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Counihan to Explore Italian Cuisine

Posted on Monday, February 13, 2012

Researcher and author Carole Counihan will join the Fisher Center for the Study of Women and Men to speak about Italian food activism on Wednesday, Feb. 15. Counihan's talk, "Gender and Food Activism in Italy," will continue a year-long discussion on food and will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Geneva Room of the Warren Hunting Smith Library.



Last semester, the Fisher Center for the Study of Women and Men welcomed to campus a host of speakers who cast a critical eye on food - exploring the gender, politics and culture of this integral world.

There will also be a Thursday morning roundtable discussion at 9 a.m. in The Fisher Center, Demarest 212, during which Counihan will answer questions and interact with students one-on-one.

In her research, Counihan has discovered that literature on food and gender suggests that there are several forces that can influence one's participation in food activism. Relations to food - whether the relationship is sensory, corporeal or emotional - can be divided along gender lines. It is this divide that can play into the success - or failure of food activism.

Using recent ethnographic interviews conducted in 2009 and 2011, Counihan has analyzed the views of prominent Italian leaders and food activists in her work. During her talk, she will discuss how their experience with food in Italian culture has altered their efforts to create a food system that is just, sustainable, of high quality, and reflective of local communities.

Counihan is a visiting professor of food anthropology in the gastronomy MLA program at Boston University and a retired professor of anthropology at Millersville University in Pennsylvania. She received her BA in history from Stanford University and her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Massachusetts. Her research focuses on food, gender and identity in the U.S. and Italy. Supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, she authored "A Tortilla Is Like Life: Food and Culture in the San Luis Valley of Colorado."

She is also author of "Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family and Gender in Twentieth Century Florence" and "The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power." She is co-editor of *Food in the USA: A Reader*, and editor-in-chief of the scholarly journal *Food and Foodways*. Counihan has served as a visiting professor at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Italy, and at the University of Cagliari in Italy.

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