

# The Ethics of Food

Instructor: Jennifer Wang  
Sample Syllabus

Time and Location: TBA

Office hours: TBA

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## Course Description

Each day, we are faced with choices about the food we eat. This course focuses on the ethics of the decisions we make by looking at: arguments for and against vegetarianism or veganism, the environmental, economic, and social impact of food products from farm to table, and arguments for and against food-buying practices. Are we morally permitted to make certain choices? Do we have duties towards the farmers, factory workers and retailers involved in the production of certain food products? These and other questions will be examined in this course.

## Readings

These required textbooks are available in the campus bookstore:

1. Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*
2. Peter Singer and Jim Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat: Why Our Food Choice Matter*
3. Shelly Kagan, *Normative Ethics*

Additional articles will be made available online.

## Requirements

Students are required to attend and participate in class, take a midterm, submit 10 short writing assignments, and submit a final paper.

## Attendance and Participation Policy

You are required to attend every class. Good attendance and participation in class will count in favor of you if your final grade is within half a point of the next grade up.

## Grading

30% Midterm

30% Final paper

40% Short writing assignments

## Schedule

	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading assignment</i>
Week 1	Introduction	
	Overview of the food system	
Week 2	Overview of the food system	
	The basic argument for vegetarianism	James Rachels
Week 3	The basic argument for vegetarianism	
	Moral theory	Normative Ethics, chapters 2-3
Week 4	Moral theory	
	Moral theory	Normative Ethics, chapter 5
Week 5	The moral status of animals	Peter Singer, "All Animals are Equal"

Week 6	The moral status of animals The moral status of animals Conscientious Omnivory	Alistair Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People" Tom Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights" Roger Scruton, "The Conscientious Carnivore"
Week 7	Veganism and other animal products Veganism and other animal products	The Ethics of What We Eat, chapters 8 The Omnivore's Dilemma, chapters 16-17
Week 8	Veganism and other animal products Factory farming	The Ethics of What We Eat, chapter 17 The Ethics of What We Eat, chapters 2-4
Week 9	Factory farming Animal death	Alice Levitt, "Guilt-Free Food"
Week 10	Seafood Conventional Agriculture	David Foster Wallace, "Consider the Lobster" The Omnivore's Dilemma, part 1
Week 11	Conventional Agriculture Organic Agriculture	The Omnivore's Dilemma, part 1 The Omnivore's Dilemma, chapter 9
Week 12	Organic Agriculture Food workers	The Ethics of What We Eat, chapter 14 Fast Food Nation, chapter 8
Week 13	Local food Collective Responsibility and Food Policy	The Ethics of What We Eat, chapter 10 Excerpts from Marion Nestle, Food Politics
Week 14	Collective Responsibility and Food Policy	