

“Food is a feminist issue. From production, distribution and consumption, the gendered dynamics of all aspects of this arena of social, cultural and biological life repay feminist interrogation...[it incorporates] a broad range of food-inspired issues, including, but not limited to: questioning the intersectional issues provoked by food; exploring and analysing the economics, politics and ethics of food; revisiting the ongoing but unfinished feminist analysis and critique of embodied food politics and body management and ethics.”

Overview: This course combines a philosophical approach to topics in feminism as well as its intersection with other aspects of gender, health, and food. The class hits the intersection of three major areas: philosophy of gender, philosophy of health and well-being, and philosophy of food. Below I describe the specific themes we will cover.

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Meetings: Tuesday & Thursday, 1.10—2.30 in Murray 210

Text: readings on Sakai

### **Student Expectations**

1. Commit to attending each class session—attendance will be taken (2 exc absences)
2. Be prepared to discuss assigned readings and engage positively in discussion
3. Be willing to share, analyze, and examine their own ideas and listen to the ideas of others
4. Be respectful of different perspectives offered by classmates and professor
5. Complete assignments and participate in weekly class discussions
6. Complete a student evaluation of my teaching at end of course (Sakai)

### **Assessment:**

40 % weekly response papers (500 words)

20% group project (assorted, throughout semester)

30% final paper (6-8 pages)

10% student expectations

\*\*More about the above assignments will be provided in Sakai Resources.

### **Late Submission Policy**

Late submissions of response papers (and final paper) carry letter grade penalties: 1 point off per hour, up to 24 hours.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is mandatory. You may miss a total of two classes. After that, regardless of the reason, your final grade will be affected (exceptions: religious holidays, death & hospitalization)

### **Disability Accommodation**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>.

The course will be discussion oriented, and is structured around the following themes:

#### **1) Why do topics in gender, health, and food deserve philosophical attention?**

Weeks 1–3:

Introduction to *Unbearable Weight*—Susan Bordo: *Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*  
[Sakai Resources]

Simone deBeauvoir's Introduction to the *Second Sex* [Sakai resources]

Introduction to *Philosophy Comes to Dinner* (TBD)

Introduction to the *Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics* (TBD)

#### **2) How we should understand current eating practices and concerns as indicative of key 'pressure points' in contemporary culture, many of which are highly gendered.?**

(It's interesting and important to understand that this is ALWAYS true)

Weeks 3-6:

Bordo's "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity" and "Hunger as Ideology"

Selections from Orbach's *Fat is a Feminist Issue*

Selections from Carol Adams's *The Sexual Politics of Meat*

VanDyke's "Eating as a Gendered Act" [Sakai resources]

#### **3) How the current emphasis on 'health' covers a whole range of different worries, and how gender pops up again and again in these discussions.**

Alternative Possible topic: *Body image & Pornography*

Weeks 7-10:

Overview of differing definitions of health in the literature: articles by VanDyke, Kukla, and others from the section on gender and health in the *Oxford Handbook of Food*

*Ethics*, and readings and/or video clips that students bring in and present as part of assignments

**4) Intersectionality: constructions of race, gender, disability in the areas of gender, health, and food**

**Weeks 11-13:**

Douglas Baynton's "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History" [Sakai resources], Elizabeth Spellman's "Gender and Race: the Ampersand Problem" [Sakai resources], Elizabeth Barnes's "Adaptive Preferences" [Sakai resources], selections from Elizabeth Barnes's *The Minority Body*, and readings and/or video clips that students bring in and present as parts of assignments.

\*\*Colleagues who've previously taught this course tell me it has worked really well to make it more interactive than 'normal' philosophy classes: given that students are usually pretty invested in these issues themselves, we will regularly have group assignments in which you will be asked to bring in readings or songs or video clips, so that we can get a wide range of interesting examples to apply the theoretical stuff to.