

## **African American Foodways: Finding Culinary Soul in the Rosenbach Collection**

**Instructors: Psyche Williams-Forson and Kelsey Scouten Bates**

**Syllabus** (all courses are 6:30-8:30 pm via Zoom)

### **October 18: African-American Culinary History, a primer**

**Key Reading:** *The Cooking Gene*, by Michael C. Twitty

Key discussion points:

- did this book give you new perspectives on African-American cuisine?
- what does African-American culinary history tell us about U.S. history?
- how does the complexity and history of African-American cuisine reflect (or not) your personal culinary history?

### **November 22: Creating tradition: the continuing development of African-American cuisine**

**Key Reading:** *High on the Hog*, Jessica B. Harris

Key discussion points:

- creating a food tradition: the evolution and dispersion of soul food in the U.S.
- exploring ideas of ownership, legacy, and authenticity

Additional Reading: *Comfort in a Decidedly Uncomfortable Time*, Kelsey Scouten Bates (this will be sent to students by the instructors)

### **December 20: Food as aesthetic signifier of the African Diaspora**

**Key readings:**

Essays (will be provided by instructors)

- excerpts from *The New Negro, the Life of Alain Locke*, by Jeffrey C. Stewart
- *Every Crumb of Cake: W.E.B. Du Bois, food intimacy, and patriarchy*, by Jennifer Wallach
- *Racial Imperialism and Food Traditions* by Lee A. McBride

Key discussion points:

- Who were Alain Locke and W.E.B. Du Bois and what do they have to do with food?
- Why was the term *Soul Food* coined and what does that mean about the Black arts movement?
- What is Soul Food to the African Diaspora?

**January 24: The contemporary meanings and purveyors of the Soul Food tradition**

**Key Reading:** *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs*, Psyche Williams-Forsson (esp. chapters 1-5—part 1)

- Soul food and Black women in the 21st Century
- What is the meaning of food to the migration and movements of Black people in the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

additional reading: *Everyday Use*, by Alice Walker (this can be found on the internet)