This seminar investigates the place of food in American history and culture, from reputed cannibalism in the American colonies to the rise of fast food in the twentieth century. Through selected episodes and commodities, we will explore the role of taste, competition for food, and capitalism in recasting American lives and identities. Topics include: colonial hunger and violence; the development of taste and “refined” eating; the role of food in defining race, class, and regional culture; the rise of mass production and its environmental effects and the reshaping of American bodies. In following the evolution of American food ways, we will visit eighteenth-century coffeehouses, antebellum slave quarters, campfires of the American West, the slaughterhouses of the Chicago meat market and, of course, McDonald’s.