



CAMOSUN COLLEGE
School of Arts & Science
Department of Humanities

PHIL-202-001AB
Current Ethical Issues
Fall 2019

COURSE OUTLINE

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

Ω Please note: This outline will not be kept indefinitely. It is recommended students keep this outline for their records, especially to assist in transfer credit to post-secondary institutions.

1. Instructor Information

(a) Instructor	Megan Shelstad
(b) Office hours	Mondays and Wednesdays: 10:30 am - 12:15 pm
(c) Location	Young 312
(d) Phone 3951	Alternative: _____
(e) E-mail	shelstad@camosun.bc.ca
(f) Website	_____

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course a 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

Texts: Coursepack (available in the bookstore)

4. Course Content and Schedule

Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays: 8:30 am – 9:20 am YOUNG 316

Seminar A: Mondays – 9:30 – 10:20 am YOUNG 316

Seminar B: – Wednesdays – 9:30 – 10:20 am YOUNG 316

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

- (a) Assignments: 15% - applied topic presentation/debates
- (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% - seminar homework (course outline), complete all 10 (2% each)

6. Grading System

Standard Grading System (GPA)

Competency Based Grading System

A. GRADING SYSTEMS <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html>

The following two grading systems are used at Camosun College:

1. 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		1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

2. Competency Based Grading System (Non GPA)

This grading system is based on satisfactory acquisition of defined skills or successful completion of the course learning outcomes

Grade	Description
COM	<i>The student has met the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.</i>
DST	<i>The student has met and exceeded, above and beyond expectation, the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.</i>
NC	<i>The student has not met the goals, criteria or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.</i>

B. 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 at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html> 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 are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.
CW	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.</i>

7. Recommended Materials to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

Coursepack

8. College Supports, Services and Policies



Immediate, Urgent, or Emergency Support

If you or someone you know requires immediate, urgent, or emergency support (e.g. illness, injury, thoughts of suicide, sexual assault, etc.), **SEEK HELP**. Resource contacts @ <http://camosun.ca/about/mental-health/emergency.html> or <http://camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence/get-support.html#urgent>

College Services

Camosun offers a variety of health and academic support services, including counselling, dental, disability resource centre, help centre, learning skills, sexual violence support & education, library, and writing centre. For more information on each of these services, visit the **STUDENT SERVICES** link on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/>

College Policies

Camosun strives to provide clear, transparent, and easily accessible policies that exemplify the college's commitment to life-changing learning. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of College policies. Policies are available on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/>. Education and academic policies include, but are not limited to, Academic Progress, Admission, Course Withdrawals, Standards for Awarding Credentials, Involuntary Health and Safety Leave of Absence, Prior Learning Assessment, Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Student Ancillary Fees, Student Appeals, Student Conduct, and Student Penalties and Fines.

SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS AND HOMEWORK (20%)

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, sentence-structure, etc. as well as using an appropriate method of citation for the quotes you 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.

2 marks for written work (excellent [2] or satisfactory [1])

TEMPLATE FOR ARGUMENT ANALYSIS (summary and evaluation)

Primary points (things you must do)

1. What is the author's main point(s)? What are they claiming and trying to convince you of? Be specific. Include a quote(s) where they say this.
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. Include quotes.
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. In an essay, this will likely take the form of examples or illustrations although references to studies may be included.

Secondary points (to assist you with the primary points)

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 the author(s) 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.

Create your better life index: Rate the following topics according to their importance to you.

1. Housing

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

2. Income

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

3. Jobs

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

4. Community

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

5. Education

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

6. Environment

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

7. Civic Engagement

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

8. Health

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

9. Life Satisfaction

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

Safety

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

Work-Life Balance

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	neutral	somewhat unimportant	not important

Phil 202 Reading Schedule (from coursepack)

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

Homework is due at the beginning of Monday's seminar.

Quizzes usually will be on Wednesdays at the end of class.

Remember to turn OFF your cell phone for class and put it away. Laptops, ipads, etc. to be used for note taking only.

See "Classroom Technology Use."

Camosun.ca/learn/school/business/current-students/documents/ClassroomTechnologyUse.pdf

Missing classes: if you miss a class due to illness or some other reason, it is not necessary to notify me unless a test (not a quiz) is missed. It is the student's responsibility to find out from another student what was covered.

Check your reading schedule.

Policy on missed tests (not quizzes): make-up tests will be permitted only in cases of illness or personal crisis.

Documentation is required.

Disruptive behaviour, such as carrying on conversations when the instructor or others are speaking, is a sign of disrespect and is not acceptable in class.

Week 1 Lecture: Wednesday, Sept. 4: Introduction, "Gyges' Ring"

*****NO Seminar*****

Please do the 2 surveys in the course outline and bring them with you on Monday.

Don't forget to read Pojman and Aristotle before next week's classes.

Week 2 Lectures: Monday, Sept. 9: Pojman, Aristotle
Wednesday, Sept. 11: Aristotle cont'd.

*****QUIZ 1***** (Gyges' Ring, Pojman, Aristotle)

Seminar: *the Golden Mean*

Week 3 Lectures: Monday, Sept. 16: Kluger
Wednesday, Sept. 18: Govier

Seminar: Argument analysis: "The battle of Charlottesville," Jelani Cobb, Aug. 13, 2017, www.newyorker.com

USE ARGUMENT ANALYSIS TEMPLATE INCLUDED WITH THE COURSE OUTLINE

Week 4 Lectures: **Ethics and Religion**, Monday, Sept. 23: Waller
Wednesday, Sept. 25: Plato (*Euthyphro*)

*****QUIZ 2***** (Kluger, Govier, Waller)

Seminar: Argument analysis: *be prepared to tell the rest of the class about the issues raised in your article.*

1. "Does God want you to be rich?" David Van Biema and Jeff Chu, www.time.com **OR**

2. "Right-wing judges face huge moral dilemma," Brian Beutler, www.salon.com **OR**

3. "Pope Francis's environmental message brings thousands on to the streets in Rome," Rosalie Scammell,
www.theguardian.com

USE ARGUMENT ANALYSIS TEMPLATE INCLUDED WITH THE COURSE OUTLINE

Week 5 Lectures: Monday, Sept. 30: Moulton
Wednesday, Oct. 2: debate teams and topics

Seminar: Argument analysis: "The Coddling of the American Mind," G. Lukianoff and J. Haidt, www.theatlantic.com

USE ARGUMENT ANALYSIS TEMPLATE INCLUDED WITH THE COURSE OUTLINE

Week 6 Lectures: Moral and Cultural Relativism, Monday, Oct. 7: Herodotus,
Wednesday, Oct. 9: Brannigan ****QUIZ 3**** (Moulton, Herodotus, Brannigan)

Seminar: Argument analysis: "Shame Culture," D. Brooks, www.nytimes.com

USE ARGUMENT ANALYSIS TEMPLATE INCLUDED WITH THE COURSE OUTLINE

Week 7 (Oct. 16): *THANKSGIVING DAY, Oct. 14 - college closed*** *****MIDTERM TEST - WED. OCT. 16*** NO Seminar*******

Week 8 Lectures: Monday, Oct. 21 and Wednesday, Oct. 23: **DEBATES (topics to be decided)**

Week 9 Lectures: Monday, Oct. 28 and Wednesday, Oct. 30: **DEBATES**

Week 10 Lectures: Monday, Nov. 4 and Wednesday, Nov. 6: **DEBATES**

Seminars: Argument analysis: articles (TBA)

*****REMEMBRANCE DAY – Monday, Nov. 11 – college closed*****

Week 11 Lecture: Ethical Egoism, Wednesday, Nov. 13: Rachels

*****NO Seminar*****

Week 12 Lectures: Rational Self-interest/Social Contract, Monday, Nov. 18: Brody
Wednesday, Nov. 20: Hobbes *****QUIZ 4***** (Rachels, Brody, Hobbes)

Seminar: Argument analysis: "The Prisoner's Dilemma in Relationships," www.spectacle.org OR
"Infidelity: The Prisoner's Dilemma," www.pauldavidphd.com

USE TEMPLATE INCLUDED WITH THE COURSE OUTLINE

Week 13 Lectures: Monday, Nov. 25: Kant
Wednesday, Nov. 27: Hume, Haidt

*****QUIZ 5***** (Kant, Hume, Haidt)

Seminar: Argument analysis: "The Dark Side of Empathy," P. Singer, www.globeandmail.com

USE TEMPLATE INCLUDED WITH THE COURSE OUTLINE

Week 14 Lectures: Monday, Dec. 2: Mill
Wednesday, Dec. 4: Baier

*****QUIZ 6***** (Mill, Baier)

Seminar: Argument analysis: "The Moral Bucket List," David Brooks, April 11, 2015, www.nytimes.com

USE TEMPLATE INCLUDED WITH THE COURSE OUTLINE

*****FINAL TEST IN EXAM PERIOD*****

Make work schedules and travel plans accordingly; exams are part of the term.

Philosophy 202 diagnostic survey

Choose the answer that most accords with your intuitions and opinions, even if imperfectly. Also, please rank each topic according to which you're most interested in covering, "1" being your top choice. Do this within each subheading.

LIFE AND DEATH

RANK

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------|
| 1. Is war ever justified? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 2. Is terrorism ever justified? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 3. Is euthanasia permissible? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 4. Is assisted suicide permissible? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 5. Is capital punishment ever justified? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 6. Is abortion permissible? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 7. Is torture ever justified? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |

SPEECH AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

RANK

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------|
| 1. Are campus speech codes ever justified? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 2. Should pornography (not erotica) be permissible? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 3. Is racial profiling (carding) ever justified? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 4. Should there be laws against hate speech? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 5. Is "affirmative action" ever justified? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 6. Should voting be mandatory? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 7. Is racial profiling by police permissible? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |

SEXUALITY AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

RANK

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------|
| 1. Is there such a thing as date rape? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 2. Should we license parents? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 3. Is prostitution permissible? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 4. Is polygamy permissible? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 5. Do we owe a duty of care to our parents? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 6. Is surrogate motherhood permissible? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |
| 7. Is social media undermining the idea of friendship? | _____ YES | _____ NO | _____ |

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

RANK

- 1. Should non-human animals have rights? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 2. Is deliberately polluting ever justified? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 3. Is it permissible to eat meat? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 4. Is trophy-hunting permissible? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 5. Does the environment have intrinsic value? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 6. Is using animals for experimentation permissible? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 7. Is it permissible to sell water for profit? _____ YES _____ NO _____

POVERTY AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

RANK

- 1. Are high taxes for the rich justified? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 2. Is inequality a serious problem? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 3. Is taxation a form of stealing? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 4. Do corporations have social responsibilities? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 5. Is famine relief a moral duty? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 6. Should businesses/media always tell the truth? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 7. Should there be compensation for past wrongs? _____ YES _____ NO _____

MISCILLANEOUS

RANK

- 1. Is paying for an organ transplant permissible? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 2. Should we ban human cloning? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 3. Is it permissible to use military drones to kill? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 4. Is human genetic engineering permissible? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 5. Can we medically treat people by force against their will? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 6. Is social media destroying our capacity for empathy? _____ YES _____ NO _____
- 7. Is it permissible for lots of people's jobs to be replaced by automation/robots? _____ YES _____ NO _____

PLEASE ADD ANY OTHER TOPICS YOU WOULD LIKE TO WORK ON THIS TERM.

******ADDITIONAL QUESTION:** Would you like to restrict our debate topics to questions about technology? There are so many current issues arising in this area, from medical to communications to privacy to environmental...(and the list goes on...) It could be enlightening.