

COURSE SYLLABUS



COURSE TITLE: PHIL-202: Current Ethical Issues

CLASS SECTION: 001

TERM: Fall 2021

COURSE CREDITS: 3

DELIVERY METHOD(S): Blended

Camosun College campuses are located on the traditional territories of the Lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples. We acknowledge their welcome and graciousness to the students who seek knowledge here. Learn more about Camosun's [Territorial Acknowledgement](#).

For COVID-19 information please visit <https://camosun.ca/about/covid-19-updates>

Camosun College requires mandatory attendance for the first class meeting of each course. If you do not attend, and do not provide your instructor with a reasonable explanation in advance, you will be removed from the course and the space offered to the next waitlisted student.

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

NAME: Anthony J. Gavin

EMAIL: GavinA@camosun.bc.ca

OFFICE: Young 312

HOURS: Wednesday and Friday, 11:00 – 12:30am (online via Zoom or in-person)

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

This course emphasizes the serious moral issues facing us today. The views of both modern and historical thinkers in relation to these issues will be considered, but the emphasis will remain on contemporary issues.

PREREQUISITE(S):

One of:

- C in ENGL 151
- C in ENGL 161
- C in ENGL 163
- C in ENGL 164

CO-REQUISITE(S):

Not Applicable

EXCLUSION(S):

Not Applicable

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES / OBJECTIVES

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.

REQUIRED MATERIALS & RECOMMENDED PREPARATION / INFORMATION

Textbook: PHIL 202 Coursepack (available at the college bookstore).

Additional readings will be made available on D2L.

Additional recommended resources:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP): <https://plato.stanford.edu>

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP): <https://iep.utm.edu>

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

The following schedule and course components are subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor. Readings that aren't included in the coursepack (highlighted in blue below) will be made available on D2L. Readings marked with an *asterisk are optional.

You will notice that I ask students to submit a **student survey** at the end of the first week of class. These surveys will be made available on D2L. Your surveys will not be shared with anyone; they are 100% confidential between you and me. The surveys serve a twofold purpose: first, they let me know where you are at coming into this course with respect to a broad range of current ethical issues; and second, they tell me where the class's interests lie. If there is significant interest in a particular topic, then I will make an effort to incorporate it into our course schedule. This means that the schedule below is **subject to change** if necessary.

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	OTHER NOTES
Sept. 7 – 10	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review course syllabus How to have a constructive philosophical debate Topic: democracy and voting <p>Tuesday Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Moves on YouTube (on D2L) Logical Toolkit, pp. 8 – 25 (on D2L) Tips for Writing a Good Philosophy Essay (on D2L) <p>Thursday Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plato, “Apology: Defense of Socrates” (on D2L) The School of Life, “Why Socrates Hated Democracy” (on D2L) 	Please turn in your student surveys at by beginning of class on Thursday, Sept. 9
Sept. 13 – 17	<p>Topic: On education; what makes a good citizen/ruler?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plato, <i>Republic</i>, Bk. VII 	
Sept. 20 – 24	<p>Topic: Fake News & Post-Truth</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lanchester, “You Are the Product” *Williams, “Plato Predicted ‘Pizzagate’ (or rather, fake news more generally)” (on D2L) *Video: Chomsky, “The 5 Filters of the Mass Media Machine,” animated introduction on YouTube (on D2L) *Video: Fuller, “Post-Truth” (on D2L) 	
Sept. 27 – Oct. 1	<p>Topic: Confronting Global Capitalism</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fisher, “It’s easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism” Fraser, “Behind Marx’s Hidden Abode” *Video: Zero Books, “Mark Fisher: Capitalist Realism,” YouTube (on D2L) *Uetricht, “The Beginning of the End of Capitalist Realism” (on D2L) 	NO CLASS OR SEMINAR Thursday, Sept. 30 (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation)
Oct. 4 – 8	<p>Topic: Violence and the Limits of Political Representation</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics” *Video: <i>Star Trek: The Next Generation</i>, Season 3, Episode 12, “The High Ground” (available on Netflix) 	QUIZ #1 on Tuesday, Oct. 5

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	OTHER NOTES
Oct. 11 – 15	<p>Topic: Racial Justice & BLM</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mills, “White Ignorance” • Du Bois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” • *Yancy, “To Be Black in the US Is to Have a Knee Against Your Neck Each Day” (on D2L) 	
Oct. 18 – 22	<p>Topic: The Politics of Mass Incarceration, I</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander, “The New Jim Crow,” pp. 178 – 200 • *hooks, “The Politics of Radical Black Subjectivity” • *Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” 	
Oct. 25 – 29	<p>Topic: The Politics of Mass Incarceration, II</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander, “The New Jim Crow,” pp. 200 – 220 • Davis, “Abolitionist Alternatives” 	QUIZ #2 on Thursday, Oct. 28
Nov. 1 – 5	<p>Topic: Civil Disobedience & ANTIFA</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaw, “A Philosophy of Antifascism” • Shaw, “Militant Antifascism is Community Self-Defense” (on D2L) • *Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience” • *Fromm, “Disobedience as a Psychological and Moral Problem” • *Hendricks, “The philosophy of protest: Thoreau, King, and Civil Disobedience” (on D2L) 	
Nov. 8 – 12	<p>Topic: Decolonization, I</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alfred & Corntassel, “Being Indigenous” • *Tuck & Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor” 	NO CLASS OR SEMINAR Thursday, Nov. 11 (Remembrance Day)
Nov. 15 – 19	<p>Topic: Decolonization, II</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simpson, “Land as Pedagogy” • *Waziyatawin, “The paradox of Indigenous resurgence at the end of empire” 	

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	OTHER NOTES
Nov. 22 – 26	<p>Topic: Ecological & Nonhuman Rights</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tsing, “Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species” • *Haraway, “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin” 	QUIZ #3 on Thursday, Nov. 25
Nov. 29 – Dec. 3	<p>Topic: Politics in a Global Pandemic</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Coronavirus and Philosophers” • Shotwell, “The Virus is a Relation” • *Le Guin, “The Day Before the Revolution” • *Butler & Yancy, “Interview: Mourning Is a Political Act Amid the Pandemic and Its Disparities” (on D2L) 	
Dec. 6 – 10	<p>Topic: What if things don’t get better?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norlock, “Perpetual Struggle” (on D2L) 	
Dec. 13 – 21	Final Exam Period	FINAL PAPER due Dec. 16

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 notice is required. Deadlines can be reviewed on the [CAL exams page](http://camosun.ca/services/accessible-learning/exams.html). <http://camosun.ca/services/accessible-learning/exams.html>

EVALUATION OF LEARNING

DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING
Participation	15%
Critical Response Assignments (5 x 5%)	25%
Quizzes (3 x 10%)	30%
Final paper	30%
TOTAL	100%

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](http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-and-instruction/e-1.14.pdf) policy for more information. <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-and-instruction/e-1.14.pdf>

1. COVID-19 Guidelines

There are a number of important policies to keep in mind as we return to in-person teaching. Due to COVID-19, **masks are mandatory in class**. If you do not wear a mask, you will not be allowed to enter the classroom. Also, **no food or drink** are allowed in the classroom. If you need to grab a quick snack or sip of water, please excuse yourself from class. It may be necessary to accommodate short breaks in the middle of class for this purpose. Speaking as your professor, it's quite difficult to lecture for an hour straight without taking a sip of water! Your diligence in respecting these guidelines is warmly appreciated.

For up-to-date information on the college's COVID-19 guidelines, please use the following link:

<https://camosun.ca/about/covid-19-updates>

2. Course Delivery and Attendance

As soon as class begins on September 8th, you will have access to the course website on **D2L**. All of your assigned work and quizzes will be submitted through D2L. Supplementary lecture materials will also be posted on D2L each week. Note that these supplementary lecture materials are not a substitute for the main lecture portion of the course. *You are still expected to attend class in-person.*

Students are expected to attend two lectures and one seminar in-person each week. Seminar sections have been assigned to you: Group B meets after class on Tuesdays, and Group A meets after class on Thursdays. These seminars are intended for us to meet together for group discussions on the week's reading materials. Students are also encouraged to show up with their own questions. *Please ensure that you are caught up on the readings prior to showing up to each seminar.*

It is very important to attend the first class. Failure to do so will result in your being automatically dropped from the course, and your space will go to the first student on the waitlist. Students on the waitlist are also welcome to attend during the first week, but you will not have access to D2L unless you are on the active list. I will take attendance for students on both lists during the first week, but not any further beyond that. This only applies to the lecture portion of the course; rules for seminar attendance are outlined below. If for any reason you are unable to attend during the first week, please let me know as soon as possible.

3. Basis of Evaluation

(a) Participation (15%)

Your **participation** grade is dependent on seminar attendance: students are expected to attend at least 10 seminars (out of a possible 14), valued at 1.5% each, for a total of 15% of your final grade. I recognize that there are multiple ways to participate in a course, and that we are not always up to speed 100% of the time that we're physically present. Therefore, participation grades are subject to a final adjustment before final grades are released.

(b) Critical Response Assignments (5 x 5% = 25%)

Every other week (starting in week 2), you will be required to write a short **critical response assignment** on one or more of the previous week's reading materials. Your responses should do more than just summarize; that is, they should demonstrate some form of critical engagement with the readings. *Aim for your responses to be approximately one page in length (12pt font, double spaced).* Please upload your responses in either .doc or .docx format to the course page. Each critical response assignment is worth 5% of your final grade, for up to 5

out of 6 possible responses (meaning that you are allowed to miss up to one response without penalty). **Critical response are due by the beginning of class each Tuesday.**

(c) Quizzes (3 x 10% = 30%)

Over the course of the semester you will write three short **quizzes**. Each quiz is worth 10% of your final grade, for a total of 30%. Each quiz will consist of five short answer questions (2-3 sentences each) and one long answer question (2-3 short paragraphs). The short answer questions will ask you to define some concept or summarize some argument; the long answer questions will ask you to evaluate and critically reflect on some author's key arguments or positions, or to compare and contrast the key arguments or positions of more than one author. **Each quiz will have a choice of three different possible long answer questions, of which you will have to choose and write on just one. You must answer all of the short answer questions.**

(d) Final Paper (30%)

Your **final paper** will be a short philosophical essay of 1500-2000 words (please do not exceed a maximum of 2500 words). I will assign a list of topics beforehand, but you may also decide to write on a topic of your own choosing. If you do, I ask that you submit your proposal to me at least two weeks before the final paper is due (no later than Dec. 2). Your papers should be properly cited, in whatever citation format you choose. Start with a clear introduction and thesis statement, then move on to your main arguments and conclusion. As with all of the assignments that you will write over the course of this semester, I am more interested in the quality of your ideas than in your grammar; however, your final papers should still be proofread, and should still be written in clear academic prose. **Your final papers are due by the end of the day on Thursday, one week after the end of classes (Dec. 16).**

4. Academic Integrity

You are welcome and encouraged to discuss course material with others in your class, and work together to solve problems. However, the work you turn in must be your own. If you are ever unsure about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, please consult the college's Academic Integrity Policy (available at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/>).

5. Late Submissions and Extensions

Late work is penalized at 10% per day up to a maximum of 5 days, after which point it will no longer be accepted. However, I know that things do not always go according to plan. You are welcome to two day's worth of extensions on assignments (not the midterm/final). This means that you can take two extra days to complete a assignment, or have one extra day on two different assignments. *Please let me know before the due date if you are using an extension. Otherwise, your work will be counted as a late submission.*

6. Communication and Office Hours

Email is my preferred method of communication, especially for any official requests. If you ask me a question over email, you can expect a reply within about 1 working day. If you don't hear back from me after that time frame, feel free to try again in case your message went astray. When you do address me (over email or otherwise), please do so as either Professor (Prof.) Gavin, or Anthony. If you are ever nervous about sending me an email, or asking a question, please feel free to include a picture of a cute animal or hilarious meme with your request. This will not affect whether or not I will be able to help you with your request, but it does provide a nice icebreaker. Finally, my pronouns are he/him/his. If you think I am unlikely to know the name you would prefer to be called, or the pronouns that I should use for you through the entry that I will see for you on D2L and your college registration, please don't hesitate to make me aware.

I will be available for office hours on Wednesdays and Fridays between 11:00am and 12:30am. Due to COVID-19, I ask that you schedule an appointment with me before attending office hours. My default platform for office hours will be Zoom, but in-person appointments are also available. My office is located in the Young Building, Room 312. If neither of these options works for you, please feel free to suggest an alternative. Appointments can be scheduled in 15 minute blocks. If you are working with a study group and would like to attend office hours as a group, simply designate one person to reserve the appointment and let me know who else will be attending. Group appointments are online-only.

7. Respectful Discussion

Due to the sensitive nature of many of the topics we are engaging in this class, it is foreseeable that emotions will be running high for at least some of our group discussions. I ask that students keep this in mind and carry themselves in group discussions in a respectful manner. This is a philosophy class, which means that we will often discuss difficult questions in a critical manner. However, this doesn't mean that it's ever acceptable to bludgeon each other over the head with what we personally take to be the 'right' answers to those questions. I will do everything in my power to ensure that the classroom remains a safe space for discussion, where ideas can be raised and challenged without fear of personal retribution. This means **zero tolerance** for threats, violence, or any other misconduct that disrupts the learning environment of your fellow students.

Please review Camosun College's Student Misconduct Policy at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-2-student-services-and-support/e-2.5.pdf> to understand the College's expectations of academic integrity and student behavioural conduct.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

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

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 <http://camosun.ca/students/>.

Academic Advising	http://camosun.ca/advising
Accessible Learning	http://camosun.ca/accessible-learning
Counselling	http://camosun.ca/counselling
Career Services	http://camosun.ca/coop
Financial Aid and Awards	http://camosun.ca/financialaid
Help Centres (Math/English/Science)	http://camosun.ca/help-centres
Indigenous Student Support	http://camosun.ca/indigenous

International Student Support	http://camosun.ca/international/
Learning Skills	http://camosun.ca/learningskills
Library	http://camosun.ca/services/library/
Office of Student Support	http://camosun.ca/oss
Ombudsperson	http://camosun.ca/ombuds
Registration	http://camosun.ca/registration
Technology Support	http://camosun.ca/its
Writing Centre	http://camosun.ca/writing-centre

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 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The College is committed to providing appropriate and reasonable academic accommodations to students with disabilities (i.e. physical, depression, learning, etc). If you have a disability, the [Centre for Accessible Learning](#) (CAL) can help you document your needs, and where disability-related barriers to access in your courses exist, create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through CAL, you can ensure you have the appropriate academic accommodations you need without disclosing your diagnosis or condition to course instructors. Please visit the CAL website for contacts and to learn how to get started:

<http://camosun.ca/services/accessible-learning/>

Academic Integrity

Please visit <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-and-instruction/e-1.13.pdf> for policy regarding academic expectations and details for addressing and resolving matters of academic misconduct.

Academic Progress

Please visit <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-and-instruction/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 <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-2-student-services-and-support/e-2.2.pdf> for further details about course withdrawals. For deadline for fees, course drop dates, and tuition refund, please visit <http://camosun.ca/learn/fees/#deadlines>.

Grading Policy

Please visit <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-and-instruction/e-1.5.pdf> for further details about grading.

Grade Review and Appeals

Please visit <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-and-instruction/e-1.14.pdf> for policy relating to requests for review and appeal of grades.

Mandatory Attendance for First Class Meeting of Each Course

Camosun College requires mandatory attendance for the first class meeting of each course. If you do not attend, and do not provide your instructor with a reasonable reason in advance, you will be removed from the course and the space offered to the next waitlisted student. For more information, please see the “Attendance” section under “Registration Policies and Procedures” (<http://camosun.ca/learn/calendar/current/procedures.html>) and the Grading Policy at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-1-programming-and-instruction/e-1.5.pdf>.

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. Please visit <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-2-student-services-and-support/e-2.8.pdf> to learn more about the process involved in a medical/compassionate withdrawal.

Sexual Violence and Misconduct

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 or misconduct 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 and Misconduct Policy: <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-2-student-services-and-support/e-2.9.pdf> and camosun.ca/sexual-violence. To contact the Office of Student Support: oss@camosun.ca or by phone: 250-370-3046 or 250-3703841

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 <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-2-student-services-and-support/e-2.5.pdf> to understand the College’s expectations of academic integrity and student behavioural conduct.

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.