

PHIL 3900 Philosophy of Food

David M. Kaplan

This class will examine food in all of its philosophical dimensions, analyzing what food is, how we experience it, the social role it plays, how it is a moral and political issue, how we judge it to be delicious or awful, and why it matters so much to us. We will consider what the nature of food is and how it is different from other potentially edible things; how we understand food (scientifically, culturally, personally); what eating is and how it affects human experience (as nourishment, celebration, spirituality); what some ethical issues are in agriculture and food (genetically-modified food, animal welfare, vegetarianism); what some political issues are in food and agriculture (corporate responsibility and political governance, consumption and social inequality, hunger and food rights); and what taste in food has to do with taste in music and art.

Texts David M. Kaplan, *Food Philosophy* (Columbia University Press)
Alexandra Plakias, *Thinking Through Food* (Broadview Press)

Requirements: First, you are expected to read every assignment. Second, you are expected to participate in every discussion. Third, you are expected to turn in every assignment. Fourth, you are expected to be respectful and polite to others in class.

How the asynchronous class will work: Each week, I will post video lectures about the assigned readings. From Monday to Wednesday, you will post your questions and comments about the readings. We will all have a chance to respond to each other. Each Friday, a response paper about the week's assignment will be due.

Grading: Your grade will be based on class discussion, twelve response papers and two, 2,000 word (6-8 page) papers. The response papers are short, one-page, commentaries, graded on a scale of 1-5. Essays will be graded on a standard lettering system: A through F. You will have several topics to choose from. Your papers should both summarize and analyze (i.e., assess, criticize, and question) the readings. You will be asked to explain an author's position on an issue, and then evaluate, compare, or criticize the author's position. A grading rubric is posted with standards for good participation. At the end of the semester, your posts will be graded on a scale of excellent-good-ok-poor.

Grading	Two essays	50%	<u>Both essays are required for a passing grade</u>
	Ten response papers	40%	<u>All ten are required for a passing grade</u>
	Class discussion	10%	<u>Participation in every discussion is required</u>

Reading Schedule

Week 1	Food Metaphysics Kaplan, <i>Food Philosophy</i> , pp. 1-19
Week 2	Kaplan, <i>Food Philosophy</i> , pp. 19-37 Plakias, <i>Thinking Through Food</i> , pp. 1-8
Week 3	Food Epistemology Kaplan, <i>Food Philosophy</i> , pp. 38-63
Week 4	Plakias, <i>Thinking Through Food</i> , pp. 15-31
Week 5	Food Aesthetics Kaplan, <i>Food Philosophy</i> , pp. 64-87
Week 6	Plakias, <i>Thinking Through Food</i> , pp. 33-55
Week 7 Essay #1 due	Food Ethics Kaplan, <i>Food Philosophy</i> , pp. 88-113
Week 8	Eating Meat Kaplan, <i>Food Philosophy</i> , pp. 113-121 Plakias, <i>Thinking Through Food</i> , pp. 57-82
Week 9	Agriculture and the Environment Plakias, <i>Thinking Through Food</i> , pp. 83-103
Week 10	Food and Technology Plakias, <i>Thinking Through Food</i> , pp. 105-124
Week 11	Food, Health, and Freedom Plakias, <i>Thinking Through Food</i> , pp. 125-148
Week 12	Food Political Philosophy Kaplan, <i>Food Philosophy</i> , pp. 122-149
Week 13	Food Justice Plakias, <i>Thinking Through Food</i> , pp. 125-148
Week 14 Essay #2 due	Food Existentialism Kaplan, <i>Food Philosophy</i> , pp. 150-176
Week 15	The Future of Food Plakias, <i>Thinking Through Food</i> , pp. 173-182