

Ethical Issues Today - Alimentary Theology: Eating, Drinking, and Ethics

Theme:	Exploring (Theological Ethics)
ECTS:	5
Module Code:	LY2332 – BCLY01
Contact Hours	22
Mode of Delivery	Lectures
Lecturer:	Jacob J. Erickson

Module Description:

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 mind set 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 water scarcity and more. We'll primarily read contemporary Christian theologians on food ethics, but we'll also consider contemporary visual documentaries about food ethics. How might theology, spirituality, and 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.

Indicative Bibliography:

- Adams, Carol J. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. New York: Bloomsbury, 1990/2015. [ISBN: 1501312839]
- Méndez Montoya, Angel F. *The Theology of Food: Eating and the Eucharist*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2009. [ISBN: 1405189673]
- Peppard, Christiana Z. *Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014. [ISBN: 162698056X]
- Wirzba, Norman. *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. [ISBN: 0521146240]

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module students will be able to:

- 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.

Methods of Assessment and Student Workload:

Continuous Assessment

