

“If truth be told, how then shall we live?”

HOW THEN SHALL WE EAT? (SPRING 2009)

MONT-107C-01 – Class Number 1948 ♦ 501 Smith Hall ♦ T-Th 6:30-7:45pm

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Course Description

Food is a commodity whose production requires a sacrifice. Thus, by eating, we also embody a sacrifice while pledging a financial contribution. What principles, if any, should guide our consumption? Is there a truest, golden rule for food consumption? Reflection on this is often framed in terms of opposites: whether to eat meat or vegetables, local or non-local, organic or non-organic. But, choices are usually more complex. It might take a large amount of fuel to bring a fairly traded banana on our table, while to eat a local apple might just be a missed opportunity for wealth redistribution. So, which of the two should we consume? During the course, we will examine and compare the different values that may guide our diet.

Structure and Course Requirements:

Readings and Participation: You will be expected to complete the assigned readings before the class for which they are assigned, to bring the texts under discussion with you to class, and to come to class prepared to discuss them. Contribution to in-class activities will be considered under participation.

Attendance: You are expected to attend each class. If you will be absent, please e-mail me in advance (aborghin@holycross.edu). The only grounds for which absences will be excused are religious holidays, family crises, or illness; absences due to the last two reasons must be explained by a note from a dean or a doctor. For each class, I keep track of students who are late. Accumulating several late arrivals will incur in a grade reduction of one third of a grade. If you have scheduling conflicts, please come see me.

Journal Assignment: During the semester, you will keep a journal for the class. This should be a way for you to keep track of the flow and progress of your thoughts during the course, and a key source for your term papers. The journal should feature *no less* than two entries (of reasonable length) per week. I will collect journals two times during the semester and provide substantial feedback.

Journals will be evaluated according to the following scale:

- Excellent ⇒ 15 points;
- Good ⇒ 12 points;
- Fair ⇒ 9 points;
- Poor ⇒ 7 points.

Postings: Before each class I will open a discussion tread on the Moodle website for the course. You should post a comment to the tread no later than 5pm for the day of the class (e.g.: for a class on

Tuesday, January 26, 6:30pm you should post an answer no later than Tuesday, January 26, 5pm). You can skip four treads during the semester.

Paper: 2200-2500 words. The paper is due in class on Tuesday, March 17. It should be typed in Times New Roman, size 12 font, double-spaced, and all the page margins should measure one inch. A draft of the paper will be required by April 14 and it should have been discussed with me by then. The draft will count for 5% of your overall grade. Paper topics will be distributed in advance.

Final in-class meditation: This will be very much like the *Comprehensive Meditation* from the past semester: a list of the topics and questions that we discussed throughout the year, divided into different clusters; you will have to choose a set number of topics from each cluster and write a reflective piece that encompasses them. Unlike the past semester, this assignment will be completed in class, during exam period. The topics will embrace materials from both semesters.

Required Texts:

The following books are required:

- 1) Plato, *Phaedrus*, Penguin Classics, ISBN: 978-014-0449747
- 2) C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, Harcourt, ISBN: 0-15-690436-5
- 3) Marilyn Nelson, *Fortune's Bones*, Front Street, ISBN: 1-932425-12-8

Grade Breakdown:

Journal: 15%

Postings: 15%

Final in-class meditation: 20%

Paper: 30% (5% draft; 25% paper)

Participation: 20%

Please be advised: In order to pass the class you are required to do *all* the coursework (e.g. getting an incomplete on your paper will result in failing the class). Late papers incur in a penalty of one third of a letter grade per day (e.g. from A to A-). Finally, plagiarism, cheating, and collusion, in any form, will not be tolerated, in accordance with the *Student Handbook* (cfr. end of syllabus for details on this point).

Office Hours:

My office hours are Wednesday, 5 to 8pm, 519 Smith Hall. I am also on campus at many other times, and you can make an appointment to see me by e-mail (aborghin@holycross.edu). Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me about any aspect of the course.

Tentative Schedule:

Week 1

- 1.15 (Th) **COMMON READING**
➤ Plato, *Phaedrus* (Required Text)

Week 2

- 1.20 (T) **COMMON READING**
➤ Plato, *Phaedrus* (Required Text)
⇒ **First Common Event: "Town Meeting", 7:30-9pm, Wheeler** (We will walk to Wheeler together from class)

SECTION I: FOOD AS ART

- 1.22 (Th) *Can Food Be Art? (Theory)*
➤ E. Telfer, *Food for Thought*, Chapter 3: "The Art of Food" (1996) (Eres)

Week 3

- 1.27 (T) *Common Food Day I (Practicum)*
➤ Assignment I: post an example of food that counts as a work of art, and come to class prepared to explain why it is so
➤ Assignment II: bring some food to class that you regard as artistic
- 1.29 (Th) *Can Food Be Art? Cont'ed (Theory)*
➤ C. Korsmeyer, "The Meaning of Taste and the Taste of Meaning", (1997) (Xerox)

Week 4

- 2.3 (T) *Great Cooks and Great Dinners*
➤ Ferran Adrià
<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/foodmonthly/futureoffood/story/0,,1969713,00.html>
➤ Alice Waters
http://www.whitings-writings.com/essays/chez_panisse.htm
➤ Mario Batali
<http://www.mariobatali.com/>
➤ Alton Brown
<http://www.guidepostsmag.com/search/?i=815>
- 2.5 (Th) *Food as Art*
Recup Class

Week 5

- 2.10 (T) *Food as a Metaphor*
➤ The Tradition of the *Seder*
<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/passoverseder.html>
➤ Assignment: post an example of food that counts as a metaphor, and come to class prepared to explain why it is so

SECTION II: FOOD AS A PRODUCE

- 2.12 (Th) *Environment: Production*
- P. Singer and J. Mason, *The Way We Eat*, Chapter 2 (2006) (Eres)
 - E. Starmer, “Environmental and Health Problems in Livestock Production” (Moodle)
 - Do Cows Pollute?
<http://milk.procon.org/viewanswers.asp?questionID=976>
- Week 6**
- 2.16 (M) **COMMON EVENT**
- Screening of G. Axel, *Babette’s Feast* (1987), Seelos Theatre, 7:30-10pm
- 2.17 (T) *Environment: Transportation*
- E. Rosenthal: “The Environmental Cost of Shipping Groceries Around the World” (2008)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/26/business/worldbusiness/26food.html?em>
 - E. Rosenthal: “How Far Has Your Food Traveled?” [Read also files for each food] (2007)
<http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/camiles/contents.asp>
- 2.19 (Th) *Employers*
- P. Singer and J. Mason, *The Way We Eat*, Chapter 2 and pp. 177-183 (2006) (Eres)
 - Pollan and Whole Foods:
<http://www.michaelpollan.com/article.php?id=80>
<http://www.michaelpollan.com/article.php?id=83>
- PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED**
- Week 7**
- 2.24 (T) *Fair Trade*
- R.H. Bates, *Open-Economy Politics: the Political Economy of the World Coffee Trade*, “Introduction” (1997) (Eres)
 - M. Levi and A. Linton, “Fair Trade: A Cup at a Time?” (2003) (Moodle)
 - J. Stiglitz, *Fair Trade for All*, Chapter 5 (2006) (Eres)
- 2.26 (Th) Guest Speaker: Marty Dudek (Kimball Dining Services, Director)
Holy Cross Campus Food and the Environment
- Week 8**
- 3.3 (T) ACADEMIC HOLIDAY
- 3.5 (Th) ACADEMIC HOLIDAY
- Week 9**
- 3.10 (T) **COMMON READING**
- Nelson, *Fortune’s Bones* (Required Text)
- 3.11 (W) **COMMON EVENT**
- Marilyn Nelson Cluster Visit, 7:30-9:30pm (location TBA)

- 3.12 (Th) **COMMON READING**
 ➤ Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting” and “Abstract Representational, and so forth” (Eres)

Week 10

- 3.17 (T) *Animal Rights*
 ➤ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, Chapters 1 and 4 (1975) (Eres)
- 3.19 (Th) *Animal Rights Cont’ed*
 ➤ C. Diamond, “Eating Meat and Eating People” (1975-1976) (Moodle)

Week 11

- 3.24 (T) *On Hunting*
 ➤ M. Pollan, “The Modern Hunter-Gatherer” (2006)
<http://www.michaelpollan.com/article.php?id=74>
 ➤ Roger Scruton, *On Hunting*, Chapter 3 (2001) (Eres)
 ➤ L. Cahoon, “Hunting as a Moral Good” (2009) (Moodle)
- PAPER DRAFT DUE**

SECTION III: FOOD AS A MIRROR

- 3.26(Th) *Personal Identity (Theory)* [Class will be longer to make room for screening]
 ➤ B. Kingsolver, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, excerpts (2007) (Eres)
 ⇒ Screening of M. Spurlock, *Supersize Me* (2004)

Week 12

- 3.31 (T) *Practicum*
 Conversation on students’ paper drafts
- 4.2 (Th) *Cultural Identity (Theory)*
 ➤ L. Harbottle, “Fast Food/Spoiled Identity: Iranian Migrants in the British Catering Trade” (1997) (Eres)
 ➤ S. Charsley, “Marriages, Weddings and Their Cakes” (1997) (Eres)
 ➤ L. Martens and Alan Warde, “The Meaning of Eating Out in a Northern City” (1997) (Eres)

Week 13

- 4.7 (T) Guest Practicum: Angelo from Crossroad
 Cooking with Angelo (Wheeler Kitchen)
PAPER DUE
- 4.9 (Th) EASTER -- ACADEMIC HOLIDAY (**READ TILL WE HAVE FACES!**)

Week 14

- 4.14 (T) **COMMON READING**

- Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, 1-176 (Required Text)

4.16 (Th)

COMMON READING

- Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, 176 - to the end (Required Text)

Week 14

4.20 (M)

COMMON EVENT

- Screening of N. Stone, *Shadowlands* (1985), Seelos Theatre, 7:30-10pm

4.21 (T)

Eating and Civilization (Theory) [Class will be longer to make room for screening]

- N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, Part II, Chapter 4 (1939) (Eres)
- Assignment: post an example of a peculiar eating manner

4.23 (Th)

On the Art of Choosing a Diet (Theory)

- Professor's notes

Week 15

4.28 (T)

On the Art of Choosing a Diet (Practicum)

- Assignment I: post your authentic diet (a week-long diet), and come to class prepared to talk about it
- Assignment II: bring some food to class that you would like to be part of your diet

TBA

FINAL EXAM

Academic Honesty

The College Catalog (2008- 2009: 13 – 14) includes the following statement:

All education is a cooperative enterprise between teachers and students. This cooperation requires trust and mutual respect, which are only possible in an environment governed by the principles of academic honesty. As an institution devoted to teaching, learning, and intellectual inquiry, Holy Cross expects all members of the College community to abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any violation of academic honesty undermines the student-teacher relationship, thereby wounding the whole community. The principal violations of academic honesty are plagiarism, cheating, and collusion.

Plagiarism is the act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrative material, or statements of someone else, without full and proper acknowledgment, and presenting them as one's own.

Cheating is the use of improper means or subterfuge to gain credit or advantage. Forms of cheating include the use, attempted use, or improper possession of unauthorized aids in any examination or other academic exercise submitted for evaluation; the fabrication or falsification of data; misrepresentation of academic or extracurricular credentials; and deceitful performance on placement examinations. It is also cheating to submit the same work for credit in more than one course, except as authorized in advance by the course instructors.

Collusion is assisting or attempting to assist another student in an act of academic dishonesty.

At the beginning of each course the teacher should address the students on academic integrity and how it applies to the assignments for the course. The teacher should also make every effort, through vigilance and through the nature of the assignments, to discourage and prevent dishonesty in any form.

It is the responsibility of students, independent of the teacher's responsibility, to understand the proper methods of using and quoting from source materials (as explained in standard handbooks such as *The Little Brown Handbook* and the *Harbrace College Handbook*), and to take credit only for work they have completed through their own individual efforts within the guidelines established by the teacher.

We expect academic honesty in this, as in all your courses. Whatever you submit to me comes with the implicit pledge that the work is your own; any request you make for an academic exception, given illness, family issues, personal problems, conflicting obligations, and the like, I expect to be based on truth. If you have any questions at all about your responsibility, please ask me.