

Building on a 16 year tradition...<sup>1</sup>

## **The Meaning of Food**

### **Interdisciplinary Conference on Representations of Food in the Arts & Humanities**

Thursday, March 26 to Saturday, March 28, 2020

Call for Presentations:

All proposals are due **November 1st, 2019** (11:59 pm EST) at  
<https://forms.gle/QnpvbiD64WmKh4yA9>

Sponsored by

Elon University, High Point University and Wake Forest University

Visit our conference website for more details: <http://meaningoffoodconference.com>



1897 William McCloskey *Wrapped oranges on a tabletop*

The study of food—what we do or do not eat as well as how, when, where, why and with whom we eat—is strongly linked to anthropological, cultural, social, political, and economic concerns. Once regarded as mundane and not worthy of scholarly study, food has become a valuable lens to explore pressing social issues. Indeed, Roland Barthes has said that “an entire ‘world’ (social environment) is present in and signified by food.”<sup>2</sup> Food is never *just* food, and its representation in the arts and humanities is replete with meaning—whether realistic, narrative, or figurative—adding depth and richness to cultural productions. Furthermore, the complex function of food in the arts and humanities is often strengthened by food’s material and metaphorical link to language and to narration since we both speak and eat with our mouths, communicating and tasting with our tongues. The etymology of the word table, often the site of both food consumption and storytelling, is revealing on this count: “table” comes from the Latin *tabula* meaning a board or slab “intended to receive an inscription or an account.”<sup>3</sup> The “stories” we tell about food construct its meaning, while the food practices we engage in equally shape the narratives we create.

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<sup>1</sup> We are indebted to Santiago Daydi-Tolson for organizing the eight *Interdisciplinary and Multicultural Food Representations in Literature, Film, and the Other Arts* conferences at University of Texas San Antonio from 1998 to 2014 from which this conference stems. The first biannual conference in Greensboro was held in 2018, and we look forward to another engaging symposium in 2020!

<sup>2</sup> Barthes, Roland. “Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption.” *Food and Culture: A Reader* (3rd edition). Ed by Caroline Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. NY: Routledge, 2013. p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Kessler, Brad. “One Reader’s Digest: Toward a Gastronomic Theory of Literature.” *Kenyon Review* 27.2 (2005). p. 152.

*This conference welcomes studies from any discipline in the arts and humanities that consider food as a productive lens to analyze socio-cultural constructions of meaning.*

**This conference is intended to be dialogue driven. Therefore, we expect 15 minute presentations (not read papers), with the inclusion of at least 2 discussion questions to facilitate a 10 minute prompted conversation among the participants following the presentation.** We invite submission of both individual and panel proposals connected to any of the following, though not limited to, topics:

1. Food and identity (national, regional, local, etc.), and/or status (race, class, etc.)
2. Food, the body, and/or gender
3. Food images and visualizations
4. Food and media and/or social media
5. Food in pop culture(s)
6. Food, memory, and the stories we tell
7. Food and language
8. "Authenticity" or "authentic" foods
9. Nature vs/and Culture (taboos, etc.)
10. Consumer vs Global culture
11. Local(e) and spaces
12. Culinary aesthetics
13. Food and ethical approaches or practices
14. Teaching food; food and innovative pedagogies

In addition, we welcome submission proposals for 45-minute interactive pedagogy-focused workshops to help share innovative ideas regarding teaching food-related matters.

Workshops can include discussions and methods related to: using food to develop students' understanding of inequality and social justice, food-related activities to enhance analysis, incorporating theory into food courses, analyzing food-related texts, harnessing students' writing/ideas about food so that they are more critical/demonstrate deep thinking, balancing the personal and analytical with student responses to food, syllabi creation, etc.

We will also provide many opportunities during the conference for engaging in idea-driven dialogue---via planned cultural events and, of course, tasty/delectable meals.

Please visit the conference website for more details: <http://meaningoffoodconference.com>

If you have any specific questions, please contact the conference organizers (Nina Namaste, Alison Atkins, and Claudia Femenías) at [meaningoffoodconf@elon.edu](mailto:meaningoffoodconf@elon.edu).