

## ***Philosophy of Food (Phil 205B)*** ***Spring 2013***

Instructor: Dr. Williams  
Office: Daniel Building 208  
Office Phone: 597-4907  
Email: WilliamsNM@wofford.edu  
Office Hours: MW 3:30-5:00 or by appt.  
Class time/location: MWF (11:30-12:20)

### **Course Description**

An exploration of how food relates to major areas of philosophical inquiry. In this class, we will critically examine the issue of world hunger, the aesthetics of food and culinary tastes, and the different ways in which food can be thought of as an expression of one's identity. The ethics of biotechnology and eating animals will also be explored before we conclude with a brief examination into the issues surrounding food safety.

### **Required text/readings**

- *Food and Philosophy*, Allhoff and Monore, (eds.), 2007
- Material on e-reserve and handouts

### **Learning Outcomes**

- to familiarize students with philosophical inquiry and how it relates to food;
- to develop critical thinking skills;
- to promote written and oral communication skills;
- to assist students in cultivating a deeper appreciation about how our food choices have ethical consequences.

### **Basis for grade determination**

- Midterm = 25%
- Short writing assignments = 25%
- Group presentation = 15%
- Final paper = 25%
- Class participation = 10%

**Midterm exam:** an in-class exam that measures the students' ability to articulate philosophical arguments and their application to certain food issues.

**Short writing assignments** (1-2 pages): I will assign these periodically during the semester to complement our readings and/or class discussions. These assignments will measure critical thinking and writing skills and encourage currency with the readings.

**Group presentations:** each group is required to give a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation that covers an assigned chapter from *America's Food* (2009), located at the Reserve Desk in the library.

**Final paper** (5-7 pages): a paper that defends a thesis about a food-related issue.

**Class participation:** see rubric

**Grading Scale** (percentage): A =100-94; A- = 93-90; B+ = 89-87; B =86-84; B- =83-80; C+ = 79-77; C =76-74; C- =73-70; D =69-60; F =below 60

### **Late Work**

All work is due at the beginning of class. One letter grade will be deducted for every day your work is late.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is required in this class. You are allowed three absences with no grade reduction, thereafter five points off your final paper grade for every unexcused absence. I will record attendance at every class meeting. You are required to arrive at class on time and remain for the entire period in order to be counted as present.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty will be handed in accordance to Wofford's honor code, which can be found at [http://www.wofford.edu/studentlife/honor\\_code.pdf](http://www.wofford.edu/studentlife/honor_code.pdf)

### **Disability**

If you have a disability that requires my attention please let me know as soon as possible so that I may accommodate you.

Schedule  
(subject to change)

#### Note:

(FP) *Food and Philosophy*

(ER) Electronic-Reserve from library webpage

GP = With one exception (humane meat), all group presentations will draw on *America's Food: what you don't know about what you eat* (2009), located at the Reserve Desk

### **Week 1 – Feb.4**

- Introduction: What is the philosophy and philosophy of food?
- J. Wisniewski: "Murder, Cannibalism, and Indirect Suicide: A Philosophical Study of a Recent Case" (ER)
- J. Swift: "A Modest Proposal" (ER)

### **Week 2 – Feb. 11 Food Politics and Hunger**

- Hardin: "Lifeboat Ethics" (ER)
- Murdoch and Oaten: "Population and Food" (ER)
- Singer: "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (ER)

### **Week 3 – Feb. 18 Food Ethics: The importance of values**

#### **GP #1 – "Eating Poorly and Too Much" (Monday, Feb. 18)**

- Zepeda: "Carving values with a spoon" (FP)
- V = *Food Inc.* (excerpt)
- King: "Eating Well" (FP)

### **Week 4 – Feb. 25 Eating Animals**

- Engel: “The Immorality of Eating Meat” (ER)
- V = *Life Behind Bars*
- GP #2 - “Cattle, Milk, Swine, and Sheep” (Wed., Feb. 27)**
- Wrye: “Should I eat meat?” (FP)

### **Week 5 – March 4**

- Fox: “Vegetarianism and Treading Lightly on the Earth” (ER)  
and Bittman: “Rethinking the Meat Guzzler” (ER)
- V = *Fowl Play*
- GP #3 - “Chicken, Eggs, Turkey, and Duck” (Friday, March 8)**

### **Week 6 – March 11**

- Brown: “Picky Eating is a Moral Failing” (FP)  
and V = *Vegucated*
- **GP #4 – Humane Meat (Wed., March 13)**  
V = *Polyface farms*
- “The Meat You Eat,” *NYT* essay contest

### **Week 7 – March 18**

- Berlin: “In Vitro Meat” (ER)
- GP #5 – “Seafood: The Killing Fields” (Wed., March 20)**

### **Midterm**

### **Week 8 – March 25 Food Identity: Culture**

- V = *Flesh* and Adams: “Sexual Politics of Meat” (ER)
- Parasecoli: “Hungry Engrams” (FP) and Tafoya: “Diplomacy of the Dish” (FP)
- Heldke: “Down-Home Global Cooking” (ER)  
*Tentative: required to attend guest talk 3/26 (11 am on Tuesday, 26)*

### **Week 9 - Spring Break**

### **Week 10 – April 8 The body**

- Curtin: “Food/Body/Person” (ER)
- Bordo: “Anorexia Nervosa” (ER)
- Lintott: “Sublime Hunger” (FP)

### **Week 11 – April 15 Aesthetics of Food and Taste**

- Monroe: “Can Food be Art?” (FP)
- Kuehn: “Food Fetishes and Sin-Aesthetics” (FP)
- Iggers: “Who Needs a Critic?” (FP)
- Brady: “Tastes, Smells, and Everyday Aesthetics” (ER)

## **Week 12 – April 22 Food Technology**

### **GP #6 - “Genetically Modified Food” (Monday, April 22)**

- Pence: “Designer food”
- Davion: “Food Fights: A Feminist Perspective” (ER)
- Thompson: “Shall we dine?” Confronting the strange and horrifying story of GMO’s in our food” (FP)

## **Week 13 – April 29 Organic Food**

### **GP# 7 - “Organic Food” (Monday, April 29)**

- Open

## **Week 14 – May 6 Food Safety**

- Burkhardt: “The Ethics of Food Safety in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (ER)
- Final paper review