

**This is a draft course outline. The final outline, complete with a weekly schedule, will be available closer to the start of the semester.**

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2025-26

**PHILOSOPHY 2082F**  
**Introduction to the Philosophy of Food**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Information including instructor contact details and course location can be found on the course Owl BrightSpace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

**PREREQUISITE CHECKING**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Every day at the dinner table, we make ethically significant decisions. What we eat (and what we don't eat), how we eat, who we eat with, all of these choices are value-laden and socially significant. Food choices have a substantial impact on our families and communities, the environment, and nearly all life on earth. Though in our everyday life we may make food choices unreflectively, in this course we'll be subjecting these choices to critical analysis.

The philosophy of food is not only ethically rich, but aesthetically rich. Eating is one of our first pleasures and humans have developed elaborate practices around food. Food preparation and presentation can be intensely creative, precise, and meaningful.

We'll cover topics including food justice and world hunger, the environmental and worker impacts of our food choices, factory farming and veganism, the connection between food and culture, and the aesthetics of cooking and eating.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Raise and respond to ethical questions raised by food production, distribution, and consumption
- Reconstruct arguments from philosophical texts and popular culture
- Predict likely objections to arguments and charitably reply to them
- Constructively discuss food ethics with others
- Make more deliberate, thoughtful choices about what they consume
- More richly engage with the aesthetics of food

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

A weekly schedule of topics and readings will be made available closer to the start of the semester.

**TEXTS**

All course materials will be available for free on the course BrightSpace.

**METHOD OF EVALUATION**

**In-class quizzes: 15% (surprise dates)**

There will be 7 surprise reading quizzes, with one given every week or two. A quiz will consist of a single question requiring a short answer, and will be graded out of 3 points. The quizzes are not meant to be challenging. Rather, they should be pretty straight-forward if one has done the reading somewhat carefully. A 3 is earned for a correct or near-correct answer, a 2 is earned for a relevant but incorrect answer that demonstrates you've done the reading, and a 1 is earned merely by showing up and taking the quiz. The lowest 2 scores, including 0s due to missed quizzes, will be dropped when calculating your final grade. As such, requests for academic consideration will be denied.

#### **Food ethics in the news: 20% (due week 5)**

This short (3-4 page) paper will require that you find a somewhat contemporary news piece that touches on one of the ethical issues we discuss in the early weeks of the course. You will do some structured reflecting on the piece and engage with at least one of the course readings. This assignment may be submitted up to 3 days late without penalty.

#### **Argument outline 5% (due week 8)**

This assignment will prepare you for the larger, argumentative paper. You'll hand in a brief outline of the argument you'll be presenting in your final paper. This early start will also allow you to get some brief feedback on your plan, which you'll be expected to incorporate into your paper. This assignment may be submitted up to 3 days late without penalty.

#### **Argumentative paper: 30% (due week 11)**

This longer (5-6 page) paper will require that you carefully engage with one or two of the course readings. You must select an argument you'd like to respond to, raise what you think is the strongest objection to it, and imagine how the author might respond. You will be graded on accuracy, clarity, charity, and strength of argument. This assignment may be submitted up to 3 days late without penalty.

#### **Final exam: 30% (date determined by Registrar)**

This will be an in-class exam covering material from the full length of the course. It will include both short answer questions and a couple short essay responses. A list of possible exam questions will be given to you at least a week before the final. See Western's policy on Special Examinations.

**Especially good participation will earn you a grade bump of up to 3% if your final grade is at the margins.** If your final grade would otherwise be an 88% and so earn you an A-, for instance, especially good participation will leave you with an A. Regularly and thoughtfully participating in class discussion will be enough to earn this bump, but if you struggle to speak up in class, you can also earn this by regularly attending office hours to discuss course material.

### **DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES**

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html> . It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

### **AUDIT**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Electronic devices of any kind (including computers, cell phones, and smart watches) are not permitted during the final exam.

### **STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

If plagiarism or unauthorized AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes and/or drafts of assignments after the assignment has been submitted. Students must keep all notes and first drafts until the assignment is returned to them.

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration; however, students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism. **Assignments should reflect the students' own thoughts and independent written work.**

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION**

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Accessible Education at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students”

<http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

### **SPECIAL EXAMINATIONS**

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

### **ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION**

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of Faculty in which the student is registered.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:

- a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
- b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
- c. Supporting documentation as relevant

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner. Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

### **Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs**

#### **RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION**

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_religious.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf).

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be "given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than **one week** prior to the writing of the test".

#### **COURSE ASSIGNMENT**

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

#### **SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

#### **Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

#### **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: [https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty\\_academic\\_counselling.html](https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html)

#### **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western

(<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends (24/7 availability).

### **GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).