



## COURSE OUTLINE

The course description is online @ <http://camosun.ca/learn/calendar/current/web/phil.html>

Ω Please note: the College electronically stores this outline for five (5) years only.  
It is **strongly recommended** you keep a copy of this outline with your academic records.  
You will need this outline for any future application/s for transfer credit/s to other colleges/universities.

### 1. Instructor Information

(a)	Instructor:	Megan Shelstad		
(b)	Office Hours:	Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00 – 1:15 p.m.		
(c)	Location:	Young 312		
(d)	Phone:	370-3950	Alternative Phone:	
(e)	Email:	shelstad@camosun.bc.ca		
(f)	Website:			

### 2. Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. Summarize and evaluate central problems in Western political philosophy.
2. Critically examine classical and contemporary solutions to these problems.
3. Compare between various philosophical/political positions and describe the history of political philosophy in general.
4. Take a philosophical/political position and support that position with good reasons (evidence).
5. Explain the relevance of political philosophy to contemporary social problems concerning beliefs and values, knowledge and justification.
6. Describe and critically assess specific cases and alternative solutions to contemporary social/political problems.

### 3. Required Materials

- (a) Texts: Cahn, S. 2011. *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts*. 2e. OUP. (available in the bookstore)

### 4. Course Content and Schedule

Lectures: Tuesdays 1:30 – 3:20 p.m. Fisher 212

Seminars: Group A: Thursdays 1:30 – 2:20 p.m. Fisher 212

Group B: Thursdays 2:30 – 3:20 p.m. Fisher 212

### 5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

- (a) Assignments: 30% - 10 weekly homework (out of 13 possibilities, approx. 250 words, typed)
- (b) Quizzes: 10% - 6 quizzes (best 5, 1 "free" one, no make-ups)
- (c) Exams: 25% - midterm test  
25% - final test **OR** final essay (**ONE OR THE OTHER BUT NOT BOTH**)\*\*\*\*\*
- (d) Other: 10% - seminar attendance and participation

## 6. Grading System

(No changes are to be made to this section unless the Approved Course Description has been forwarded through the Education Council of Camosun College for approval.)

### Standard Grading System (GPA)

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+		9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+		6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D	Minimum level of achievement for which credit is granted; a course with a "D" grade cannot be used as a prerequisite.	1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

### Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca) for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
I	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
IP	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that, due to design may require a further enrollment in the same course. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course. (For these courses a final grade will be assigned to either the 3 <sup>rd</sup> course attempt or at the point of course completion.)
CW	<i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.

## 7. Recommended Materials or Services to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

### LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College calendar, at Student Services, or the College web site at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca).

### STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

There is a Student Conduct Policy **which includes plagiarism**. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, at Student Services, and the College web site in the Policy Section.

Philosophy 236 reading schedule (to be done before class)

Week 1: (Jan. 11, 13) – Introduction, article (yesmagazine.org)

*Seminar: "A very scary Harper story" (cannabisculture.com)*

Study question for seminar: how do you think Stephen Harper sees "economic conservatism" and "Burkean conservatism?"

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Week 2: (Jan. 18, 20) – Plato: *The Republic*, Book I

*Seminar: "Gyges' Ring" (Book II, p. 53)*

Study question for seminar: what would you do if you were Gyges? What do you think most people would do?

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Week 3: (Jan. 25, 27) – Books II and III, QUIZ 1 (Tues.) on Week 1 and 2 material

*Seminar: "Ignoble Liars: Leo Strauss, George Bush, and the Philosophy of Mass Deception" (Harper's Magazine, June 2004) LIBRARY OR ONLINE*

Study question for seminar: is a "noble lie" ever necessary or justified? If yes, is it our fault? What makes it "noble"?

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Week 4: (Feb. 1, 3) – Books IV and V, QUIZ 2 (Tues.) on Week 3 material

*Seminar: "Harper, Bush Share Roots in Controversial Philosophy" (theyee.ca, Nov. 2005) and "Obama and the 'Noble Lie'" (nationalreview.com, June 2009)*

Study question for seminar: compare and contrast these authors' arguments

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Week 5: (Feb. 8, 10) -- Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I and *Politics* Book II

*Seminar: DVD: Aristotle's critique of Plato's Republic (QUIZ 3 while you watch)*

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Week 6: (Feb. 15, 17) -- *Politics* Books III and IV

*Seminar: review for test, come with your questions and list of choices for the rest of term assigned (you will read 4 editor introductions and we'll discuss on Mar. 1)*

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Week 7: (Feb. 22) -- **\*\*\*TEST\*\*\***

**\*\*READING BREAK FEB. 24-25 NO SEMINAR\*\***

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Making a Difference Makes You Happy by Tim Kasser posted May 05, 2010

A series of studies find that activism brings pleasant emotions, greater life satisfaction, and more experiences of freedom, competence, and connection to others. A new study found that activism leads to feeling more alert, alive, and satisfied with life.

Democracy depends on the time, energy, and engagement of ordinary people. But it remains quite difficult to motivate average citizens even to vote, much less to engage in the more intensive forms of political activism needed to counteract powerful forces that work against rule by the people.

That's why Malte Klar and I set out to determine whether people's engagement in political activity might be associated with the motivator of personal well-being. In other words, despite the struggles inherent in political activism, does being politically active brings its own rewards in terms of happiness and life satisfaction? Such a relationship seemed plausible to us, given past studies illustrating the well-being benefits of volunteering and of having pro-social attitudes and values.

To test this possibility, Klar and I surveyed one group of 344 college students, and then a larger group of 718 adults (all United States residents, half of whom were recruited from an online activism registry, and the other half of whom were community members recruited to match the activists on several demographic variables. Subjects' political activism was assessed via measures like their commitment to activism (e.g., "I take the time I need to engage in activism") and their sense of identity as an activist (e.g., "Being an activist is central to who I am"). Subjects were also asked how often they planned to or had participated in activist behaviors -- ranging from sending "a letter or email about a political issue to a public official" to higher-risk activities like engaging "in a political activity in which you knew you will be arrested."

Statistical analyses showed that after controlling for demographic factors like age, race, political orientation, and education, study participants who scored higher in political activism also reported higher levels of personal well-being. Specifically, political activism scores were associated with feeling more pleasant emotions, reporting greater life satisfaction, and having more experiences of freedom, competence, and connection to others. Our application of past research on "psychological thriving" further showed that 28 percent of the politically active adults had reached this highest level of well-being, compared to 18 percent of the community sample.

Because these correlational findings cannot establish whether being politically active actually caused increases in well-being, Klar and I conducted a third study. We asked students to write letters to the head of their college's dining services; some students were assigned to write about "hedonistic" aspects of the food, commenting on the food's taste and how enjoyable it was to eat, while other students were assigned to write about ethical and political aspects of the food, such as whether its production supported fair trade and social justice. Afterwards, students reported on their current personal well-being. Even with this relatively weak and short-term political action, results showed that subjects assigned to write about political issues reported feeling significantly more alert, energized, and alive than did those who wrote about the hedonistic aspects of food.

There are of course many limits to the three studies Klar and I conducted, including their use of only U.S. citizens and their short-term nature. Our results also have an important caveat: Engagement in "high-risk" activist behaviors that can lead people to get arrested or physically injured bore no systematic associations with personal well-being. Nonetheless, the results clearly suggested that being politically active is associated with higher levels of personal well-being, and may even cause improvements in vitality.

Politicians and activists typically attempt to motivate ordinary citizens to participate in democracy on the basis of moral appeals or attempts to fix a problem. Our results suggest that it might also be worthwhile to highlight the internal rewards citizens can obtain from being politically engaged: A sense of satisfaction, the experience of pleasant emotions and of connection with others, and a feeling of aliveness.

Tim Kasser, Ph.D., wrote this article for YES! Magazine, a national, nonprofit media organization that fuses powerful ideas with practical actions. Tim is professor and chair of Psychology at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. The paper this essay is based on was published in the journal *Political Psychology* under the title "Some benefits of being an activist: Measuring activism and its role in psychological well-being."