

Ethical Dilemmas: Food, Wealth, & Social Identity

Philosophy 1001

Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays, BEHS 110, 10:45am – 11:35am

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Course Description: How should I live? In this course, we will investigate this question—the central question of ethics—by focusing on three topics: food, wealth, and social identity. Food will be our starting point. What does it mean, we will ask, to be an ethical consumer of food? Is eating meat morally permissible? Should we eat only local and organic products? What is the connection between social inequality and food? Thinking about food will lead to our second topic: wealth and poverty. We live in a world marked by increasingly large gaps between the rich and poor. What’s wrong with such inequalities? What moral obligations do we have, as individuals, to help the less well off? How do these obligations affect how we ought to spend our money on an everyday basis? What must we give up, if anything, to help relieve the suffering of others? In the course’s last part, we turn to questions of social identity and diversity. How should we understand categories like gender, race, and ethnicity? What does it mean to accept and respect group difference? Investigating these questions will allow us to better understand the ethical challenges—and dilemmas—we face in everyday life.

Theoretical goals:

Students will better understand...

- the ethical dimensions of food choice—in particular, arguments for and against eating meat.
- three important ethical theories: Kantian, utilitarian, and virtue theories.
- arguments for moral obligations towards the less well off, as well as objections to those arguments.
- the ethical dimensions of diversity

Practical goals:

Students will improve their ability...

- to read and interpret philosophical & literary texts.
- to recognize and evaluate arguments
- to communicate ideas clearly in speech and writing
- to engage respectfully with conflicting points of view

Course Requirements:

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| 1. Attendance and participation: | (16%) 37 points |
| 2. Two short papers: | (43%) 100 points (40 for 1 st paper, 60 for 2 nd) |
| 3. Weekly writing assignments | (26%) 60 points (12 assignments @ 5 points each) |
| 4. Final Exam: | (14%) 33 points |
| | 230 points TOTAL |

GRADING SCALE

A+	(98% and up)	B-	(82%-80%)
A	(97%-95%)	C+	(79%-78%)
A-	(94%-90%)	C	(77%-75%)
B+	(89%-88%)	C-	(74%-70%)
B	(87%-85%)	D+	(69%-68%)

The Details:

1. Attendance and participation

- Each day, your attendance and participation is worth 1 point.
- I take attendance and gauge participation using clickers. You must purchase a clicker!
- You do not get credit merely for coming to class. You must participate via clicker and, if required, in small group discussions in order to get your point. You can also get credit by asking a question in lecture. There are no stupid questions!
- I give excused absences for sickness, medical and work emergencies, etcetera. Please get in touch with me via email if you need an excused absence.
- If your clicker is not working in class, you are responsible for emailing me to get your participation point.
- Note: you will lose your daily point if you are caught checking your email or visiting any non-course related website. I would recommend not having a screen in class.

2. Two short papers

- Each of the papers is 3 pages long and should be double-spaced.
- All paper topics and instructions are posted on Canvas in the “Assignments” section and the papers must be submitted via Canvas. All due dates are marked on the course syllabus.
- All papers are graded anonymously via rubric and are run through the Turn-It-In website to check for plagiarism. Never put your name on your papers! SID only.
- Late papers will **not** be accepted, save for exceptional circumstances. No rewrites.
- You will only receive handwritten comments from me if you upload your paper **one day** before the official submission date and notify me at erin.beeghly@utah.edu

3. Weekly writing assignments

- There is a weekly writing assignment for this class. Each one is worth five points. 12/14 are required.
- The point of the assignments is to incentivize reading for class—and, more specifically—to incentivize reading well. They also encourage you to connect class material to your personal experiences and to think critically about course material.
- **Submission requirements:** as a general rule, all written assignments are due at 9am before class starts. Here is the only exception: if you have a “stay-at-home reading day,” assignments are due at 5pm.
- **Grading:** Some assignments will ask you to answer very specific questions. Some are writing or reflection exercises. Assignments are graded using a rubric, included with each assignment.

- You can choose to opt out of two written assignments without penalty. You pick which ones. You will ultimately do 12/14. Only 12 are required, and you don't get extra credit for doing extra entries.

4. Final exam

- The final exam will be comprehensive but will focus especially on the last part of the course.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **What if I Have Questions About The Comments on My Papers or My Grade?** I am happy to discuss the grades for your papers or to clarify your written comments. Just get in touch with me, and I will set up an appointment with you. I will, as a matter of policy, wait 24 hours until after the comments and grades to set up appointments. Grades are almost never changed, but we do encourage people to meet with us to get a better sense of how they can improve.
- **What if I Want to Challenge My Grade on a Paper?** I am very conscientious about grading student work, and I very rarely make mistakes. However, if you believe that there is an error in your grade, you should make an appointment with me to review your paper. I will explain the grade and check for errors. If you still believe that the paper has not been graded correctly, you must write a letter explaining your reasons for believing that your paper has not been accurately graded and email it to me, as well as to the philosophy department chair, Matt Haber. He will find a faculty member to re-grade the paper. The grade can go up or down.
- **Can I Check My Grades Via Canvas?** Your grades are always accessible via Canvas.
- **When Is Reading for the Class Due?** You should always do the assigned reading before you come to class.
- **Should I Bring My Books to Class?** YES! Always.

Class Policies:

- **Plagiarism, Cheating, and Misrepresentation of One's Work:** Anyone that plagiarizes, cheats, or misrepresents their work will automatically the assignment and, possibly, the course. It is your responsibility to know what counts as plagiarism, cheating, and misrepresentation. Please familiarize yourself with relevant standards here: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>.
- **Electronics Policy:** Please turn off your cellphones in class. I permit laptops. However, if you are caught on your laptop on a non-course related website, you lose your participation points for the day. I will also establish a laptop free zone in class, if students are interested.
- **Email Policy:** I am available by email to answer course-related questions. Please give me at least 24 hours to respond to your message. Note that I do not answer philosophical questions about course material over email! Philosophical questions are better addressed in person during office hours and in class. If you have a substantive question about lecture, please come see me in person! If it helps you to write me with your question in advance, that's fine! Know that I cannot respond to the

question over email but I will read it carefully, and we can talk about it in person or, if appropriate, raise the question for the class as a whole to discuss.

- **Respect in the Classroom:** I aim to make the classroom a place where people with conflicting points of view can respectfully engage with one another. I require that people are polite. Raise your hand when you have a question. No interrupting other students or the professor. Be aware of the time that you spend talking. No one student or group of students should be dominating discussion.
- **Learning Styles:** Your wellbeing and success in this course are important to me. I recognize that there are *multiple* ways to learn and that this multiplicity should be acknowledged in the design and structure of university courses and the evaluation of their participants. Thus, I encourage students registered in the course to discuss their learning styles and comprehension requirements with me during my office hours or, if necessary, at another arranged time. Every student is entitled to a meaningful and stimulating learning experience.
- **Accommodations:** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801.581.5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the professor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.
- **Food:** No messy/smelly food in class, please! Eat before or after class.

Flexibility of the Syllabus: The syllabus is subject to change! I will announce changes in lecture and in the course website.

Books to Purchase (Required): *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Michael Pollan
The Ethics of What We Eat, Peter Singer and Jim Mason
All other readings are available on the course.

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

Monday, January 8	Course Introduction
SECTION 1: FOOD	
Wednesday, January 10	Class topic: The Omnivore's Dilemma? Diet and Food Choice Required before class: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i>, Michael Pollan p. 15-19, 287-89• <i>The Ethics of What We Eat</i>, Peter Singer & Jim Mason, p. 7-8, 15-20, 83-91, 187-195.
Friday, January 12	Class topic: Meat Production in the US Required before class: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Ethics of What We Eat</i>, p. 21-68• "The Story of An Egg," PBS• "Glass Walls," PETA <i>Due before class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Journal Entry 1
Monday, January 15	NO CLASS—Martin Luther King Day
Wednesday, January 17	Class topic: The Animal Rights Objection to Eating Meat Required before class: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "All Animals Are Equal," Peter Singer <i>Due before class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Journal Entry 2
Friday, January 19	In-Class Discussion of Singer
Monday, January 22	Class topic: Response to Animal Rights Objection? Be A Conscientious Carnivore! Required before class: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i>, p. 208- 219, 226-238, 304-333
Wednesday, January 24	Class topic: Singer's Reply to Consciousness Carnivores Required before class: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Ethics of What We Eat</i>, p. 83-110, 248-258 <i>Due before class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Journal Entry 3
Friday, January 26	In-Class Discussion of Consciousness Carnivorism
Monday, January 29	NO CLASS—Research Project/Paper Prep
Wednesday, January 31	NO CLASS—Read at Home Day Topic: The Environmental Objection to Eating Meat Required reading:

- *The Ethics of What We Eat*, p. 231-240
- Brian Henning, “Standing in Livestock’s Long Shadow: The Ethics of Eating Meat on a Small Planet”

Due today:

- Journal Entry 4

Friday, February 2

In-Class Workshop: How to Write a Philosophy Paper

Monday, February 5

**Class Topic: Response to the Environmental Objection
Eat Organic! Lecture 1—What is Organic Food?**

Required before class:

- “Can an Organic Twinkie Be Certified?” Joan Dye Gusset
- *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, p. 124-140
- USDA Website: Organic Standards.

Wednesday, February 7

**Class topic: Response to the Environmental Objection
Eat Organic! Lecture 2—Is Eating Organic Meat
Environmentally Friendly?**

Required before class:

- *The Ethics of What We Eat*, p. 197-222, 231-240
- “The Great Organic Myths: Why Organic Food is An Indulgence the World Cannot Afford,” Rob Johnston
- “How to Fight Desertification and Reduce Climate Change,” Allan Savory
- “All Sizzle and No Steak,” James E. McWilliams

Optional:

- *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, p. 134-169

Due before class:

- Journal entry 5

Friday, February 9

In-Class Exercise on Food Ethics

Due before class:

- Paper 1

SECTION 2: WEALTH & POVERTY

Monday, February 12

Class topic: Global Inequalities in Wealth

Required before class:

- “The Diversity of Objections to Inequality,” Tim Scanlon

Wednesday, February 14

Class topic: Human Beings as Moral Equals—Immanuel Kant

Required before class:

- *Groundwork of the Metaphysical of Morals*, Immanuel Kant, p. 24 - 34

Friday, February 16

NO CLASS: Read at Home Day

Topic: Kantian Theories of Ethics

Required:

- *Groundwork*, Selected Passages p. 34 - 44.

Due today:

- Journal entry 6

Monday, February 19

NO CLASS: President's Day

Wednesday, February 21

In-Class Discussion on Kantian Ethics

Friday, February 23

Class topic: A Kantian Perspective on Poverty

Required before class:

- "A Kantian Approach to World Hunger," Onora O'Neill

Due before class:

- Journal entry 7

Monday, February 26

In-Class Discussion on A Kantian Response to Poverty

Wednesday, February 28

Class topic: Utilitarian Theories of Ethics

Required before class:

- "Of the Principle of Utility" Jeremy Bentham

Friday, March 2

Class topic: A Utilitarian Perspective on Poverty

Required before class:

- "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," Peter Singer

Due before class:

- Journal entry 8

Monday, March 5

In-Class Discussion on The Utilitarian Response to Poverty

Wednesday, March 7

Class Topic: Response to Singer #1—Let Them Starve

Required before class:

- "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor," Garrett Hardin

Friday, March 9

Class topic: Response to Singer #2—Charity Will Not End World Hunger

Required before class:

- "More Than Charity: Cosmopolitan Alternatives to the 'Singer Solution,'" Andrew Kumar
- "Poverty, Facts, and Political Philosophy," Peter Singer
- "Facts, Theories, and Hard Choices," Andrew Kumar

Due before class:

- Journal entry 9

Monday, March 12

Class Topic: Aristotle's Virtue Ethics—The Basics

Required before class:

- *Nicomachean Ethics*, Selected Passages.

Wednesday, March 14

Class Topic: An Aristotelean Perspective on Poverty

Required before class:

- *Nicomachean Ethics*, Selected Passages.

Due before class:

- Journal entry 10

Friday, March 16

In-Class Discussion of The Aristotlean Response to Poverty

Due before class:

- Paper 2

Monday, March 19

NO CLASS: Spring Break

Wednesday, March 21

NO CLASS: Spring Break

Friday, March 23

NO CLASS: Spring Break

SECTION 3: SOCIAL IDENTITY & DIVERSITY

Monday, March 26

Class topic: The Ethics of Diversity

Required before class:

- “Ethics of Diversity,” Kwame Anthony Appiah

Wednesday, March 28

Class topic: Race & Ethnicity

Required before class:

- “What Are You Anyway?” Charles Mills

Due before class:

- *Journal entry 11*

Friday, March 30

In-Class Discussion of Mills

Monday, April 2

Class topic: Sex & Intersex

Required before class:

- Allison Stone, “Sex”

Wednesday, April 4

Class topic: Sex & Intersex

Required before class:

- Allison Stone, “Sex”

Friday, April 6

Class topic: Sex v. Gender

Required before class:

- Asta, TBD

Due before class:

- Journal entry 12

Monday, April 9

In-Class Discussion of Stone & Asta

Wednesday, April 11

Class topic: Colorblindness as a Moral Ideal

Required before class:

- “I Have a Dream,” Martin Luther King Jr.
- “Colorblindness as Ideal, Policy, and Principle, Elizabeth Anderson, 155 - 160

Friday, April 13

Class topic: Colorblindness as a Moral Ideal

Required before class:

- “Colorblindness as Ideal, Policy, and Principle, Elizabeth Anderson, 160 - 168

Due before class:

- Journal entry 13

Monday, April 16

In-Class Discussion of Colorblindness

Wednesday, April 17

Class Topic: What’s Wrong with Being Biased?

Required before class:

- “Sub-clinical Bias, Manners, & Moral Harm,” Amy Olberding

Due before class:

- Journal entry 14

Friday, April 19

CLASS SELECTS TOPIC: TBD

Monday, April 22

In-class Discussion/Final Exam Prep!

FINAL EXAM—TBD