

# **"Racial food" ? A Food's Deconstruction through the Prism of Anti-Racist, Anti-Speciesist and Feminist Studies in France and the USA**

## **Class Summary:**

Racial Food ? Is food linked to racism ?

Considered as a biological human need linked to the survival of our species, food has often been a forgotten philosophical and sociological object.

Since Pierre Bourdieu, food is understood as a sociological fact of social distinction. We do not consume such food by taste or pleasure but because it allows us to be attached to our social class ; which is distinguished through a cultural, economic and social capital.

Understood as a system of oppression, feminist philosophers have begun to denounce the sexist character of food.

Between GMOs, organic food, permaculture, agribusiness of the capitalist system, vegetarianism and veganism food is at the heart of political debates in our societies.

## **Explanation of the syllabus :**

In this course I will start from Pierre Bourdieu's studies to show that food is more than a biological fact. The food we eat is necessarily related to our social class.

As a result, food is linked to other systems of oppression: speciesism, racism and anti-feminism. I will show how the law especially in the Black Code (continued from semester 1 course) helped produce racial anthropological differences through food. Certain categories of food were reserved for a certain part of the population...

Then I will explain the notion of "speciesism" in several lessons. I would show how our societies are based on a hierarchy of human over animal. I would try to show the philosophical construction of the concepts of Human, Humanism and Humanity. I will give an important part to anti-speciesist feminists such as Carol Adams who was one of the first to denounce the "animalization" of women and farm animals.

Finally, I will try to give a comparative study of the vegan movements in France and the United States. It will be necessary to criticize them to show their ideological and conceptual construction. Then, the "new movements" such as Afro-veganism and Asian veganism will draw our attention.

In conclusion, we will think together on the symbolism of meat and its inclusion in capitalist society.

## **Lesson objective:**

- Develop your critical thinking : understand food as a sociological, philosophical fact
- Analyze historical sources : some historical sources can lead to an understanding of present oppressions
- Study legal texts: to understand how the law contributed to the emergence of speciesism (protection or not of animals, stigmatization of activists)
- Develop your research and thinking skills: understanding philosophical and sociological concepts + personal reading

- Develop your oral skills : participating in the class is very important because we will talk about some culinary traditions that are sometimes precursors to the vegan diet. The participation of everyone through their own experience would be very enriching.

### **Course syllabus:**

**Lesson 1:** Food as biological need or sociological identification ?

**Lesson 2:** Food as an anthropological racial difference : Distribution and Slave Gardens

**Lesson 3:** Speciesist Society: What is Eating?

**Lesson 4:** The Animal Body, the Slave Body: Afro-Pessimism in USA.

**Lesson 5:** Carol J. Adams:, Animal-Body and Female-Body the example of Publi-Speciesism

**Lesson 6 :** The Difficult Beginnings of Veganism in France

**Lesson 7:** Against obesity in the USA, a healthy veganism ?

**Lesson 8:** A West African Vegan Culinary Tradition Before European Vegan Culinary Normativity ?

**Lesson 9 :** Decolonizing Veganism? Afro-veganism: A Pioneering Movement in the United States

**Lesson 10 :** The Symbolism of Meat and the Capitalist System

### **Assessment:**

Two 30min written quizzes in the form of questions and answers that will count for 30% of the final grade. These will be class questions only to grade your attendance and your personal and continuous investment.

A 1500-2000 word essay in Times New Roman 12 format, 1.5 line spacing, which counts for 70% of the grade. In this file you must develop a theme related to the lesson, to take up the concepts presented, to develop your critical mind, and your research skills. You must write an introduction with a problematic, a development, a conclusion and a bibliography (citing your sources is very important).

*Examples :*

- I was interested by lesson 1 on The Sociological aspect of Food and I want to interview a person from a sociological point of view to understand their diet.
- I was interested by the lesson 2 on The Food's slave and I want to speak more about a slave dish. You can talk about its creation, what ingredients, where they came from; as well as its posteriority. Does it exist today, yes, no, why ?
- I am generally interested in the concept of "speciesism" and I want to focus more on the animal, or animal experimentation, or the case of domestic animals.
- You can also speak about the law or charity : L-214, animal abuse law
- It is also possible to take a "specist" news topic that you will study.
- I want to link the notion of speciesism to feminism, or racism through an author
- You can also talk about a work of art, a movie and make a comment.

Of course, I'm here to talk about your subject and guide you in your readings.

**A participation grade will be taken into account, only if it allows you to increase your overall grade.**

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