

### **Food Book Assignment**

#### **The Assignment:**

Throughout this course, you will be developing a “food book” with chapters matching some of the key themes and organizing principles of the class. To complete this assignment, you will choose a food or dish to write about throughout the course so make sure to choose one that you are willing to spend the rest of the term thinking about and exploring. This assignment will require you to complete five book chapters where you will think about and explore the place of your food or dish in your culture and commerce as an instance of globalization. Each chapter will also encourage you to use different formats (i.e. digital story, hyperlinked essay, etc.) to examine your subject. In addition, you will be writing an epilogue to your “food book” where you will be asked to reflect upon your learning and integrate key course concepts, among other things.

The expectations regarding each chapter of the food book and the epilogue are described in detail below. It is important to note that the questions that are posed as part of each chapter are intended as prompts or starting points for brainstorming to help you in writing an integrative, unified chapter. They are not a series of questions to be answered as if they were a test. They are also not a comprehensive list of all the questions one might ask. Rather they are to help you begin thinking about your assignment. Some questions will be more applicable to some students and subjects than others.

This is the major assignment of the course; the food book as a whole constitutes almost two-thirds of your grade in this course.

#### **Chapter 1: Personal Identity**

The first chapter of the food book is about a food item (e.g. potato) or dish (e.g. French fries or potato salad) that can be considered a marker or measure of your identity. Building upon, and integrating, your experience in NCLC 101, write a narrative of identity with food as the topic. This dish or food item will become the focus of the “food book” that you will write in this course. In this essay you will explore and reflect on some of the following prompts as well as questions that you raise yourself when thinking about a food item or dish to write about.

The **essay** that you will write for this chapter should be between 750-1,000 words in length. This chapter is due on Thursday, October 29, 2009 and must be posted to PebblePad by midnight. Your chapter must be posted as an MS Word document and should be named as follows: lastname\_FB1 (e.g. Smith\_FB1). This chapter is worth a total of 60 possible points.

#### ***Chapter Prompts:***

1. In what ways does this dish or food item help define and reflect who you are? Why and

how has it become part of your identity? Is it a family tradition? A comfort food? Part of a religious or ethnic tradition? Another reason? Is there more than one food or dish that “fits” you, maybe as you’ve grown and changed? Why have you chosen this one? Does your choice of food reflect a new/changed awareness of identity?

2. Does this dish or food item fit in a particular context — when do you eat it? Where do you eat it? With whom? Does it evoke any special memories or meaning? Is the social setting a part of its significance? For instance, is this a dish that is associated with a holiday? With your childhood? With a particular group of people? What memories do you have of it in the past? (Recall crawfish in Cajun Louisiana.)
3. Is the obtaining, purchasing or preparing an important part of your choice of this food? Has this food/dish changed during your lifetime? If so, how and why?

## Chapter 2: Cultural History

For this chapter, you will further develop Chapter 1 of the “food book” by adding to it and ultimately converting it into a **digital story**. This is an opportunity to:

- a) Provide visual and verbal narratives for an expanded Chapter 1, using images of venues (e.g. households, restaurants, dining halls), places (e.g. countries, regions, continents), memories (e.g. childhood, family, festivities, holidays, gatherings, rituals, cultural events), among others;
- b) Examine your food item/dish and identity from cultural and historical perspectives, based on readings, class discussions, and independent research;
- c) Explore the migration and adaptations of your food item or dish in the context of globalization.

*Chapter prompts for b) and c) from above:*

1. What part of the world did your food item or dish come from? What are its origins? (Think about the changes in Philippine foodways, the Banana book, etc.)
2. Has your food item or dish been imported/introduced to the US or has it been exported/introduced from the US to other places? (Consider the cases of McDonald’s, Sushi, etc.)
3. Why do you think this food item or dish represents part of the tradition of your family, the identity of your age group, the image of your nation, etc.? In other words, is it something unique to the various communities you belong to? (Think about the Deer and Crawfish readings.)
4. How close is your food item or dish to its original? How has the preparation of it

changed over time and across geographical regions? How is it different/improved/made better/adapted to your tastes from the original? (Consider the case of McDonald's in East Asia and around the world.)

*Your digital story should:*

- Run for 3-5 minutes
- Include 200-400 words of audio narration in your own voice
- Integrate at least 10 still images or brief video clips, synched to the audio with visual transitions between them
- Incorporate a soundtrack that plays underneath the voice narration or between passages of narration
- Make skillful use of the seven elements of a digital story: points of view, dramatic question, emotional content, your voice, soundtrack, economy, and pacing
- Be posted to PebblePad
- And, remember, if you are using images, video, and/or music that you did not create, you must credit the sources at the end of the story. Please note that if any of these contents are copyrighted materials, you should refrain from posting your story onto public domains, such as Youtube.

*Additional Information:*

- This assignment is due on Wednesday, November 11, 2009 and must be posted to PebblePad by midnight.
- This chapter should be named and saved as follows: lastname\_FB2 (e.g. Smith\_FB2).
- This chapter is worth a total of 100 possible points.

### Chapter 3: Sources and Destinations

In the third and fourth weeks of this course, you have examined a variety of factors that explain how food moves from farm to table. We have explored issues in labor practices, ecological and biological variables, distribution, and marketing. We have analyzed foundational works about food production and consumption and observed some effects of our current system up close during our field trips and in the film "Life and Debt," and then applied all of these to our understanding of globalization. For this assignment, you will integrate the work you have done and come to a deeper understanding of global networks by examining these issues as they relate to an *essential ingredient* (however, you may not examine corn or bananas!) in your chosen food item or dish.

For this exercise, you will construct a thoroughly-sourced **PowerPoint presentation** (approximately 7-9 slides) that illustrates and documents the complete process of getting your food ingredient from source to table. Your presentation should effectively break down and explain your ingredient's interwoven "chains" of production, distribution, and consumption through the use of both text and visual resources. This chapter is due on Saturday, November 21, 2009 and must be posted to PebblePad by midnight. It should be named and saved as follows: lastname\_FB3 (e.g. Smith\_FB3). This chapter is worth a total of 100 possible points.

In addition, in this exercise, you must seek the information necessary to illustrate your item's web of production, distribution, and consumption by making use of library and "deep web" sources. Your presentation must include a bibliography (using MLA or APA format) of all sources cited with information and images drawn from each of the following source categories (the guidelines below are a minimum):

- 1 academic book
- 2 articles from peer-reviewed and -edited journals (print and/or online)
- 2 articles from popular print periodicals (newspapers, magazines, etc.)
- 2 reliable (i.e. fully-sourced) websites—this may include primary source material
- 1 class source (book or article)

*Chapter Prompts:*

1. Production:
  - a. Where is your item produced/grown? Under what environmental conditions?
  - b. What is some basic biology of your item? How does that affect production? For example, is it primarily mechanically or manually harvested?
  - c. Who produces/grows your item? Are the capital and labor sources the same or separate? Who profits most from the production phase? Does anyone lose in the process? Is its production subsidized (e.g. price supports for corn)?
  - d. What are the environmental costs associated with the production of your item?
2. Distribution:
  - a. How does your item move to its final destination? Air? Water? Land? How does the method of transportation from the field to the wholesale market affect the cost?
  - b. What are the environmental and economic effects of your item's journey? What is its carbon footprint? If the product is imported, how does it affect domestic producers? If the product is domestic, but non-local, how does it affect local producers of the item (if any)?
  - c. Who moves your item? How do the distributors (again both capital and labor) profit and/or lose in the transport of the ingredient to the market?
3. Consumption:
  - a. Upon arrival at the processing facility, does your item go through a refinement process, i.e. corn to corn syrup to Coca Cola? How does it then get into the wholesale market? How far has its value risen by the time it reaches this stage of consumption?
  - b. How does your item get into the retail market (i.e. the grocery store)? How do retailers acquire the product? How do they entice consumers to buy it? What is their profit margin (or loss) on the item?
  - c. Who eats your item? Does it have socioeconomic, ethno-racial, regional, or other specific connotations? Is it expensive? Is its consumption subsidized (e.g. WIC vouchers for milk, cereal, etc.)?

## Chapter 4: Sustainability Issues

The three pillars of sustainability, often called the “Three Es”, are: Ecological integrity, Economic vitality, and Equity among people. In this chapter of your food book you will be required to investigate and explore, through the use of the prompts below, the relationship that your *food ingredient* has with the “Three Es” of sustainability.

For this chapter, you will write a **hyperlinked essay** that is between 1,000-1,200 words in length. Your hyperlinked essay should have a minimum of five links to relevant external sites. It is envisioned that these links will provide additional information that enriches your core argument (contextual links). Through your linking strategy, you will demonstrate the complexity of your thinking and your understanding of your audience and the subject matter. Keep in mind that effective links serve to add meaning to your work. Any external links and visual images you use should relate meaningfully to the subject of your essay, rather than confuse or distract your reader.

Hyperlinking creates expressive possibilities that don't exist in traditional linear writing. You are encouraged to exploit these possibilities as you strive to convey the significance of the subject that you are writing about. Be as creative and ingenious as you can, but remember one thing: the aesthetic interest of your essay should never come at the expense of the intellectual content. Your hyperlinked essay, like any other form of communication, will be judged on how clearly and concisely it conveys its meanings to its audience.

Additionally, you must seek out the information necessary to complete this exercise by making use of library and “deep web” sources. Your hyper-linked essay must include a bibliography (using MLA or APA format) of all sources cited with information drawn from each of the following source categories (the guidelines below are a minimum):

- 4 academic books or peer-reviewed and -edited journals (print and/or online)
- 2 reliable (i.e. fully-sourced) websites—this may include primary source material

This chapter is due on Saturday, December 5, 2009 and must be posted to PebblePad by midnight. This chapter should be named and saved as follows: lastname\_FB4 (e.g. Smith\_FB4). It is worth a total of 100 possible points.

### *Chapter Prompts:*

1. What is the most important issue related to each one of the “Three Es” of sustainability for your food item?
2. What one of these issues do you consider to be most important and why? Explore this issue in detail explaining why it is an important topic for society at large.
3. In your opinion, does the cost to consumers of your food item reflect the true cost of its production and distribution? Why or why not?
4. Are there ways that your food item could be more sustainable?

5. How do your personal choices and decisions have an impact on the sustainability of your food item?

### Chapter 5: Alternatives and Interventions

By now you have written the first four chapters of your “food book” and you have seen some of the problems and challenges that arise when issues concerning your chosen ingredient are looked at from local, national, and global perspectives. In addition, many of the readings from weeks 3 and 4 in particular expose problems and challenges associated with different foods. For example, you have encountered problems related to the environment, sustainability, production, sources, destinations, consumption, trade, health, safety, equity, economics, and society, to name but a few. In addition, through both the panel discussion and the student presentations, you have also learned about some of the potential and existing attempts to solve these problems and challenges. You have seen some alternatives and interventions that could be instituted to lessen the severity of these problems.

Through the use of the prompts below, Chapter 5 of your “food book” will explore and describe the problems and challenges that you have discovered with your chosen *food ingredient*. In addition, it will also explore some of the alternatives and interventions that can effectively respond to these problems and challenges.

For this chapter you will write a **hyperlinked essay** (see above for a detailed description of hyperlinked essays) that is between 750 and 1000 words in length. This essay should have a minimum of five links to relevant external sites. Additionally, you must seek the information necessary to complete this exercise by making use of library and “deep web” sources. Your hyper-linked essay must include a bibliography (using MLA or APA format) of all sources cited with information drawn from each of the following source categories (the guidelines below are a minimum):

- 1 academic book
- 1 articles from peer-reviewed and -edited journals (print and/or online)
- 2 articles from popular print periodicals (newspapers, editorials, magazines, etc.)
- 2 reliable (i.e. fully-sourced) websites—this may include primary source material

This chapter is due on Monday, December 14, 2009 and must be posted to PebblePad by midnight. This chapter should be named and saved as follows: lastname\_FB5 (e.g. Smith\_FB5). It is worth a total of 100 possible points.

#### *Chapter Prompts:*

1. What are the main problems associated with your ingredient?
2. What are the alternatives/interventions that are in place or proposed by others (organizations, governments, individuals) to respond to these problems or challenges?

3. Do you see any limitations with the existing/proposed alternatives/interventions you've discovered? If so, describe ways you think they could be improved upon or extended.
4. In your opinion, what other alternatives/interventions might be successful and why? In addition consider the following:
  - a. What choices need to be made?
  - b. What might the costs be?
  - c. What dangers might there be?
  - d. Who would win and who would lose?
  - e. Are there problems that might arise in the near future? What might they be? Are they avoidable?

### Epilogue

Now that you have finished the five chapters of your “food book”, take the time to look back at the process and reflect on your learning. Because Mason Cornerstones and New Century College values active and self-reflective learning, students are required to demonstrate achievement in NCC competency areas and to engage in self-reflection and self-evaluation.

You will write an **integrative, reflective essay** for the Epilogue looking back at this project as well as our course. Think of the various course activities and assignments that we have done throughout NCLC 102 and make connections between them.

The Epilogue is due on Monday, December 14, 2009 and must be posted to PebblePad by midnight. This chapter should be named and saved as follows: lastname\_Epilogue (e.g. Smith\_Epilogue). It is worth a total of 125 possible points.

*More details about the epilogue to come...*