# Phil 1440: The Ethics of Eating

T/Th 1:25-2:40, GSH G 22

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Section: M 7:30-9:15pm (every other week), Rockefeller 115

Office Hours: Starr (Thursday 3:30-4:30, GSH 237), Chignell (Thursday 2:45-4:15); also by appointment

**Course Description:**

We all face difficult moral decisions on occasion. This course introduces students to the idea that we face such a decision several times a day in deciding what to eat. How should facts about animal life and death inform this decision? Is the suffering involved in meat, egg, and dairy production really bad enough to make the practices immoral? How do our dietary choices affect local and non-local economies, the environment, and other people generally? Finally, given the deep connections between eating practices and various ethnic, religious and class identities, how can we implement a reasonable food policy for an expanding world population while also respecting these important differences? The goal of this course is not to teach some preferred set of answers to these questions. The goal is rather to give participants the basic tools required to reflect clearly and effectively on the questions themselves. These tools include a working knowledge of the major moral theories developed by philosophers, and an understanding of basic empirical issues related to food production, distribution, consumption, and disposal. In addition to readings, lectures, and required sections, the course will involve trips to some local food-production facilities, as well as supplemental lectures by experts from Cornell, Ithaca, and beyond.

**Books:**

*Required***:**

[JSF] Jonathan Safran Foer, *Eating Animals* (Little and Brown, 2009)

[MP] Michael Pollan, *Omnivore’s Dilemma* (Penguin, 2006)

[PP] Paul Pojman (ed), *Food Ethics* (Cengage, 2011)

[SS] Steven Sapontzis (ed), *Food for Thought* (Prometheus, 2004)

[W] Wansink, Brian, *Mindless Eating* (Bantam, 2010)

[BD] Dingman, Brad, *Reclamation* (Feral Visions, 2012)

*Recommended*:

1. David Kaplan (ed.), *The Philosophy of Food* (UC Press 2012)

2. Colin Campbell, *The China Study* (BenBella Books, 2006)

3. Marion Nestle, *Food Politics* (UC Press, 2007)  
4. Marian Dawkins and Roland Bonney (eds.), *The Future of Animal Farming* (Blackwell, 2008)

Books (1)-(4) have been ordered from the Buffalo St. Books Co-op, which provides the following information: *These books are available at Buffalo Street Books, and can be ordered* [*online*](http://www.buffalostreetbooks.com/#!first-class/c123e) *or over the phone, and will be delivered to the* ***second meeting of the course****. Please note that there will be no taxes or shipping fees charged for any books ordered for this class. We accept MC, VISA and Discover but can also accept payment via PayPal. (No AmEx.) Confirmation will be sent by email. If you would like to order by phone, please call us at (607) 273-8246. The store is located in the DeWitt Mall on Buffalo Street between Cayuga & Tioga Streets in Downtown Ithaca. More information can be found at our website,* [*www.BuffaloStreetBooks.com*](http://cts.vresp.com/c/?BuffaloStreetBooks/532e1eab5e/ba740abe3b/188ef1b0d5)*.*

**Other Resources:**

Many of our readings will be made available on the course Blackboard site (Bb)

Marion Nestle, [www.foodpolitics.com](http://www.foodpolitics.com)

Mark Bittman, [www.markbittman.com](http://www.markbittman.com)

Food and Brand Lab [www.foodandbrandlab.cornell.edu](http://www.foodandbrandlab.cornell.edu)

T. Colin Campbell, *The China Study Site:* <http://www.thechinastudy.com/>

David Kaplan, *The Philosophy of Food Project* <http://www.food.unt.edu/>

# Requirements for the Course

→ Readings

Daily assignments. Some of these texts are quite complicated, especially if this is your first exposure to philosophy, so you should budget time to read them at least twice for full understanding.

→ Eight reading quizzes (5 questions multiple choice or short answer questions)

Each quiz will contain five multiple-choice or short answer questions, and you’ll have 5 minutes to complete it. It will cover the *required* readings and the lectures we’ve had since the last quiz (including the required readings assigned for the day of the quiz), and should be extremely easy if you’ve kept up with the reading. No makeups for quizzes, but we’ll throw out the lowest grade so don’t worry if you miss (or bomb) one of them. Quizzes will be popped, not announced.

→ Two medium-sized papers (4 pages).

**Topics:** Sample paper topics will be distributed, though you are also free to develop your own (feel free to email us your ideas as you have them, or catch us after class).

**Format:** 1-inch margins all around, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or equivalent.

**Style guidelines**: On writing a philosophy paper, there is no better guide than that of (Cornell alum) James Pryor. *Please* use it if you haven't written much philosophy before. In grading papers, we will *assume* that you have read Pryor. In peer reviewing papers, you should assume that your peer has read Pryor. Here’s a [link](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html).

**Extensions**: Granted, but only for really good reasons (illness requires a physician’s note). Please don’t ask for an extension without a compelling reason; consult the Cornell student handbook for guidelines.

**Late papers**: Without an extension, one full letter grade lower. No papers accepted more than a week after due date without an extension.

**Sources:** Papers should adhere to some consistent practice of footnoting and citation (Chicago, MLA, Harvard, etc.). We prefer Chicago (most philosophers use this) but don't really mind which one you use as long as you are consistent.

**Plagiarism:** <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html> has details. Statement from the Administration: “Plagiarism, or academic theft, is passing off someone else’s work as your own. Regardless of your background, you are responsible for not plagiarizing… Plagiarism will be prosecuted; it can affect your permanent record.” We will run the papers for the course through Turnitin. *Please note: if you loosely paraphrase or take the main gist of a thought from someone else, you need to say that in a note, and provide the reference.* This includes websites, Wikipedia, sparknotes, etc. **When in doubt, cite.**

→Peer reviews on rough drafts

For each of the two papers, students will be asked to review a classmate’s rough draft (using the peer review suite on Bb as well as a rubric that we will provide). Rough drafts will be due *two weeks before the final draft deadline*. Peer reviews will be due *one week before the final draft deadline*.

**Section**

There is an evening section *every other week* on Monday evenings. This will serve primarily as a venue to show portions of documentaries. We strongly encourage you to go to section, but if you don’t you are still responsible for seeing the films that we watch.

**Grading** (out of 100 points):

Attendance: 15 points (30 class periods, each class worth .5 point)

First paper: 15 points

Second paper: 25 points

Peer reviews: 5 points each (5 x 2 = 10 points)

Eight pop quizzes (one thrown out): 35 points (5 points each)

Note: this means that **each question on a quiz is worth 1% of your final course grade**. Again, at the end of term, we’ll throw out your lowest grade and count the best seven.

**Schedule (subject to revision as we go along…):**

**(\*) = sessions to be videocaptured**

Jan 23: Introductory

### **Part I: Ethics, Omnivores, and the Food System**

### Jan 27: King Corn

Jan 28: Eating Animals and Animals that Eat

* Jeff McMahan, “[The Meat-Eaters](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/19/the-meat-eaters/),” *NYT* September 19, 2010
* David Foster Wallace, “[Consider the Lobster](http://www.gourmet.com/magazine/2000s/2004/08/consider_the_lobster),” *Gourmet*, August 2004.

Jan 30: Overview of the food system, with a focus on corn

* Michael Pollan, *Omnivore’s Dilemma* (MP 1-84)

Feb 3: No section

Feb 4: Overview continued

* Michael Pollan, *Omnivore’s Dilemma* (MP 85-122)
* Recommended: Barbara Kingsolver, “Waiting for Asparagus,” Ch. 2 from *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (Bb)

Feb 6: Overview continued

* Jonathan Safran Foer, *Eating Animals,* “Storytelling” (JSF 3-16)
* Jonathan Safran Foer, *Eating Animals,* “All or Nothing or Something Else” (JSF 21-41)

Feb 10: *Food Inc*

Feb 11: Big Food, Big Politics

* Marion Nestle, *Food Politics*, Ch.4-6 (Bb)

Feb. 13: The Individual in Food Politics

* Nestle, *Food Politics*, Ch.7 (Bb)
* Foer, *Eating Animals*, “Influence/Speechlessness,” (JSF 117-148)

# Part II: Ethical Systems and their Applications to Animals

Feb 17: No section, Winter break

Feb 18: No class, Winter break, watch Marion Nestle talk ([videonote link](https://videonotevideos.s3.amazonaws.com/downloads/Marion_Nestle_11_06_2013.mp4))

\*Feb 20: Consequentialism described

* James Rachels, *Elements of Moral Philosophy*, chs. 7-8 (Bb)

Feb 24: *Our Daily Bread*

\*Feb 25: Consequentialism applied

* Alastair Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases” (Bb)
* Recommended*:* Peter Singer, “[All Animals are Equal](http://www2.webster.edu/~corbetre/philosophy/animals/singer-text.html)” (online or Bb)

Feb 27: Deontology described: Immanuel Kant

* Immanuel Kant, “Rational Beings Alone Have Moral Worth” (PP)
* Holly Wilson, “The Green Kant: Kant’s Treatment of Animals” (PP)
* Recommended: James Rachels, *Elements of Moral Philosophy*, chs. 9-10 (Bb)

March 3: No section

March 4: Deontology applied

* Tom Regan, “The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights” (PP)
* Mary Anne Warren, “A Critique of Regan’s Animal Rights Theory” (PP)

March 6: Moral vegetarianism: a debate

* James Rachels, “The Basic Argument for Vegetarianism” (Bb)
* Michael Martin, “[A Critique of Moral Vegetarianism](http://www.reasonpapers.com/pdf/03/rp_3_2.pdf)” (online or Bb)

March 7: Paper 1 First Draft Due

March 10: *American Meat*

\*March 11: Ethically-acceptable meat?

* Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, Chapter 17 (MP 304-333)
* Singer/Mason: *The Ethics of What We Eat*, Chapter 17 (pp. 241-269) (Bb)

March 13: Catch-up

* Haynes, “The Myth of Happy Meat” (Kaplan 161-168, Bb)
* Dawkins, “The Science of Animal Suffering” (Bb) (tentative)

March 14: Paper 1 Peer Review DUE

# Part III: The Human Side: Identity, Psychology, Dignity

March 17: No section

March 18: Food and Religious Identity

* Regan, “Christians are what Christians Eat” (SS)
* Gaffney, “Eastern Religions and the Eating of Meat” (SS)
* Preece, “Ask your Brother for Forgiveness: Animal respect in Native American traditions” (SS)

# \*March 20: Psychology of Eating

* Brian Wansink, *Mindless Eating*, part one (W, chs. 1-5)

# \*March 24: Visit from [Brian Wansink](http://brianwansink.com/): “The Psychologies of Eating”

* Wansink, *Mindless Eating* part two(W, Chs. 6-10)

March 25: Feminist Perspectives

* Carol J. Adams, “The Sexual Politics of Meat” (SS)
* Christina Van Dyke “Gendered Eating” from *Philosophy Comes to Dinner,* Chignell, Cuneo, Halteman (eds.) (Bb)

March 26: Paper 1 Final Draft Due

\*March 27: Food Justice

* Norgaard et. al. “A Continuing Legacy: institutional racism, hunger and nutritional justice on the Klamath” (Bb)
* Armitage, “[Choctaw Brothers Pioneer Aquaponic Farming System to Tackle Food Insecurity in Indian Country](http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/12/20/choctaw-brothers-pioneer-aquaponic-farming-system-tackle-food-insecurity-indian-country)” (online)

March 31: Spring Break

April 1: Spring Break

April 3: Spring Break

\*April 7: Section on Food Dignity: Visit from [Jemila Sequeira](http://sustainabletompkins.org/sustainability-podcast/interview-with-jemila-sequeira/) (coordinator of Whole Community Project and vice-president of the Ithaca SouthSide Community Center) and John Armstrong (Ph.D. student and participant in [*Food Dignity Project*](http://fooddignity.org/))

\*April 8: OLIN HALL, Rm. 155 Visit from [Jonathan Balcombe](http://jonathanbalcombe.com/about): “Second Nature: The Inner Lives of Animals”

April 10: Visit from [Joe Regenstein](http://foodscience.cornell.edu/cals/foodsci/faculty-staff/faculty-profile.cfm?netId=jmr9): “Food and Religious Slaughter”

* Regenstein et al., “The Kosher and Halal Food Laws” (Bb)
* Regenstein, “The Politics of Religious Slaughter: How Science can be Misused” (Bb)
* Recommended: Foltz, “Is Vegetarianism Un-Islamic?” (SS)

April 14: No section

\*April 15: Visit from [Mike Baker](http://vivo.cornell.edu/display/individual6231) (Animal Sciences, Cornell Cooperative Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, and faculty liaison to [Cornell Small Farms](http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/))

* Conover, “Undercover in an Industrial Slaughterhouse” (Bb)

April 16: Cargill Meat Processing Plant Visit (meet at 7.30am, back by noon)

\*April 17: Visit from [Joe Regenstein](http://foodscience.cornell.edu/cals/foodsci/faculty-staff/faculty-profile.cfm?netId=jmr9): “Why I Love Factory Farming”

* Watch: Alan Savory TED talk: [“How to fight desertification and fight climate change”](http://www.ted.com/talks/allan_savory_how_to_green_the_world_s_deserts_and_reverse_climate_change.html)

April 21: Section discussion and quiz

\*April 22: Visit from [Gary Fick](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Professor-Gary-W-Fick/123270307810736?fref=ts): “Food, Starvation, Obesity, and Diet”

* Fick, *Food, Farming, and Faith* (ch. 11) (Bb)

\*April 24: Visit from [Brad Dingman and Heather Sanford](http://feralvisions.org/books/reclamation/) On Hunting, Local Eating, and Pigs

* Brad Dingman, *Reclamation*, ch. 3-5
* Rinella, “Locavore, Get your Gun” (NYT op-ed) (Bb)
* Recommended: Pollan, *Omnivore’s Dilemma*, ch. 18 (MP)
* Recommended: Marris, “More Hipsters are Hunting” (*Slate*) (Bb)

# Part IV: The Planetary Perspective: Global, Local, Environmental

April 28: No section

\*April 29: Environmental and Food Justice

* Mares & Peña, “Environmental and Food Justice: toward local, slow and deep food systems” (Bb)
* Bill McKibben, “A Special Moment in History: the challenge of overpopulation and overconsumption” (PP)

May 1: Visit from [Harold Brown](http://www.farmkind.org) (director of Farmkind): Local, Global, Environmental

* Brown, “This is Civilization?” (Bb)
* Two additional readings on Bb

May 5: Section: Video of [Per Pinstrup-Anderson](http://www.worldfoodprize.org/en/laureates/20002009_laureates/2001_pinstrupandersen/) on *“Globalizing Food and Nutrition”*

\*May 6: Recap and Discussion

* Hardin “Lifeboat Ethics” (PP)
* Murdoch and Oaten “Population and Food: a critique of life boat ethics” (PP)

May 7: Paper 2 First Draft due

May 14: Paper 2 Peer Review due

May 21: Paper 2 Final Draft due

May 11-21: Extra office hours for consultation on papers (times tba)