Office Hours: T/R 12:30-1:30 and by appointment. All students are encouraged to come to my office hours whenever they would like.

Course Description:
This course will focus on a variety of ethical issues related to food. Food can bring up familiar ethical dilemmas in a new light.

Do we have duties to others, to future generations? How might such duties intersect with the risks of new food technologies such as genetically modified organisms, confined animal feeding operations, and labor issues?

What kind of character should society help foster in individuals and communities? How do the conditions of vertically integrated industries and the limited government oversight of food corporations impact the ability for individuals and communities to develop and sustain desired character traits?

How do we balance apparently competing claims to happiness—the desire for affordable food, the desire for fair labor conditions, the desire for farm conditions that meet welfare requirements for farmed animals?

Can we form caring relationships across national and species boundaries? Can humans care for animals whom they eat? Can real care exist when food that sustains the poor in one country is diverted to produce a luxury product for those in another country to consume? These are just some of the questions raised by examining food ethics. In addition, the pressing need for food changes such moral questions from objects of theoretical contemplation to pressing (often immediate) needs. We will consider how approaching ethics through issues like this might change the nature of ethical discourse and decision making generally.

Texts:

Assignments:
Readings: You are responsible for all of the required readings each week. In addition to these readings, you are expected to pursue secondary readings on the course material in support of your own interests, the précis, and the final paper.

Discussion Leadership and Précis: Each participant will sign up to take special responsibility for a reading, twice during the term. On that day, you will be especially well-prepared to answer questions about the readings and introduce topics for class discussion. On one day you will select one of the chapters in the primary text readings for the day and write a short précis on that chapter. Each précis should summarize the argument of the chapter and discuss it in relation to an organizing interest or question. The précis should be 500-800 words in length. The précis will
be worth 10% of your grade and your time as discussion leader will be worth 10%. On another day you will select a reading outside the course materials, distribute it to the class at least one week prior to the day you will lead discussion, and write a short précis on that piece. The précis should summarize the argument of the piece and discuss it in relation to an organizing interest or question. The précis should be 500-800 words in length. The précis will be worth 10% of your grade and your time as discussion leader will be worth 10%.

Paper Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography: On May 20th, you will submit a prospectus of your final paper with two components: (1) a 2-3 page detailed description of the topic and outline of your proposed argument; and (2) an annotated bibliography of at least five primary or peer-reviewed secondary texts that you intend to consult (in addition to texts assigned for the course). Each annotation should be about 300 words and include a summary of the book or article as well as an indication of its relevance for your project. Your prospectus must receive my approval in order for your final term paper to be accepted. The prospectus will be worth 10% of your final course grade.

Term Paper: Your term paper may be on a topic of your choice and should be 3,500-4,000 words (a little longer than standard “conference” length). In general, papers should focus on some aspect of materials read for class and must make use of secondary sources beyond the course readings. In addition, these papers should be informed in some way by an experiential element (a visit to a farm, and interview with a restaurant owner, work at a food bank…). Since it is important for you to work on papers with a more far-reaching purpose, I encourage you to think of these papers as works-in-progress toward a possible conference paper or journal submission. Your paper will be worth 40% of your grade. Final papers are due on Wednesday June 8th at 5:00 in the department office or on Canvas.

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is required. For every unexcused absence after one, you will lose 1/3 of a grade. Class will focus on guided discussions of the material so students need to be on time and prepared to participate. At a minimum this means having completed the reading, thought about the reading, having questions ready, and listening actively (rather than just waiting one’s turn to speak or dominating the conversation). The presentation of your paper will be included here.

Grading:

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PLEASE NOTE: Failure to complete any assignment results in automatic failure of the class.

Academic Honesty
Students who engage in acts of academic dishonesty, which in this class would mean cheating on an exam or paper, will receive a failing grade for the assignment and may fail the class. For a full description of forms of academic dishonesty, please see: https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx

Note that the schedule of readings is subject to change during the quarter. All changes will be announced in advance during class. If you have questions about the assignments, requirements, or subject matter, please let me know. If you have special needs due to a disability, please talk with me as soon as possible so that your needs can be addressed.

Schedule:

March

Introduction:
(W) 30 Boisvert, introduction (1-8); Heldke, introduction (xi-xxx), Pachirat, Acknowledgements and ch. 1 (ix-19)

April

Food and Philosophy:
(W) 6 Boisvert, chs. 1-4 (9-68)—philosophy, hospitality, interdependence, knowledge

(W) 13 Boisvert, ch. 5—conclusion (73-148)—art, time, political, religion

Ethics, Politics, Violence, and Justice
(W) 20 Pachirat chs. 2-3 (20-84)

(W) 27 Pachirat chs. 4-6 (85-161)

May
(W) 4 Pachirat chs. 7-9 (162-256)

Ethics and Justice in a Global/Local Context
(W) 11 Heldke, Part I (1-60)—novelty, authenticity, the “other”

(W) 18 Heldke, Parts II and III (91-150)—quest for the exotic, zest for authenticity, treating the ethnic “other” as a resource, insider/outsider, desiring the exotic, cook as resource

(W) 25 Heldke, Part IV—Garden (151-222)—what to do?, skepticism, eating in context

June
(W) 1 paper presentations

Finals week: Paper due June 8th