



CAMOSUN COLLEGE
School of Arts & Science
Department of Humanities

PHIL-202-D01
Current Ethical Issues
Winter 2021

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	Anthony J. Gavin	
(b) Office hours	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00am-11:30am	
(c) Location	Zoom (signup required)	
(d) Phone	Please email	Alternative:
(e) E-mail	gavina@camosun.bc.ca	
(f) Website	Through D2L	

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

4. Course Content and Schedule

This will be an *asynchronous* online course. This means that there are no particular times of day when you need to watch course videos, post in discussion forums, or complete your assigned work. There are still regular deadlines for completing your assigned work, so you will still be expected to keep up with what we are covering in any given week. 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/>).

Course videos will be captioned, and I will try to fix any errors in the automatic transcriptions, but please feel free to email me if you notice any remaining mistakes. If you notice any additional accessibility issues

with respect to this class, please let me know and I will do my best to solve them. I would also encourage any students who might benefit from their services to consult the Centre for Accessible Learning (<http://camosun.ca/services/accessible-learning/>).

Many of you might be new to online learning—but whether online or in person, I know that sometimes things do not go as planned. You are welcome to two day’s worth of extensions on assignments or quizzes. This means that you can take two extra days to complete a single assignment, or have one extra day on two different assignments. Please let me know before the due date if you are using an extension. You also do not need to tell me why you need the extension, but if you anticipate needing more than these two days, I highly encourage you to make an appointment with me to talk about how we can plan for you to keep up with the course schedule.

The course schedule at the end of this document lists the topics for each week and relevant readings from the coursepack (plus links to additional readings where required). All of my course videos will be available on the course website prior to the start of the week when the material is covered. It is up to you whether you will read the scheduled course materials before or after watching these videos, but it is highly recommended that you read them before completing your discussion forum assignments each week.

In order to receive your participation grade, you will need to post original questions and responses to the questions posted by your classmates on the course discussion forums. No extensions will be given on these participation grades, since they are for the benefit of the other students in the class; however, as outlined below, you may miss up to three weeks’ discussions without penalty.

Suggested weekly schedule:

Day(s)	Tasks
Monday	Read assigned coursepack materials, watch course videos. Slow down and review as needed. Post questions in the course discussion forum. Schedule meeting with me during office hours if needed.
Tuesday – Wednesday	Read assigned coursepack materials, watch course videos. Work on assignments and/or quizzes. Respond to your classmates’ questions in the course discussion forum. Schedule office hours if needed.
Thursday	Respond to your classmates’ questions in the course discussion forum. Work on assignments and/or quizzes. Review material as needed. Begin formulating questions on next week’s readings.
Friday	Finish weekly assignment and/or quiz.

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

(a) Participation (20%)

In order to receive your participation grade, each week you will be required to do two things: (a) first, you must formulate an original question on the basis of the week’s readings, and post your question to the course discussion forum; (b) then, you must respond to at least one of your classmate’s questions, using the discussion moves that we will discuss during the first week of the course. Doing both of these things each week will be worth 2% of your final grade, for a total of 20% (2% each for up to 10 out of 12 possible questions and responses, minus the first week – you are allowed to miss up to two weeks’ posts without penalty).

Your questions should demonstrate some form of critical engagement with the week's reading materials – that is, they should serve more so as prompts for further discussion, than as the clarification-seeking sort of questions that you may ask during a lecture. Strive for your questions and responses to be approximately 2-3 sentences in length, but please do not exceed the maximum of 5 sentences for your questions. **Your questions are due by the end of the day each Monday, and responses are due by the end of the day each Friday, starting in the second week.**

(b) Assignments (25%)

Every other week (starting in week 3) you will be required to write a short critical response to one or more of the 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). **Your assignments are due by the end of the day each Friday in the week in which they are assigned.**

(c) Quizzes (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. **You will have one hour from the time that you start each quiz to complete it, but it is up to you when to write each quiz in the week in which it is due.**

(d) Final Paper (25%)

Your final assignment of the semester 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, please meet with me during office hours to discuss your proposed topic at least two weeks before the final papers are due. 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 Friday, one week after the end of classes.**

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	The student has met the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
DST	The student has met and exceeded, above and beyond expectation, the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
NC	The student has not met the goals, criteria or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.

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	<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 to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

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

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

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, Student Ancillary Fees, Academic Integrity, Grade Review & Appeals, Student Misconduct and Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and Student Penalties and Fines.

9. 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 Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 10:00am and 11:30am. My default platform for office hours will be Zoom, but if that does not work for you, please feel free to email me in advance to suggest an alternative. You will need to schedule an appointment beforehand. 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.

PHIL 202 COURSE SCHEDULE

All readings in Coursepack unless otherwise specified. Schedule subject to change if necessary.

- **Week One: Jan 11 – 15**

Topic: **Introduction to the course.**

How to have a constructive philosophical discussion/debate.

- **Week Two: Jan 18 – 22**

Topic: **On education; what makes a good citizen/ruler?**

Read: Plato, *Republic*, Bk. VII

- **Week Three: Jan 25 – 29**

Topic: **Fake News & Post-Truth**

Read: John Lanchester, "You Are the Product"

Video: Animated introduction to Noam Chomsky on "The 5 Filters of the Mass Media Machine":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34LGPIXvU5M&t=36s>

Video: Steve Fuller, "Post-Truth": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4Rwca7k_Fs

- **Week Four: Feb 1 – 5**

Topic: **Confronting Global Capitalism**

Read: Nancy Fraser, "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode: For an Expanded Conception of Capitalism"; Mark Fisher, "It's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism."

Optional: Micah Uetricht, "The Beginning of the End of Capitalist Realism, in *Jacobin*, January 30 2019, URL: <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/01/capitalist-realism-mark-fisher-k-punk-depression>

(*Not in coursepack).

*** QUIZ #1 due by end of day Friday, Feb 5th ***

- **Week Five: Feb 8 – 12**

Topic: **Violence and the Limits of Political Representation**

Read: Judith Butler, "Violence, Mourning, Politics."

Optional video: Star Trek: The Next Generation, Season 3, Episode 12, "The High Ground" (available on Netflix).

- **Week Six: Feb 15 – 19**

Reading Break

- **Week Seven: Feb 22 – 26**

Topic: **Racial Justice & BLM**

Read: Charles Mills, "White Ignorance"; W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings."

Optional: George Yancy, interview, "To Be Black in the US Is to Have a Knee Against Your Neck Each Day," in *Truthout*, URL: <https://truthout.org/articles/george-yancy-to-be-black-in-the-us-is-to-have-a-knee-against-your-neck-each-day/> (*Not in coursepack).

- **Week Eight: Mar 1 – 5**

Topic: **The Politics of Mass Incarceration, I**

Read: Michelle Alexander, "The New Jim Crow," pp. 178-200

Optional: bell hooks, "The Politics of Radical Black Subjectivity"; Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House."

- **Week Nine: Mar 8 – 12**

Topic: **The Politics of Mass Incarceration, II**

Read: Michelle Alexander, "The New Jim Crow," pp. 200-220; Angela Y. Davis, "Abolitionist Alternatives."

- **Week Ten: Mar 15 – 19**

Topic: **Civil Disobedience & ANTIFA**

Read: Devin Zane Shaw, "A Philosophy of Antifascism"; Shaw, "Militant Antifascism is Community Self-Defense" (available on D2L).

Optional: Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"; Erich Fromm, "Disobedience as a Psychological and Moral Problem"; Scotty Hendricks, "The philosophy of protest: Thoreau, King, and Civil Disobedience" in *Big Think*, URL: <https://bigthink.com/politics-current-affairs/philosophy-civil-disobedience> (*Not in coursepack).

*** QUIZ #2 due by end of day Friday, Mar 19th ***

- **Week Eleven: Mar 22 – 26**

Topic: **Decolonization, I**

Read: Taiaiake Alfred & Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Capitalism."

Optional: Eve Tuck & K. Wayne Yang, excerpts from "Decolonization is not a metaphor."

- **Week Twelve: Mar 29 – Apr 2**

Topic: **Decolonization, II**

Read: Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy"

Optional: Waziyatawin, "The paradox of Indigenous resurgence at the end of empire"

- **Week Thirteen: Apr 5 – 9**

Topic: **Ecological & Nonhuman Rights**

Read: Anna Tsing, "Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species"

Optional: Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin"

*** QUIZ #3 due by end of day Friday, Apr 9th ***

- **Week Fourteen: Apr 12 – 16**

Topic: **Politics in a Global Pandemic**

Read: "Coronavirus and Philosophers"; Alexis Shotwell, "The Virus is a Relation"

Optional: Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Day Before the Revolution"; Judith Butler & George Yancy, "Interview: Mourning Is a Political Act Amid the Pandemic and Its Disparities (Republication)," in *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* 2020, URL: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11673-020-10043-6> (*Not in coursepack).

*** FINAL PAPER DUE by end of day Friday, April 23rd ***