

QMU MSc Gastronomy pre-course reading and materials.

Reading

Here are some suggested books for relatively easy, preliminary reading. The first five books here, listed alphabetically by author, are core texts for the course, so you will find them referred to frequently during your studies. The full list of core texts and other advance reading for semester one modules will be sent through at a later date. You certainly don't necessarily have to rush out and buy them all new: many of these titles might be available through public libraries, in good second-hand bookshops, as e-books or audio books (which some former students recommend as an easy way into them).

- BAGGINI, J. 2014. *Virtues of the Table*. London: Granta.
- BELASCO, W., 2008. *Food: the key concepts*. Berg, New York.
- PATEL, R., 2007. *Stuffed and Starved: markets, power and the hidden battle for the world food system*. London: Portobello
- POLLAN, M., 2012. *Cooked: a natural history of transformation*. Penguin
- SPECTOR, T., 2015. *The Diet Myth: The Real Science Behind What We Eat*. London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson.

In addition, you might want to extend your reading to these (although they aren't core texts, they're accessible and relevant):

- BARBER, D., 2014. *The third plate: field notes on the future of food*. London: Little Brown.
- KREBS, J., 2013. *Food: a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- POLLAN, M., 2006. *The omnivores dilemma: the search for the perfect meal in a fast food world*. London: Bloomsbury.
- WILSON, B., 2012. *Consider the fork: a history of how we cook and eat*. New York: Basic Books.

Listening, watching and web resources

- We'd always recommend tuning in to BBC Radio 4's excellent [Food Programme](#), either in its regular broadcast slots on Sunday or Monday, by podcast, or its comprehensive archive.
- BBC World Service also puts out a weekly half-hour show called [The Food Chain](#), which quite likes to plunge into the political and economic role of food around the globe.
- Also, BBC Radio Scotland's much improved [Kitchen Café](#) is on Thursdays, repeated on Sunday morning, and can be found on iPlayer. Episodes are occasionally recorded at Queen Margaret University.
- You can go further afield with programmes from [National Public Radio](#) or [Public Broadcasting Service](#) in the US. You can pick up podcasts from here, or from sources such as [Gastropod](#), [Kut](#) or [The Great Courses](#).
- Many of the broadcasters above also do video clips and more. You won't be surprised to find plenty of engaging video among the [TED Talks](#), which feature many authors and other experts mentioned above and found elsewhere among these resources.
- There are countless websites you could keep tabs on for relevant articles, news and links. A couple you can get started with are the [Sustainable Food Trust](#), [Food Ethics Council](#), and [Grist](#) (US). In The Guardian, you should find it relatively easy to wean yourself off Jay Rayner and find some meatier food, farming and environmental issues tackled [elsewhere on](#)

[their site](#). Don't spend all your time there, however, as the sky will fall on your head. They take things less seriously on Vice's food strand, [Munchies](#). In amongst the irreverent, frivolous and annoying there are a few gems.

- If you want to familiarise yourself with more scholarly and academic articles, dip your toe in the journal [Gastronomica](#), published in California.

Tips on reading materials for postgraduate study

You are not necessarily expected to swallow any of these books, websites or resources whole. Get a general sense of a book by reading the introduction, skimming the conclusion, checking out the contents, then going online to see if there are any free-access articles written by the same author that provide a handy summary of the main arguments. Or you might find a podcast or interview with the author, or a review of the book. Another time, pick out one chapter that looks particularly interesting and try to get a grasp of the chapter: the main theoretical position being proposed, how the argument is constructed, and any bits and pieces that particularly stimulate your thinking.

With websites and podcasts, pace yourself. There's a ton of material out there and one of the skills you'll develop as you study is how to sift through material to find things that are relevant to topics you're interested in or want to explore deeper.

Also, crucially, remember that almost every bit of reading or research you do should lead to something else -- there may be direct references, footnotes or links you can follow up so that you start to get used to going back to original sources, and see how an author has built on the work of others. At other times you will come across concepts you might want to look up, or the names of authors, books or articles worth keeping in mind for later research.

Alongside all your reading, watching and listening, get into a good habit of taking notes. This should include short precis of chapters, summaries of articles and gathered notes and reflections on items you encounter. Not only will this help you create a useful resource of relevant reading, but it will help you develop useful habits around identifying key facts and theories, consolidating arguments and accurately representing viewpoints that aren't necessarily your own.