

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2015-16**

**Philosophy 2010: The Philosophy of Food**

**Winter Term 2016  
UCC66  
W 12:30-1:20  
F 12:30-2:20**

**Instructor: Benjamin Hill  
StvH 3142:  
519-661-2111 x80143  
Office Hours: WTh, 11:30-12:20pm  
Online Office Hours: Th 7:00-8:00pm  
Email: Please use OWL  
Emergency: bhill28@uwo.ca**

**Instructor: Henrik Lagerlund  
StvH 3145  
x80508  
Office Hours: W:1:30-2:30**

**DESCRIPTION**

Philosophy has long been divided into theoretical and practical domains. We approach this class as a course in practical philosophy. It is meant to be an intensely immersive experience exploring and challenging your own food values. The aim is to develop the students' abilities to think critically and philosophically about their food choices and the connections between their food choices and our food system(s). Issues dealt with in the course may include, for example, the treatment of animals, moral and political dimensions of genetically modified food, hunger and obligation to the poor, the role of food in gender, personal and national identity, and what role does food play in the good life. The course aims to do this through philosophical discussions in the classroom and investigative assignments.

Prerequisites: None

Antirequisites: None

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**WARNING**

This course will require frequent, sometimes personal, and extended discussions of food, an individual's relationship with food, and the role food does, can, or should play in one's life. Individuals with a history of eating disorders may find the material and the course difficult and traumatic.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

**Attendance is mandatory for this course and unexcused absences will adversely affect the student's grade. See Methods of Evaluation for information about how attendance is graded.**

The objectives of this course include:

- (1) Understanding the contemporary food system, including production, processing, development, distribution, consumption, and waste;
- (2) Discovering the nature and degree of one's connections with and dependence on the contemporary food system;
- (3) Understanding the notion of "food values", and how to assess them;
- (4) Understanding how the contemporary food system impacts human rights and why;
- (5) Understanding the notion of "food justice";
- (6) Understanding how issues surrounding food justice arise within the contemporary food system;
- (7) Understanding the notion of "sustainable food" and how food values impact our conception of sustainability;
- (8) Discovering how to balance issues of human rights, food justice, and sustainability within the greater scheme of food values;
- (9) Discovering what your own food values are;
- (10) Discovering how to judge and assess your own food values relative to alternative possibilities;
- (11) Discovering the extent to which your food choices accurately reflect your food values;
- (12) Discovering how to modify your food values and/or your food choices.

## **TEXTS**

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History in Four Meals*. London: Penguin, 2006 ISBN 9780143038580;

Thompson, Paul. *From Field to Fork: Food Ethics for Everyone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN 9780199391691;

Sage, Colin. *Environment and Food*. New York: Routledge, 2012. ISBN 9780415363129.

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION**

**Sustainability Group Project (40%)** Students will be randomly assigned to group to work together on a project regarding food and sustainability. The project will be rewriting the Canadian Food Guidelines to incorporate issues regarding sustainability. Groups will be required to submit a written "technical" report and a "marketing" PowerPoint or video presentation of the revised guidelines. The final submission of the report and PowerPoint/video is due at midnight on April 7<sup>th</sup>. A grading rubric and guidelines will be distributed via OWL.

The grading breakdown will be as follows:

- (A) 10% will be based on the group's overall grade for the project, the peer assessments of the student's contributions to the project (4 in total), and the GTA assessments of the student's engagement with the project (4 in total), minus penalties for unexcused absences from class during the project activities.

- (B) 15% will be based on an individual's specific contributions to the final technical report and marketing PowerPoint/video. The project will be divided into twelve subprojects and individual students will be primarily responsible for two subprojects, one related to the final submission and one due to the research component of the project. (This will be described in the Project Guidelines.) Individual students will submit their own contributions to the final project via OWL.
- (C) 15% will be based on an individual's specific contribution to the research component of the project. The due date and content of each subproject will be described in the Project Guidelines.

The idea behind this breakdown in the grading is to allow each student's grade to be largely determined by his/her own activity and to allow each student to be accountable for his/her contributions to the project. Yet it still incentivizes group activity and collaboration on putting the project together. This will be spelled out in greater detail in the forthcoming rubric and guidelines.

**Book Review (20%)** All students are required to write a 1000 word *critical* book review of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. The due date for the review is due on Friday Feb. 12 at midnight. The review should describe the thesis and main argument(s) of the book as well as provide some reflective, critical comments about its thesis and argument. A grading rubric and guidelines for writing a book review will be distributed via OWL.

**Food Journals (20%)** All students will be required to complete and submit food journals tracking their eating habits and documenting any changes in their eating habits as the course progresses. Journals will be due on the following dates: Wed Jan 27<sup>th</sup>; Wed Feb 24<sup>th</sup>; Wed Mar 16<sup>th</sup>; and Wed Apr 6<sup>th</sup>. The journals will be used for some in-class activities and students may be required to submit their journals at various "surprise" times in addition to the announced dates. Students must always bring their up-to-date journals to class with them. An example of a few food journal entries will be provided for your convenience. The food journal should *include everything you eat and drink*: meals, snacks, coffee/smoothies, beer/alcohol, etc.. The goal behind the food journals is self-discovery and the promotion of mindful, critical eating. The formatting of the food journal is up to you. It should be something that you can submit electronically via OWL. Feel free to include photos as well as lists and descriptions of what you consume. The food journal must include the following information: time/date; menu item(s); primary ingredients; social context; any thoughts or reflects you wish to share with yourself regarding why you are eating this here and now.

N.B., during the course of the class and its activities, you may be sharing your journals and engaged with the journals of others. Although they are your own journals primarily for your own benefit, you should approach them as if they were public documents. You are also expected to be professional when you engage with others and their food journals. **Judgmental, belittling, shaming, rude, ridiculing, bullying, and all other unprofessional behavior, comments, and attitudes are inappropriate and will not be tolerated.** Food is a powerful conduit directly attached to people's self-identity, body image, cultural identity, moral self, and self-esteem. Sometimes, discussing people's food values and eating habits can be difficult and it needs to be approached respectfully. **We require that all discussion be respectful and kind even when critical, defensive, emotional, and contradictory.**

**Homework and Assignments (10%)** There will be weekly quizzes self-administered via OWL and occasional homework or in-class assignments to be submitted for grading. The weekly quizzes will be short, timed quizzes (15 min time limit) covering material taken directly from class or the assigned reading. The quizzes will be multiple choice or short answer (max 1-2 sentences). The homework or in-class assignments will be announced in class and posted on OWL. The OWL portal will open at 6:00 pm on Sunday following a week of classes and will close at 10:00 am on Wednesday. (Reading week will be the only exception.)

**Attendance (10%)** All students are required to attend every class. A sign-in sheet will be distributed. Attendance does not connote mere physical presence in the classroom. It requires paying attention and not engaging in rude, disruptive, or disrespectful behavior during the class. Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to: texting, checking email, reading the newspaper, reading material for another class, chatting or joking during class, surfing the internet, internet shopping, etc.. The instructor reserves the right to strike any person's name from the attendance roll for engaging in the above, or any other such disruptive or disrespectful behavior. Students are awarded 2.70 points per hour of class attended.

Non-medical absences will be accommodated by the instructors with sufficient explanation and documentation for the absence. Late assignments and missed deadlines will also be accommodated by the instructors with sufficient explanation and documentation. Documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office and not to the instructor. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

The Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness is here:

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

For accommodations of work worth less than 10% of the total course grade, documentation and decanal approval is not necessary.

No electronic devices or printed materials are allowed during examinations.

### **ACADEMIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

### **ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at

<http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

The policy of the Department of Philosophy is that all written work must be submitted to turnitin.com. See <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Registrarial Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>)  
Student Support Services (<http://westernusc.ca/services/>)

### **AUDITING**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

### **OPTIONAL CEL COURSE COMPONENT**

There are limited opportunities for students to join with a community partner on a project directly related to the content of the course. This is an option, ungraded component of the course. Community Engaged Learning at Western partners with local and international organizations to mobilize knowledge and exchange resources in order to address critical societal issues. By engaging students, staff, and faculty in meaningful experiential learning opportunities, CEL helps meet community defined needs while promoting students' sense of civic engagement and social responsibility. These partnerships help extend Western's reach beyond campus and foster excellence and innovation in teaching and learning.

The CEL opportunity is project-based, where students will work in groups of 3-5 to complete a deliverable defined by the community partner. Students will be expected to complete 2 hours per week for 8 weeks. Further details describing the opportunities and the requirements will be posted on our class OWL site and presented in class.