

Department of English & Writing Studies

**Consuming Difference:  
Food and Multiculturalism in Contemporary Canadian Literature<sup>1</sup>  
English 4060F  
Fall 2015**

**Instructor:** Dr. Stephanie Oliver

**Date/Time:** Wednesdays (12:30-3:30 pm)

**Location:** Arts and Humanities Building (AHB) 101

**Contact:** soliver9@uwo.ca

**Office Hours:** TBA

Course Description

What is the relationship between food and multiculturalism? How does Canada's official policy of multiculturalism shape constructions of "ethnic food" and cultural difference? What is the relationship between food and ethnicity, race, class, gender, and sexuality, and how are these relationships informed by broader notions of community, desire, longing, and memory? This course will consider these questions by exploring a range of literary works (novels, short stories, poems, memoirs), cultural texts (visual art, recipes, food blogs), and theoretical essays. As part of the course, students will write their own restaurant reviews, which will be posted on a food blog created for the class.

Prerequisites

Two of [English 2200F/G](#), [2210F/G](#), [2220F/G](#), [2230F/G](#), [2235A/B](#) (Huron), [English 2240F/G](#), [2250F/G](#), [Theatre Studies 3205F/G](#), or permission of the Department.

"Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

Course Objectives

Students who successfully complete the course will be better able to:

- Critically reflect on the socio-cultural significance of food in the context of Canadian multiculturalism
- Identify, understand, and use key theoretical concepts to analyze literary representations of food in contemporary Canadian literature and cultural texts
- Research, develop, and communicate original arguments clearly in oral and written formats while building on existing criticism
- Critically reflect on their own relationship to food and multiculturalism in face-to-face and online contexts
- Respectfully engage in critical discussion and debate in face-to-face and online contexts

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that this is a draft of the course syllabus. The final version will be distributed to students on the first day of class.

### Course Methods

This course will combine a variety of teaching techniques, including instructor- and student-led seminars, discussions, and some individual/small group active learning strategies, in order to support student learning and facilitate a depth of engagement with the material.

See the “Class Participation” section under “Course Evaluation” below for more information on expectations around class participation and technology use.

### Required Texts

Frank Paci, *Black Madonna*

M.G. Vassanji, *No New Land*

Hiromi Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms*

Fred Wah, *Diamond Grill*

Marusya Bociurkiw, *Comfort Food for Break-ups: The Memoir of a Hungry Girl*

Custom Course Book (available)

### Course Evaluation

Class Participation	20%
Restaurant Review (1000 words)	15%
Blog Comments (150 words each x 3)	5%
Seminar (45 minutes)	25%
Essay Workshop Proposal (1-2 pages)	5%
Final Essay (12-15 pages)	30%

**Class Participation (20%):** Since this is a fourth-year seminar course, class participation is crucial.

Class participation includes:

- attending class in full each week
- coming prepared to discuss the assigned readings (readings must be read *before* class on the day they are assigned and you should bring your copies of the readings to class)
- actively engaging in class discussion
- participating in group work, workshops, and other in-class activities/assignments
- completing any other assigned “homework” tasks
- and completing any assignments given during class

Thoughtful engagement during class is essential. I encourage you to come to class with a list of questions or comments about the assigned readings so you can draw on these ideas during discussions. You will also be expected to listen actively during instructor- and student-led seminars and make constructive contributions to class discussions during and after these seminars.

Note that participating in an intellectual community means that you must be aware of *how* you participate. Disagreements are a part of healthy intellectual debate; please respect your classmates’ opinions, allow them to have their say, and listen with an open mind. Part of my role is to guide and mediate class discussions, so if you would like to speak, please raise your hand and I will make sure that you have a chance to respond. When it is your turn to speak, focus on the argument at hand rather than critiquing the person making the argument.

**A note on technology:** I encourage the use of various technologies in class as long as they are used for class purposes – in other words, I expect you to use your devices in a way that *facilitates*, rather than prevents, your engagement with the class. Since active listening is a key component of class participation, I ask that you turn off your cell phones before class begins. Laptops and tablets are allowed in class and occasionally you may be asked to look something up online or use your devices for in-class assignments. The rest of the time, however, I would advise that you close your internet browsers. Checking your email, Facebook, etc. during class is distracting to other students. It will also prevent you from fully participating, and as a consequence, you may lose participation marks and miss key parts of class, which may affect your performance on assignments.

**Restaurant Review (1000 words) (15%):** The restaurant review gives you the opportunity to reflect on your own experience of food/cultural consumption. It also gives you the chance to flex your creative muscle and engage with an online platform commonly used for discussing the production and consumption of “ethnic” food.

For this assignment, you will review a restaurant or food vendor (food show, food festival, food truck, etc.) that serves cuisine marketed as “ethnic.” You can use the restaurant reviews and food blogs discussed in class as a model for this assignment, but your review will go one step beyond description to include a critical analysis of the restaurant/vendor and your culinary experience. For this reason, it will be longer than the average restaurant review (1000 words).

In your review, you will:

- 1) briefly describe the restaurant/vendor with a link to its website (if applicable)
- 2) briefly describe how you heard about the restaurant/vendor
- 3) briefly discuss how the restaurant/vendor markets itself (through its name, signage, building exterior, etc. and/or advertisements)
- 4) describe your culinary experience, including your experience of the setting, mood, atmosphere, and food
- 5) reflect on and analyze the restaurant/vendor, its representation of ethnicity, and your culinary experience using at least one critical concept and/or key scene from the readings (literary or theoretical)

Your review should also include at least one photo of the restaurant/vendor and/or the food you ate (they don't have to be professional – use it as a chance to express your creative side!). You may also want to refer to the photo(s) in your review to illustrate a point.

You will submit your review by posting it on a group blog created for the course. I will provide you with access information and instructions for how to post your review before the assignment is due (so don't worry if you haven't blogged before). In order to make sure that your review uploads properly, I recommend that you post it on the blog a few days before it is due and view it to see if you are happy with the format – then if you have any trouble, you can let me know and we can resolve the issue. Reviews are due on the date designated on the class schedule and should be posted in full by that date.

Please note that you must submit the name of the restaurant/food vendor you plan to review to me in class or by email before reviews are due (see the date designated on the class schedule). Please include a link to the restaurant/vendor website if available.

**Blog Comments (150 words each x 3) (5%):** This assignment gives you the opportunity to read and comment on your classmates' reviews. It also gives you a chance to learn about how the critical

concepts discussed in class apply in a variety of culinary and cultural contexts, and allows you to engage with an intellectual community in an online platform.

After the restaurant reviews are due and have been posted online, you will read and respond to three separate reviews. Your comments should be 150 words and should provide one new, thoughtful insight based on your reading of the review. For instance, in your comments you could:

- 1) extend the reviewer's analysis to other elements of the restaurant/vendor description that the review did not analyze
- 2) analyze the reviewer's description of the food, atmosphere, etc. in relation to a critical concept not discussed in the review
- 3) compare and/or contrast the reviewer's description of the food, atmosphere, etc. to a literary or cultural text discussed in class

Please note that the guidelines for respectful class discussion also apply to blog comments.

Blog comments must be posted on the blog by the date designated on the class schedule.

**Seminar (25%):** The seminar gives you the opportunity to lead the class through the day's readings, guide class discussion, and ask questions to provoke thoughtful intellectual debate. Think of it as your chance to teach us something about the readings while exploring your own ideas about them and encouraging the class to do the same.

Your seminar will be 45 minutes in length and will focus on the assigned literary/cultural text and recommended critical readings for that day. You may choose to use the first 30 minutes to present on the readings and the final 15 minutes for class discussion, or you may choose another format.

Whichever format you choose, you will:

- 1) provide an introduction to the assigned literary/cultural text and its key theme(s)
- 2) summarize the recommended critical readings and their key argument(s)
- 3) use the recommended critical readings to build your own argument about the assigned literary/cultural text through close reading and critical analysis

For your seminar, you may use electronic presentation tools (PowerPoint, Prezi, YouTube videos, movie clips, audio files, etc.), traditional presentation tools (handouts, whiteboard and marker, etc.), or a combination of both. Remember, however, that these are aids to *enhance* your seminar; they should not dominate it. The primary purpose of the seminar is for you to communicate your thoughts orally and engage the class in a productive intellectual discussion about the week's readings. That being said, feel free to incorporate whatever you think will be useful to make your points and engage the class (including food!).

On the day of your seminar, you will bring an extra hard copy of your notes and any other relevant materials for me to use as a guide for marking. You will also send any electronic presentations (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) to me via email.

Please note that you must meet with me to discuss your ideas for your seminar beforehand. You will have the opportunity to choose the texts/date for your seminar when the course begins.

**Essay Workshop Proposal (5%):** You will have the opportunity to workshop your essays in class before they are due (see the date designated on the class schedule). The workshop will give you the opportunity to discuss your preliminary ideas and arguments with your classmates and gain useful feedback on your work.

By 11:59 pm on the date designated on the class schedule, you will upload a detailed outline (1-2 pages) of your essay on OWL that includes:

- 1) a brief discussion of the literary text(s) you want to focus on and the key themes/aspects of the text(s) you want to explore
- 2) a list of 3-4 potential secondary sources for your essay and a brief discussion of a) why these sources are relevant for your paper and b) how you're going to use these sources
- 3) a working thesis statement
- 4) at least one question about your essay proposal that you would like feedback on

I will distribute photocopies of your proposal in class for the other students. You will give a brief overview of your proposal and your classmates will be given the chance to provide you with constructive feedback.

**Final Essay (12-15 pages) (35%):** The final essay gives you the opportunity to study a literary text closely and develop your own critical thoughts on its key theme(s) relating to food and multiculturalism. It also gives you the chance to engage with a broader intellectual community beyond the classroom and make an original contribution to current criticism on your text and/or topic.

Your final essay will focus on one or two literary text(s) on the course syllabus. You may write on the same text(s) you explored in your seminar. You may also draw upon other cultural texts (legislation, artwork, video clips, news stories, etc.) that we have discussed in class (if you want to discuss a cultural text not discussed in class, please consult me beforehand).

Your final essay will be 15-18 pages, double-spaced, written in 12 point Times New Roman font, and printed on 8.5" x 11" paper (single-sided) with 1" margins. It will follow the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th ed.* (New York: MLA, 2009). Your essay will have an introduction with a clearly defined thesis statement, developmental paragraphs that support your thesis statement through close reading and critical analysis, and a conclusion that sums up your argument and analysis.

Your essay will aim to make an original contribution to current criticism on the literary text you have chosen to write about. To do this, and to demonstrate your ability to critically engage with secondary research, your essay will draw on 3-4 scholarly sources (you may use the theoretical essays discussed in class, but you should have at least one new scholarly source). You may use these sources to support your argument, but you will also use them to show how your argument differs from current criticism on the text in question. In other words, your essay will demonstrate your ability to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and critique scholarly arguments. I recommend consulting the library catalogue for relevant monographs and edited collections and searching the library's electronic databases (such as MLA International Bibliography, JSTOR, and Project Muse) for relevant journal articles. Please let me know if you have any difficulty locating useful material.

Essays will be submitted both in both hard copy (due at the beginning of class) and electronic copy (due on OWL before class begins) on the date designated on the class schedule.

#### Extensions & Late Penalties

If for some reason you cannot submit or complete an assignment on the designated due date, please let me know as soon as possible. Extensions will only be granted with proper medical certification or other extenuating circumstances and should be arranged in advance with me and/or an academic counselor. For further information, please see the section of "Academic Accommodation" in this syllabus.

Assignments handed in (either in person or online) after the designated time on the due date will be given a late penalty of 1%. Assignments submitted after the due date will be given a late penalty of 2% per day, including weekends.

If required, hard copies of late assignments will be handed directly to me or submitted to the essay drop-box outside the English Department office (Arts and Humanities Building Room 2G02). Please note that the submission date for late assignments will be assessed by the date stamp from the English Department office. Assignments received during the day before 4:00 pm (3:30 pm on Fridays) are stamped with the current days' date.

### Class Schedule

*\*Recommended critical readings are TBA and will be added to the final syllabus. Please note that these readings are recommended and are only required for those giving seminars that day.*

### First Course

**Wed, Sept. 16**

**Week 1: What's on the Menu**

Introduction

**Wed, Sept. 23**

**Week 2: Canadian Multiculturalism & the Management of Difference**

Selections from Course Book:

*Canadian Multiculturalism Act*

Smaro Kamboureli, selections from "Sedative Politics"

Sara Ahmed, selections from "Multiculturalism and the Proximity of Strangers"

**Wed, Sept. 30**

**Week 3: Consuming Difference**

Selections from Course Book:

bell hooks, "Eating the Other"

Sara Ahmed, selections from "Going strange, going native"

Food Blogs (TBA)

### Main Course

**Wed, Oct 7**

**Week 5: Negotiating Food, Fat, and Family in Little Italy**

Frank Paci, *Black Madonna*

*\*Name and website of restaurants/food vendors due*

**Wed, Oct. 14**

**Week 6: Taste, Temptation, and the Myth of Multiculturalism**

M.G. Vassanji, *No New Land*

**Wed, Oct. 21**

**Week 7: Food/Body/Politics: Consumption and Critique**

Hiromi Goto, "The Body Politic"

---, "Not Your Ethnic Body"

Shie Kasai, *Make your own sushi* and *Survival Japanese Cooking* (available online at

<http://www.erudit.org/revue/cuizine/2009/v1/n2/037854ar.html>)

*\*Restaurant reviews due*

**Wed, Oct. 28**

**Week 8: “Vegetable Politics”: Cultural Difference on the Canadian Prairies**

Hiromi Goto, *Chorus of Mushrooms*

**Wed, Nov. 4**

**Week 9: Eating, Out: Queering Authenticity in the Multicultural City**

Shani Mootoo, “Out on Main Street”

Shani Mootoo, “The Upsidedownness of the World as it Unfolds”

Literature Alive Online, “My Dinner with Shani Mootoo” (clips available on

[http://caribbean.onlinefilm.org/en\\_EN/detail/literature-alive-season-1-shani-mootoo.57537](http://caribbean.onlinefilm.org/en_EN/detail/literature-alive-season-1-shani-mootoo.57537) and YouTube)

*\*Blog comments due*

**Wed, Nov. 11**

**Week 10: Eating Chinese: Recipes for Remembering**

Fred Wah, *Diamond Grill*

**Wed, Nov. 18**

**Week 11: “Rituals of Slave Food” and the Culinary Memoir**

TBA

**Wed, Nov. 25**

**Week 12: Essay Proposal Workshop**

*\*Upload essay proposals on OWL by 11:59 pm the day before (Tuesday, Nov. 24)*

**Wed, Dec. 2**

**Week 12: “Mama’s Kitchen and Beyond”: Queering Ukrainian-Canadian Consumption**

Marusya Bociurkiw, *Comfort Food for Break-ups: The Memoir of a Hungry Girl*

Final Course

**Wed, Dec. 9**

**Week 13: Food for Thought: Reflection & Discussion**

*\*Final essays due*

Academic Policies

**Academic Accommodation:**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. In this course, students seeking academic accommodation for assignments worth less than 10% of their final grade must also follow this procedure.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student’s Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found here:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

The full policy is set out here:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Students must review the statement on plagiarism on the English Department website here, reprinted below: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#plagiarism>.

Plagiarism (the unacknowledged use of another person's work) is one of the most serious academic offences, since it involves fraud and misrepresentation. In plagiarizing, one is in effect claiming another person's words or ideas or data as one's own work, and thus misrepresenting material subject to academic evaluation. It is necessary, therefore, that plagiarism carry appropriate penalties. These are within the discretion of the Chair of Undergraduate Studies, but may include failure of a course or a grade of zero on an assignment, without the privilege of resubmitting it. See [Academic Calendar](#) for more details.

**STUDENTS FOUND GUILTY OF A SECOND SERIOUS OFFENCE WILL BE EXPELLED FROM DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COURSES. FURTHER ACTION MAY BE TAKEN BY THE DEAN'S OFFICE.**

Students must acknowledge each printed or electronic source (including study guides such as *Cole's Notes*, *SparkNotes*, and Internet materials) by author, title, date and place of publication, and page number if: (a) they quote from it directly; (b) they paraphrase its ideas; (c) they are conscious of any influence its ideas may have had on their own work. **Every source (including websites) that students have consulted (whether they refer to it directly or not) must be included in a bibliography (Works Cited).** Some instructors may require that students provide copies of material downloaded from the Internet.

It is not always possible to identify the sources of inspiration of one's own ideas with total accuracy. A reasonable and conscientious effort is all that is required. **However, it is entirely the student's responsibility to be aware of the nature of plagiarism.** If students have any questions about plagiarism, they should ask their instructor. If students have any doubts about the documentation of their own essays, they should see the instructor before the essays are due. Information about correct forms of documentation may be found in the *MLA HANDBOOK For Writers of Research Papers* (New York: Modern Language Association, 2009), available in the Reference section at Weldon (LB 2369.M57).

Students found to have submitted the work of another person as their own work **will automatically fail the course.** Any students who know their own work has been used improperly have a responsibility to inform the Department of that fact; otherwise they will be considered collaborators."



**Plagiarism Checking:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.