



Emil Doerstling, *Kant und seine Tischgenossen (Kant and Friends at Table)*, 1892-93

PHIL 2888

Philosophy of Food

Dr Gerald Lang and Dr Aaron Meskin 2013/14

Level: 2

Semester Taught: 2

Credits: 20

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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:

1. Elizabeth Telfer, 'Food as Art' from *Food for Thought: Philosophy and Food*, Routledge, 1996.
2. Carolyn Korsmeyer, 'The Meaning of Taste and the Taste of Meaning', Ch. 3 of *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy*, Cornell University Press, 1999.
3. Aaron Meskin, 'The Art of Food,' *The Philosopher's Magazine* 61, 2013: 81-86.

Further Readings

Thomas Adajian, 'The Definition of Art', <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/art-definition/>

Glenn Kuehn, 'How Can Food Be Art?' in A. Light & J. Smith (eds), *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, Columbia University Press, 2005.

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:

1. Kevin Sweeney, 'Can a Soup Be Beautiful?: The Rise of Gastronomy and the Aesthetics of Food' in F. Allhoff & D. Monroe (eds), *Food and Philosophy: Eat, Think and Be Merry*, Blackwell 2007.
2. Emily Brady, 'Sniffing and Savoring: The Aesthetics of Smells and Tastes' in A. Light & J. Smith (eds), *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, Columbia University Press, 2005.
3. Tim Crane, 'Wine as an Aesthetic Object' in B. Smith (ed) *Questions of Taste: The Philosophy of Wine*, OUP, 2007.

Further Readings

- Douglas Burnham and Ole Martin Skilleas, 'You'll Never Drink Alone: Wine Tasting and Aesthetic Practice,' in F. Alhoff (ed) *Wine and Philosophy: A Symposium on Thinking and Drinking*, Blackwell 2008.
- George Gale, 'Who Cares If You Like It, This Is a Good Wine Regardless', in F. Alhoff (ed) *Wine and Philosophy: A Symposium on Thinking and Drinking*, Blackwell 2008.
- Carolyn Korsmeyer, 'Philosophies of Taste: Aesthetic and Nonaesthetic Senses,' ch. 2 of *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy*, Cornell University Press, 1999.
- James Shelley, 'The Concept of the Aesthetic', <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetic-concept/>

Part II: The Ethics of Food

TOPIC 3: Eating Meat

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

Main Readings:

1. Cora Diamond, 'Eating Meat and Eating People', *Philosophy* 53 (1978): 465-79 [uploaded in VLE]
2. Peter Singer, 'All Animals are Equal', *Philosophical Exchange* 1. Reprinted in LaFollette, Hugh (ed.). 2007. *Ethics in Practice: Third Edition*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. pp. 171-180 [uploaded in VLE]
3. Bonnie Steinbock, 'Speciesism and the Idea of Equality', *Philosophy* 53 (1978): 247-56 [uploaded in VLE]
4. Elizabeth Harman, 'The Moral Significance of Animal Pain and Animal Death' in *The Oxford Handbook on Ethics and Animals*, Tom L. Beauchamp and R. L. Frey, eds., New York: Oxford University Press 2011 [uploaded in VLE]

Some Further Readings:

- Elizabeth Anderson, 'Animal Rights and the Values of Nonhuman Life' in Cass Sunstein & Martha Nussbaum (eds), *Animal Rights, Current Debates and New Directions*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press 2004
- Roger J. H. King, 'Eating Well: Thinking Ethically About Food' in F. Allhoff & D. Monroe (eds), *Food and Philosophy*, Blackwell 2007, chapter 12, pp. 177-91
- Peter Singer, 'Introduction' in P. Singer, *The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter*, Rodale Book 2006
- Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Bloomsbury Publishing 2011

The Oxford Handbook on Ethics and Animals, Tom L. Beauchamp and R. L. Frey, eds., New York: Oxford University Press 2011

The Philosophy of Food Project at <http://www.food.unt.edu/bibliography/>

Elizabeth Telfer, *Food for Thought: Philosophy and Food*, Routledge 1996.

Christine Korsgaard, 'Moral Animals: Human Beings and Other Animals' (unpublished, available on Korsgaard's website)

Jeff McMahan, 'The Meat Eaters' in *New York Times*, Opinionator available at

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/19/the-meat-eaters/>

Jeff McMahan on Vegetarianism (Philosophy Bites) <http://philosophybites.com/2010/06/jeff-mcmahan-on-vegetarianism.html>

J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 1999.

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)

Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, Pimlico 1995 (4th revised edition)

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:

1. Gerald Dworkin, 'Paternalism', *The Monist*, 1972
2. Douglas Husak, 'Paternalism and Autonomy', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1981, 10 (1):27-46

Some Further Readings:

Simona Giordano, 'Paternalism v. respect for autonomy' in S.G., *Understanding Eating Disorders: Conceptual and ethical issues in the treatment of anorexia and bulimia nervosa*. Oxford University Press, 2005, chapter 2.

Sheila Lintott, 'Sublime Hunger' in F. Allhoff & D. Monroe (eds), *Food and Philosophy*, Blackwell 2007, chapter 4, pp. 58-70

Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar, eds. *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self* (Oxford University Press, 2000)

R Jay Wallace, 'Addiction as Defect of the Will: Some Philosophical Reflections' in Gary Watson (ed), *Free Will*. Oxford Readings in Philosophy

Gary Watson, 'Disordered Appetites: Addiction, Compulsion and Dependence' in Gary Watson, *Agency and Answerability*, Oxford: Clarendon 2004/2003.

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:

1. Peter Singer, 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 1 (1972): 229-43
2. Thomas Pogge, 'Real World Justice', *Journal of Ethics* 9 (2005): 29-53

3. Onora O'Neill, 'Lifeboat Earth', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 4 (1975): 273-92
4. Cecile Fabre, 'Mandatory Rescue Killings', *Journal of Political Philosophy* 15 (2007): 363-84

Some Further Readings:

- Barbara Herman, 'The Scope of Moral Requirement', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 30 (2001): 227-56
- M. Reitberger, 'Poverty, Negative Duties, and the Global Institutional Order', *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 8 (2009): 379-402
- 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)
- Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008)
- 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]
- Tim Mulgan, *The Demands of Consequentialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)
- Liam Murphy, *Moral Demands in Non-Ideal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Deen K. Chatterjee (ed.), *The Ethics of Assistance: Morality and the Distant Needy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

TOPIC 6: Genetically Modified Food and the Management of Risk

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

Main Readings:

1. Nils Holtug, 'The Harm Principle and Genetically Modified Food', *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 14 (2001): 169-78
2. Hahn, Robert W., and Cass R. Sunstein, 'The Precautionary Principle as a Basis for Decision-Making', *The Economists' Voice* 2 (2005) [uploaded in the VLE]

Some Further Readings:

- Neil A. Manson, 'Formulating the Precautionary Principle', *Environmental Ethics* 24 (2002): 263-74; online at <http://commonsenseatheism.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Manson-Formulating-the-Precautionary-Principle.pdf>
- J. S. Mill, *On Liberty* [various editions]
- Gardiner, Steven, 'Ethics and Global Climate Change', *Ethics* 114 (2004): 555-600 [uploaded in the VLE]
- Jamieson, Dale, 'Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming', *Science, Technology and Human Values* 17 (1992): 139-53; reprinted in *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*, ed. Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston III (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), ch. 27 [uploaded in the VLE]
- McKie, Robin, 'After 30 years of rows over GM, is a breakthrough here at last?', *Observer*, 20 February 2013. Online at: <http://guardian.newspaperdirect.com/epaper/viewer.aspx>
- Schmidtz, David, 'A Place for Cost-Benefit Analysis', *Philosophical Issues* 11 (2001): 148-71 [uploaded in the VLE]
- Sunstein, Cass R. 'Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Environment', *Ethics* 115 (2005): 351-85 [uploaded in the VLE]
- Sunstein, Cass R. 'Beyond the Precautionary Principle', Social Science Research Network Electronic Paper Collection, 2003 [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:

1. Michael Shaffer, 'Taste, Gastronomic Expertise, and Objectivity' in F. Allhoff & D. Monroe (eds), *Food and Philosophy: Eat, Think and Be Merry*, Blackwell 2007.
2. Barry Smith, 'The Objectivity of Tastes and Tasting' in B. Smith (ed) *Questions of Taste: The Philosophy of Wine*, OUP, 2007.
3. Jamie Goode, 'Experiencing Wine: Why Critics Mess Up (Some of the Time)' in F. Alhoff (ed) *Wine and Philosophy: A Symposium on Thinking and Drinking*, Blackwell 2008.

Further Readings

John Bender, 'What the Wine Critic Tells Us' in F. Alhoff (ed) *Wine and Philosophy: A Symposium on Thinking and Drinking*, Blackwell 2008.

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:

1. Jonathan Cohen, 'On the Limitations of Blind Tasting', *World of Fine Wine* 41: 74-81, September 2013.
2. Aaron Meskin and Jon Robson, 'Testimony about Taste', manuscript.

Further Readings

Jonathan Adler, 'Epistemological Problems of Testimony', <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/testimony-episprob/>

Jon Robson, 'Aesthetic Testimony', *Philosophy Compass* 7(1): 1-10.

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.