

## **EATING, ENVIRONMENT, AND ETHICS**

**HRTS 4392  
3 CREDIT HOURS  
JAN TERM 2020**

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### **DESCRIPTION**

Of all issues related to human rights, perhaps none is more basic than the eating of food. The need for nourishment approaches as close to a universal condition of life as can be found. At the same time, few qualities are more expressive of humanity's differences. For millennia diverse communities have recognized how the production and consumption of food create deeply meaningful relationships among peoples, non-human beings, and the places they inhabit. Yet as eating has become increasingly mediated through supermarkets, global supply chains, microwaves, and fast-food restaurants, these relationships have shifted in significant and often unexamined ways. This course therefore considers eating as a complex act that is simultaneously ecological, historical, scientific, cultural, political, symbolic, economic, theological, and social—even as it centers on a simple ethical question: where does food come from, and what does this mean?

### **INSTRUCTOR**

My name is Dr. Brad Klein. I serve as Associate Director for the [SMU Human Rights Program](#) here at SMU. I am a human rights and environmental justice scholar-practitioner specializing in critical pedagogy, leadership development, and social change. My office is located in Clements Hall Room 109B. To schedule a meeting, please email me at [kleinb@smu.edu](mailto:kleinb@smu.edu).

### **GOALS**

This course explores the eating of food as an ethical act embodying both intimate connections and jarring separations within the delicate web of being that encircles the earth. Eating is framed as the performance of a value system with both spatial and temporal implications. While emphasizing the context of privilege in the United States, the course considers also the global environmental dimensions of the contemporary food system. Case studies are used to demonstrate patterns of injustice and waste, describe unequal distributions of burdens and benefits, and illustrate forms of resistance and transcendence. Through dialogue over the intersections between food and environment, participants join in the fundamental struggle to envision and establish societies built upon basic fairness and holistic health.

No matter what their career paths are, students are prepared to live out the old adage “you are what you eat” with a greater sense of awareness, integrity, and joy. This preparation is enabled by the integration of four main goals. By the end of the term students develop:

1. **An enhanced understanding of interdependence**, by being able to articulate how eating connects people with each other, non-human life, and the places in which they exist; challenge assumptions in common biases and stereotypes; and illustrate how differences (in geography, culture, race, religion, etc.) shape relationships and access to food.
2. **An increased ability to think systemically**, by being able to describe how personal choices influence (and are influenced by) larger structures; deconstruct the role of privilege in the dominant food system; and expose how environmental burdens and benefits are distributed unequally.
3. **A more robust capacity for envisioning creative responses**, by being able to cite specific case studies and historical trends; define more holistic and contextual interpretations of “food” and “environment”; and apply strategies for nurturing leadership, subverting oppression, and building alliances.
4. **A greater confidence in their power to work for change**, by being able to adopt appropriate personal lifestyle shifts; voice clear yet nuanced commitments to learning, dialogue, and action; and advocate for more just and healthy patterns of food production and consumption in their communities.

These goals are designed to help students align cutting-edge theory with meaningful praxis. In other words, all aspects of the course are aimed at developing practical knowledge for personal and social transformation.

## TECHNOLOGY

[SMU Canvas](#) is the hub for all instructor announcements, student questions, assignment submissions, reading postings, and grading feedback. Unless otherwise noted, all course-related activities are handled through this online portal.

Technology is not allowed in the classroom. Laptops, tablets, phones, and all other devices are not to be used unless a special accommodation has been arranged (as described in the section below). Although I think technology can serve many productive educational purposes, my experiences as both student and professor have convinced me that it detracts from the classroom experience more often than not. The objective of building a strong learning community necessitates that all participants are present and prepared in their moments together.

Students are encouraged to use technology outside of class time in order to build their understanding and further discussions of class topics. During class, the focus should be on the interpersonal connections in the room.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

I want to ensure that the intellectual, emotional, and physical abilities of all students are respected. Consequently, I am happy to work with individuals to determine appropriate accommodations for the best possible course experience. As per university policy:

- Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit the [DASS website](#) to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement (see [University Policy 2.4](#)).
- Due to the sensitive nature of course material and dialogue, the use of recording devices is prohibited unless arranged through DASS and approved by the instructor in advance.
- Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence (see [University Policy No. 1.9](#)).
- Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work (see the [SMU Undergraduate Catalogue](#)).
- Students wishing to drop this course must consult the SMU [Registrar](#), [Financial Aid Office](#), and any other relevant administrative bodies to ensure appropriate policies and dates are taken into consideration.

**I support survivors of sexual assault and harassment.** If you or someone you know has been assaulted or harassed, appropriate resources can be found on the [SMU Live Responsibly website](#). Help can also be found through the [SMU Police Department](#) or [SMU Counseling & Psychiatric Services](#).

## ASSESSMENT

Progress toward course goals is assessed in three ways.

- **Portfolio (80%):** Students complete a portfolio with 4 parts. Part 1 involves an exploration of the student's family and cultural background and worldview formation in terms of food. Part 2 involves a summary of the student's personal relationship with, ethical approach to, and positive and negative habits regarding food. Part 3 involves an analysis of three to four major themes from the readings. Part 4 involves a proposal of a specific call to action or policy initiative related to food and environment. Students are challenged to create a coherent arc among the parts from start to finish. Each part is approximately 2000 words in length. An optional outline of the portfolio is due January 14th. The final portfolio is due by the end of the term. Full details are explained in a separate document.

- **Class participation (10%):** Participation includes, but is not limited to: attending every class; completing the required reading and assignments; coming to discussions prepared to contribute meaningfully; actively listening and maintaining a respectful presence in discussions; taking appropriate risks in sharing; offering timely words of support or challenge; and approaching the material and other participants with a curious yet critical mind. Students must also take charge of leading one discussion over the course of the semester. Full details are explained in a separate document.
- **Discussion Facilitation (10%):** Each day, students are assigned to facilitate discussions and activities around the readings. Full details for the discussion facilitation assignment are explained in a separate document.

The [SMU Honor Code](#) is in effect for all aspects of this course. All assignments submitted for review are considered to include the SMU Honor Pledge (“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this work”), whether or not the pledge appears in writing and/or with a signature. Violations of the honor code result in automatic course failure. All quotations and paraphrases must include a proper citation.

Writing assignments follow the [Chicago Manual of Style](#) and use 1 inch margins, single spacing, and a 10 to 12 inch basic font. Late or incorrect assignments receive half credit, except in cases of emergency or exceptional circumstances. Assignments are considered late whether submitted 1 minute or 1 month past the deadline; this policy is intended to ensure all students are treated fairly and equitably. Impeccable grammar and usage represent a baseline expectation for all writing assignments. Assignments cannot be edited and resubmitted. A full writing assignment rubric is provided in a separate document. Students are encouraged to contact the [SMU Writing Center](#) regardless of writing skill level, in order to seek improvement.

## GRADES

The following grade scale is used:

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|--|---|
| <b>A (96-100)</b>  | A superior performance. The student demonstrates a rare mastery of all concepts and consistently contributes to the class in unique and meaningful ways.                              |
| <b>A- (91-95)</b><br><b>B+ (86-90)</b>                     | An excellent performance. The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of all concepts and often contributes to the class in interesting and relevant ways.                      |
| <b>B (81-85)</b><br><b>B- (76-80)</b>                      | An acceptable performance. The student demonstrates a solid knowledge of most concepts with some flaws, and typically contributes to the class in accurate but commonplace ways.      |
| <b>C+ (71-75)</b><br><b>C (66-70)</b><br><b>C- (61-65)</b> | A weak performance. The student demonstrates an adequate awareness of most concepts with notable flaws, and sometimes contributes to the class in constructive but insufficient ways. |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>D+ (56-60)</b> | An unacceptable performance. The students demonstrates little familiarity of concepts and is frequently unable to contribute coherently to the class. |
| <b>D (51-55)</b>  |   |
| <b>D- (46-50)</b> |   |
| <b>F (0-45)</b>   |   |

## **SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)**

The following texts raise diverse and vital themes related to eating, environment, and ethics. Students are not expected to agree with all of the authors; in fact, respectful and reasoned critique is encouraged. However, they are expected to vigorously and purposefully engage the ideas. Students are strongly encouraged to begin reading before the term begins.

### **January 6 (Morning)**

Esquibel, Catriona Rueda. "Decolonize Your Diet: Notes Towards Decolonization." *Food First. Dismantling Racism in the Food System* 7 (2016): 1-4.

Shiva, Vandana. "Monocultures of the Mind." *Trumpter* 10, no. 4 (1993): 1-10.

Bradley, Katherine, and Hank Herrera. "Decolonizing Food Justice: Naming, Resisting, and Researching Colonizing Forces in the Movement." *Antipode* 48, no. 1 (2016): 97-114.

### **January 6 (Afternoon)**

Benson, Peter, and Edward F. Fischer. "Broccoli and Desire." *Antipode* 39, no. 5 (2007): 800-820.

Heldke, Lisa. "'Let's Eat Chinese: Reflections on Cultural Food Colonialism.'" *Gastronomica* 1, no. 2 (2001): 76-79.

White Jr., Lynn. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis." *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203-1207.

### **January 7 (Morning)**

Singer, Peter. "All Animals Are Equal..." In *Animal Liberation*, 1-24. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

Farm Sanctuary. "African American Vegan Starter Guide." 2016.  
[http://www.farmsanctuary.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/AA\\_VeganStarterGuide\\_WebVersion.pdf](http://www.farmsanctuary.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/AA_VeganStarterGuide_WebVersion.pdf).

Ursin, Lars. "The Ethics of Meat Paradox." *Environmental Ethics* 38, no. 2 (2016): 131-144.  
 Farm Sanctuary - African American Vegan Starter Guide

Greenebaum, Jessica. "Veganism, Identity, and the Quest for Authenticity." *Food, Culture, and Society* 15, no. 1 (2012): 129-144.

### **January 7 (Afternoon)**

Food and Water Watch. "Genetically Engineered Food: An Overview." January 2016.  
[https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/sites/default/files/rpt\\_1601\\_gmo101-update2-web2.pdf](https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/sites/default/files/rpt_1601_gmo101-update2-web2.pdf).

Hall, Stephen S. "CRISPR Can Speed Up Nature - And Change How We Grow Food." *Wired*, July 17, 2018. <https://www.wired.com/story/crispr-tomato-mutant-future-of-food/>.

Monsanto. "Growing Better Together: 2017 Sustainability Report."  
[https://monsanto.com/app/uploads/2017/12/Sustainability\\_2017.pdf](https://monsanto.com/app/uploads/2017/12/Sustainability_2017.pdf)

The Panos Institute. "The GM Debate - Who Decides?" *Panos Report* 49 (2005).  
<http://panoslondon.panosnetwork.org/resources/the-gm-debate-who-decides/>.

Berry, Wendell. "Part I: Farming" In *Bringing It To The Table: On Farming and Food*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2009. 17-103.

### **January 8 (Morning)**

Kruzic, Ahna. "Cultivating Gender Justice." *Food First Backgrounder* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 1-4. [https://foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/GenderSpring2017\\_Final-1.pdf](https://foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/GenderSpring2017_Final-1.pdf).

Howard, Patricia. *The Major Importance of 'Minor' Resources: Women and Plant Biodiversity*. International Institute for Environment and Development. Gatekeeper Series No. 112 (2003).

Shiva, Vandana. "Women and the Gendered Politics of Food." *Philosophical Topics* 37, no. 2 (2009): 17-32.

### **January 8 (Afternoon)**

LaDuke, Winona. "Part 3: Seeds and Medicine." In *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. Cambridge: South End Press (2005): 153-210.

Severson, Kim. "Black Vegans Step Out, For Health and Other Causes." *The New York Times*, November 28, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/28/dining/black-vegan-cooking.html>.

Wartman, Kristin. "Why Food Belongs in Our Discussions of Race." *Civil Eats*, September 3, 2015. <https://civileats.com/2015/09/03/why-food-belongs-in-our-discussions-of-race/>.

### **January 9 (Morning)**

Alkon, Alison Hope. "Food Justice, Food Sovereignty, and the Challenge of Neoliberalism." Paper presented at *Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue*, Yale University, September 14-15, 2013.

Holt-Gimenez, Eric. "From Food Crisis to Food Sovereignty: The Challenge of Social Movements." *Monthly Review*, July 1, 2009.

<https://monthlyreview.org/2009/07/01/from-food-crisis-to-food-sovereignty-the-challenge-of-social-movements/>.

Patel, Raj. "Food Sovereignty." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 36, no. 3 (2009): 663-706.

### **January 9 (Afternoon)**

Russell-Mayhew, Shelly. "Eating Disorders and Obesity as Social Justice Issues: Implications for Research and Practice." *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology* 1, no. 1 (2007): 1-12.

Gordon, Kathryn H., Marisol Perez, and Thomas E. Joiner, Jr. "The Impact of Racial Stereotypes on Eating Disorder Recognition." *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 32, no. 2 (2002): 219-224.

Teaching Tolerance. "I See You, You See Me: Body Image and Social Justice." <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/i-see-you-you-see-me-body-image-and-social-justice>.

### **January 10 (Morning)**

Pollan, Michael. "Industrial Corn." In *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2006. 15-128.

### **January 10 (Afternoon)**

Standage, Tom. "Food, Wealth, and Power." In *An Edible History of Humanity*. New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2009). 65-93.

Standage, Tom. "Follow the Food." In *An Edible History of Humanity*. New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2009). 94-113.

### **January 14 (Morning)**

Alkon, Alison Hope and Kari Marie Norgaard. "Breaking the Food Chains: An Investigation of Food Justice Activism." *Sociological Inquiry* 79, no. 3 (2009): 289-305.

Coalition of Immokalee Workers. "About CIW." <http://ciw-online.org/about/>

Powers, Jessica. "Special Report: America's Food Banks Say Charity Won't End Hunger." *WhyHunger*, January 21, 2016. 1-9.

### **January 14 (Afternoon)**

Food and Water Watch. "The Urgent Case for a Ban on Factory Farms." May 14, 2018. <https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/insight/urgent-case-ban-factory-farms>.

Mares, Teresa M. and Devon G. Pena. "Environmental and Food Justice: Toward Local, Slow,

and Deep Food Systems.” In *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011. 197-219.

### **January 15 (Morning)**

Weber, Karl, ed. “Part III: What You Can Do About It?” In *Food Inc.: How Industrial Food is Making Us Sicker, Fatter, and Poorer - And What You Can Do About It*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2009. 169-274.

### **January 15 (Afternoon)**

McGregor, Joan. “Eat Right: Eating Local or Global.” *Proceedings from the 50th Societas Ethica Annual Conference 2013*. Soesterberg, The Netherlands, August 22-25, 2013. 123-141.

Starr, Amory. “Local Food: A Social Movement?” *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies* 10, no. 6 (2010): 479-490.

### **January 16 (Morning)**

Brones, Anna. “Karen Washington: It’s Not a Food Desert, It’s Food Apartheid.” *Guernica*, May 7, 2018.

<https://www.guernicamag.com/karen-washington-its-not-a-food-desert-its-food-apartheid/>.

Singer, Peter. “What Should We Eat?” In *The Ethics of What We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter*. Emmaus: Rodale, 2006. 270-284.

Altieri, Miguel. “How Urban Agriculture Can Improve Food Security.” *Civil Eats*, February 14, 2019. <https://civileats.com/2019/02/14/how-urban-agriculture-can-improve-food-security/>.

### **January 16 (Afternoon)**

Berry, Wendell. “The Pleasures of Eating.” In *Bringing It To The Table: On Farming and Food*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2009. 215-221.

Oxfam. “Growing a Better Future: Food Justice in a Resource-Constrained World.” June 2011. <https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/growing-a-better-future-010611-en.pdf>.