More than Just Recipes: Exploring American Cookbooks

ARTSSCI 1137.06, Wednesdays, 9:10–10:05am
Hagerty Hall, Room 351 (first class session)
Thompson Library, Room 105c, Special Collections Classroom (meeting place for the rest of the semester)

Instructor: Jolie Braun, Associate Professor & Curator of Modern Literature and Manuscripts
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Office hours: Email me to schedule an appointment

Course Description: Although we’re all familiar with cookbooks, most people typically don’t give them much thought: they’re just collections of recipes. Yet they also include many other components: advice, personal narratives, and artwork, as well as ideas about what kind of foods to eat, how to prepare them, and what these choices may say about a person. While cookbooks have a utilitarian value, they are also often aspirational texts (meaning that they help readers imagine and try to realize who they want to be). This class takes cookbooks seriously, and we’ll spend the semester studying some American classics of the genre. We will consider how cookbooks have been a way to document food and cooking trends and advancements in technology; promote specific ideas about taste, nutrition, and health; record stories of families and communities; and how they reveal the values and concerns of the historical moment in which they were created. By the end of this course, you’ll have a deeper understanding of how cookbooks have both reflected and helped shape ideas about food and identity in the United States over the past two hundred years.

To help us think about these topics, we will examine American cookbooks from 1796 through the 21st century. This course will be based in The Ohio State University Libraries’ Rare Books & Manuscripts Library (RBML), and we will have the opportunity to work with materials in RBML’s Peter D. Franklin Cookbook Collection during class sessions.

Course Goals:
• Refine critical thinking skills through class discussions and activities
• Gain experience analyzing primary source materials (both published and archival) by working with historical cookbooks and related special collections items
• Develop an appreciation of the intersection of food and identity in the U.S. through class readings and assignments

Required Texts: All readings, videos, and podcasts will be available via links on the syllabus or the course’s Carmen site. Be sure to complete them before the class session.

Class Location: Class will meet in Thompson Library, Room 105c, the special collections classroom, which is accessible through the special collections reading room. Because we will be working with special collections materials, you will need to leave food and drink, jackets, backpacks, pens, and other personal items in a locker. (You can get a locker key from the staff at
the special collections reading room desk. Bring your BuckID with you to show at the desk.) Feel free to bring your laptop, tablet, notebook, and/or pencil into the classroom.

Course Policies:

Attendance: Your attendance is essential. If you are unable to attend class because of illness, religious observance, or a family emergency, let me know as soon as possible. Please don’t come to class if you are sick! Contact me so we can figure out an alternative. If you don’t attend and don’t communicate with me, you will be marked as absent.

Participation: Because this is a small, discussion-based class, your participation is important. Please come prepared to talk about the assigned materials: ask questions, offer analysis, and share your ideas. Participation also means being a good citizen of the class and helping create a positive and productive environment. This includes arriving on time, participating in in-class activities, listening when others are talking, and being respectful of others. Laptops and tablets are permitted if they are being used for course-related work.

Journal Responses: Throughout the semester, you will write a total of four journal entries (approximately 250-300 words each) responding to the day’s topic and assigned texts. Your responses should be coherent and thoughtful, but do not need to be formal. You will receive credit for engaging with the material and demonstrating that you’ve given the topic some thought.

Cookbook Analysis: For this assignment you will write an analysis (approximately 2 pages) of a cookbook of your own choice from the Library’s circulating collection. More information will be available as we get closer to the date.

Collaborative Cookbook: Having spent the semester studying cookbooks, we will end by creating our own. For your final project, you will collaborate on a cookbook together as a class. You will be responsible for submitting one page featuring a recipe of your choice, as well as 2-page self-reflection about your process. More information will be available as we get closer to the date.

Grading:

- Attendance and participation: 30%
- Four journal responses: 20%
- Cookbook analysis: 25%
- Collaborative cookbook recipe and reflection: 25%

Grading Scale:

- A: 93-100
- A-: 90-92
- B: 83-87
- B-: 80-82
- C: 73-77
- C-: 70-72
- D: 65-67
- E: 0-64
- B+: 88-89
- C+: 78-79
- D+: 68-69
**Academic Honesty:** It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct [http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/](http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/).

**Students with Disabilities:** The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

**Diversity at Ohio State:** The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

**Mental Health Services:** As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning (strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation). These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](http://ccs.osu.edu) or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

**Buckeye Food Alliance:** Anyone with a BuckID can use this on-campus food pantry. For more information, visit: [https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/pantry](https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/pantry).
Weekly Schedule, Fall 2022

August 24, Week 1: Syllabus & Introductions

August 31, Week 2: Why Do Cookbooks Matter?
- **Due:** First journal response
- “Introduction: Follow the Food,” from *From Hardtack to Home Fries*, Barbara Haber (p 1-6) (in Carmen)
- “Why We (Still) Need Cookbooks,” Sarah S. Davis
- “Cookbooks Are So Much More than Recipes and Photographs,” Joshua Raff
  [https://lithub.com/cookbooks-are-so-much-more-than-just-albums-of-food/](https://lithub.com/cookbooks-are-so-much-more-than-just-albums-of-food/)
- “Listening to the Voices in Historic Cookbooks,” Emily Contois

September 7, Week 3: America’s “First” Cookbook
- **Cookbook:** *American Cookery* (1796), Amelia Simmons (preface; p 34-35)
  [https://www.loc.gov/item/96126967/](https://www.loc.gov/item/96126967/)
- “What America’s First Cookbook Says about Our Country and Its Cuisine,” Keith Stavely and Kathleen Fitzgerald
- Video: Historic Kitchens vs. Modern Kitchens (13 minutes)
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axFFUdQdyJg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axFFUdQdyJg)
- Video: Pumpkin Pie Recipe from *American Cookery* (12 minutes)
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLbfpGYf89Y&index=8&t=452s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLbfpGYf89Y&list=PL4e4wpjna1vx3DFU7r7gDtdPzEeCsL2l&index=8&t=452s)
- **Recommended Reading:** “The Culinary Legacy of James Hemings,”

September 14, Week 4: The Rise of the Cookbook in Nineteenth-Century America
- **Due:** Second journal response
- **Cookbook:** *The American Frugal Housewife* (1829), Lydia Maria Child (“Introductory Chapter,” “Cheap Cakes,” p. 3-9; 58-63)
  [https://www.loc.gov/item/43019104/](https://www.loc.gov/item/43019104/)
- “Introduction,” from *Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project*, Jan Longone
  [https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/introduction](https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/introduction) (read from “A Brief History of American Cookbooks” to “Women’s Magazines and Almanacs”)
September 21, Week 5: Manuscript Cookbooks
- **Cookbook** (Explore one, your choice):
  - *Rappe Family Cookbook* (circa 1810-1840) from the Winterthur Library Digital Collections
  - *Sallie Wilson Recipe Book* (circa 1868) from the Virginia Tech Digital Collections
    [https://digitalsc.lib.vt.edu/HFDMss/Ms2009-002_WilsonSallie_Recipe](https://digitalsc.lib.vt.edu/HFDMss/Ms2009-002_WilsonSallie_Recipe)
- Podcast: “Manuscript Cookbooks,” *A Taste of the Past,*
  [https://heritageradiounetwork.org/podcast/manuscript-cookbooks](https://heritageradiounetwork.org/podcast/manuscript-cookbooks) (41 minutes)

September 28, Week 6: Cookbooks, Domestic Science, & Cooking Schools
- **Due:** Third journal response
- **Cookbook:** *The Boston Cooking School Cook Book* (1896), Fannie Farmer
  [https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/8#page/1/mode/2up](https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/8#page/1/mode/2up) (“How to Measure,” “Salad Dressings and Salads,” p 27-29; 287-301)
- “And the Kitchen Becomes the Worship of the Skies,” from *Perfection Salad,* Laura Shapiro (p 34-46) (in Carmen)
- “The Rise of Cookbooks in America” Helen Zoe Veit
- Also in class: Discuss cookbook analysis assignment

October 5, Week 7: Cookbooks & Immigration
- **Cookbook:** *The Settlement Cook Book* (1901), Lizzie Black Kander
  [https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/66#page/1/mode/2up](https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/66#page/1/mode/2up) (“Household Rules,” “Dumplings and Garnishes for Soups,” p 3-8; 81-86)
- **Cookbook:** *How to Cook and Eat in Chinese* (1945), Buwei Yang Chao (“Preface,” “Author’s Note,” “Noodles,” p. x-xiv; 195-202 (in Carmen)
- “The Cookbook That Brought Chinese Food to Americans,” Livia Gershon
  [https://daily.jstor.org/the-cookbook-that-brought-chinese-food-to-american-kitchens/](https://daily.jstor.org/the-cookbook-that-brought-chinese-food-to-american-kitchens/)
- “Immigrants,” from *What America Ate,* Donna Gabaccia

October 12, Week 8: Cookbooks, Rationing, & World War II
- **Due:** Cookbook analysis
- **Cookbook:** *Your Share: How to Prepare Appetizing, Healthful Meals with Foods Available Today* (1943), Betty Crocker (Foreword-p 9; 36-39) (in Carmen)
- Video: “Point Rationing of Food” (6 minutes)
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HC6bB0YucFs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HC6bB0YucFs)
October 19, Week 9: Convenience, Familiarity, & Marketing: Advertising Cookbooks
- “Advertising Cookbooks,” Duke University’s Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History
  https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/.scriptorium/eaa/cookbooks.html
- “A Lesson in Advertising from Your Grandma’s Deceptively Savvy ‘Ad Cookbooks,” Madeleine Morley
- “Rubenstein Library Test Kitchen: The Joys of Jell-O (1962),” Kate Collins
  https://blogs.library.duke.edu/rubenstein/2020/01/31/the-joys-of-jell-o/
- Also in class: Discuss collaborative cookbook assignment

October 26, Week 10: African American Cookbooks
- **Cookbook:** Good Things to Eat as Suggested by Rufus (1911), Rufus Estes,
  https://archive.org/details/goodthingstoeata00esterich (“Foreword,” “Sketch of My Life,”
  “Hints to Kitchen Maids,” “Lunch Dishes,” p 5-8; 45-50)
- **Cookbook:** Spoonbread and Strawberry Wine (1978), Carole Darden and Norma Jean Darden,
- “Introduction” from Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks, Toni Tipton-Martin (p 1-9) (in Carmen)
- Video: “Kush – A Hash with Cornbread featuring Michael Twitty” (5 minutes)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvjsli71Crl

November 2, Week 11: Mid-Century Cookbooks & Gender
- **Due:** Fourth journal response
- “The Most Important Meal: Women’s Home Cooking, Domestic Ideology, and Cookbooks” from Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern America, Jessamyn Neuhaus (p 219-238) (in Carmen)
- “How Steak Became Manly and Salads Became Feminine,” Paul Freedman

November 9, Week 12: Community Cookbooks
- Podcast: “Women’s Work: History of Community Cookbooks,” A Taste of the Past
  https://heritageradionetwork.org/podcast/womens-work-history-of-community-cookbooks (53 minutes)

November 16, Week 13: Collaborative Cookbook Recipe Draft Workshop
- **Due:** Bring two copies of your recipe draft
- **Also in class:** Explore recipe design and layout examples
- Recommended Reading: “The Art of Recipe Writing,” Dianne Jacob, (p 165-188) (in Carmen)
November 23, Week 14: No class (Thanksgiving break)

November 30, Week 15: Guest speaker, food historian Sarah Lohman (virtual presentation on Zoom)
- **Due:** Collaborative cookbook submission and reflection
- “The Recipe Convention That Dooms Home Cooks,” J.J. Goode
- “When Did Recipe Writing Get So…Whitewashed?” Priya Krishna
- Video: “Sarah Lohman’s Black Pepper Brown Sugar Cookies” (3 minutes)
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVFGLp79o4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVFGLp79o4s)

December 7, Week 16: No Recipe Cookbooks & Collaborative Cookbook Release Party
- **Cookbook:** *Cooking as Though You Might Cook Again* (2021), Danny Licht (“A Pot of Beans,” “Making Pasta,” p 15-17; 21-24) (in Carmen)
- “The Constant Reinvention of No-Recipe Recipes,” Marian Bull