



Fall 2019 Honors Seminar

PLAY WITH FOOD

Professor Erin B. Mee Erinmee1@gmail.com

THEA-UA 801-001_UT — 4 Credits

Thursdays 11:00am-1:45pm

Many contemporary performances mobilize eating and drinking as central components of the theatrical experience. In an attempt to create multi-sensory, multimodal, embodied engagement this theatre can be tasted, smelled, and touched, as well as seen and heard. Theatricality affects taste: strawberries taste sweeter when served on a white plate, and brass instrumentation brings out the bitter notes in food. Is the reverse also true? How does bringing something into the body to roll around on the tongue, savor, and swallow, enhance a theatrical experience? What does it mean to “taste” theatre?

This seminar examines food in/and/as performance. We begin by examining the Sanskrit aesthetic theory of *rasa*, which uses taste as its central metaphor. Students will then experience several “edible performances” first hand in the form of Chanoyu (The Way of Tea), dinner at a theme restaurant, *The Dance of Chocolate*, an immersive theatre piece centered on food, and a new mode of dinner theatre. We will unpack the power dynamics of table etiquette in “fine dining,” analyze the components of a *seeder* plate as “food for thought,” recreate several performance recipes from the *Futurist Cookbook*, and read plays centered around food, such as: *Food and Fadwa*, *Cake*, *Café Play*, and *A Serious Banquet*. Essays from *Food and Theatre on the World Stage*, and special issues of *Performance Research* will help us analyze food – and eating - as a mode of performance.