursday 6 February 2025, and a three-hour final exam, to be scheduled during the April Exam Period by the Registrar's Office. Both exams will feature a selection of short written answer questions and a choice of essay questions (one essay for the midterm and two essays for the final). Electronic devices of any kind (e.g., phones) are not permitted to be carried, or near to the student during exams.

## Accommodation for Missed Exams:

Students seeking academic accommodation or consideration regarding the mid-term or final exam must contact their Academic Advisory office and provide formal supporting documentation. Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Counselling. Please see

[https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program\\_module\\_information/policies.html](https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html) for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams. The designated make-up date will be assigned by the History department.

## Course Materials

Jeffrey Pilcher, *Food in World History*, 3rd ed (2023). E-book available from the UWO Library. Any additional materials consisting of book chapters, articles, and illustrations will be available on the course website or through the Western Libraries Course Readings for History 2158B. Weekly Reading List will be found on the final version of the syllabus on the OWL Brightspace course website, prior to the beginning of classes in January.

## Draft Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1	Food in World History; Vegetarians and Cannibals
Week 2	The Labours of the Months/How to Read for History
Week 3	The Spice Trade/ The Labours of the Months
Week 4	The Columbian Exchange
Week 5	Mid-term (40%)
Week 6	How the Potato Changed the World/Drug Foods: Chocolate
Reading Week	
Week 7	Drug Foods: Coffee & Tea
Week 8	Sugar and Slavery
Week 9	Industrial Food/The Calorie and the Rise of Nutritional Science

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Week 10	Food and the World Wars/The Chile Pepper in China discussion
Week 11	National Cuisines and National Identities
Week 12	Famine and Hunger/ The Green Revolution/Summary and Review
Final Exam	April exam period (60%)

### **Additional Statements**

**Communication policies:** The best way to contact me is by email, after class or during office hours. Please write using your UWO email account as it is less likely to end up in spam. If my office hours do not fit your schedule, I am happy to talk after class or try to arrange an alternative time to meet. Office hours are useful to clarify any issues concerning the course but are also an opportunity for further discussion.

**Classroom behavior:** Please turn off your phone and use laptops for notetaking only.

**Use of electronic devices:** Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the student has the prior written permission of the instructor. No electronic devices are permitted during tests and examinations.

Copyright and Intellectual Property: PowerPoint lecture slides and notes are typically the intellectual property of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction through audio-recording, video-recording, photographing, sharing on social media, or posting on course-sharing websites is an infringement of copyright, and is prohibited.

### **Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI):**

You may not make any use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, for any assignments in this course.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: [https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program\\_module\\_information/policies.html](https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html) for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.