



School of Arts & Science  
 HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT  
 PHIL 202-001  
 Contemporary Moral Issues  
 FALL 2013

## COURSE OUTLINE

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

⚡ 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 4:30 - 5:30 and Thursdays 1:30 – 2:15		
(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. Describe and evaluate classic and modern moral theories.
2. Describe the resolutions to moral dilemmas that are implied by classic and modern moral theories.
3. Assess various arguments for differing positions on contemporary moral issues.
4. Articulate arguments.

### 3. Required Materials

- (a) Coursepack (available in the bookstore)

### 4. Course Content and Schedule

Lectures: Tuesdays 2:30 – 4:20 **YOUNG 310**

Seminar A: Thursdays – 2:30 – 3:20. **YOUNG 310**

Seminar B: Thursdays – 3:30 – 4:20 “

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

- (a) Assignments: 10% - debate  
 5% - judge or moderator duties
- (b) Quizzes: 10% - 6 quizzes (2% each, best 5, **no make-ups**)
- (c) Exams: 20% - midterm test  
 25% - final essay exam
- (d) Other: 10% - seminar attendance and participation  
 20% - homework (see instructions with course outline)  
 - you need to complete 10, so you can miss 1 but **no make-ups**.

## 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.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AS APPROPRIATE OR AS REQUIRED

## Phil 202 Reading Schedule (from coursepack)

To be done BEFORE class (schedule subject to change if necessary)

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Week 1 (Sept. 3, 5): Introduction, exercise

*Seminar: "Gyges' Ring" (Plato: The Republic) answer the questions at the bottom of the page included with this course outline (see homework instructions).*

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Week 2 (Sept. 10, 12): Kluger, Govier, moral dilemma (p. 15)

*Seminar: Argument summary: "Euthyphro" (Plato) (see homework instructions).*

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Week 3 (Sept. 17, 19): Waller, God as "cop" (p. 31)

*Seminar: Internet: "Does God want you to be rich?" [www.time.com](http://www.time.com) (on the "Prosperity gospel")  
\*\*\*PING-PONG DEBATE (YES or NO)\*\*\**

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Week 4 (Sept. 24, 26): Moulton, **\*\*QUIZ 1\*\*** (wks. 2 - 4), Herodotus

*Seminar: Internet: "Moral Relativism" Michael Snyder [www.endoftheamericandream.com](http://www.endoftheamericandream.com) (go through the list of 20 examples, agree or not, say briefly why?)*

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Week 5 (Oct. 1, 3): Benedict, **\*\*QUIZ 2\*\***(wk. 4, 5), Prisoners' dilemma (p. 57)

*Seminar: Internet: "The Prisoner's Dilemma in Relationships" [www.spectacle.org/995/love.html](http://www.spectacle.org/995/love.html) Is there an argument? (see homework instructions).*

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Week 6 (Oct. 8, 10): Brody, Hobbes, **\*\*QUIZ 3\*\*** (wk. 6)

*Seminar: Internet: Ayn Rand's "Who is the final authority in ethics?" ([freedomkeys.com](http://freedomkeys.com)) (see homework instructions).*

**\*\*\*THANKSGIVING MONDAY, OCT. 14\*\*\***

Week 7 (Oct. 15, 17): Kant, logic challenge (p. 82) , **\*\*QUIZ 4\*\*** (wk. 7)

**Seminar: \*\*\*TEST REVIEW\*\*\***

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Week 8 (Oct. 22, 24): **\*\*MIDTERM TEST (TUES. Oct. 22)\*\*** (up to wk. 7)

**Seminar: debate team work period**

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Week 9 (Oct. 29, 31): Hume, social psychology (Haight, p. 103 - 4)

**Seminar: "The New Humanism," David Brooks, [www.NYTimes](http://www.NYTimes), 2011 (see homework instructions).**

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Week 10 (Nov. 5, 7): Mill, **\*\*QUIZ 5\*\*** (wks. 9, 10)

**Seminar: Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan: "Heinz dilemma" (p. 125 - 6) Do you think there are significant gender/sex differences on morality? Why? (see homework instructions).**

**\*\*\*REMEMBRANCE DAY, MONDAY, NOV. 11\*\*\***

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Week 11 (Nov. 12, 14): Aristotle, Baier, **\*\*QUIZ 6\*\*** (wk. 11)

**Seminar: "The Golden Mean" (p. 124)  
fill in the vices that correspond to the virtues given**

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Week 12 (Nov. 19, 21): **\*\*\*DEBATE\*\*\***

**Seminar: Bentham's "hedonic calculus" (p. 110 - 4)**

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Week 13 (Nov. 26, 28): **\*\*\*DEBATE\*\*\***

**Seminar: Seminar: Internet: "Is there a tortuous road to justice?" Alan Dershowitz, [www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com) (see homework instructions).**

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Week 14 (Dec. 3, 5): **\*\*\*DEBATE\*\*\***

**Seminar: review (exam in exam period)**

## **SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS AND HOMEWORK (30%)**

In seminar periods we will be analyzing and discussing various current issues in ethics. These sometimes present cases which offer examples of various situations that have happened (or not, as in "thought experiments") and provide the opportunity to practice our ethical decision-making skills. But they are just examples; they do not provide, by themselves, arguments for why we should or should not do any particular thing. For that we need the arguments. The authors often offer claims (**conclusions**) for which they provide reasons (**premises**) and evidence for why we should be convinced of the likely truth of their claims.

You should employ all the usual rules of grammar, spelling, etc. as well as using an appropriate method of citation for any quotes you may use.

The following is a template you can use when analyzing arguments. There are also argument summary sheets sprinkled throughout the coursepack for your use. Occasionally you are required to do something else. Check the reading schedule. 1 mark for attendance and participation, 2 marks for written work

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### **TEMPLATE FOR ARGUMENT ANALYSIS (summary and evaluation)**

1. What is the author's **main** point(s)? What are they claiming and trying to convince you of? Be specific.
2. What **main** reasons (premises) does the author offer in support of the main point? Are these good reasons? Why? Are these reasons **relevant** to the author's conclusion? Be specific when answering these questions.
3. What **evidence** is offered in support of those reasons (premises)? Is the evidence good? Why? Is the evidence **relevant** to the author's reasons and/or conclusion? Be specific when answering these questions.
4. Does the author's argument(s) depend on specific **principles**? What are they (again, be specific)? Principles (including ethical principles) are general guidelines for behavior, what we should, or should not, do.
5. Does the author's argument(s) depend on any key beliefs or **assumptions**? Assumptions are claims or beliefs for which we do not offer reasons or evidence but they can provide a place to begin. Are these assumptions warranted or unwarranted? Explain why (again, be specific)?
6. What objections can you think of (use the coursepack) to the author's claims or arguments? Are they good objections? Are they relevant? Did they already address them in the article in a convincing way?

## ***The Ring of Gyges - Plato*** ***The Republic Book II***

Now that those who practice justice do so involuntarily and because they have not the power to be unjust will best appear if we imagine something of this kind: having given both to the just and the unjust power to do what they will, let us watch and see whither desire will lead them; then we shall discover in the very act the just and unjust man to be proceeding along the same road, following their interest, which all natures deem to be their good, and are only diverted into the path of justice by the force of law. The liberty which we are supposing may be most completely given to them in the form of such a power as is said to have been possessed by Gyges the ancestor of Croesus the Lydian. According to the tradition, Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia; there was a great storm, and an earthquake made an opening in the earth at the place where he was feeding his flock. Amazed at the sight, he descended into the opening, where, among other marvels, he beheld a hollow brazen horse, having doors, at which he stooping and looking in saw a dead body of stature, as appeared to him, more than human, and having nothing on but a gold ring; this he took from the finger of the dead and reascended. Now the shepherds met together, according to custom, that they might send their monthly report about the flocks to the king; into their assembly he came having the ring on his finger, and as he was sitting among them he chanced to turn the collet of the ring inside his hand, when instantly he became invisible to the rest of the company and they began to speak of him as if he were no longer present. He was astonished at this, and again touching the ring he turned the collet outwards and reappeared; he made several trials of the ring, and always with the same result-when he turned the collet inwards he became invisible, when outwards he reappeared. Whereupon he contrived to be chosen one of the messengers who were sent to the court; where as soon as he arrived he seduced the queen, and with her help conspired against the king and slew him, and took the kingdom. Suppose now that there were two such magic rings, and the just put on one of them and the unjust the other; no man can be imagined to be of such an iron nature that he would stand fast in justice. No man would keep his hands off what was not his own when he could safely take what he liked out of the market, or go into houses and lie with any one at his pleasure, or kill or release from prison whom he would, and in all respects be like a God among men. Then the actions of the just would be as the actions of the unjust; they would both come at last to the same point. And this we may truly affirm to be a great proof that a man is just, not willingly or because he thinks that justice is any good to him individually, but of necessity, for wherever anyone thinks that he can safely be unjust, there he is unjust. For all men believe in their hearts that injustice is far more profitable to the individual than justice, and he who argues as I have been supposing, will say that they are right. If you could imagine any one obtaining this power of becoming invisible, and never doing any wrong or touching what was another's, he would be thought by the lookers-on to be a most wretched idiot, although they would praise him to one another's faces, and keep up appearances with one another from a fear that they too might suffer injustice.

***What do you think is the main point in this story? What reasons does he offer in support of his point? What would you do if you were in a similar situation?***

Philosophy 202 diagnostic survey

Choose the answer that most accords with your intuitions and opinions, even if imperfectly. Include a brief (point form) explanation. Also, please rank each topic according to which you're most interested in covering, "1" being your top choice.

- |   | <u>RANK</u>    |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Should "hate speech" be controlled (i.e. not "free")? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO   | _____<br>_____ |
| 2. Should pornography be censored? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO   | _____<br>_____ |
| 3. Are affirmative action programs justified? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO  | _____<br>_____ |
| 4. Do nonhuman animals have rights? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO  | _____<br>_____ |
| 5. Should illegal drugs be decriminalized/legalized? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO   | _____<br>_____ |
| 6. Should athletes be permitted to use performance-enhancing drugs? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO  | _____<br>_____ |
| 7. Is same-sex marriage immoral? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO   | _____<br>_____ |
| 8. Is abortion morally acceptable? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO   | _____<br>_____ |
| 9. Should the cloning or genetic engineering of human beings be banned? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO  | _____<br>_____ |
| 10. Do medical researchers have different ethical obligations to subjects in impoverished countries as in wealthy countries? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO | _____<br>_____ |
| 11. Should assisted suicide (including physicians) or euthanasia be permitted? Why or why not?<br>____ YES<br>____ NO   | _____<br>_____ |

**RANK**

12. Is capital punishment ever justified for some crimes? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Should the amount of money involved in political campaigns be restricted? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Is a “restorative justice” model better than our present system? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Should the environment be protected even if it costs some jobs? Why or why not?  
Is consumerism an ethical problem?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Are acts of terrorism/war/torture ever morally justified? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Should wealth be distributed more fairly in order to address poverty and world hunger?  
Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Do we need some kind of new ethical framework (“cyberethics”) for online activity?  
Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_

19. Do people who work in media have a responsibility to be ethical? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Do multiculturalism and/or immigration bring up ethical issues? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you think of other ethical issues that you would like to address in this class?