

## **More than Just Recipes: Exploring American Cookbooks**

### **Instructor:**

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### **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 and how to prepare them. While cookbooks have a utilitarian value, they are also often aspirational texts (meaning that they help readers imagine and possibly 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 nutrition and health; record stories of 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 21<sup>st</sup> century. This course will be based in the 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 or the course's Carmen site. Be sure to complete them before the class session. I will provide some context, questions to consider, and strategies for study for them the week prior.

### **Course Policies:**

**Attendance:** Your attendance is essential. If you are unable to attend class because of illness, religious observance, or a family emergency, please let me know as soon as possible. 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 your classmates and me. Laptops and tablets are permitted if they are being used for course-related work. Phones and headphones should be put away during class.

**Reflection Journal:** Each week you will write a journal entry (at least 250 words) responding to the assigned texts. Some weeks I will suggest a question to respond to, but generally this will be an opportunity for you to write freely about the week's readings (videos / podcasts): What did you find interesting? What surprised you? What do you want to know more about? You will submit your journal entry via the course's Carmen site the night before class.

**Recipe Interview:** For this assignment you'll explore the life of a recipe beyond the cookbook. Conduct an interview (plan for approximately 30-60 minutes) with a relative, family friend, or someone you're close to from a different generation about a recipe that is important to them. (It can, but doesn't need to be, from a cookbook.) You may want to develop your own list of questions to ask, but a few to consider: What is special about this dish? What do they like about this particular recipe for it? Where did the recipe come from? How long have they been preparing it? What kind of ingredients does it require – is it an inexpensive or costly dish to prepare? What kind of knowledge or expertise is needed? Have they modified or deviated from the original recipe over the years, and if so, in what way(s)? Record the interview so you have it to refer to later. Write a summary of your findings (2 pages). You do not need to transcribe the interview but do feel free to quote parts of it.

**Collaborative Cookbook:** Having spent the semester studying cookbooks, we'll end by creating our own. For your final project, we will collaborate on a cookbook together as a class. You will be responsible for one page (a template will be provided) featuring a recipe of your choice. The recipe will need to include the following components: 1) a head note (1 short paragraph in which you provide some context about the recipe. You can include why you like it, where the recipe originated from, tips for preparing it, and/or suggestions about when to serve it (For a special occasion? A quick, weeknight meal?), 2) ingredients, and 3) instructions. You will also submit 1-page reflection to me about your process. You may want to include: why you selected this recipe, the decisions you made while writing it, any revisions you made to the original, and how the recipes you encountered this semester influenced how you selected your own.

**Grading:**

Attendance and participation	30%
Reflection journal	30%
Recipe interview	20%
Collaborative cookbook recipe and reflection	20%

**Grading Scale:**

A	93-100	B	83-87	C	73-77	D	65-67
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	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/>.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307, [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu).

**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).

**Biographical Statement:**

I have been a curator at The Ohio State University's Rare Books & Manuscripts Library (RBML) since 2016. In this role I provide special collections-based instruction and develop the collection's modern holdings, including RBML's Peter D. Franklin Cookbook Collection, which contains more than 8,000 volumes. This course grew out of my teaching with the cookbook collection as well as a love of cooking and food history. Beyond cookbooks, my research interests include women publishers and booksellers, self-publishing, and zines.

## Weekly Schedule

### Week 1 – Introductions & Syllabus

### Week 2 – Why Cookbooks?

- “Listening to the Voices in Historic Cookbooks,” Emily Contois  
<https://emilycontois.com/2017/06/11/historic-cookbooks/>
- “Eating American,” Sidney Mintz (p 106-124) (in *Carmen*)

### Week 3 – America’s “First” Cookbook

- **Cookbook:** *American Cookery* (1797), Amelia Simmons (preface; p 34-35)  
<https://archive.org/details/american-cookery-by-amelia-simmons>
- “What America’s First Cookbook Says about Our Country and Its Cuisine,” Keith Stavely and Kathleen Fitzgerald  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/what-americas-first-cookbook-says-about-our-country-its-cuisine-180967809/>
- Video: Historic Kitchens vs. Modern Kitchens (13 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axFFUdQdyJg>
- Video: Pumpkin Pie Recipe from *American Cookery* (12 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLbfpGYf89Y&list=PL4e4wpjna1vx3DFU7r7gjDtdPzEeCsL2l&index=8&t=452s>

### Week 4 – The Rise of the Cookbook in Nineteenth-Century America

- **Cookbook:** *The American Frugal Housewife* (1829), Lydia Maria Child (“Introductory Chapter,” “Cheap Cakes,” p. 3-9; 58-63)  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/43019104/>
- “Domestic Virtue and Citizenship in the Work of Lydia Maria Child,” from *A Taste of Power: Food and American Identities*, Katharina Vester (p 43-49)
- “Introduction,” *Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project*, Jan Longone  
<https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/introduction> (read from “A Brief History of American Cookbooks” to “Women’s Magazines and Almanacs”)
- “Lydia Maria Child’s ‘Frugal Housewife’ the Must-Read Cookbook of Its Day,” Bill Daley  
<https://www.chicagotribune.com/dining/recipes/sc-food-0717-giants-child-20150714-story.html>

### Week 5 – Manuscript Cookbooks

- **Cookbook:** *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) (p 4-5)
- *Rappe Family Cookbook* (circa 1810 – 1840), from the Winterthur Library Digital Collections  
<https://cdm17274.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/Recipes/id/839/rec/11> (p 12-13)

- “Nineteenth-Century Manuscript Cookbooks and Memoirs of Taste,” Avery Blankenship (in Carmen)

### Week 6 – Cookbooks, Domestic Science, & Cooking Schools

- **Cookbook:** *The Boston Cooking School Cook Book* (1896 edition), Fannie Farmer <https://archive.org/details/the-original-fannie-farmer-1896-cookbook> (“How to Measure,” “Vegetables,” 27-28; 252-262)
- “And the Kitchen Becomes the Worship of the Skies,” *Perfection Salad*, Laura Shapiro (p 34-46)
- “The Rise of Cookbooks in America” Helen Zoe Veit <https://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2018/11/the-rise-of-cookbooks-in-america/>

### Week 7 – Cookbooks & Immigration

- **Cookbook:** *The Settlement Cook Book* (1901), Lizzie Black Kander <https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/66#page/1/mode/2up> (“Dumplings and Garnishes for Soups,” p 81-86)
- **Cookbook:** *How to Cook and Eat in Chinese* (1945), Buwei Yang Chao (p 1-10) (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/>
- “Immigrants,” from *What America Ate*, Donna Gabaccia <https://whatamericaate.org/single.collection.php?kid=164-593-6>

### Week 8 – Cookbooks, Rationing, & World War II

- **Cookbook:** *Your Share: How to Prepare Appetizing, Healthful Meals with Foods Available Today* (1943), Betty Crocker (p 1-11; 36-37) (in Carmen)
- “Food is a Weapon: Nutrition Programs Fight for Victory” <https://sos.oregon.gov/archives/exhibits/ww2/Pages/services-nutrition.aspx>
- “How Did We Can?” (World War II section) <https://www.nal.usda.gov/exhibits/ipd/canning/exhibits/show/wartime-canning/world-war-ii>
- Video: “Point Rationing of Food” (7 minutes) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationing\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States#Food\\_and\\_consumer\\_goods](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationing_in_the_United_States#Food_and_consumer_goods)

### 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 <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/how-advertising-cookbooks-taught-us-to-love-everything-from-avocados-and-oranges-to-spam-and-jell-o/>
- “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/>

### Week 10 – African American Cookbooks

- **Cookbook:** *Good Things to Eat as Suggested by Rufus* (1911), Rufus Estes, (read: 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,” “Aunt Lizzie; Sweet Potatoes”; xiii-xv; 115-120)
- “Introduction” *Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks*, Toni Tipton-Martin (p 1-9)
- Video: “Kush, A Hash with Cornbread with Michael Twitty” (5 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvjsli7ICrI>

### Week 11 – Mid-Century Cookbooks & Gender

- “The Most Important: Women’s Home Cooking, Domestic Ideology, and Cookbooks” *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  
<https://theconversation.com/how-steak-became-manly-and-salads-became-feminine-124147>

### Week 12 – Community Cookbooks

- “Tried Receipts”: An Overview of America’s Charitable Cookbooks,” Janice Bluestein Longone (p 17-28) (in Carmen)
- Podcast: “Women’s Work: History of Community Cookbooks,” *Taste of the Past*  
<https://heritageradionetwork.org/podcast/womens-work-history-of-community-cookbooks> (53 minutes)

### Week 13 – Health & Diet Cookbooks

- “The Story of America, as Told through Diet Books” Adrienne Rose Bitar  
<https://theconversation.com/the-story-of-america-as-told-through-diet-books-59351>
- “Fat America: A Historical Consideration of Diet and Weight Loss in the U.S.,” Imke Schessler-Jandreau (p 88-94) (in Carmen)

### Week 14 – Cookbooks & the Local Food Movement

- **Cookbook:** *The Taste of Country Cooking* (1976), Edna Lewis (“Introduction,” “Fall,” and “Race Day Picnic,” p xix-xxi; 144; 148-154)
- **Cookbook:** *The Art of Simple Food* (2007), Alice Waters (“Introduction,” “Ingredients and Pantry,” “Everyday Meals,” p 3-7; 10-11; 34-36)
- Video: “Alice Waters: How to Start a Food Revolution,” (24 minutes)  
<https://www.latimes.com/food/fqgu5w71liy-123>
- “The Local Food Movement: Definitions, Benefits, & Resources,” Roslynn Brain  
[https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2693&context=extension\\_curation](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2693&context=extension_curation)

### Week 15 – Revisiting “Why Cookbooks?” & cookbook release party