PHIL 2888
Philosophy of Food

Dr Gerald Lang and Dr Aaron Meskin 2013/14

Level: 2
Semester Taught: 2
Credits: 20
Module Aims, Objectives and Outcomes:

**Aims**
This course will focus on some of the most interesting philosophical issues raised by food and eating. We'll investigate aesthetic questions about food and drink such as: Is there an art form of food? Can food be expressive? What are food’s representational capacities? Can food and drink be beautiful? We'll investigate ethical and political questions about food such as: Should we refrain from eating meat? To what extent can we be held responsible for obesity, or for anorexia? How demanding are our duties to relieve hunger, and how are those duties grounded? We'll also address questions about the epistemology of food such as: What can we learn from others about taste? Is there expertise when it comes to taste judgments? Are taste judgments ever objective? Is blind tasting the best way to judge wine? Readings will come from both classic and contemporary writings about food and eating.

**Objectives**
On completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Show a good grasp of central issues, arguments, and theories relating to the philosophical questions raised by food and eating and give clear and accurate exposition of leading philosophical treatments of such.
2. Show understanding of how these issues, arguments, and theories relate to one another;
3. Demonstrate the capacity to analyse arguments critically and develop their own position in relation to these issues.

**Learning outcomes**
The course will provide students with knowledge of leading philosophical work and philosophical arguments having to do with questions raised by food and eating.

**Skills outcomes**
The module will help further the development of the following skills:

- Skills of close and careful reading.
- The capacity to pay attention to detail.
- The ability to engage in research, use a library and internet resources to good effect to discover additional resources.
- The ability to write critical, well-organised, discursive prose.
The ability to prepare a written document to high standards of grammar, punctuation, presentation, etc.

The ability to discuss amicably and fruitfully with one’s peers and teachers questions of interpretation and evaluation.

The ability to co-operate as a member of a team in the preparation of group work.

Teaching Methods:
16 lectures and 4 tutorials.

You can view all of your lecture and tutorial times and locations on your personal timetable, which can be accessed via the Student Portal. You should check your timetable regularly throughout the term in case of any location changes.

Required Materials:
Unless otherwise noted, all required readings will be available online via the VLE.

Attendance:
Attendance at lectures and tutorials for this module is compulsory. Please see the School Undergraduate Handbook (available in the VLE) for full details of School regulations on attendance.

Private Study:
Lecture preparation: 80 (16 lectures * 5 hours each)
Tutorial preparation: 20 (4 tutorials * 5 hours each)
Essay 1 preparation: 25 hours
Essay 2 preparation: 35 hours
Group project: 18 hours

Assessment:
Group project: 20 %
1st essay: 30 %
2nd essay: 50 %

Please see the School Undergraduate Handbook (available in the VLE) for full details of School assessment procedures including essay presentation and submission, word limits, deadlines, extension requests, examinations and resits. Guidelines on referencing and plagiarism can also be found in the Handbook.

Essay Titles and Group Project Topics:
Essay titles will be distributed four weeks before they are due. Group project topics need to be agreed on with Module Leaders by week 6. Further information about the group project will be distributed by the end of week 2.
You are not allowed to submit the same work twice. You must ensure that your essay does not overlap extensively with work submitted for your dissertation, or for other modules within your subject or in related subjects.

Feedback Arrangements:
You will have numerous opportunities to receive feedback from the Module Leaders and your fellow students throughout the semester. You will be required to turn in a rough drafts of your first essay and will receive feedback from both fellow students and a Module Leader. You will also be required to do a first draft of your group project on which both students and Module Leaders will comment. Your first essay will be returned with comments by a Module Leader. You will receive immediate informal feedback on your group presentation at the end of the module, but to receive formal feedback on the project and your final essay you will need contact a Module Leader for a feedback appointment once your marks have been released.

Module Outline:
There will be two lectures per week, on Tuesday and Friday, in weeks 1-4, and in weeks 6-9. Please note that there will be no lectures in weeks 5, 10, and 11.

Tutorials will be taking place in weeks 3, 5, 9, and 11. Week 5 will be devoted to an essay writing workshop. The tutorials in weeks 9 and 11 will be devoted to preparations for, and then presentations of, the group project. We will supply more details as the module progresses.

Part I: The Aesthetics and Art of Food

TOPIC 1: Food as Art
This topic will be covered in the lectures in week 1.

Main Readings:

Further Readings
David Monroe, ‘Can Food be Art: The Problem of Consumption’ in F. Allhoff & D. Monroe (eds), Food and Philosophy: Eat, Think and Be Merry, Blackwell 2007.

TOPIC 2: The Aesthetics of Food and Wine
This topic will be covered in the lectures in week 2.

Main Readings:


**Further Readings**


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**Part II: The Ethics of Food**

### TOPIC 3: Eating Meat

This topic will be covered in the lectures in week 3.

**Main Readings:**


**Some Further Readings:**


Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, Bloomsbury Publishing 2011
The Philosophy of Food Project at http://www.food.unt.edu/bibliography/
Christine Korsgaard, ‘Moral Animals: Human Beings and Other Animals’ (unpublished, available on Korsgaard’s website)
Jeff McMahan on Vegetarianism (Philosophy Bites) http://philosophybites.com/2010/06/jeff-mcmahan-on-vegetarianism.html
Christine Korsgaard, ‘Fellow Creatures’ The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, ed. by Grethe B. Peterson. Salt Lake City: Utah University Press, Volume 25, 2005 and electronically (see link on Korsgaard’s website)
Jonathan Safran Foer, Eating Animals, Penguin 2011

TOPIC 4: Eating Disorders, Autonomy, and Paternalism
This topic will be covered in the lectures in week 4.

Main Readings:

Some Further Readings:
Sheila Lintott, ‘Sublime Hunger’ in F. Allhoff & D. Monroe (eds), Food and Philosophy, Blackwell 2007, chapter 4, pp. 58-70

Part III: The Political Morality of Food

TOPIC 5: Duties to Relieve Hunger
Topic 5 will be covered in the two lectures in week 6, and the first lecture in week 7.

Main Readings:

Some Further Readings:
Gerhard Øverland, ‘602 and One Dead: On Contribution to Global Poverty and Liability to Defensive Force’, *European Journal of Philosophy*, forthcoming (Early View available online)
Pablo Gilabert, ‘The Duty to Eradicate Global Poverty: Positive or Negative?’, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 7 (2005): 537-50 [PDF to be uploaded in the VLE]

**TOPIC 6: Genetically Modified Food and the Management of Risk**

Topic 6 will be covered in the second lecture in week 7.

Main Readings:

Some Further Readings:
J. S. Mill, *On Liberty* [various editions]
Gardiner, Steven, ‘Ethics and Global Climate Change’, *Ethics* 114 (2004): 555-600 [uploaded in the VLE]

**Part IV Epistemology of Taste**
TOPIC 7: Objectivity, Expertise and Taste
This topic will be covered in week 8

Main Readings:

Further Readings
David Hume, ‘Of the Standard of Taste’, http://www.davidhume.org/texts/fd#Mil226

TOPIC 9: Blind Tasting and Testimony
This topic will be covered in week 9

Main Readings:

Further Readings

Getting Help:

Key Documents
Please ensure that you read and familiarize yourself with the following important documents, all available in the VLE:

- School of Philosophy, Religion & History of Science Undergraduate Student Handbook
- School Code of Practice on Assessment
- School Style Guide
Module Leader
If you have queries not covered in the above key documents or in this Module Handbook, please contact the Module Leader during their office hours or by email.

Student Staff Forum
You should always contact the Module Leader in the first instance about any problems which arise in relation to a module. Any unresolved concerns about a module can be directed to the Course Representative with responsibility for the module. Course Representatives are students who have successfully applied sit on the Student Staff Forum SSF, to represent a particular programme, and a group of modules, and relay module level concerns to the SSF. Concerns about your programme of study or the School in general can also be directed to the relevant Course Representative. You can find out who your Course Representatives are, and how to contact them, by checking the Portal under the ‘My Studies’ tab in the top left of the screen.

If you are interested in becoming a Course Representative in the next academic year, please look out for details of the application process which will be publicized towards the end of Semester 2. The School values student input very highly.