

Course Title: Sociology of Food

Course Type: Add-On Certificate Course

Target Group: UG/PG Students in Social Sciences & Humanities

Duration: 30 hours

Mode: Offline / Hybrid

Assessment: Food ethnography report, media analysis, presentations, reflection journals

Aims:

This course aims to introduce students to food as a powerful sociological lens through which culture, identity, power, and economy are examined. Students will explore the social meanings, symbolic representations, and structures embedded in what, how, and why we eat.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand food as a social, cultural, and political phenomenon.
 2. Examine how food habits shape and reflect identity, class, caste, gender, and nationhood.
 3. Analyze the impact of globalization, industrialization, and media on food systems.
 4. Explore issues of food ethics, justice, and sustainability.
 5. Conduct basic food ethnography and critically reflect on personal food practices.
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Module Outline with Activities

Module 1: Introduction to the Sociology of Food

Topics Covered: What is food sociology? Food as culture, symbol, and ritual. Food vs. eating.

Activities:

- **Personal Food Diary:** Students record everything they eat for 3 days and reflect on what their diet reveals about culture/class/gender.
 - **Class Discussion:** "Is food purely about nutrition?"
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Module 2: Food, Identity, and Social Stratification

Topics Covered: Food and caste/class/religion; gendered food practices; taboos and preferences

Activities:

- **Visual Collage:** Students create a cultural food map of India (or their state) showing region, caste, and religious influences.

- **Guest Talk / Story Circle:** Local women or community elders share gendered food memories.
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Module 3: Food and Globalization

Topics Covered: Fast food, fusion food, culinary tourism, McDonaldization

Activities:

- **Restaurant/Café Field Visit:** Analyze the menu of a global food chain or “fusion” café in sociological terms.
 - **Debate:** “Has Globalization Enriched or Eroded Culinary Diversity?”
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Module 4: Politics of Food: Power, Policy, and Inequality

Topics Covered: Hunger, malnutrition, food security, PDS, food as resistance (Dalit kitchens, langars, etc.)

Activities:

- **Case Study Presentation:** Midday Meal Scheme or a local food movement (e.g., Right to Food Campaign).
 - **Documentary Screening & Discussion:** *Kaphal: Wild Berries*, *Seeds of Freedom*, or *Amartya Sen on Famine and Food*
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Module 5: Food Media, Representation, and Meaning-Making

Topics Covered: Cookbooks, food blogs, culinary shows, social media, aestheticization of food

Activities:

- **Media Critique:** Analyze a food Instagram page or cooking show for class/gender/national identity portrayals.
 - **Creative Task:** Students write their own short “food story” or blog entry on a memory tied to a dish.
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Module 6: Food Ethics, Sustainability, and the Future of Eating

Topics Covered: Vegetarianism, veganism, food waste, lab-grown meat, organic movements

Activities:

- **Group Discussion:** “Is Being Vegetarian an Ethical or Cultural Choice?”
 - **Sustainability Audit:** Students assess food waste practices in their home/hostel/canteen and suggest solutions.
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Final Project Options (Choose One)

- **Mini Food Ethnography:** Interview family/community members about food rituals/traditions.
 - **Digital Zine:** A visual/sociological magazine on a theme like "Food & Memory" or "Food & Inequality."
 - **Presentation:** "A Sociological Reading of My Plate" – linking identity, privilege, and history through what you eat.
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Suggested Readings:

1. Counihan, Carole & Van Esterik, Penny. *Food and Culture: A Reader*
2. Appadurai, Arjun. *How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India*
3. Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*
4. Nandy, Ashis. *Time Warps: Silent and Evasive Pasts in Indian Politics and Religion* (Chapter on food politics)
5. Mintz, Sidney. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*
6. Roy, Kumkum. *Food, Women and Religion in Early India*
7. Twilley, Nicola. "The Rise and Fall of the American Buffet" (for food/media/consumption discussions)
8. Relevant articles from *Scroll*, *The Wire*, *The Hindu*, and food blogs (e.g., Dalit Camera, Khabar Lahariya Food Channel)