



Babette's Feast, 1987

LY2332/BCLY01:

EATING, DRINKING, AND ETHICS

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
HILARY TERM 2018-19
MONDAYS, 2-4PM
LOYOLA/ISE BUILDING G6

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What's on the Tasting Menu?

In an episode of the Netflix series *Chef's Table*, the Buddhist monk Jeong Kwan makes the provocative statement that, "With food we share and communicate our emotions. It's that mind set of sharing that is really what you're eating." At first thought, one might perceive this experience to be about simple nourishment. But, upon further reflection, many webs entangle the practices of eating and drinking. We eat within shared webs of mindset and emotion: hunger for your next meal, longing for your favourite dish, excitement at taste, envy of another's order at a restaurant, or remembering a dish a loved one once prepared.

We eat and drink within ethical webs: agricultural systems of food production, global hunger and justice, manifold perceptions of body image and dieting, the complexities of access to clean drinking water, questions of food and gender, and ongoing debates over the ethics of eating other animals and the global meat industry. And we eat within other webs of theological, spiritual, and ethical belief: churches practice the Eucharist in bread and wine, one might pray before or in preparing a meal, one wonders if animals carry souls, a clergy member expresses faith in metaphors of food (one might hunger or thirst for God), or one might offer the hospitality of food to a stranger out of neighbourly love. This module explores these contemporary theological and ethical perspectives on eating and drinking: from food systems to vegetarianism to scarcity and more. How might contemporary ethics shape and be shaped by what we eat or drink, how we eat or drink? This module will practice hunger for such reflection, and we may eat a bit along the way.

Developing Tastes: Module Goals

- Articulate and assess major themes in contemporary theo-ethical considerations of food
- An ability to articulate what an agricultural “food system” is and how that system functions locally and globally.
- An ability to analyse multiple theological perspectives on animal ethics and vegetarianism.
- Analyse contemporary issues on drinking water, water scarcity, and water’s theological significance
- In-depth analysis of the metaphors of eating and drinking in theological reflection.
- Be able to articulate your own theological or ethical perspective on a significant issue in contemporary food ethics.

Name Cards: Preferred Gender Pronoun

This module affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

On Stealing from Other People’s Plates

DON’T STEAL YOUR NEIGHBOR’S DESSERT. Plagiarism, the unacknowledged appropriation of another person’s words or ideas, is a serious academic offense. It is imperative that you hand in work that is your own, and that cites or gives credit to others whenever you draw from their work. Familiarise yourself with Trinity College’s plagiarism statements, or brush up on them. Plagiarism is interpreted by the University as the act of *presenting the work of others as one’s own work, without acknowledgement*. Plagiarism is considered academic fraudulent, and an offence against University discipline. The University considers plagiarism to be a major offence, and subject to disciplinary procedures of the University. The University's full statement on plagiarism is set out in the *University Calendar, Part I, 'General Regulations and Information', II, Academic progress, p63 - p71.*

On Using your Phone at the Table

We’re going to be talking with each other as a learning community and certain screens change the nature of the kinds of conversations we might have with one another. They also tempt g-chat and other forms of communication not primarily engaged with this collective of people. I invite you to make a promise with yourself and each other to make this class a kind of intentional community, where focus on the material we’re covering and rich dialogue with each other is paramount. I hope you do. If screens aid you in that reflection, then I invite you to use them. But if they don’t, then social media-based electronic devices such as: smartphones, kindles, blackberries, flat screen tvs, Nintendo Switches, Blu-ray players (you get the picture, right?) may not be used during this class.

I am committed to supporting the learning of all students and inclusive curriculum in this module. If you have accommodations, please meet with me early in the term to discuss, plan, and implement your accommodations in the course. If you have or think you have a disability (learning, sensory, physical, chronic health, mental health or attentional): To register with the Disability Service, you can contact them by calling 01 8963111 or by calling into Room 2054

Preparing for the Food Critics: Assignments & Grading

The goal of this course is a single, end-of-term portfolio that demonstrates engaged continuous assessment across the term. The portfolio will consist of:

- Portfolio Part 1: Recipe Reflection—Class Cookbook - On food and meaning in documentary film (500 – 750 words) **Due Friday, February 15th, 5pm.**
- Portfolio Part 2: Documentary Film Reflection— (750 words) **Due Friday, March 15th, 5pm.**
- Portfolio Part 3: Issue Reflection— On research topic of your choice, (1500 words), **Due Monday, April 15th, by 5pm.**

Participation: Participation means everything from actual attendance to active listening, engagement with the readings to collaborative discussion in class— especially with each other, especially with perspectives you may or may not recognize as your own.

Attendance: Attendance to this course is beneficial to you. We'll be following attendance policies as written in the Loyola Institute Handbook in the School of Religion, and they are as follows:

Attendance is required at all lectures, seminars and tutorials unless you are specifically exempted (off books). If you are unable to attend a lecture for any reason, you must let your lecturer know. Unexplained and/or unwarranted non-attendance at more than six lectures per module in any term will result in your performance being deemed non-satisfactory for that term. Being returned as nonsatisfactory for two terms puts you at risk of being barred from examinations in accordance with normal university regulations. If you cannot attend due to illness for two consecutive weeks you must provide a medical certificate or other equivalent evidence to explain your absence to the Head of Year. The Institute requires students who have missed six or more lectures to hand in a one-page summary of the main points of each lecture missed from the articles and the notes available either on Blackboard, or as handed out in class, as evidence that they have caught up with what they have missed. The deadline for this is the end of teaching term. ... The normal essay assignment has to be completed by the class deadline.

[https://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/assets/pdfs/Loyola%20Institute%20Handbook%202017-18%20\(Approved\).pdf](https://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/assets/pdfs/Loyola%20Institute%20Handbook%202017-18%20(Approved).pdf)

Module Texts:

Most of our shorter readings will be available on Blackboard. The Miles book, due to its size, will not be on blackboard. While a copy of this text is in the library, you may wish to purchase it for your own reading (the paperback is relatively cheap, around 12 euro).

Carol J. Adams. *Burger*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2018. [Selections]

Sara Miles. *Take this Bread: A Radical Conversion*. London: Canterbury Press, 2012.

Paul B. Thompson. *Field to Fork: Food Ethics for Everyone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.



Appetizers: Sharing Stories, Theories, and Methods

Week One : How Do We Get a Taste for Food Ethics?

Monday, January 21st:

Introductory Comments, the Syllabus

Handouts: Mary Oliver, Selected Poems: "Rice," "Oranges"

Andrea Olsen, "Day 22: Digestion and Nutrition" *Body and Earth: An Experiential Guide*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2002: 155 - 163.

Documentary Suggestion: *In Defense of Food*, 2015.

Week Two: Food, Ethics, and Webs of Meaning

Monday, January 28th:

Read: Wendell Berry, "The Pleasure of Eating" [Blackboard]

Paul B. Thompson, "Chapter One: You are NOT what you eat" *From Field to Fork: Food Ethics for Everyone*. Oxford University Press, 2015: p. 22 - 53. [Blackboard]

Documentary Suggestion: Bill Moyers' Interview with Wendell Berry,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ejYAfcjJmY>

Week Three: Cultural and Anthropological Classic Texts of Food Studies

Monday, February 4th:

Read: Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle" [Blackboard]
 Roland Barthes, "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption" [Blackboard]
 Pierre Bourdieu, "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste" [Blackboard]
 Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal" [Blackboard]
 Norman Wirzba, "Food for Theologians" *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 67(4) 374–382: 2013. [Blackboard]

Documentary Suggestion: *The Search for General Tso* (2014) – traces the origin of Americanized Chinese food and how we think about the cultural origin of food.

First Course: Agricultural Systems, Food Insecurity, and Food Sovereignty

Week Four: Agricultural Systems and Injustice

Monday, February 11th:

Read: Thompson, Chapter 2, "Food Ethics and Social Injustice," p. 54 – 79.
 Listen to: Dan Barber, "Driven By Flavor" *On Being*. <https://onbeing.org/programs/dan-barber-driven-by-flavor/>

And a series of shorter pieces:

Christopher Carter, "Eating Food and Justice" in *Reflections*.

<https://reflections.yale.edu/article/risk-our-food-our-water-ourselves/eating-food-and-justice>

Read: Mark Bittman, "Fixing Our Food Problem"

<https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/fixing-our-food-problem/>

Bittman, "My Dream Food Label"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/opinion/sunday/bittman-my-dream-food-label.html>

Michael Pollan, "Unhappy Meals"

Documentary Suggestion: *Chef's Table*. Season 1, Episode 2 "Dan Barber."

PORTFOLIO PART 1 DUE Friday, February 15th, 5pm: Recipe Reflection

Week Five: Agricultural Systems and Injustice, 2

Monday, February 18th:

Read: Thompson, Chapter 4 "The Fundamental Problem of Food Ethics," 106 - 129.
[Blackboard]

"7. The myth of Ireland's green farming" in Pádraic Fogarty, *Whittled Away: Ireland's Vanishing Nature*. Cork, Ireland: The Collins Press, 2017.

Documentary Suggestion: *Food Inc.*, 2008.

Week Six: Eating Other Animals?

Monday, February 25th:

Thompson, Chapter 5, "Livestock Welfare and the Ethics of Producing Meat," p. 130-158.

Carol Adams, *Burger*, [Selections, Blackboard]

Barbara Kingsolver, "Lily's Chickens" [Blackboard]

Further: Kristin Johnston Lergen, "A Christian Rationale for Vegetarianism" *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* • Volume 48, Number 2 • Summer 2009. [Blackboard]

Burhan Wazir, "If you want to eat clean and green, is the future halal?" *Aeon*.

<https://aeon.co/ideas/if-you-want-to-eat-clean-and-green-is-the-future-halal> 16 July, 2018.

Documentary Suggestion: *Eating Animals*, 2018.

Second Course: Cultural and Theological Approaches to Eating, Desire, Hunger

Week Seven: Study Week [March 4th, NO CLASS MEETING]

Week Eight: Theologies of Eating and Spiritual Desire

Monday, March 11th:

Read: Laura Hartman, "Consuming Christ: The Role of Jesus in Christian Food Ethics," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 30:1 (2010): 45-62 [Blackboard]

Sara Miles, *Eat This Bread*, Prologue - 90.

Film Suggestion: *Chocolat*, 2000.

PORTFOLIO PART 2 DUE: Documentary Reflection Due. Friday, March 15th, 5pm.

Week Nine: Public Holiday [March 18th, NO CLASS MEETING]

Week Ten: Take This Bread, Conclusion

Monday, March 25nd:

Sara Miles, *Take This Bread*, p. 91 – 280.

Film Suggestion: *Babette's Feast*, 1987.

Final Course: Bodies, Justice, and Biotechnology
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Week Eleven: Gender, Sexuality, Eating and Justice

Monday, April 1st:

Read: Thompson, Chapter 3, “The Ethics of Diet and Obesity” p. 80 – 105. [Blackboard]

Selections from Roxane Gay, *Hunger* [Blackboard]

Susan Bordo, “Not Just a White Girl’s Thing: The Changing Face of Food and Body Image Problems,” [Blackboard]

Fabio Parasecoli, “Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinities in Men’s Fitness Magazines,” [Blackboard]

Christopher Carrington, “Feeding Lesbian Families,” [Blackboard]

Rebecca Swenson, “‘Domestic Divo?’ Televised Treatments of Masculinity, Femininity, and Food,” [Blackboard]

Film Suggestion: *Like Water for Chocolate*, 1992.

Week Twelve Final Considerations: Colonialism, Food Security, and Hunger

Monday, April 8th: Thompson, Chapter 7, “Green Revolution Food Production and Its Discontents,” p. 193 – 226.

Jennifer and Robert Herdt, “The Feeding of the 12 Billion” in *Reflections*.

<https://reflections.yale.edu/article/risk-our-food-our-water-ourselves/feeding-12-billion>

Mintz “Time, Sugar, and Sweetness” [Blackboard]

Documentary Suggestion: *Food Evolution*, 2017.

Seed: The Untold Story, 2016.

Portfolio Due with Final Essay: Monday, April 15th, by 5pm.