

CALL FOR PAPERS

Amsterdam Symposium on the History of Food

2018

Body and Soul: Examining the historical relation between nutrition, health, and culture

The act of ingestion ensures our intimate relationship with food. This literal ‘incorporation’ has implications that go far beyond basic physicality: it is precisely in the corporeal sphere that the cultural significance of our food habits is on display. Crucial to the connection between food and body is the concept of control. State institutions, medical professionals, and spiritual teachers have prescribed and proscribed dietary behaviour, exercising what Michel Foucault has termed ‘biopower’, in an attempt to regulate the nourishment of populations. Such nutritional advice has often been a form of moral guidance: to authorities like doctors and religious leaders, public health was a medical *and* an ethical issue. Corporations have made similar persuasion efforts, often aided by health gurus and sportspersons – from 19th-century fruitarians to 21st-century Instagram influencers advertising their ‘killer’ bodies. By conceptualizing the body as a machine in need of ‘input’, they increasingly sold consumers the prospect of total control over their health and wellbeing.

Yet the public has the agency to modify and contest existing food regimes. By narrativizing the fundamental everyday practice of food consumption, individuals fashion eating – and not-eating – into a performance, thereby inextricably linking these acts to personal identity. Their pursuit for healthy and inspiring lifestyles can lead to greater self-care, but can also encourage problematic body/food mindsets, such as anorexia or orthorexia. No wonder that, since ancient times, the notion of a powerful connection between psychological and physical health has been deployed by spiritual leaders to promise audiences control over their desires and appetites. Hence it is *especially* in the context of the body that the cultural relevance of food can be explored.

Topics

This year's Symposium aims at drawing into dialogue scholars exploring the historical complexities of the relationship between body and nutrition. We invite abstracts for papers covering any topic related to the study of this relationship including, but not limited to, the following:

- Nutritional science, dietetics, and medicine
- Popularization and mediatization of nutritional knowledge
- Dieting, body images, and physical culture
- Food, spirituality and morality
- Public health and nutritional policy

Guidelines Paper Proposals

The symposium program consists of plenary keynote lectures, paper presentations and panel discussions. If you are interested in presenting a paper at the symposium, please submit an abstract before **5 March 2018**. Please expect to be presenting to a large audience of up to 250 people, including academic as well as professional participants. The symposium language is English. Presenters of accepted papers are asked to speak 20 minutes as lively and engaging as possible, followed by a discussion with the panel and the audience under the supervision of a session chair.

Applications should include:

- Title of proposed paper
- Abstract (maximum 500 words)
- Biographical information (short CV)
- Contact information (e-mail, telephone and postal address)

Applications should be sent by the deadline of **5 March 2018** to: Foodhistory-ub@uva.nl

Notification of acceptance:

As it may not be possible to include everyone's submission, the organizing committee and advisory board will make a selection. You will be notified if the paper is accepted by **1 May 2018**.

Organisation

The Amsterdam Symposium on the History of Food is the result of a collaborative partnership between Special Collections (UvA), the Amsterdam School of Historical Studies (UvA) and the research unit Social & Cultural Food Studies (FOST) of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Advisory Board

Prof. Dr. Ir. Louise O. Fresco; Mrs. Claudia Roden; Prof. Dr. Peter Scholliers; Prof. Dr. Irene E. Zwiap

Aims

The symposium is an annual point of assembly and an exchange of knowledge in the field of food history. It intends to stimulate debate and research that bridges the gap between different disciplines. Submissions are encouraged to use an interdisciplinary approach, in which theory and methods from diverse (social) sciences are appropriated or from other disciplines that take a historical stance. Another aim is to transfer academic research to a wider public and stimulate research using the Special Collection of the University of Amsterdam. The symposium is therefore targeted at both an academic and a professional audience.

Organizing Committee

IJsbrand van Dijk; Joke Mammen; Antonia Mazel; Jon Verriet; Ingrid de Zwarte

More information and updates about the symposium

<http://bijzonderecollectiesuva.nl/foodhistory/amsterdam-symposium-on-the-history-of-food/>

Partners

Special Collections of the University of Amsterdam

Amsterdam School of Historical Studies (UvA)

Social & Cultural Food Studies (FOST) of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel