



CHC Chicago Foodways Roundtable

Easy Target: Foie Gras as a Pragmatic and Problematic Target for Animal Rights Organizations, Cities and Countries

Presented by
Michaela DeSoucey

Saturday, May 8th, 2010
10 AM
Kendall College
900 North Branch Street, Chicago
(West of Halsted Street, North of Chicago Avenue)
Free Parking

Cost: \$3 per person, free to Kendall students and faculty with ID.

This talk is based on Michaela DeSoucey's dissertation, called *Gullet Politics*, in which she compares the political, cultural, and moral debates over foie gras in the U.S. (primarily in Chicago) and in France. She conducted several years of ethnographic fieldwork, 80 interviews, and analyzed the contents of myriad newspaper and magazine articles, web postings, legislative documents, veterinary reports, radio and television reports, and organizational documents.

For this talk, Michaela DeSoucey plans to focus on foie gras's status as an 'easy target' for animal rights activism and for legislatures, as well as what unintended consequences have occurred for its selection as a social problem. She will compare how the frame of 'easy target' played out in the case of Chicago foie gras politics and in France. As most of you know, foie gras was banned in Chicago between 2006 and 2008, by ordinance of the Chicago City Council. Rhetoric of the 'easy target' pervaded public discussion of the rationale for its selection as a target of legislative regulation, as well as galvanized resistance to the ban. In France, on the other hand, rhetoric of the 'easy target' elsewhere spurred the French national government to legally protect foie gras as cultural patrimony. DeSoucey calls this process "gastronationalism."

Michaela DeSoucey is a PhD candidate and Graduate Legal Studies Fellow at Northwestern University in the Department of Sociology. She is finishing her dissertation, *Gullet Politics: Foie Gras in the U.S. and France*, this spring, and she will begin a postdoctoral fellowship in September at Princeton University's Center for the Study of Social Organization. An article, *Gastronationalism: Food Traditions and Authenticity Politics in the European Union*, will be published this June in the *American Sociological Review*. Michaela has also conducted research and published articles on local food movements, the grass-fed beef movement, and a comparison of bans on foie gras and trans fat. Aside from her scholarly interest in food, Michaela has also volunteered at the Evanston Farmers Market and Green City Market, working for Kinnikinnick Farm since 2005. She is also getting married this summer, and the wedding will take place at Kinnikinnick Farm.

This program is hosted by the Chicago Foodways Roundtable. To reserve, please call (847) 432-8255, then leave your name, telephone number and how many people in your party or e-mail: chicago.foodways.roundtable@gmail.com

Next program June 19th at Kendall College: Canadian ex-pats in the United States.