

COURSE SYLLABUS



COURSE TITLE: PHIL-100-Introduction to Philosophy: Classics

CLASS SECTION: 003

TERM: 2025F

COURSE CREDITS: 3

DELIVERY METHOD(S): In-person lectures and seminars

Camosun College respectfully acknowledges that our campuses are situated on the territories of the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Kosapsum) and WSÁNEĆ peoples. We honour their knowledge and welcome to all students who seek education here.

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

NAME: Elena Holmgren

EMAIL: HolmgrenE@camosun.ca

OFFICE: Young 302

HOURS: Mondays and Wednesdays at 2:30-3:30. Additional office hours also available by appointment.

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

An introduction to classical philosophical works concerning central philosophical issues such as the nature and possibility of knowledge, the existence of God, the nature of morality and justice, and the mind/body relationship.

PREREQUISITE(S):

One of:

C+ in English 12

C in Camosun Alternative

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES / OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course the student will be able to:

Identify and describe fundamental philosophical problems, along with the classical philosophical answers to these problems.

Distinguish among various philosophical theories.

Identify key periods and concepts in the (philosophical) history of ideas.

Critically analyze an argument philosophically by identifying its premise and conclusion and by assessing its strengths and weaknesses.

REQUIRED MATERIALS & RECOMMENDED PREPARATION / INFORMATION

No course textbook is required. I will post PDF copies of the required readings online on our D2L site.

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.

Lectures:

Wednesdays 12:30 pm - 2:20 pm Fisher 306

Seminar (003A):

Mondays 12:30 pm – 1:20 pm Young 325

Seminar (003B):

Mondays 1:30 pm – 2:20 pm Young 325

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS
1. Sept. 2 - 5	The Value of Philosophy	-Organ, "The Human Being as Philosopher." -Plato, "Apology: Defence of Socrates."
2. Sept. 18 - 12	Philosophy As a Way of Life Arguments	- Maritain, "The Sophists and Socrates" - Hadot, "Spiritual Exercises"
3. Sept 15 - 19	Reason and Reality: Plato	- Blanshard, "The Idea of Reason in Western Thought" - Plato, "Allegory of the Cave" - Plato, "Meno: The Theory of Forms and the Doctrine of Recollection"
4. Sept. 22 - 26	Reason and Reality: Plato, cont'd	-Plato, Excerpt from <i>Phaedo</i>

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS
5. Sept. 29 – Oct. 3	The Skeptic's Challenge: Can We Know Anything?	-Nagel: "How Do We Know Anything?" -Russell, "Appearance and Reality."
6. Oct. 6 - 10	TEST 1 - OCT. 8 The Skeptic's Challenge: Can We Know Anything?	-Plato: Excerpt from the <i>Theaetetus</i> -Sextus Empiricus: Excerpts from <i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i>
7. Oct. 13 - 17	The Sources of Knowledge: Reason Descartes on the Nature of the Mind	- Descartes, "Meditations I - II" -Blanshard: "The Idea of Reason in Western Thought" – Excerpt on Descartes
8. Oct. 20 - 24	Descartes' Argument for the Existence of God	-Descartes, "Meditation III"
9. Oct. 27 - 31	The Sources of Knowledge: the Senses	-Hume, Excerpts from <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i>
10. Nov. 3 - 7	TEST 2 - NOV. 5	No new readings.
11. Nov. 10 - 14	Is the Self an Illusion?	-Hume, "Bundle Theory of the Self"
12. Nov. 17 - 21	The Place of Consciousness in the Natural World	-Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"
13. Nov. 24 - 28	Artificial Minds Vs. Human Minds: Can Machines Be Rational Subjects?	-Searle, "Minds, Brains and Programs"
14. Dec. 1 - 5	Is Belief in God Rational?	-Pascal's <i>Wager</i> -Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief" -James, "The Will to Believe"
Dec. 8 - 16	Final Exam Period	Exam to be scheduled in this period

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](https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams). <https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams>

EVALUATION OF LEARNING

DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING
Test 1: Oct. 8	30%
Test 2: Nov. 5	30%
Final Exam: to be scheduled during the final exam period (Dec. 8-16)	30%
Seminar Participation	10%
	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](#) policy for more information.

<https://cam.ac.uk/citac/default/files/2021-05/p-1-14.pdf>

General Instructions:

All tests will evaluate your understanding of content *covered in this class*. Thus, tests should show evidence of engagement with the material *as covered in class*. That said, be sure to explain the content *in your own words*, rather than merely replicating lectures.

2 Tests:

Each test consists of a list of prompts, of which you can select three and construct long answer responses to them. All tests (including the final exam) for this course will be closed-book and must be completed in class. For the tests, you are responsible for all the required readings and class lectures.

Final Exam:

The final exam will be in class and will be scheduled during the final exam period (Dec. 8-16). It will consist of a list of prompts, from which you are to select one and construct an essay-style response to it. The prompts will be released at least a week ahead of time, so that you can have a chance to gather together your thoughts on the prompt. The purpose of the exam will be to enable you to gather your thoughts on some big-picture themes we will have explored together throughout the course, to form a coherent stance on that issue and to then defend it.

I encourage you to write a rough outline or plan of your response to the test prompt you have chosen to have a sense of the structure of your response before you come to write your test in person. You are welcome to bring your outline to me for feedback prior to the exam date. **However, you cannot bring your outline or any other notes to the test.** More instructions on how to prepare for the final exam will be provided in due time.

Seminar Discussion Worksheets:

Philosophy is best learned through practice and dialogue. To this end, active participation in our regular seminar discussion activities is essential. These activities are designed to help you develop the critical thinking skills that are essential not just for doing well in this course and on the tests, but also for learning to do philosophy for yourself, which ultimately matters more than simply memorizing and reproducing the results of other people's philosophizing.

The discussion activities are also designed to train your ability to articulate your views clearly, to provide argumentative support for your views, to question your most taken-for-granted assumptions, and to internalize other perspectives (as opposed as they may seem to your own!) before identifying their strengths and shortcomings. Students are expected to engage respectfully with all opposing views presented in class discussions.

Your grade for this course component will be based on the level of your constructive engagement in the weekly seminar discussions, and on your completion of **10 seminar worksheets**. The seminar worksheets will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis, and each is worth 1%. You must attend the seminar and participate in the discussion in order to submit your worksheet.

COURSE GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, take notes, ask questions, practice academic integrity, and engage in respectful and productive reasoned dialogue with peers.

Regular Lecture Attendance and Good Study Habits:

Since each and every lecture is designed to give you the theoretical tools needed to unpack the course readings and prepare you for the tests, regular attendance is necessary in order to do well in this course. If you miss any class, you are responsible for acquiring any content we covered, either by referring to the slides posted on our D2L website, by asking a fellow student to share their notes, by visiting me during my scheduled office hours, by emailing me or by setting up a Zoom appointment with me.

Taking detailed notes is essential for cementing your understanding of the content. It is also advisable to review and organize your notes regularly by highlighting important overarching themes that came up, as well as summarizing (in your own words) the different theorists' takes on these themes. Then, make note of any **key claims** made by the authors we have discussed, as well as noting the **key arguments** they have presented in support of those claims. Also, make note of any **definitions** introduced, as well as of any **examples** that helped clarify any key concepts we covered. Lastly, make sure to take note of the areas where you **agree** and **disagree** with the authors. For each major author and theory we cover, jot down the "pros" and "cons" of adopting their view. Doing all this will greatly assist you when preparing for the tests.

Note that generative AI or Google cannot replace the information you get through regular attendance and quality note-taking. The chances that you will find quality information relevant to our particular class discussions of the course material by relying on these tools are vanishingly small.

Active Close Reading:

Students are expected to read all assigned materials before the start of the first class of each week. Readings are essential preparation for our discussion activities.

Few things train and focus the mind quite as well as the practice of close reading does. This practice involves two complementary movements of thought: the first "zooms in" to closely analyze and evaluate the various steps in an argument, while the second "zooms out" to consider how the

particular passage at hand, and the text as a whole, each shed light on significant big-picture themes. As we go through the course, you will have ample chance to work on cultivating these close reading skills.

These can be quite challenging and richly-layered texts. Thus, aim to read each assigned work *at least twice*: first, read it once over in order to get a general “bird’s eye” overview of the topics discussed. Then, re-read it at least one time in order to get a more detailed grasp of the different steps in the argument/s presented.

In order to *read actively*, briefly summarize the key points of the reading in your own words. Focus your reading by identifying the core claim (or conclusion) that the author is trying to argue for. Then, identify the claims provided in support of that conclusion. Can you identify any problems with any of these claims? If so, make note of them.

In-Person and Virtual Office Hours:

The course content can be challenging; if it weren’t, it wouldn’t be philosophy! However, I am here to help. Please do not hesitate to make an appointment to have a video conference with me, if you are unable to make any of the in-person office hours listed above. The sooner you contact me with questions about areas you may be struggling with, the better I can help you.

Also, feel free to email me any time if you require any clarification at all, or if you just wish to chat about philosophy!

Academic Integrity:

Be sure that all the assignments you submit in this class represent your own honest work and your sincere commitment to your own learning. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the college’s policy on plagiarism (see below); ignorance is no excuse. Any assignment that violates this policy in any way will receive a grade of 0.

Unless otherwise specified, *no collaborating is permitted on any of the assignments* (aside from the seminar discussion worksheets). Any collaborated work will be considered in violation of the Student Conduct Policy and will receive a grade of 0.

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 camosun.ca/services.

Support Service	Website
Academic Advising	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/academic-advising
Accessible Learning	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning
Counselling	camosun.ca/services/health-and-wellness/counselling-centre
Career Services	camosun.ca/services/co-operative-education-and-career-services
Financial Aid and Awards	camosun.ca/registration-records/financial-aid-awards
Help Centres (Math/English/Science)	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres
Indigenous Student Support	camosun.ca/programs-courses/iecc/indigenous-student-services
International Student Support	camosun.ca/international
Learning Skills	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills
Library	camosun.ca/services/library
Office of Student Support	camosun.ca/services/office-student-support
Ombudsperson	camosun.ca/services/ombudsperson
Registration	camosun.ca/registration-records/registration
Technology Support	camosun.ca/services/its
Writing Centre	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills

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 Integrity

Students are expected to comply with all College policy regarding academic integrity; which is about honest and ethical behaviour in your education journey. The following guide is designed to help you understand your responsibilities: <https://camosun.libguides.com/academicintegrity/welcome>
Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.13.pdf> for Camosun's Academic Integrity policy and details for addressing and resolving matters of academic misconduct.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Camosun College is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a documented disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and register as early as possible. Please visit the CAL website for more information about the process of registering with CAL, including important deadlines:

<https://camosun.ca/cal>

Academic Progress

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2023-02/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 <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.2.pdf> for further details about course withdrawals. For deadline for fees, course drop dates, and tuition refund, please visit <https://camosun.ca/registration-records/tuition-fees#deadlines>.

Grading Policy

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.5.pdf> for further details about grading.

Grade Review and Appeals

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf> for policy relating to requests for review and appeal of grades.

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 (see [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawals policy](#)). Please visit <https://camosun.ca/services/forms#medical> to learn more about the process involved in a medical/compassionate withdrawal.

Sexual Violence

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 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 Policy: <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.9.pdf> and camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence-support-and-education.

To contact the Office of Student Support: oss@camosun.ca or by phone: 250-370-3046 or 250-370-3841

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 <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.5.pdf> to understand the College's expectations of academic integrity and student behavioural conduct.

Looking for other policies?

The full suite of College policies and directives can be found here: <https://camosun.ca/about/camosun-college-policies-and-directives>

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.

