

Winter 2020 Lecture Series at the Dunbar Community Centre

Eat, Drink, and Be Merry...

If you died tomorrow, could you say you lived?

This biblical reminder of the inevitability of death comments on the briefness of life and exhorts us to enjoy what little time we have. Lectures in this series will contemplate food, fun, and death, sometimes all at the same time.

Jan 16

Say, What's in this Drink? Poisons in Ancient Greece and Rome

Jennifer Knapp

Socrates drank it, Cleopatra injected it, Claudius ate it. Toxic substances were everywhere in the ancient world and were often used to kill. We will explore poisonous substances and their use, both intentional and unintentional, and the notorious people who used them and were harmed by them.



Jan 23

Rumblings: Hunger and the Hunger for Change in Paris, 1870-1871

Craig Keating

The Prussian siege of Paris during the winter of 1870-71 is remembered as a period of extreme hunger. The signal moment was the sacrifice of animals at the Paris zoo to the needs of elite French gastronomic ideals that similarly refused to surrender to the conditions imposed upon it by the Prussians. Yet in the aftermath, the lurid circumstances of this all-consuming moment were chalked up to the insatiable appetites of the working class.

Jan 30

Locks of Hairs and What Not To Wear: Death and Mourning Rituals in Victorian England

Paisley Mann

The Victorians took death and mourning rituals very seriously: rules governed the length of time a person had to remain in black, and the hair of deceased loved ones was often fashioned into jewelry. This talk will explore the various customs and expectations surrounding death and mourning in Victorian England and consider what seemingly-macabre practices might have provided grieving Victorians.

Feb 6

Some Effects of Relentless and Rapid Modernization: Trains as Facilitators of Merrimaking in the Literature of the Meiji and Taisho Eras of Japan (1868 – 1926)

Stefan Haag

Using fiction of the era and museums and other impressions from a three-week rail journey through Japan, we will explore the effect that the transformative expansion of the railway system had on Japanese society during the Meiji and Taisho eras. What does "merrimaking" mean to the Japanese and was there a specifically Japanese high modernist variant – as there was in Germany?

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Feb 13

Bread and Circuses: Imperial Monopoly in the Roman Empire

Kim McCullough

Juvenal coined the phrase “panem et circenses” as a way to describe the Roman people’s demand for food and entertainment. We will focus on the emperor’s sponsorship of spectacles for the masses and the degree to which they were considered entertaining, what can be characterized as “good” games, not so “good” games, and how to keep the general population of Rome merry.

Feb 20

Hunger, Thirst and Jubilation: The Experience of the First Crusade

Michael Fulton

The armies of the First Crusade travelled through Anatolia and western Syria, overcoming incredible odds and taking Jerusalem. Often overlooked is the suffering that they endured along the way: at Antioch, starvation; at Jerusalem, dehydration. Those lucky enough to see the fall of Jerusalem, having had not much to eat, nor to drink, could at last celebrate. But then a new enemy approached...

Feb 27

Soup and Snobbery: Food in the Novels of Jane Austen

Tanya Lewis

Jane Austen’s correspondence indicates that she was deeply interested in food production and procurement, yet her practical culinary interests seldom surface in her fiction. In this lecture, we will look at how Austen often wrote of food as a moral marker rather than a real bodily need.

March 5

Who Wants To Live Forever? Body Hacking, Biological Immortality, and Other Ways to Evade Death

Lealle Ruhl

Contemporary attempts to challenge human mortality fall into two general streams: those which seek to extend life, usually through optimizing physiological processes (‘body hacks’), and those which seek to achieve immortality, usually through technological means (downloading our brains into computers). In the recurring human obsession with forestalling death, it is curious that our obsession with living forever often excludes important considerations of how to live our best life.

March 12

Ancient Maya Chocolate Pots: Not All Were Made for Drinking

Cara Tremain

The Ancient Maya made beautifully painted ceramic vases for food and drink, and it has long been assumed that many were used for cacao beverages- the precursor to today's chocolate. We will explore the latest research into these fascinating ceramics, including results of chemical analysis and evidence of modern forgeries, revealing there is much more to these seemingly sweet containers than meets the eye!

March 19

For Tomorrow We Die: The Black Death and its Impact, 1346-1351

Niall Christie

Originating in Central Asia and spreading to East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, the pandemic known as the Black Death wiped out somewhere between a third and a half of the populations that it afflicted. In this talk we will look at the impact of the plague, including those whose response was indeed "Eat, drink and be merry," and those who reacted rather differently...

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Location: Dunbar Community Centre
4747 Dunbar St
604 222 6060
www.dunbarcentre.org

Thursdays, 7pm to 8:30pm

\$5/lecture, \$2.50 for students

\$45/series, \$22.50 for students

To register visit ca.apm.activecommunities.com/vancouver or phone 604 222 6060 or visit the Dunbar Community Centre in person. Students must register in person or by phone to get the discounted price.

Advance registration recommended. Limited supply of tickets available at the door.

All speakers are Langara College faculty members.

