

**Sociology**  
**Discipline Specific Elective (DSE) 15**  
**Sociology of Food**

**Discipline Specific Elective-15 (DSE - 15) : Sociology of Food**

**CREDIT DISTRIBUTION, ELIGIBILITY AND PRE-REQUISITES OF THE COURSE**

Course title & Code	Credits	Credit distribution of the course			Eligibility criteria	Pre-requisite of the course (if any)
		Lecture	Tutorial	Practical/ Practice		
<b>DSE 15: Sociology of Food</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12th Class Pass</b>	<b>Nil</b>

**Learning Objectives:**

1. To introduce the field of the sociology of food.
2. To familiarize students with key theoretical perspectives in sociology of food.
3. To equip students with sociological tools to analyse everyday food practices.
4. To discuss key contemporary issues in the sociology of food in general and in the Indian context in particular.
5. To enhance skills to engage with key aspects of **SDG 2 – Zero Hunger** and **SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production**.

**Learning Outcomes:**

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

1. Describe and analyse how the production, distribution, preparation and consumption of food is a social and cultural phenomenon.
2. Explain how food is related to the issues of modernity, taste and identity.
3. Demonstrate the ability to analyse everyday food practices using sociological tools through short field observations or media-based reflections.
4. Analyse how historical developments and socio-cultural contexts have a bearing on issues ranging from hunger to ethics of consumption.
5. Engaging with issues of food security, sustainability, and socio-cultural access to nutrition in pursuit of **SDG 2 – Zero Hunger** and **SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production**.

## **SYLLABUS OF DSE:**

### **Unit I. Introducing the Sociology of Food (6 Hours)**

*This section introduces food as an object of inquiry.*

- a. Why Study Food?
- b. Towards a Sociology of Food

### **Unit II. Food, Culture and Society (15 Hours)**

*This section familiarizes students with various approaches to the analysis of food.*

- a. Cultural Approach
- b. Structural and Materialist Approaches
- c. Semiotic Approach

### **Unit III. Issues in the Sociology of Food (12 Hours)**

*This unit introduces students to the issues of culture, modernity, taste, consumption and identity surrounding food.*

- a. Food, Culture and Modernity
- b. A Sociology of Taste
- c. Food and Identity

### **Unit IV: Food in Indian Context (12 hours)**

*This unit discusses some key issues examined in sociological writings on food in South Asian Context such as ritual, purity, commensality, domesticity and consumption.*

- a. Food and Sociality
- b. Domesticity and Consumption

**Practical Component: NIL**

### **Essential/Recommended Readings:**

#### **Unit I. Introducing the Sociology of Food**

##### **a. Why Study Food?**

Belasco, Warren James. *Food: The Key Concepts*. United Kingdom, Berg Publishers, 2008. Chapter 1. Why Study Food? Pp. 1-13.

##### **b. Towards a sociology of Food**

Beardsworth, Alan, and Keil, Teresa. *Sociology on the Menu: An Invitation to the Study of Food and Society*. United Kingdom, Taylor & Francis, 2002. Chapter 3. Sociological Perspectives on Food and Eating. Pp. 47-70.

## **Unit II. Food, Culture and Society**

### **a. Cultural Approach**

Simmel, Georg. *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*. India, Sage Publications, 1997. The Sociology of The Meal. Pp. 130-135.

### **b. Structural and Materialist Approaches**

Douglas, Mary. 1972. Deciphering a Meal. *Daedalus*, 101(1): 61–81.

Counihan, Carole, Penny Van Esterik eds. 2013. *Food and Culture: A Reader*. United Kingdom, Routledge, Pp. 40-47, 59-71.

### **c. Semiotic Approach**

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. United Kingdom, Vintage, 1993. Pp. 58-64.

## **Unit III: Issues in the Sociology of Food**

### **a. Food, Culture and Modernity**

Mintz, Sidney Wilfred. *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past*. United States, Beacon Press, 1996. Pp. 1-32.

Goody, Jack. *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Chapter 5. The Industrial Food: Towards the Development of a World Cuisine. Pp. 154-174.

Allison, Anne. 1991. Japanese Mothers and Obentōs: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 64(4): 195 -208.

### **b. A Sociology of Taste**

Bourdieu, Pierre. Taste of Luxury, Taste of Necessity. In Carolyn Korsmeyer ed. *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*. United Kingdom, Bloomsbury Academic, 2005. Pp. 72-78.

### **c. Food and Identity**

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities Through Time*. Ukraine, Princeton University Press, 1994. Chapter 1, 8 &9. Pp. 2-11, 114-136.

Dandekar, Deepra. 2020. Women's Ritually Shared Bodies and Food-Penance in Rural Maharashtra. In Nita Kumar, Usha Sanyal (Eds.), *Food, Faith and Gender in South Asia: The*

*Cultural Politics of Women's Food Practices*. United Kingdom, Bloomsbury Publishing, Pp. 151-170.

## **Unit IV. Food in Indian Context**

### **a. Food and Sociality**

Khare, Ravindra. S. (ed.) *The Eternal Food: Gastronomic Ideas and Experiences of Hindus and Buddhists*. United States, State University of New York Press, 1992. Ch. 1 Food with Saints: An Aspect of Hindu Gastrosemantics. Pp. 27-48.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1981. Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia. *American Ethnologist*, 8(3): 494–511.

Staples, James. “Food, Commensality and Caste in South Asia.” In Watson, James L. and Jakob A. Klein (Eds.), *The Handbook of Food and Anthropology*. India, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016. Pp. 74-88.

### **b. Domesticity and Consumption**

Donner, Henrike. 2011. “Gendered Bodies, Domestic Work and Perfect Families: New Regimes of Gender and Food in Bengali Middle-Class Lifestyles.” In Henrike Donner ed. *Being Middle-Class in India: A Way of life*, Routledge. Pp. 47-72.

Conlon, Frank F. “Dining Out in Bombay.” In Carol Breckenridge, ed. *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*. United Kingdom, University of Minnesota Press, 1995. Pp. 90-118.

## **Suggested Readings:**

Achaya, K. T. *Indian Food: A Historical Companion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Arnold, David. *Famine: Social Crisis and Historical Change*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988.

Beagan, B., Chapman, G. E., D’Sylva, A., & Bassett, B. R. “‘It’s Just Easier for Me to Do It: Rationalizing the Family Division of Foodwork.’” *Sociology*, 42(4), 2008, Pp. 653–671.

Drèze, John. “Democracy and Right to Food.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2004, 39(17): 1723-31.

Fine, Ben., Heasman, M., Wright, J. *Consumption in the Age of Affluence: The World of Food*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2002.

Counihan, Carole. *Food in the USA: A Reader*. United Kingdom, Taylor & Francis, 2013.

Freedman, Paul. *Why Food Matters*. United Kingdom: Yale University Press, 2021.

Kiple, Kenneth F. *A Movable Feast: Ten Millennia of Food Globalization*. United States: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Counihan, Carole & Sussane Højlund. *Making Taste Public: Ethnographies of Food and the Senses*. United Kingdom, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.

Mannur, Anita. *Culinary Fictions: Food in South Asian Diasporic Culture*. Temple University Press, 2009.

Harris, Marvin. *Our Kind: Who We Are, Where We Came From, Where We Are Going*. Harper Collins Publishers, 1989.

Parasecoli, Fabio. "Food and Popular Culture." In *Food in Time and Place: The American Historical Association Companion to Food History*. United States: University of California Press. 2014.

Petrini, Carlo. *Slow Food: The Case for Taste*. United Kingdom: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Ross, Eric B. and Marvin Harris (Eds.) *Food and Evolution: Toward a Theory of Human Food Habits*. United States: Temple University Press, 1987.

Toussaint-Samat, Maguelonne. *A History of Food*. Oxford: Wiley, 2009.

**Note:** Examination scheme and mode shall be as prescribed by the Examination Branch, University of Delhi, from time to time.