

**Food for Thought: The Ethics of Food Choices** — The University of Edinburgh 2017/2018  
Lecturer: Dr. Anders J. Schoubye ([anders.schoubye@ed.ac.uk](mailto:anders.schoubye@ed.ac.uk))  
Course Secretary: Ann-Marie Cowe ([annmarie.cowe@ed.ac.uk](mailto: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.
- Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Bloomsbury Paperbacks, 2011.

— 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*

DATE	READINGS
	<b>Theme: Veganism and Vegetarianism as a Moral Choice</b>
<b>Week 1-2</b>	<i>Required Reading</i> — Alastair Norcross (2004). <i>Puppies, Pigs, and People</i> . Philosophical Perspective 18. — Tristram McPherson (2016). <i>Why I Am a Vegan (and You Should Be One Too)</i> , Philosophy Comes to Dinner, ch.4.
<b>Week 3</b>	<i>Required Reading</i> — Peter Singer (2009). <i>Speciesism and Moral Status</i> . <i>Metaphilosophy</i> Vol.40, Noûs. 1-2
<b>Week 4</b>	<i>Required Reading:</i> — Carol Adams (1990). <i>The Sexual Politics of Meat</i> . Continuum Books. (chapter 1-2) — Christina Van Dyke (2016). <i>Manly Meat and Gendered Eating</i> . Philosophy Comes to Dinner, ch.2.  <i>Background Reading for Week 1-3</i> — Singer and Mason. <i>The Ethics of What We Eat</i> , p.15-83, — Food Inc. (documentary, available on e.g. <i>Netflix</i> ) — Michael Moss (2013). <i>The Extraordinary Science of Addictive Junk Food</i> . New York Times. ( <a href="http://nyti.ms/11T0oSR">http://nyti.ms/11T0oSR</a> )
	<b>Theme: Consumer Responsibility, Consumer Complicity</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	<i>Required Reading</i> — Ted. A Warfield (2016). <i>Eating Dead Animals</i> . Philosophy Comes to Dinner, ch.8 — Andrew Chignell (2016). <i>Can We Really Vote with Our Forks?</i> . Philosophy Comes to Dinner, ch.10.
<b>Week 6</b>	<i>Required Reading</i> — Mark Bryan Budolfson (2016). <i>Consumer Ethics, Harm Footprints, and the Empirical Dimensions of Food Choices</i> . Philosophy Comes to Dinner, ch.9.

**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*  
— Michael Pollan (2011). *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Bloomsbury Paperbacks (Part 1, p.1-123)

**Theme: Locavorism**

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

**Week 9**     *Required Reading*  
— Anne Barnhill (2016). *Does Locavorism Keep it Too Simple?* Philosophy Comes to Dinner, ch.13.  
— Vasilu Stanescu (2010). "Green" Eggs and Ham? *The Myth of Sustainable Meat and the Danger of the Local*. Journal for Critical Animal Studies vol. VIII, Issue 1/2.

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

**Week 10**    *Required Reading*  
— Jeff McMahan (2016). *The Problem of Moral Predation*. Philosophy Comes to Dinner, ch.15.

**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)