

Food for Thought

PHIL 10163
Semester 2
2019-20

1. Course Information

SCQF Level: 10 (Year 4 Undergraduate)

SCQF/ECTS Credits: 20/10

Course Organiser: Tom Baker

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Drop in Hours: TBA

Course Secretary: Ann-Marie Cowe

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2. Course Description

The purpose of this class is to consider and discuss a range of ethical issues broadly related to food, e.g. food production, consumer food choices, and the consequences of current and past food policy. In the first half of the class, we will focus on veganism and vegetarianism as personal moral choices. We will examine various arguments in favour of these positions, but also consider a range of objections and potential problems. In the second half of the class, we will discuss a number of additional issues related to food choices. For example, to what extent are we as consumers morally complicit in the various harms that are caused by food production? Is supporting only locally produced food a superior moral position? And what, if any, interaction there might be between ethical and aesthetic considerations when it comes to food?

Content Warning: Some of the readings include graphic descriptions of the mistreatment of animals. If you have any concerns about this, please feel free to get touch.

2.1 Learning Objectives

Knowledge:

Students should gain a critical appreciation of debates concerning the main theories concerning the ethics of food choices, and their strengths and weakness.

Skills:

Students will develop their ability to: reason, philosophically, to a well-thought-out position on various topics in the ethics of food choices; develop their own views, systematically, drawing upon the sources on which the course focuses; express themselves clearly and precisely in writing, seminar discussion, and presentation.

Understanding:

Students should gain a critical understanding of the main philosophical debates concerning: for and against the consumption of meat; the moral status of non-human animals; environmental, health and societal costs associated with the production various types of meat and dairy; for (and against) only buying local, organic and sustainable food products; the interaction between ethical and aesthetic considerations when it comes to food.

3. Structure of Teaching

Seminars are Thursday 14:10-16:00, weeks 1-5 and 6-11 in S37, 7 George Square.

Total Hours: 200

There will be 11 two-hour seminars and 4 programme level learning and teaching hours. This leaves 174 hours of directed and independent learning. If you want to do well on this course, you need to be disciplined with yourself and do the required work outside of class time.

It's *vital* that you only come to class (a) having done the reading and (b) prepared to contribute to discussion on it. The issues under consideration are of crucial importance and you all have interesting points to make. Think about what your view is and come to class ready to discuss it. Make sure to bring with you (a) the reading (b) your notes (c) some questions and thoughts on the reading.

4. Reading List

Listed below are the essential readings for each seminar and some further readings for each theme. For additional further readings please consult the bibliographies of the papers we read and/or philpapers.org. Many of the readings for this class can be found in the books listed below.

Chignell, Cuneo & Halteman (eds.) (2016) [*Philosophy Comes to Dinner*](#) (Routledge).

David M. Kaplan (ed.) (2012) [*The Philosophy of Food*](#) (University of California Press).

Michael Pollan (2011) [*The Omnivore's Dilemma*](#) (Bloomsbury Paperbacks).

Barnhill, Budolfson & Doggett (eds.) (2018) [*The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics*](#) (OUP).

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Veganism and Vegetarianism as a Moral Choice

Week One

**Tristram McPherson (2016) '[Why I Am a Vegan \(and You Should Be One Too\)](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch. 4.

**Alastair Norcross (2004) '[Puppies, Pigs, and People](#)', *Philosophical Perspectives* 18(1): 229-245.

Week Two

**Peter Singer (2009) '[Speciesism and Moral Status](#)', *Metaphilosophy* 40(3/4): 567-581 .

** David Schmidtz (2011) '[Are All Species Equal?](#)', in Beauchamp & Frey (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics* (OUP).

Week Three

**Terence Cuneo (2016) '[Conscientious Omnivorism](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch. 1.

**Timothy Hsiao (2015) '[In Defense of Eating Meat](#)', *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 28: 277-291.

Week Four

**Carol Adams (1990) [The Sexual Politics of Meat](#) (Continuum Books): chs. 1 & 2

**Christina Van Dyke (2016) '[Manly Meat and Gendered Eating](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch.2.

Background and Further Reading for Weeks 1-4

Bob Fischer (2018) 'Arguments for Consuming Animal Products', in *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics* (OUP).

Loren Lomasky (2013) '[Is it Wrong to Eat Animals?](#)', *Social Philosophy and Policy* 30(1-2): 177-200.

Elizabeth Harman (2011) '[The Moral Significance of Animal Pain and Animal Death](#)', in Beauchamp & Frey (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics* (OUP).

Michael Moss (2013) '[The Extraordinary Science of Addictive Junk Food](#)', *New York Times*.

Singer & Mason (2006) *The Ethics of What We Eat*, pp.15-83.

Consumer Responsibility and Consumer Complicity

Week Five

**Ted. A Warfield (2016) '[Eating Dead Animals](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch. 8

**Andrew Chignell (2016) '[Can We Really Vote with Our Forks?](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch. 10.

Week Six

**Mark Bryan Budolfson (2016) '[Consumer Ethics, Harm Footprints, and the Empirical Dimensions of Food Choices](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch. 9.

**Adrienne M. Martin (2016) '[Factory Farming and Consumer Complicity](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch. 11.

Week Seven

**Elizabeth Harman (2016) '[Eating Meat as a Morally Permissible Moral Mistake](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch. 12.

**Matthew C. Halteman & Megan Halteman Zwart (2016) '[Philosophy as Therapy for Recovering \(Unrestrained\) Omnivores](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch. 7.

Background and Further Reading for Weeks 5-7

Anne Barnhill & Tyler Doggett (2018) '[Food Ethics I: food production and food justice](#)' and '[Food Ethics II: consumption and obesity](#)', *Philosophy Compass* 13.

Ronald Hinch (2018) '[Chocolate, slavery, forced labour, child labour and the state](#)', in Gray & Hinch (eds.) *A Handbook of Food Crime: Immoral and Illegal Practices in the Food Industry and What to Do About Them* (Policy Press).

Jeff McMahan (2016) '[The Problem of Moral Predation](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch.15.

Stellan Welin, Julie Gold & Johanna Berlin (2012) '[In Vitro Meat: What Are the Moral Issues?](#)', in David M. Kaplan (ed.) *The Philosophy of Food* (University of California Press).

G. Owen Schaefer & Julian Savulescu (2014) 'The Ethics of Producing *In Vitro* Meat', *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 31(2): 188-202.

Michael Pollan (2011) *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Bloomsbury Paperbacks): pp.1-123.

Paul B. Thompson (2015) *From Field to Fork: Food Ethics for Everyone* (OUP)

Locavorism

Week Eight

**Charles List (2018) '[The New Hunter and Local Food](#)', in *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics* (OUP).

**Michael Pollan (2011) *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Bloomsbury Paperbacks): chs.16 & 17

Week Nine

**Anne Barnhill (2016) '[Does Locavorism Keep it Too Simple?](#)', *Philosophy Comes to Dinner*, ch.13.

**Vasile Stanescu (2010) '["Green" Eggs and Ham? The Myth of Sustainable Meat and the Danger of the Local](#)', *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 8(1/2): 8-32.

Background and Further Reading for Weeks 8-9

Richard P. Hayes (2012) '[The Myth of Happy Meat](#)', in David M. Kaplan (ed.) *The Philosophy of Food* (University of California Press).

Lisa Heldke (2012) '[Down-Home Global Cooking: A Third Option between Cosmopolitanism and Localism](#)', in David M. Kaplan (ed.) *The Philosophy of Food* (University of California Press).

Matthew Adams (2018) '[The Aesthetic Value of Local Food](#)', *The Monist* 101(3) 324-339.

Singer & Mason (2006) *The Ethics of What We Eat*, ch. 10.

Food, Ethics and Aesthetics

Week Ten

**Carolyn Korsmeyer (2012) '[Ethical Gourmandism](#)', in David M. Kaplan (ed.) *The Philosophy of Food* (University of California Press).

**Susan Wolf (2018) '[The Ethics of Being a Foodie](#)', *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics* (OUP).

Background and Further Reading for Week 10

Shen-yi Liao & Aaron Meskin (2018) '[Morality and Aesthetics of Food](#)', in *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics* (OUP).

Sanna Hirvonen (2013) '[Ethics and Food Taste](#)', in Thompson & Kaplan (eds) *Encyclopedia of Food and Agricultural Ethics* (Springer).

Carolyn Korsmeyer (2011) *Savoring Disgust: The Foul and the Fair in Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Elizbeth Telfer (1996) *Food for Thought: philosophy and food* (Routledge).

Week Eleven - Review

Details will be given in week 9.

5. Assessment

Your final mark will be determined on the basis of four things.

- 2 short writing assignments 500 words each [total: 40%, ea. 20%]
- 1 final essay of 2000 words [50%]
- participation [10%]

5.1 Short Writing Assignments

For the two short writing assignments, you will be required to provide a critical response to one of the essential readings from weeks 1-4 and 5-9, respectively. These should include: a very brief statement of the argument/theory presented in the paper; a summary of a criticism/objection to the argument/theory.

- Writing Assignment 1 – due **Thursday 6th February, 2020 by 12pm (noon)**
- Writing Assignment 2 – due **Thursday 26th March, 2020 by 12pm (noon)**

5.2 Final Essay

Your final 2000word essay will be on a topic of your choosing. You should consult with me before deciding on the topic.

- Due **Thursday 23rd April, 2020 by 12pm (noon)**

5.3 Participation

You will be required create the materials for and deliver a short (5-10min) presentation on one of the arguments/themes/views covered on the course. If you have assessment adjustments which excuse you from giving a presentation please email me to arrange for an alternative to presenting.

You'll be assessed against the following criteria:

- a. How clearly and accurately you explain the relevant (e.g.) theory.
- b. How accurately you analyse and how well you evaluate it.

As to the **materials** of your presentation, you should create:

1. A presentation (e.g. PowerPoint slides, Prezi, etc.) with bullet-points, etc.
2. A handout which should be distinct from the presentation slides.

5.4 Coursework Dissertation

For undergraduates taking this course by coursework dissertation, the relevant details are:

- Deadline for notifying the teaching office which course you'll be completing the dissertation on: **Monday 24th February, 2020 by 12pm (noon)**.
- Deadline for submission: **Tuesday 21st April, 2020 by 12pm (noon)**.

6. FAQ

Note: I include here the answers to the most common queries. You are *absolutely* free to email me with your questions (or, preferably, ask me in class so that I can give the answer to others at the same time). However, please check this document and the course material on the LEARN page for the answer to your question first. This is a test – please email me a picture of a panda. Email is a wonderful resource but (a) we are all overwhelmed by it, partly because we don't use other available resources and (b) it is a very inefficient method for me to communicate with you all as a group.

(1) I missed a class, can you send me a summary of what was covered?

No. Make sure you are familiar with the reading that week.

(2) How do I go about finding extra readings?

Read the prescribed texts and the further reading suggestions listed above. Then read the things cited within those. And so on.

(3) How many references do I need for my essay?

There's no fixed number. And it's better not to think in that way (that there's some number of references you must include). When deciding whether to reference something the only relevant question is whether discussing this person's view/objection/etc. contributes positively to your answering the question. If it doesn't, then leave it out.

(4) How should I reference?

I don't mind at all which convention you use. Just pick some convention and apply it consistently. For more information see, for example:

<http://www.docs.is.ed.ac.uk/docs/Libraries/PDF/SEcitingreferencesHarvard.pdf>

(5) I need an extension / I have extenuating circumstances

You must talk to the teaching office and the student support officers (SSOs).