

# COURSE SYLLABUS



COURSE TITLE: REL-102-World Religions of the East  
CLASS SECTION:

TERM: 2024F

COURSE CREDITS: 3

DELIVERY METHOD(S): Online Asynchronous

Camosun College respectfully acknowledges that our campuses are situated on the territories of the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Kosapsum) and WSÁNEĆ peoples. We honour their knowledge and welcome to all students who seek education here.

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## INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

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NAME: Dr. Justine Semmens

EMAIL: SemmensJ@camosun.ca

OFFICE: Y320

HOURS: Online office hour Tuesday from 1:15pm to 2:30pm or by appointment

*As your course instructor, I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me. Camosun College is committed to identifying and removing institutional and social barriers that prevent access and impede success.*

## CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

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An introductory survey of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Chinese religions, and Shintiosm, this course explores the sources, beliefs (including representative texts), and practices of these religions. The traditions of each will be studied in their cultural and political contexts from both historical and contemporary perspectives.

### PREREQUISITE(S):

One of:

C+ in English 12

C in Camosun Alternative

CO-REQUISITE(S): Not Applicable

EQUIVALENCIES: Not Applicable

## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES / OBJECTIVES

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Upon completion of this course a student will be able to:

1. Explain the contexts/historical settings in which Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Chinese religions, and Shintoism arose.
2. List major dates, events, and places central to each.
3. Describe the historical linkage/relationships among them.
4. Summarize their major beliefs, teachings, ideals, and practices.
5. Explain variations/splits/divisions in each tradition.
6. Analyze their similarities/differences.
7. Compare/contrast each religion's view of the others.
8. Evaluate their relationship to and impact on the world today.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS & RECOMMENDED PREPARATION / INFORMATION

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(a) Textbook

Roy C. Amore, Amir Hussain, and Willard G. Oxtoby, *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*, 4th ed.

## COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND ASSOCIATED PREPARATION / ACTIVITY / EVALUATION

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The following schedule and course components are subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### Syllabus Quiz

Students will have the opportunity to earn up to 2% bonus points by completing a syllabus quiz.

### Lectures:

The lectures will appear on D2L course site as a pre-recorded PowerPoint file with video and audio every Tuesday and Thursday at 1:00pm. Some lectures may be available in advance.

The lectures aim to follow a similar structure to the textbook. Aim to read actively the assigned textbook readings before each lecture, ideally having guide questions beside you (These are the questions you consider as you read the material or the ones provided in the textbook), and always be aware of the major themes of each chapter. The themes are listed in the textbook on the first page of every chapter. Students who do the required readings each week and view the lectures will gain a stronger understanding of eastern world religions, be more likely to enjoy the course, and be well positioned for success.

### Tests

Over the span of 14 weeks, REL 102 covers the history, philosophical systems, and practices of a remarkable number of the world's religious traditions. To help you consolidate this broad scope of

information into knowledge, the course is organized into three (3) tests, spaced evenly apart over the semester. Tests will be open for two days prior to the 11:59pm deadline on each due date. All tests will be presented in a timed, multiple-choice format.

### Seminars:

Every other week, students must upload their seminar contribution **no later than Thursday at 11:59pm (midnight)**. They will then respond to others' posts before **Sunday at 11:59pm (midnight)**. Weeks with seminars are also indicated in the weekly schedule below.

#### Order of Participation:

All postings should be made in the "Discussion" link for that day's webpage (On the D2L Course Page, Go to My Tools Content Select the Date on the left (eg. September 27) You will see a Seminar Discussions link further down the page). Your first day's postings should start a thread; the second day's postings (your responses) should be made on other students' threads.

During a seminar, we will discuss assigned materials, primarily the textbook chapters dedicated to a religious tradition. You are strongly recommended to take notes as you read and to write down questions that arise as you encounter and explore the religious belief systems. One or two students will facilitate each discussion (see below for more information).

#### Detailed Instructions about the Seminars

The seminar component of the course is critically important to the student (and instructor) learning experience, which is reflected in its weighting as 30 percent of your final grade. During the seminars, you will discuss and sometimes debate the assigned seminar materials. These are mostly based on the textbook chapters, sometimes in addition to other sources (eg. Scripture excerpts) made available on D2L

As part of your seminar preparedness, I strongly recommend that you first read the pre-set questions on D2L before exploring the readings themselves. These questions will become available to you by Monday, September 9

For weekly course instructions and details, go to the D2L Course Site → My Tools → Content. Materials will be available approximately one week in advance

My role in the online seminar discussions is primarily as an observer and occasional moderator, if required. I read and thoughtfully consider every post and might contribute my own comments from time to time.

#### General Seminar Format:

The Seminar includes the following

- a) Your own reaction to that week's seminar readings (i.e. What did you learn? What surprised you? What unanswered questions do you now have about this religious tradition?
- b) Respond to 2 of the pre-set questions on D2L. This is done at the same time as a) c) Before the end of the weekend: Respond to 2 other students' threads.

\*Students who miss three or more seminars will forfeit their entire participation grade.

**Before the given Thursday 11:59pm (midnight) you will:**

1. Contribute your initial 100-word “first impressions” post. Some suggested questions to guide your response: What did you learn? What surprised you? How is the story, idea, value, claim, belief or practice in this passage similar or different to those in other religious traditions? What questions do you have?
2. Then answer 2 of the prescribed questions I’ve provided on D2L. Each one must be a minimum of 50 words

**Before the given Sunday at 11:59pm (midnight)**

3. React/add to 2 other students’ threads from the Thursday before. Your response can be to their initial “first impressions” post and/or to their answers to the prescribed questions. Each one must be a minimum of 50 words

**What you should do**

In your responses, I need to see thoughtful consideration of the scriptures and other sources you read, communicated effectively to the other students.

You are welcome to mention what was interesting, clear or unanswered, and what made (or did not make sense) to you. Don’t worry: if something doesn’t seem to make sense to you, there are probably other students feeling the same way. Everyone is on a learning path here. In your posts, feel free to include your own questions for other students, as long as they relate to the material. Great dialogue and debate always starts with a thought-provoking question. “Comparison” is one of the highest forms of analysis.

I strongly encourage you to look for similarities and differences in the great Eastern religious traditions, and perhaps also consider how they compare and contrast to the western secular society in which most of us live. As we move further into the semester, you will be better able to compare themes in one religious tradition (eg. the afterlife/lives, nature, reality and illusion, views on food, the nature of the Divine, principles to live by, good and evil, etc.) with ones we’ve already studied.

**What you should not do**

I do not want to see mere congratulatory responses to other students’ contributions, such as “Josh, you did a great job and clarified everything for me.” This is a poor attempt at participation, akin to a Facebook “like.” The result will be a very poor grade. Make sure that you write an informed response that adds richness to the discussion or debate. It’s okay to compliment someone (and right so, because many of you have fascinating things to say!), but make sure to follow up your virtual high-five with your own contribution. Also, try to avoid “going into the weeds,” so to speak. Keep on topic as much as possible. It is okay to meld some personal experience into your postings, but first speak to the assigned reading material. For your participation mark, you are assessed primarily on the quality of your interpretations and grasp of the course readings.

Your participation mark will be based on the seminar activity, which is broken down as follows:

- a) “Attendance” in the seminar discussions (making posts)
- b) Demonstration of an early grasp of the readings and topic (you are not expected to be an expert)
- c) The quality of your contributions (Is it thought-provoking, on topic, generating further student interest, etc.)

## Site visit summary

The traditions that we study in this class have historical origins that stretch back deep in time. These are historical traditions, but they are also vibrant living traditions that are still practiced today. While each and every of the religious traditions that we study together in this class emerged in Asia, members of diaspora communities have brought these traditions, fostered, nurtured, and adapted them as they settled here.

Understanding the religious traditions we study together in this class must also, therefore, involve understanding them in the context of contemporary Canadian society.

To this end, you will choose a contemporary expression of one of these religious traditions in Canada. You can visit a temple, shrine, or other sacred site or place in Victoria, or anywhere you are located in Canada, if you are not situated in Victoria. If you choose to visit a place of worship or meditation, make sure that you call ahead to find a time that does not interfere with religious observances of the community. You are not restricted to a place of worship. You can visit a cemetery, a garden designed to honour the principals of a particular tradition, or another outdoor place that you can find. Do a little research and try to think creatively!

Spend some time at your site, looking around, taking in the atmosphere, art, and architecture, what people around you may be doing or may not be doing.

You must submit a photo of the place you have visited (the exterior of a place of worship is sufficient), with the address, time, and day of your visit included somewhere in the document that you submit. In addition to a photo, you may also include a scanned copy or photo of a pamphlet or guide you have collected during your visit (this is not mandatory).

You will write a summary of between 700-800 words describing the following (you must include the elements that in **bold**)

1. **What do you notice about this place that reminds you of themes, facts, and phenomena we have studied together in this course?**
2. **What did you expect to see or witness? What surprised you? What did you not understand?**
3. **How do you see the concept of 'dynamic tradition' at work in the site that you visited?**
4. **Imagine that you are a religious studies scholar. What questions for further study would you propose to better understand how this site can teach you about the particular religious tradition connected to this site.**
5. If you like, you can consider how your position as either an insider or outsider to this tradition has influenced your perspectives as a visitor to this place

Please submit the written summary and photo as **one (1) pdf file** (I cannot accept apple pages documents or jpegs). Your written summary does not need to be in the form of an essay, but you must write in full sentences. You must carefully edit your document for style, grammar, and spelling.

I will release a detailed grading rubric later in the semester. You will have until 11:59pm on December 7 to submit your assignment. Grade submission deadlines imposed by the college mean that I cannot grant extensions on this assignment without your going through a formal process of deferral.

### **Important Dates at a glance:**

September 3                      Course Start Date

September 13	Last day to submit syllabus quiz for bonus points by 11:59pm
October 11	Test 1: Introduction, Hinduism, and Jainism due by 11:59pm
November 8	Test 2: Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shinto due by 11:59pm
December 7	Test 3: Sikhism and Wrap up due by 11:59pm
November 30	Site visit summary due on by 11:59pm

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC (dates and topics may be subject to change; instructor will provide advance warning of changes)	OTHER NOTES
Week 1: Sept 3-6	<p>Sept 3: Welcome <u>Readings</u>: read the syllabus!</p> <p>Sept 5: What is religion? <u>Readings</u>: Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 3-26</p>	
Week 2: Sept 9-13	<p>Sept 10: Methodological problems in the study of religion, scholarly perspectives, and the concept of “dynamic tradition” <u>Readings</u>: no readings</p> <p>Sept 12: Introduction to Hinduism and the Vedic period and Harrapan society <u>Readings</u>: Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 303-313</p> <p>Sept 13: Last day to submit syllabus quiz</p>	Seminar 1
Week 3: Sept 16-20	<p>Sept 17: Hinduism – early classical period <u>Readings</u>: Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 303-313</p> <p>Sept 19: Hinduism – The <i>Mahabharata</i> <u>Readings</u>: Excerpt from <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> (Arjuna’s dejection)</p>	
Week 4: Sept 23-27	<p>Sept 24: Hinduism – Bhakti, Vaisnavism, Saivism, Sakti <u>Readings</u>: Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 323-332</p> <p>Sept 26: Hinduism – Contemporary Hinduism <u>Readings</u>: Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 332-358</p>	Seminar 2
Week 5: Oct 1-4	Oct 1: Jaina	

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC (dates and topics may be subject to change; instructor will provide advance warning of changes)	OTHER NOTES
	<p><u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 401-429</p> <p>Oct 3: review for Test #1</p>	
Week 6: Oct 7-Oct 11	<p>Oct 8: Introduction to Buddhism - Siddhartha Gautama/The Buddha <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 435-450</p> <p>Oct 10: Buddhism – Theravada <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 451-455</p> <p>Oct 11: Test # 1 due</p>	Seminar 3 Test #1
Week 7: Oct 15-18	<p>Oct 15: Buddhism – Theravada in modern Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Myanmar <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 479-485</p> <p>Oct 17: Buddhism -Vajrayana <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 466-473</p>	
Week 8: Oct 21-25	<p>Oct 21: Buddhism – Mahayana <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 455-60, 485-86</p> <p>Oct 24: Shinto and Zen Buddhism in Japan <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 460-465, 473-476, 561-581, 583-587</p>	Seminar 4
Week 9: Oct 28-Nov 1	<p>Oct 29: Confucianism and Taoism in China Imperial China <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 497-523</p> <p>Oct 31: Religion in modern China <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 537-543</p>	
Week 10: Nov 4-8	<p>Nov 5: Review for Test #2</p> <p>Nov 7: Sikhism - The Socio-political context of India in the 16<sup>th</sup> century CE</p>	Seminar 5 Test # 2

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC (dates and topics may be subject to change; instructor will provide advance warning of changes)	OTHER NOTES
	<p><u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 365-373</p> <p><b>Nov 8: Test # 2 due</b></p>	
Week 11: Nov 12-15	<p>Sikhism – Guru Nanak <u>Readings:</u> TBA</p> <p>Sikhism – The 9 gurus and the early development of Sikh traditions <u>Readings:</u> TBA</p>	
Week 12: Nov 18-22	<p>Sikhism – The Khalsa <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 373-386</p> <p>Sikhism under the British Empire <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 386-397</p>	Seminar 6
Week 13: Nov 25-29	<p>Sikhs and the Partition of India <u>Readings:</u> TBA</p> <p>Contemporary Sikhism and the Sikh diaspora <u>Readings:</u> TBA</p>	
Week 14: Dec 2-6	<p>Dec 3: Authenticity and the ‘Western’ adoption of ‘Eastern’ religions <u>Readings:</u> Amore et al. <i>Concise Introduction to World Traditions</i>, pp. 487-490</p> <p>Dec 5: Review for Test #3</p> <p>Dec 7: <b>Test # 3 due</b></p>	Seminar 7 Test #3

Students registered with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) who complete quizzes, tests, and exams with academic accommodations have booking procedures and deadlines with CAL where advanced noticed is required. Deadlines can be reviewed on the [CAL exams page](https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams). <https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams>

## EVALUATION OF LEARNING

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DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING
Test # 1 – Introduction,Hinduism, Jaina	20%
Test # 2 – Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, Taoism	20%
Test # 3 – Sikhism, Authenticity, and Conclussions	20%
Participation	30%
Site visit/ periodical report	10%
Syllabus quiz bonus points	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

If you have a concern about a grade you have received for an evaluation, please come and see me as soon as possible. Refer to the [Grade Review and Appeals](#) policy for more information.

<https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf>

## COURSE GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

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Students are expected to participate actively and respectfully. While we will not be coming together as a classroom community during the course of this semester, we will endeavour to foster a virtual community of engaged scholars and colleagues.

Please feel very welcome to reach out to me if you require support to manage your journey through this course. College can be overwhelming. If you find you are feeling overwhelmed by your academic plate, please come to me before you fall behind. We will right your ship together!

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

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Enrolment at Camosun assumes that the student will become a responsible member of the College community. As such, each student will display a positive work ethic, assist in the preservation of College property, and assume responsibility for their education by researching academic requirements and policies; demonstrating courtesy and respect toward others; and respecting expectations concerning attendance, assignments, deadlines, and appointments.

## SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

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Camosun College offers a number of services to help you succeed in and out of the classroom. For a detailed overview of the supports and services visit [camosun.ca/services](https://camosun.ca/services).

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Support Service

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Website

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Academic Advising

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[camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/academic-advising](https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/academic-advising)

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Support Service	Website
Accessible Learning	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning">camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning</a>
Counselling	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/health-and-wellness/counselling-centre">camosun.ca/services/health-and-wellness/counselling-centre</a>
Career Services	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/co-operative-education-and-career-services">camosun.ca/services/co-operative-education-and-career-services</a>
Financial Aid and Awards	<a href="https://camosun.ca/registration-records/financial-aid-awards">camosun.ca/registration-records/financial-aid-awards</a>
Help Centres (Math/English/Science)	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres">camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres</a>
Indigenous Student Support	<a href="https://camosun.ca/programs-courses/iecc/indigenous-student-services">camosun.ca/programs-courses/iecc/indigenous-student-services</a>
International Student Support	<a href="https://camosun.ca/international">camosun.ca/international</a>
Learning Skills	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills">camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills</a>
Library	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/library">camosun.ca/services/library</a>
Office of Student Support	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/office-student-support">camosun.ca/services/office-student-support</a>
Ombudsperson	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/ombudsperson">camosun.ca/services/ombudsperson</a>
Registration	<a href="https://camosun.ca/registration-records/registration">camosun.ca/registration-records/registration</a>
Technology Support	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/its">camosun.ca/services/its</a>
Writing Centre	<a href="https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills">camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills</a>

If you have a mental health concern, please contact Counselling to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. Counselling sessions are available at both campuses during business hours. If you need urgent support after-hours, please contact the Vancouver Island Crisis Line at 1-888-494-3888 or call 911.

## COLLEGE-WIDE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS, AND STANDARDS

### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with all College policy regarding academic integrity; which is about honest and ethical behaviour in your education journey. The following guide is designed to help you understand your responsibilities: <https://camosun.libguides.com/academicintegrity/welcome>  
Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.13.pdf> for Camosun's Academic Integrity policy and details for addressing and resolving matters of academic misconduct.

### Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Camosun College is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a documented disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and register as early as possible. Please visit the CAL website for more information about the process of registering with CAL, including important deadlines:

<https://camosun.ca/cal>

### Academic Progress

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2023-02/e-1.1.pdf> for further details on how Camosun College monitors students' academic progress and what steps can be taken if a student is at risk of not meeting the College's academic progress standards.

### Course Withdrawals Policy

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.2.pdf> for further details about course withdrawals. For deadline for fees, course drop dates, and tuition refund, please visit <https://camosun.ca/registration-records/tuition-fees#deadlines>.

### Grading Policy

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.5.pdf> for further details about grading.

### Grade Review and Appeals

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf> for policy relating to requests for review and appeal of grades.

### Medical / Compassionate Withdrawals

Students who are incapacitated and unable to complete or succeed in their studies by virtue of serious and demonstrated exceptional circumstances may be eligible for a medical/compassionate withdrawal (see [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawals policy](#)). Please visit <https://camosun.ca/services/forms#medical> to learn more about the process involved in a medical/compassionate withdrawal.

### Sexual Violence

Camosun is committed to creating a campus culture of safety, respect, and consent. Camosun's Office of Student Support is responsible for offering support to students impacted by sexual violence. Regardless of when or where the sexual violence occurred, students can access support at Camosun. The Office of Student Support will make sure students have a safe and private place to talk and will help them understand what supports are available and their options for next steps. The Office of Student Support respects a student's right

to choose what is right for them. For more information see Camosun's Sexualized Violence Policy: <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.9.pdf> and [camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence-support-and-education](https://camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence-support-and-education).

To contact the Office of Student Support: [oss@camosun.ca](mailto:oss@camosun.ca) or by phone: 250-370-3046 or 250-370-3841

### Student Misconduct (Non-Academic)

Camosun College is committed to building the academic competency of all students, seeks to empower students to become agents of their own learning, and promotes academic belonging for everyone. Camosun also expects that all students to conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to a positive, supportive, and safe learning environment. Please review Camosun College's Student Misconduct Policy at <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.5.pdf> to understand the College's expectations of academic integrity and student behavioural conduct.

### Looking for other policies?

The full suite of College policies and directives can be found here: <https://camosun.ca/about/camosun-college-policies-and-directives>

**Changes to this Syllabus:** Every effort has been made to ensure that information in this syllabus is accurate at the time of publication. The College reserves the right to change courses if it becomes necessary so that course content remains relevant. In such cases, the instructor will give the students clear and timely notice of the changes.

