

## **PHI 321: The Ethics of Food**

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point  
Fall Semester 2021; T/R 11-12:15, 207 CCC  
Dr. Jason Zinser; **Email:** [jzins@uwsp.edu](mailto:jzins@uwsp.edu)  
**Office Hours:** T/R 1-3; and by appointment



### **Course Description**

Every time you raise a fork to your mouth, you are making an ethical choice that can impact the environment, animal welfare, global hunger, social justice, and the way we relate to one-another. In this course, we will examine the ethical dimensions of how we grow, consume, and distribute food.

### **How This Semester Will Work**

This course is intended to be run as an in-person class, which means that assignments, lectures, quizzes, and exams will be conducted in class.

### **Essential Questions**

- What theoretical principles guide our moral behavior?
- How do ethical concerns impact our food choices?
- What are the environmental impacts of various food choices?
- Is eating animals morally permissible?
- How do food access and quality relate to social justice issues?

### **GEP Learning Outcomes - Humanities**

- Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts or cultural artifacts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition (such as the search for truth and meaning, the confrontation with suffering and mortality, or the struggle for justice, equality, and human dignity).
- Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than one's own.

### **GEP Learning Outcomes - Environmental Responsibility**

- Identify interactions between human society and the natural environment.
- Analyze the individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors that influence environmental sustainability.
- Evaluate competing claims that inform environmental debates.

### **Required Texts:**

- Thompson, Paul B., *From Field to Fork*, 2015, Oxford University Press.
- Barnhill, Budolfson, and Doggett, *Food, Ethics, and Society: An Introductory Text with Readings*. Oxford University Press.
- Readings will also be posted on our Canvas site.

### **Graded assignments will include:**

1. Three Exams (60% total)
2. Ten Quizzes/Short Assignments (10% total)
3. Two 1,000 Word Papers (20% total)
4. One Book Review: Class Presentation and Peer Review (10%)

**Quizzes/Assignments:** There will be at least (12) quizzes or assignments and only the best (10) will count. You will have access to take quizzes roughly one week before they are due, but you must complete them by their due date. Quizzes will be on the material covered in recent readings and lectures.

**Exams:** There will be three exams. Exams will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer and essay questions.

**Papers:** You will be required to write two 1,000-word papers. The writing assignments and paper writing guidelines will be distributed at least a week before they are due.

**Book Review:** You will consult with me to identify a suitable book on a food related issue (I will also provide a list of recommended books). Book reviews will be a 12-15 minute presentation. Details for the modality of presentation (on Canvas or in-person will be forthcoming). In addition, there may be a peer-evaluation component or written component (of your presentation) to your grade. Guidelines and book suggestions will be forthcoming. If you are unable to complete this assignment for some reason (e.g., don't have access to video recording technology), please let me know and we can develop an alternative assignment.

### **Final grades will be determined on the following scale:**

100-93	A	<87-83	B	<77-73	C	<67-63	D
<93-90	A-	<83-80	B-	<73-70	C-	<63-60	D-
<90-87	B+	<80-77	C+	<70-67	D+	<60	F

**Late Policy:** Quizzes cannot be made-up. Short assignments will be docked 10% off per day late. Exams cannot be made-up without a university approved absence notification (e.g. a note from a health care provider explaining why the student couldn't be there). Furthermore, you need to contact me immediately in order to reschedule the exam as early as possible. If this condition is not met, you may not be able to re-take the exam.

**Attendance:** Attendance is not mandatory and will not be recorded (with the exception of the first few classes, which is mandatory). With that said, if you do not attend class on a regular basis, you will do poorly. Furthermore, quizzes and assignments will be administered on a regular basis and schedule changes will be announced in class. If you have an excused absence (illness, family emergency, quarantine), please email me as soon as you can, and we can develop reasonable accommodations. Finally, there will be a seating chart that we will have to adhere to.

**Academic Honesty:** If you commit any acts of academic dishonesty (such as plagiarism on written work or cheating on an exam) you will earn a zero for that work (and possibly other disciplinary actions). Please refer to the Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures for more information (<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>)

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:** The ADA is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, see: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>.

If you require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. For more information, please visit the Disability Center's office, located at 604 LRC or their webpage at: <http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>.

**Face Coverings:** At all UW-Stevens Point campus locations, the wearing of face coverings is mandatory in all buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, studios, and other instructional spaces. Any student with a condition that impacts their use of a face covering should contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center to discuss accommodations in classes. Please note that unless everyone is wearing a face covering, in-person classes cannot take place. This is university policy and not up to the discretion of individual instructors. Failure to adhere to this requirement could result in formal withdrawal from the course.

**Other Guidance:** Please monitor your own health each day using this screening tool. If you are not feeling well or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, do not come to class; email your instructor and contact Student Health Service (715-346-4646). As with any type of absence, students are expected to communicate their need to be absent and complete the course requirements as outlined in the syllabus.

- Maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance from others whenever possible.
- Do not congregate in groups before or after class; stagger your arrival and departure from the classroom, lab, or meeting room.
- Wash your hands or use appropriate hand sanitizer regularly and avoid touching your face.
- Please maintain these same healthy practices outside the classroom.

\*Schedule is subject to change. All changes will be announced via email.

References for readings: FFF – From Field to Fork; FES – Food, Ethics, and Society;  
CAN - Canvas

Agriculture and the Environment	R Sep 2	Introduction and Syllabus Wendell Berry, "The Pleasures of Eating" (CAN)
	T Sep 7	Paul Thompson, "You are NOT What You Eat" (FFF chap. 1)
	R Sep 9	<b>Industrialized Agriculture</b> Michael Pollan, <i>Omnivore's Dilemma</i> , chaps 4-7 (CAN)
	T Sep 14	Paul Thompson, "The Allure of the Local" (FFF chap. 6)
	R Sep 16	Film: <a href="#">Biggest Little Farm</a>
	T Sep 21	Rachel Laudan, "A Plea for Culinary Modernism" (CAN) Tamar Haspel, "In Defense of Corn" (CAN)
	R Sep 23	<b>Food, Climate, and Pandemics</b> Amanda Little, <i>A Taste of Things to Come</i> (CAN) George Monbiot, "We Can't Keep Eating as We Are..." (CAN)
	T Sep 28	Jonathon Safron Foer, <i>Eating Animals</i> (selections) (CAN) Sigal Samuel, "The Meat We Eat is a Pandemic Risk, Too" (CAN)
	R Sep 30	<b>Seafood</b> Singer and Mason, "Seafood" (CAN) Ian Urbina, "How China's Expanding Fishing Fleet..." (CAN) Review for the Exam
	T Oct 5	<b>EXAM</b>
Animal Ethics	R Oct 7	<b>Animal Ethics</b> Peter Singer: All Animals Are Equal (FES, 352-361)
	T Oct 12	Christine Korsgaard: Getting Animals in View (FES, 366-371)
	R Oct 14	Jonathon Safron Foer: <i>Eating Animals</i> (selections) (CAN) Humane Society of the United States: <i>The Welfare of Animals in the Meat, Egg, and Dairy Industries</i> (FES, 347-351)
	T Oct 19	Roger Scruton, <i>Eating our Friends</i> (FES, 391-394)
	R Oct 21	Harman: <i>The Moral Significance of Animal Pain and Animal Death</i> (FES, 395-403)
	T Oct 26	<b>Do Individual Choices Matter?</b> Mark Buldofson, <i>The Inefficiency Objection to Utilitarian Theories of the Ethics of the Marketplace</i> (FES, 204-209)
	R Oct 28	Julia Driver, <i>Individual Consumption and Moral Complicity</i> (CAN) <u>and Review</u>
	T Nov 2	<b>EXAM</b>
Hunger and Social Justice	R Nov 4	<b>Food Justice: Local and Global</b> Paul Thompson, <i>Food Ethics and Social Justice</i> (FFF chap. 2) Film: <a href="#">Harvest of Shame</a>
	T Nov 9	Michael Pollan: The Sickness in Our Food Supply (CAN) Brooke Jarvis: The Scramble to Pluck 24 Billion Cherries in Eight Weeks (CAN)
	R Nov 11	Paul Thompson, <i>Green Revolution Food Technology and Its Discontents</i> (FFF chap. 7)
	T Nov 16	Film: <a href="#">American Experience: Normal Borlaug the Man Who Tried to Feed the World</a>
	R Nov 18	Paul Thompson, <i>The Fundamental Problem with Food Ethics</i> (FFF chap. 4)
	T Nov 23	Movie: <i>Darwin's Nightmare</i> Ian Urbina: "Sea Slaves" (CAN)
	R Nov 25	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>
	T Nov 30	<b>Book Reviews</b>
	R Dec 2	<b>Book Reviews</b>
	T Dec 7	<b>Book Reviews</b>
R Dec 9	Lizzie Widdicombe, "The End of Food" (CAN) and Review	

**FINAL EXAM:** Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup> 10:15-12:15