



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 12:30 – 2:15 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 10:30 – 12:20 p.m. Fisher 212

Seminars: Group A: Thursdays 10:30 – 11:20 a.m. Fisher 212

Group B: Thursdays 11:30 – 12:20 p.m. Fisher 212

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

- (a) Assignments: 30% - 10 weekly homework (out of 13 possibilities, approx. 250 words, typed)
These will be graded as “pass with distinction” (3), “pass” (2), “fail” (1)
- (b) Quizzes: 10% - 6 quizzes (best 5, 1 "free" one, **no make-ups**)
- (c) Exams: 25% - midterm test
25% - final essay test
- (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 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 rd 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.

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)

Schedule subject to change if necessary.

Week 1: (Jan. 10, 12) – Introduction, article (davidsuzuki.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?"

Week 2: (Jan. 17, 19) – 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?

Week 3: (Jan. 24, 26) – 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"?

Week 4: (Jan. 31, Feb. 2) – 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

Week 5: (Feb. 7, 9) -- Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I and *Politics* Book II

*Seminar: Bring your list of **FOUR RANKED** choices for the rest of the term and your explanations for why you chose them. (Read the editor introductions to help you decide.)*

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

Week 6: (Feb. 14) -- *Politics* Books III and IV

NO Seminar: Reading break, Feb. 16/17

Week 7: (Feb. 21) -- **MIDTERM TEST**

Occupy Wall Street reflects increasing frustration

By David Suzuki with contributions from Ian Hanington, David Suzuki Foundation editorial and communications specialist

I'm not the only one unhappy with economic systems based on constant growth and endlessly increasing exploitation of finite resources — systems that concentrate wealth in the hands of a few while so many people struggle.

Since September 17, protests have spread from New York to a growing number of cities across the United States, Europe, and Canada, in a movement dubbed "Occupy Wall Street." The protesters' aims aren't always clear; in some case they seem downright incoherent or absurd — such as calls for open border policies and increased trade tariffs at the same time.

It's interesting that those credited with spurring the movement did so with a single question: "What is our one demand?" The question was first posed in my hometown of Vancouver by *Adbusters* magazine. Editor Kalle Lasn said the campaign was launched as an invitation to act more than an attempt to get an answer. Focusing on a single demand may or may not be a useful exercise, but the conversation itself is necessary. Thanks to the attention these protests are generating, union leaders, students, workers, and others have a public forum to raise questions about our current economic systems.

1. Why have governments spent trillions of dollars in taxpayers' money to bail out financial institutions, many of which fought any notion of government regulation or social assistance, while doing nothing for people who had life savings wiped out or lost homes through foreclosure? And why have governments not at least demanded that the institutions demonstrate some ecological and social responsibility in return?
2. Why do developed nations still give tax breaks to the wealthiest few while children go hungry and working people and the unemployed see wages, benefits, and opportunities dwindle — and while infrastructure crumbles and access to good health care and education diminishes?
3. Why are we rapidly exploiting finite resources and destroying precious natural systems for the sake of short-term profit and unsustainable economic growth? What will we do when oil runs out or becomes too difficult or expensive to extract if we haven't taken the time to reduce our demands for energy and shift to cleaner sources?
4. Why does our economic system place a higher value on disposable and often unnecessary goods and services than on the things we really need to survive and be healthy, like clean air, clean water, and productive soil? Sure, there's some contradiction in protesters carrying iPhones while railing against the consumer system. But this is not just about making personal changes and sacrifices; it's about questioning our place on this planet.

In less than a century, the human population has grown exponentially, from 1.5 to seven billion. That's been matched by rapid growth in technology and products, resource exploitation, and knowledge. The pace and manner of development have led to a reliance on fossil fuels, to the extent that much of our infrastructure supports products such as cars and their fuels to keep the cycle of profits and wealth concentration going. Our current economic systems are relatively new — methods we've devised both to deal with the challenge of production and distribution for rapidly expanding populations and to exploit the opportunities.

It may seem like there's no hope for change, but we have to remember that most of these developments are recent, and that humans are capable of innovation, creativity, and foresight. Despite considerable opposition, most countries recognized at some point that abolishing slavery had goals that transcended economic considerations, such as enhancing human rights and dignity — and it didn't destroy the economy in the end, as supporters of slavery feared.

I don't know if the Occupy Wall Street protests will lead to anything. Surely there will be backlash. And although I wouldn't compare these protests to those taking place in the Middle East, they all show that when people have had enough of inequality, of the negative and destructive consequences of decisions made by people in power, we have a responsibility to come together and speak out.

The course of human history is constantly changing. It's up to all of us to join the conversation to help steer it to a better path than the one we are on. Maybe our one demand should be of ourselves: Care enough to do something.