

IPLAI Reading Group Fall 2017

**Title: Food and Social Networks**

This interdisciplinary reading group will focus on a wide range of food writing that addresses the place of food in social networks. See descriptions of individual sessions for more information about how this theme will be approached in each meeting. Please note that meetings will be held at IPLAI: 3610 McTavish, 2nd floor Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2. Please email the individual session leader for the readings. Participants are asked to contribute food for a potluck meal that is inspired by that session's readings. We have a kitchen at our disposal but serving implements may be minimal so please bring what is needed to serve your dish.

**SESSION 1**

**Leader:** Dr. Alexia Moyer, Editor [red Line-ligne rouge](#)

**Contact:** [amfmoyer@hotmail.com](mailto:amfmoyer@hotmail.com)

**Date:** Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017, 6:00-8:00pm

**Location:** IPLAI: 3610 McTavish, 2nd floor, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2

**Readings:**

Clifford, Helen. "Patents for Portability: Cooking Aboard Ship 1650-1850." *Food on the Move: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery*. Ed. Harlan Walker. Devon, England: Prospect Books, 1996.

excerpts from . . .

Grossman, Anne C, and Lisa G. Thomas. *Lobscouse & Spotted Dog: Which It's a Gastronomic Companion to the Aubrey/Maturin Novels*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000.

Macdonald, Janet. *Feeding Nelson's Navy: The True Story of Food at Sea in the Georgian Era*. London: Frontline, 2014.

The unifying thread across these readings is food and public space. In this case public space is a ship (which functions very much like a small town) on international waters. We will also discuss cooking in transit, portable foods and how our private, domestic kitchens have been influenced by innovations at sea. And finally, there is a literary connection. Patrick O'Brian's nautical historical novels have been reimaged as a literary cookbook.

**Potluck prompt:** portable foods.

**SESSION 2**

**Leader:** Christopher Laurent, Anthropology, Université de Montréal

**Contact:** [claurent77@gmail.com](mailto:claurent77@gmail.com)

**Date:** Monday October 23th, 6:00-8:00pm

**Location:** IPLAI: 3610 McTavish, 2nd floor, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2

**Reading:**

"First Bite: How We Learn to Eat" By Bee Wilson

Through this book we will focus on the social construction of taste. We will discuss how taste preferences and the sensation of taste goes beyond our biological needs as they are both shaped by culture, class, gender, etc.

**Potluck prompt:** food we love but few people in our immediate surrounding like to eat.

### **SESSION 3**

**Leader:** Dr. Natalie Doonan, IPLAI, McGill University

**Contact:** [natalie.doonan@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:natalie.doonan@mail.mcgill.ca)

**Date:** Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, 6:00-8:00pm

**Location:** IPLAI: 3610 McTavish, 2nd floor, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2

#### **Reading:**

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. Parts I “What’s Left?” and III “Disturbed Beginnings: Unintentional Design,” In *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 2015.

Matsutake is a prized wild mushroom. It grows in human-disturbed environments and is technically classed a weed. As such, it represents the paradoxes that are inherent to life that thrives in ruins. Tsing considers the value of story-telling from more-than-human perspectives, taking into account the collaborative relationships that develop between plants and animals, spawning new life in the most unexpected places. We will discuss the merits and limitations of this approach to story-telling.

**Potluck prompt:** starring a wild or resilient lead.

### **SESSION 4**

**Leader:** Sarah Berger Richardson, Faculty of Law, McGill University

**Contact:** [sarah.bergerrichardson@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:sarah.bergerrichardson@mail.mcgill.ca)

**Date:** Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 6:00-8:00pm

**Location:** IPLAI: 3610 McTavish, 2nd floor, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2

#### **Reading:**

Timothy Pachirat’s book *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*.

Pachirat got a job working at a slaughterhouse and the book is an ethnographic account of his experience. Pachirat teaches Poli Sci.

Although the focus on meat production is perhaps a bit niche for our group, the broader theme of the book is making visible aspects of our food system that are hidden in plain sight.

**Potluck prompt:** people bring a dish they will present to the group in a way that makes visible an aspect of the food that is usually equally hidden. This way the discussion can flow from the theory provided in the book to practical application.