

**PHIL 235 (001) – Contemporary Moral Issues**  
**The Ethics of Food**  
Winter Term 1, 2017 – 18  
Mon, Wed, Fri, 14:00 – 15:00  
Frederic Lasserre Building (LASR), room 104

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**Course overview**

Here are but a few facts about our current food system:

- As of 2016, roughly 795 million people are suffering from chronic undernourishment.
- Globally, the vast majority of people include animal consumption as part of their regular diet.
- 66% of animals used in food consumption comes from industrial factory farms.
- Intensive monoculture (i.e. the cultivation of a given crop in one area) is detrimental to the land by depleting soil and leaving it vulnerable to erosion.
- People's food practices often play a significant role in their group identities.

What is the moral significance of these facts? This course offers an introductory survey of various issues in food ethics. Questions to be addressed include: Do the global rich have duties to help alleviate world hunger? What, if anything, is morally problematic about factory farming? Should we all be vegetarians or vegans? Which diet, if any, is globally environmentally sustainable? What is the ethical significance of the fact that people's food practices often play a significant role in their group identities? The aim of the course is to develop an understanding of the various issues that make answering these questions challenging, and hopefully come to a reasoned position on some or all of them. No prior familiarity with philosophy is required.

**Required text**

- *Food, Ethics, and Society*, edited by Anne Barnhill, Mark Budolfson, and Tyler Doggett, Oxford University Press, 2016 (available at UBC Bookstore)
- Selected readings (available on Connect or online)

**Course requirements and methods of evaluation**

- Two 3 – 4-page papers (each worth 20% of final mark)
- Four in-class group exercises (each worth 5% of final mark)
- Final exam (35% of final mark)
- Participation (5% of final mark)

## **Papers**

Each paper should be double-spaced, and no longer than four pages. Two copies of a draft of the first paper is due at the beginning of class on Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. Two copies of a draft of your second paper is due at the beginning of class on Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup>. On both days, your in-class group exercises will consist in peer-reviewing the papers of the other members of your group. Note that you are required to bring in *two* copies of your draft. You will be given an instruction sheet with a list of questions to help guide your review. A revised version of your first paper is due in class along with the drafts (with comments) on Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, and a revised version of your second paper is due in class along with the drafts (with comments) on December 1st. Late papers will be marked down 5% per calendar day late. Failure to write a draft will also lower the final mark on your paper by 5%. No extensions will be given on papers except for medical reasons. Requests for extensions must be supported by appropriate medical documentation. The deadline for requesting an extension is one business day before a paper is due. Information about how to write a philosophy paper is available [here](#) and [here](#). Each paper will be evaluated in light of the grading scale outlined below. Given that there are no prerequisites for this course, I am not assuming that you are familiar with writing philosophy papers. So, I will be holding a mini writing workshop one week before your first draft is due (see reading schedule).

## **Grading Scale**

A+ (90-100%), A (85-89%), A- (80-84%)

Exceptional Performance. Student demonstrates a mastery of the subject matter and shows strong evidence of original thinking, good organization in written work, impressive capacity to analyze and offers insightful critical evaluations.

B+ (76-79%) B (72-75%), B- (68-71%)

Competent Performance. Student demonstrates an understanding of subject matter, as well as some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability, and a reasonable understanding of relevant issues.

C+ (64-67%) C (60-63%), C- (55-59%)

Adequate Performance. Student demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter, the ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material. The work is acceptable but uninspired; not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour.

D (50-54%)

Problematic Performance. Student demonstrates some, albeit incomplete, understanding of the subject matter, limited evidence of critical and analytical skills. The work lacks original thinking.

F (0-49%)

Inadequate Performance. Student demonstrates little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter, as well as little or no evidence of critical and analytical skills, and applies a limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

**In-class assignments**

Two of the four in-class assignments will consist in peer-reviewing drafts. The other two in-class assignments will consist in answering, in groups, questions related to the course readings.

**Final examination**

The final examination will consist of a series of multiple-choice questions, and 5 short-answer questions. You will be required to answer four out of five questions. The final exam will be held during the final exam period; the specific date will be determined at some later time.

**Participation**

As stated above, your participation in the course counts for 5% of your final mark. There are no specific criteria by which I evaluate student participation. Your participation in this course will be evaluated holistically. I do not take mere class attendance to be sufficient for receiving any participation mark. In addition to attending class, receiving participation marks requires active contribution—either in class, during office hours, or on the discussion forum—by asking questions, offering comments, and generally engaging with the course material.

**Recording lectures**

Lectures will not be recorded: you will need to come to class in person in order to hear the lectures. No student may record a lecture without permission from the instructor.

**Text-matching software**

Be advised that essays may be submitted to text-matching software (e.g. Turnitin).

**Connect**

Students are expected to check the course webpage at least once a week for any announcements or postings.

**Copyright**

Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, outlines, summaries, exam questions, etc.), including material posted on the course webpage are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor.

**Academic honesty and integrity**

Here is a statement from the UBC website:

“Academic honesty is essential to the continued functioning of the University of British Columbia as an institution of higher learning and research. All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of an academic community. Breach of those expectations or failure to follow the appropriate policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the University with respect to academic honesty may result in disciplinary action.

It is the student's obligation to inform himself or herself of the applicable standards for academic honesty. Students must be aware that standards at the University of British

Columbia may be different from those in secondary schools or at other institutions. If a student is in any doubt as to the standard of academic honesty in a particular course or assignment, then the student must consult with the instructor as soon as possible, and in no case should a student submit an assignment if the student is not clear on the relevant standard of academic honesty. If an allegation is made against a student, the Registrar may place the student on academic hold until the President has made his or her final decision. When a student is placed on academic hold, the student is blocked from all activity in the Student Service Centre.”

Students should also familiarise themselves with UBC regulation on plagiarism:

“Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments.”

See the following link for further information about academic dishonesty and plagiarism:  
<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/?tree=3,54,111,9>

**Tentative Reading Schedule**  
**PHIL 235 (001) – Contemporary Moral Issues**  
**The Ethics of Food**

Winter Term 1, 2017 – 18  
 Mon, Wed, Fri, 14:00 – 15:00  
 Frederic Lasserre Building (LASR), room 104

\* Except otherwise noted, readings can be found in the course textbook *Food, Ethics, and Society*. Noted exceptions include readings available on Connect or via hyperlinks below.

Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
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<b>Week 1</b>			
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Wed. 6 Sep.	<b>Course introduction</b>	▪ Syllabus (Connect)	
Fri. 8	<b>Argumentation</b>	▪ Handout on argumentation (Connect)	

<b>Week 2</b>			
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Mon. 11	<b>Moral Theory Primer</b>	▪ Timmons (Connect)	
Wed. 13		▪ Cont'd	
Fri. 15	<b>Global Hunger</b>	▪ Introduction, 36 – 46 ▪ Weiss, 8 – 11 ▪ Singer, 64 – 71	

<b>Week 3</b>			
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Mon. 18		▪ Introduction, 52 – 57 ▪ Sen, 75 – 79	
Wed. 20		▪ Introduction, 57 – 59 ▪ Deaton, 79 – 80 ▪ Gates, 81 – 83 ▪ Banerjee & Duflo, 84 – 80	
Fri. 22	<b>In-class assignment</b>	▪ No readings	

<b>Week 4</b>			
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Mon. 25	<b>Production Ethics</b> Industrial Animal Agriculture	▪ Introduction, 322 – 329 ▪ Pew Foundation, 342 – 345 ▪ Nestle, 436 – 437 ▪ Human Society of the USA, 347 – 352	
Wed. 27		▪ Introduction, 329 – 334 ▪ Singer, 352 – 361	
Fri. 29	<b>Interlude: How to write a philosophy paper</b>	▪ <a href="#">Horban (1995)</a> ▪ <a href="#">Horban (2005)</a> ▪ <a href="#">Pryor (2012)</a>	Paper 1 topics released on Connect

<b>Week 5</b>			
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Mon. 2, Oct.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Singer, Cont'd.</li> <li>▪ Tännsjö, 362 – 365</li> </ul>	
Wed. 4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Korsgaard, 366 – 371</li> </ul>	
Fri. 6	<b>In-class assignment: Peer reviewing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No readings</li> </ul>	<i>Two copies</i> of first draft due at the beginning of class

<b>Week 6</b>			
Mon. 9	<b>Thanksgiving Day</b>		University closed
Wed. 11	Alternatives to Industrial Animal Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, 373 – 380</li> <li>▪ Salatin, 386 – 391</li> <li>▪ Scruton, 391 – 394</li> </ul>	
Fri. 13		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Harman, 395 – 402</li> </ul>	Paper 1 due at the beginning of class

<b>Week 7</b>			
Mon. 16		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, 380 – 382</li> <li>▪ Yoon, 404 – 406</li> </ul>	
Wed. 18	Industrial Plant Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, 407 – 416</li> <li>▪ Borlaug, 434 – 439</li> </ul>	
Fri. 20		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Desrochers &amp; Shimizu, 440 – 446</li> </ul>	

<b>Week 8</b>			
Mon. 23		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, 416 – 427</li> </ul>	
Wed. 25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ronald, 447 – 453</li> <li>▪ Naylor, 454 – 455</li> <li>▪ Philpott, 456 – 457</li> </ul>	
Fri. 27	Alternatives to Industrial Plant Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, 459 – 463</li> <li>▪ Dye Gussow, 480 – 481</li> <li>▪ Kirschenmann, 482 – 489</li> </ul>	

<b>Week 9</b>			
Mon. 30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, 463 – 469</li> <li>▪ McKibben, 490 – 495</li> <li>▪ De Bres, 495 – 507</li> </ul>	
Wed. 1 Nov.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Paratore, 510 – 512</li> <li>▪ Kiessig, 514 – 517</li> </ul>	
Fri. 3	<b>In-class assignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No readings</li> </ul>	

<b>Week 10</b>			
Mon. 6	<b>Consumer Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, 165 – 169</li> <li>▪ McPherson, 189 – 203</li> </ul>	
Wed. 8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction, 169 – 173</li> <li>▪ Budolfson, 204 – 209</li> </ul>	
Fri. 10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Michaelson, 210 – 218</li> </ul>	

<b>Week 11</b>			
Mon. 13	<b>Remembrance Day</b>		University closed

Wed. 15		▪ Singer & Mason, 219 – 224	
Fri. 17	<b>Food and Identity</b>	▪ Introduction, 226 – 228 ▪ Guptill et al., 238 – 241	Paper 2 topics released on Connect

<b>Week 12</b>
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Mon. 20		▪ Introduction, 228 – 230 ▪ Adams, 258 – 263	
Wed. 22		▪ Introduction, 231 – 233 ▪ Vantrease, 242 – 248	
Fri. 24	<b>In-class assignment: Peer reviewing</b>	▪ No readings	<i>Two copies</i> of draft due at the beginning of class

<b>Week 13</b>
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Mon. 27		▪ Introduction, 234 – 235 ▪ Heldke, 269 – 273	
Wed. 29		▪ Introduction, 285 – 286 ▪ Kemmerer, 309 – 319	
Fri. 1 Dec.	TBD	▪ TBD	Paper 2 due at the beginning of class

Final Exam period: December 5 – 20, 2017