

PHIL 3140: Philosophy of Food

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Course Time: TR 1:30-2:45
Course Location: Sustainable Education 316
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description: Food is something that is fundamental to our lives, and for most of human history, and kinds of questions that people asked about food were correspondingly basic. Is this berry edible, or will it make me sick? Where are the animals we can eat, and how can we kill them? Which crops will grow during which seasons? How can we eat in the winter? At bottom, all of these questions about food boil down to perhaps the most basic one of all: *How can we get enough of it?*

While contemporary societies have some of the same questions – the problem of getting enough food is still a serious one for many in our world – we also have different, and more complicated, questions. If we walk through the aisles of our local grocery store, pick out an item, and ask where it comes from, the answer will, in many cases, be far from obvious. This is especially clear when we read, or attempt to read, the list of ingredients. Contemporary methods of food production are radically different from anything that we have known in the past, and they significant consequences (including moral, political, economic, and environmental consequences) for a variety of different stakeholders. Decisions about how food is produced, distributed, and regulated reflect ethical and political values – whether those values are acknowledged or not.

This course is divided into two parts:

- I. In the first part of the course, we will discuss a number of topics in food studies, including global hunger, food justice, consumer ethics, food and identity, industrial plant and animal agriculture and alternatives; workers; overconsumption and obesity, and paternalism and public health. Our primary text will be a recent collection of essays, *Food, Ethics, and Society*.
- II. In the second part of the course, students will work collaboratively in small groups to develop a stakeholder analysis of a food-related decision.

Texts: *Food, Ethics, and Society*, Anne Barnhill, Mark Budolfson, and Tyler Doggett, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Course Goals: While one of the primary goals of the course is to develop an understanding of some of the central issues related to the production and consumption of food, there are other goals that are important not only for those who wish to continue to study philosophy, but virtually any other subject as well. In particular, this course should help you to learn to understand the structure of arguments, to present arguments clearly, and to evaluate arguments. The course assignments – in particular, the stakeholder analysis group project – are meant to help you achieve these goals.

Learning Objectives:

- Students should develop an understanding of, and be able to describe clearly, some of the central issues (especially ethical, nutritional, and environmental) related to the production and consumption of food.
- Students should be able to identify arguments in texts and present them clearly in their own words – both verbally and in writing.
- Students should be able to compare and contrast the meaning of major texts, including the main arguments in these texts.
- Students should be able to evaluate and/or critique arguments in their own words – both verbally and in writing.
- Students should be able to work collaboratively to develop a stakeholder analysis of a food-related decision.

Course Format: In the first part of the course, class sessions will be part lecture and part class discussion – in some cases as an entire group, but in most cases in small groups. For these class sessions, it is expected that each student will contribute to the discussions. Prepare accordingly! The second part of the course will consist entirely of group project work. I will be available to assist you in your project work, but the majority of your work in this part will be student driven.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation	20%
Pop Quizzes	40%
Short Discussion Papers	10%
Group Project Presentation	30%

Grade Scale:

[90, 100]	A
[80, 90)	B
[70, 80)	C
[60, 70)	D
[0, 60)	F

Pop Quizzes: There will be a number of pop quizzes given throughout the semester (approximately 1-2 per week). Each quiz will consist of two questions that should be relatively easy to answer, provided that you have read the assigned texts carefully. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class; in general, quizzes cannot be made up or taken late. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest two quiz grades.

Class Participation: As noted above, class participation is mandatory for this class. It is expected that students not only read the assigned readings, but also think about them and come to class prepared to discuss them.

Your class participation grade will reflect the extent to which you fulfill this expectation – and, more generally, the extent to which you contribute to a positive atmosphere for intellectual inquiry. In particular, your class participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

- **Quantity and quality of contributions to class discussions.** The more you contribute, the better. High-quality contributions include contributions that are relevant, insightful, and respectful of others.
- **Contributions to small group discussions.** Small group discussions will take up a significant portion of our class time. It is expected that you contribute in a positive way to these discussions.
- **Punctuality and classroom demeanor.** Your behavior in class should facilitate a positive learning environment for all class participants. This includes being punctual, attentive (both to me and to your classmates), and respectful. Behavior that distracts others from class discussion (such as consistent tardiness) or that discourages others from participating (such as disrespectful speech or incivility) will be penalized.
- **Attendance.** This class includes a strict attendance policy. For every third unexcused absence, your overall course grade will be reduced one letter. An unexcused absence is any absence for which I do not receive appropriate documentation (e.g., a note from a doctor) or is not cleared by me *in advance*.

Group Projects: The final part of the course will consist of collaborative group work to develop a stakeholder analysis of a food-related decision. Students will present their projects in class at the end of the semester, in the form of a Power Point Presentation, Prezi, or the like. Students will have input into the choice of their topics; however, final decisions regarding group topics and group membership will be decided by me. Further instructions for the group projects will be provided over the course of the semester.

Student-Faculty Expectations: General student-faculty expectations for all students and faculty at Georgia Tech can be found at: <<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22.php>>. It is expected that students have read, and understood, these expectations.

Plagiarism: Don't do it. The work that you do in this class should be your own, and when you do borrow an idea from someone else, you should cite that person or persons accordingly. Prior to the project presentations, we will discuss in more detail what does, and does not, count as plagiarism. It is also assumed that all students have read, and understood, the GT Honor Code <<http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>> and the Georgia Tech Student Code of Conduct <<http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/code-conduct>>.

Cell Phones and Computers: Please turn off all cell phones prior to the start of class. Additionally, please do not leave your laptop computers open on your desk during class. If you need to look up a piece of information briefly during the course of a class discussion, you may do so, but close your computer immediately afterwards.

Schedule of Readings

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>
22 Aug	Course Introduction	
24 Aug	The Ethically Troubling Food System	FES, 1-21
29 Aug	<i>continued</i>	FES, 22-35
31 Aug	Global Hunger	FES, 64-78
5 Sep	Food Justice	FES, 115-134
7 Sep	<i>continued</i>	FES, 150-164
12 Sep	Consumer Ethics	FES, 189-210
14 Sep	<i>continued</i>	FES, 210-224

19 Sep	Food and Identity	FES, 238-257
21 Sep	<i>continued</i>	FES, 258-273
26 Sep	Industrial Animal Agriculture	FES, 342-361
28 Sep	<i>continued</i>	FES, 362-371
3 Oct	Alternatives to Industrial Animal Agriculture	FES, 386-403
5 Oct	Industrial Plant Agriculture	FES, 434-453
10 Oct	NO CLASS – FALL 2016 STUDENT RECESS	
12 Oct	<i>continued</i>	FES, 454-457; 459-462; 480-495
17 Oct	Alternatives to Industrial Plant Agriculture	FES, 495-517
19 Oct	Workers	FES, 432-459
24 Oct	Overconsumption and Obesity	FES, 586-601
26 Oct	<i>continued</i>	FES, 601-621
28 Oct	LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW WITH “W” GRADE	
31 Oct	Paternalism and Public Health	FES, 623-627; 634-646
2 Nov	<i>continued</i>	FES, 647-664
	Preferences for Group Project Topics	
	Part V: Stakeholder Analysis Group Projects	
7 Nov	Stakeholder Analysis Group Projects: Topic Choices, Group Distributions	Reed, et al., “Who’s in and Why? A Typology of Stakeholder Analysis Methods for Natural Resource Management” (available on T-Square)
9 Nov	Group Project Work	
14 Nov	Group Project Work	
16 Nov	Group Project Work	
21 Nov	Group Project Work	
23 Nov	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK	
28 Nov	Group Project Work	
30 Nov	DUE DATE FOR GROUP PROJECTS – Group Project Presentations	
5 Dec	Group Project Presentations (continued)	
7-14 Dec	FINAL EXAMS	