

HIST 330-01: The Politics of Food in Early Modern England

Grinnell College, Fall 1 2020 (August 24th-October 14th)

MTWThF @ 7:00-8:50 p.m., WebEx Meeting Room

<https://grinnellcollege.webex.com/grinnellcollege/j.php?MTID=ma666b74c432cdc117c8f269bfc04690a>

Syllabus subject to change

Assistant Professor Catherine Chou (choucath@grinnell.edu)

Office Hours: MTWThF 9:00-10:00 p.m.

Course Description

'The culinary is political,' an early modern Englishman once said – or even if he hadn't, surely he would have concurred. Through an examination of the conflicts surrounding the purchase, consumption, and production of food, as well as the moral-political use of culinary puns, metaphors, and allusions, this class will offer an overview of the 'century of revolutions' in England beginning with Elizabeth I's reign in the 1550s and ending with the death of King William III in 1702. We chart England's transition from an early modern monarchy and economy, in which high politics centered on the person of the monarch and the Crown struggled to find a way to 'live of its own'; through the Civil War and Interregnum, when 'the world turned upside down' and royalists, Ranters, and radicals contended with one another over the ideal form of civil society; and finally, to the turn-of-the-century, when the Glorious Revolution ushered in party politics and a modernized commercial society.

Over the course of the quarter, we will address the following questions: 1) What can we learn about the ways in which English conceptions of the ideal society shifted (or remained the same) over the course of the early modern period, through a close reading of sermons, proclamations, pamphlets, songs, and satires concerning the consumption of food and the manner in which it was sold and supplied? 2) What can these sources tell us about the constituencies and communities that comprised early modern England, and how and why their interests aligned or came into conflict? 3) In addition, what can these sources teach us about the 'rules' governing the early modern English economy, and how such rules relate to common understandings about the duties of poor and middling Englishmen vis-à-vis their masters, and vice versa?

Although this seminar takes as its primary subject matter the consumption of food and the manipulation of culinary language and imagery, it is not a class on material culture. Rather, it seeks to understand the political, and religious conflicts of the day by exploring textual and visual sources on plenty and want, fasting and gluttony, drunkenness and temperance. Above all, this is a course designed to familiarize you with techniques and methodologies that historians use in order to analyze, contextualize, and synthesize primary and secondary source material. As a capstone, you will produce an original resi-1717 (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009)

mailed to your address)

A note on the course schedule and readings

Given the compressed schedules for the fall (7 weeks versus 14 weeks), we will be meeting synchronously together Monday-Thursday for the first three weeks to discuss our assigned primary and secondary sources, with Fridays reserved for individual sessions and one-on-one feedback on your research progress and paper proposals. The last

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ogvv5wt8nu9kco1/1601%20Parliamentary%20Debate%20on%20the%20issue%20of%20Monopolies-2-3.docx?dl=0>

2. Pauline Croft, 'Parliament, Purveyance, and the City of London, 1589-1608', *Parliamentary History*, vol. 4 (1985), p. 9-

Monday, September 14th – Restoration, or the Roasting of the Rump

1. Mark S.R. Jenner, 'The Roasting of the Rump: Scatology and the Body Politic in Restoration England', *Past and Present* no. 177 (November 2002), p. 84-120 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3600879.pdf>)
2. Alexander Brome, 'Rump, or an Exact Collection of the Choycest Poems and Songs Relating to the Late Times', 1662 (<https://search-proquest-com.grinnell.idm.oclc.org/docview/2248545551>)

Tuesday, September 15th – Coffeehouses and the Development of a Public Sphere

1. Brian Cowan, Introduction and Chapter One, *The Social Life of Coffee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

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