Food for Thought: The Ethics of Food Choices — The University of Edinburgh 2017/2018
Lecturer: Dr. Anders J. Schoubye (anders.schoubye@ed.ac.uk)
Course Secretary: Ann-Marie Cowe (annmarie.cowe@ed.ac.uk)
Time/Location: TBA

Course Overview
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 favor 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 are we
morally required to intervene with respect to harms in the wild?

Readings:
Most of the readings for this class can be found in the books listed below (which you should
therefore somehow acquire).

- Philosophy Comes to Dinner (ed. A. Chignell, T. Cuneo, M.C. Halteman), Routledge, 2016.
- Peter Singer and Jim Mason, The Ethics of What We Eat, Rodale, 2006.

— the remaining articles/papers will be available online on Learn.

Writing Assignments:
This course features three writing assignments in total. Two short writing assignments with a
question prompts and one final essay on a topic of your choosing. You should consult with
me before deciding on the topic for your final essay.

- First Writing Assignment: TBA (500 words)
- Second Writing Assignment: TBA (500 words)
- Final Essay: TBA (2000 words)

Class Structure
This class is predominantly based on discussion. Each week, you will be divided into small
groups where you will discuss a set of questions distributed at the beginning of class. After
approximately 20 minutes of small group discussion, we will convene as a group and discuss
the answers of each group together.
**Schedule:** *Food for Thought: The Ethics of Food Choices*

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<td><strong>Theme: Veganism and Vegetarianism as a Moral Choice</strong></td>
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| **Week 1-2** | Required Reading  
— Tristam McPherson (2016). *Why I Am a Vegan (and You Should Be One Too)*, Philosophy Comes to Dinner, ch.4. |
| **Week 3** | Required Reading  
| **Week 4** | Required Reading:  
**Background Reading for Week 1-3**  
— Singer and Mason. *The Ethics of What We Eat*, p.15-83,  
— Food Inc. (documentary, available on e.g. Netflix)  
| **Theme: Consumer Responsibility, Consumer Complicity** |
| **Week 5** | Required Reading  
— 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 6** | Required Reading  
**Week 7**  
*Required Reading*  
— Adrienne M. Martin (2016). *Factory Farming and Consumer Complicity*. Philosophy Comes to Dinner, ch.11.

*Background Reading for Weeks 4-6*  

**Theme: Locavorism**

**Week 8**  
*Required Reading*  
— Michael Pollan (2011). *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Bloomsbury Paperbacks (ch.16-17)

**Week 9**  
*Required Reading*  

**Theme: Moral Responsibility and Harms in the Wild**

**Week 10**  
*Required Reading*  

**Theme: Food and Religion**

**Week 11**  
*Required Reading*  
— Matthew C. Halteman. *Compassionate Eating as Care of Creation* in Food, Ethics, and Society (eds. Anne Barnhill, Mark Budolfson, and Tyler Doggett)