

## Course Description

### ***Philosophy 310: Ethics and Public Policy***

**Winter 2002: AB1: Thursday, 10:00 am-12:50 pm, A404**

**Calendar Description:** Sometimes our ethics are about how we act individually; for example, whether to make a charitable donation for cancer research. Sometimes, our ethics are about our political practices; for example, whether to make our charitable donations tax deductible.

What role should ethics play in our social and political practices? Should our ethics—what we think is right—take into account the realities of politics—of how we collectively make decisions? Should we structure our social and political practices to meet ethical requirements?

In order to pursue these questions about diverse practices such as health care, international relations, business, employment relations, and government, we will look at various approaches to ethics that focus on practical issues of forming, justifying, and implementing political and social solutions.

**PHIL 310** satisfies one of the upper level requirements for the *Applied Ethical and Political Philosophy* program at UCFV.

This *Course Description* provides routine information, and describes the objectives and methods for the course. Read it carefully and ask questions.

It should be viewed as a **contract** but can be altered for individual students in extraordinary circumstances.

**If I make a special arrangement with you, write a note to that effect and have me sign it. Keep the note and show it to me to remind me of our arrangement.**

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#### Contact Information

**Instructor: Paul Herman** (based in Chilliwack)

BA, University of California Santa Barbara; All PhD. work except thesis completed, UBC.

Teaching: UBC; Carleton University; Fraser Valley College & UCFV 1975-present.

#### **Office Hours**

**Abbotsford:** Monday & Thursday, 9:00-9:30, D3094 (shared with Moira Gutteridge)

**Chilliwack:** Wednesday, 9:00-9:30, A102-12

Talk to me during office hours about your problems with an assignment, areas of interest you would like to pursue, my marking of your work, etc. If these times are not convenient for you, we can arrange to meet at other times.

Since I am often out of my office (but usually close to it) or talking to students during the above times, it is best (but not essential) to make an appointment. When I am working in the *Writing Centre*, its students have priority.

### Telephone & E-mail

**Telephone:**   **Abbotsford:** 853-7441, local 4320 or through the Receptionist  
                   **Chilliwack:** 792-0025, local 2836 or through the Receptionist  
                   **Home:** 858-4854

You can also leave a message for me on UCFV voice-mail. After hours, call direct:

**Abbotsford:** 854-4500, box 8117  
**Chilliwack:** 795-2800, box 2836

**Fax: 604-792-2388**

**E-Mail:** through *Course Website* and [HERMAN@UCFV.BC.CA](mailto:HERMAN@UCFV.BC.CA)

I prefer that you ask all non-personal questions (*i.e.*, any question you don't care that others know you are asking) through the *Course Website* so that others can also benefit from it.

I usually check my e-mail in the morning, early afternoon, and early evening.

Please put the course number in the subject line whenever you e-mail me. Otherwise, I may fail to deal with your message quickly.

If you have not heard back from me within a day, please try again by e-mail or other means.

I usually check the *Course Website* once a day, typically early afternoon.

If you would like to meet me in the chat room, we need to arrange a time.

### The Course

This course is about acting ethically through social institutions such as business, occupations, unions, government to make and implement public policy in fields as diverse as health care, the environment, education, international relations, the economy.

The goal is to bring together theories and practices of ethics and politics without presupposing other upper level Philosophy and Politics courses.

**Prerequisites:** 45 credits from Applied or Arts or Science programs, including nine credits in Philosophy or Political Science; or permission of the instructor.

### Major Areas

The course will include three major elements:

1. Strategies for making policy decisions, especially under conditions of social conflict.
2. Theories that set goals for moral and political action in order to achieve a good society: liberal, libertarian, pluralist.
3. Negotiating agreements to apply theories of justice to various policy areas.

In the first one-third of the course, we will do preparatory work in the first area.

In the last two-thirds of the course, you will negotiate public policy with each other to implement theories of a good society in policy areas you choose such as health care, income distribution, educational policy, cultural relations.

### **Goals of the Course**

At the end of this course, my intention is that you will:

- be able to describe different positions on the major, general issues noted above.
- communicate orally and in writing your organised, disciplined critical thinking about some of these major, general issues in order to produce and defend your own solution to questions of public policy in specific areas.
- be motivated to use the skills and knowledge from this course as a productive way to think about these issues as you encounter them in everyday life.

### **Standard Operating Procedure**

Throughout the course, we will typically follow this procedure (often called *reflective equilibrium*):

1. I will ask you to make some judgments about some specific examples of a religious issue, either based on your own experience or on some reading.

We will consider your judgments in order to see some of the more general issues they raise.

2. I will provide you with some background and philosophical reading for the general issues, asking you to consider how they produce general reasons for your specific judgments.
3. We will reflect upon the reading and test general reasons by applying them to specific examples.
4. You will be asked to make some assessment of **your** judgments and general reasons for them.

There is a dialectic between our **judgments about specific cases** and the **general reasons** for those judgments. Sometimes you may change your specific judgments to fit your general reasons. Sometimes you may change your reasons to fit your judgments. Or you may adjust both.

In most cases, there is no single correct answer that emerges from this process. However, some answers are not as good as others, e.g., because they do not deal well with the full range and depth of the issues or are not supported by good reasoning.

So, good answers require much more than merely expressing an opinion.

### **Co-operative Learning**

I make every effort to have **you** do most of the talking and writing during class sessions. Consequently, we shall do a lot of co-operative learning in groups following several formats.

You are expected to interact with group mates, share ideas and resources, support each other, explain material and techniques to each other, and hold each other responsible for completing the assignment. If you need help with the assignment, **first** ask your group mates; if you need further assistance with the group assignment, **only the group as a whole** should request help from the instructor.

Co-operative learning has a long history as a major teaching strategy, going back in the West at least to its use by one of Martin Luther's students who became a teacher. It wasn't until teaching became more professionalised that folks began to believe the myth that only teachers can teach.

## Effectiveness

There is a great deal of research supporting the effectiveness of co-operative learning because it:

- enables many people to **learn actively** at the same time: when the instructor lectures, possibly only one person (the instructor) and occasionally a few others (students who ask questions) are active; with groups of two, at least half the class is active at a time;
- conforms to **‘the real world’** where we do much of our work in groups such as families, committees, community boards, unions, and we are often judged by the performance of the groups to which we belong;
- requires students to **take responsibility for their own learning** and prepare for **life-long learning**;
- recognizes that students are often better than instructors at teaching each other, and that **the best way to learn is to teach**;
- provides a **community of support** where the skills and material in a course are valued and reinforced. (By working in groups, you will actually get to know—perhaps even to become friends with—other students in the course by working co-operatively at least as often as competitively.);
- makes it possible to **pursue far more and more diverse interests** than could the class as a whole, and to **share our results** as we could not working individually and competitively.

Many research studies have demonstrated that students who learn co-operatively get higher grades than students who try to learn the same material individually. For example, research about why Chinese American students did so well in calculus at Berkeley while members of other minority groups fared poorly, observed that the Chinese students studied together, ate together, hung out together, etc. A math program at the University of Texas based on this research has become a model for math programs throughout the U.S.

Students sometimes object that marking for group work is not always fair. First, I will make every effort to ensure that students are marked both on individual and on group work. Second, I think the educational benefits are worth the occasional unfairness that may result. Third, it is not bad to have to deal with this common feature of our world: **you** can do something to reduce the unfairness. For example, if a member does not contribute to the group's work, then do not put the person's name on group assignments.

## Formats

**Informal co-operative learning groups** are temporary, *ad hoc* groups lasting from a few minutes to one class session. You engage in focused discussions with two or four people before, during, and after a class session.

These groups aim to counter a major problem with lectures: the information passes from the notes of the instructor to the notes of the students without passing through the mind of either. They focus attention on the material, set a mood conducive to learning, help organize in advance the material for a class session, ensure that you are engaged in active learning, and provide closure to a class session.

**Formal co-operative learning groups** last for one class session up to several weeks to complete a specific assignment. You are responsible for maximizing your own learning and that of your group mates.

**Standard Co-operative Learning Procedures**

1. The instructor gives you instructions and objectives.
2. You are assigned to a group, provided with materials, and perhaps given a specific role in the group.
3. The instructor explains the task, the co-operative structure, and relevant concepts or strategies for completing the assignment.
4. The instructor monitors your group to provide assistance as needed with academic material and co-operative techniques.
5. The instructor evaluates your results by referring to a set of non-competitive criteria, i.e., everyone who meets the criteria does well.

**Resources****Materials to buy from the [Bookstore](#):**

Paul Herman, *Philosophy 310 Course Pack*  
 Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*, Second Edition.  
 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Revised Edition  
 Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*

**Additional Resources**

**If you are not confident about your background in the basics of moral and political thinking, then I strongly recommend the you immediately take a few hours to read a basic primer such as:**

James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (in the Bookstore or Library).

If you have doubts about your understanding of the nature of philosophy and of methods of reading and writing philosophy then I recommend Jay F. Rosenberg's *The Practice of Philosophy: A Handbook for Beginners*, copies in the **Bookstore** (although it has become ridiculously expensive), **Library**, and **Writing Centres**. Also see [Methods of Inquiry](#) in the *CoursePack*.

If you feel you need additional background on some area, ask me.

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**Internet Resources**

The **Internet** also has many resources, readings, discussion groups, etc. in philosophy and on a variety of topics that we investigate in this course. Go to the UCFV Library website, "Guides to Research" for religious studies and philosophy ([ucfv.bc.ca/library/religion.htm](http://ucfv.bc.ca/library/religion.htm)). Two excellent philosophy Web sites are:

Epistemé Links: <http://www.epistemelinks.com/welcome.htm>  
 philosophy material especially useful for undergraduate students of philosophy such as online encyclopaedias and dictionaries, aides for writing better papers, bibliographies, etc..

Hippias Internet search engine for philosophy: [hippias.evansville.edu/](http://hippias.evansville.edu/)

One of the best general resources in ethics is:

Ethics Updates: [ethics.acusd.edu/index.html](http://ethics.acusd.edu/index.html)

For example, it includes an ethics glossary at [ethics.acusd.edu/Glossary.html](http://ethics.acusd.edu/Glossary.html).

Two very useful sites for policy research are:

Government of Canada Policy Research Initiative: <http://policyresearch.schoolnet.ca/>

Canadian Social Research Links: <http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/>

There are many policy research sites. The following present a spectrum of views:

Fraser Institute: <http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/>

C.D. Howe Institute: <http://www.cdhowe.org/english/mainpage.html>

Canadian Policy Research Networks: <http://www.cprn.org/cprn.html>

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/middle.html>

And there are many sites on specific issues, for example,:

Gender Policy Review: <http://gender-policy.tripod.com/journal/index.html>

National Anti-Poverty Organisation: <http://www.napo-onap.ca/>

Forest Ethics: <http://www.forestethics.org/html/eng/home.shtml>

David Suzuki Foundation: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/>

Medicare Economics Group: <http://www.meg.ab.ca/links.html>

### **Help with writing**

Help is available through [Writing Centres](#) on each campus (Abbotsford G168, Chilliwack A205, Mission D226a; [www.ucfv.bc.ca/writing\\_centre/index.html](http://www.ucfv.bc.ca/writing_centre/index.html) for more information and resources).

Paradigm Online Writing Assistant, "Argumentative Essays," <http://www.powa.org/argufrms.htm>

[www.microsoft.com/education/tutorial/workshop/word2k.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/education/tutorial/workshop/word2k.asp) is a tutorial about writing with a word processor. It is Microsoft promotional material oriented towards teachers, but it still looks helpful for using a word processor as much more than an automatic typewriter.

### **Help with a disability that may interfere with your learning**

It would be wise to discuss it with me and to see an access advisor at the [Disability Resource Centre](#) (Chilliwack 795-2843, D117a; Abbotsford 864-4609, D207; [www.ucfv.bc.ca/drc/](http://www.ucfv.bc.ca/drc/)) about available services at UCFV.

## Computing Resources

**Free computing labs** are available at UCFV where you can use computers to prepare course materials, go on the Internet, etc. UCFV may also offer computing orientation sessions.

**No computing is required in this course**, but I strongly recommend that you take advantage of this opportunity to use computers at very little cost to you. Computers are incredibly useful for writing, making it easier to organize your ideas in various ways, to revise your writing, and to produce final drafts that are mechanically almost perfect.

If you do not have an **e-mail address**, you should obtain one; they are available for free through UCFV computing labs. An e-mail address enables you easily to communicate with other members of the class, to circulate drafts of your formal work for comments by me or others, to discuss material with other members of the class.

### Criterion DecisionPlus

While **no computing is required** in this course, I strongly suggest that you try using this program (*Decision+*) to prepare several of the assignments in *Policy Project*. However, some students in previous versions of this course completed similar assignments without the aid of this program.

*Decision+* helps set goals, build a hierarchy of components of that goal, determine their priority, and then use those components to evaluate a range of alternatives. So far, I have found it easy to use, but it also has depths I have not yet plumbed (and don't think I need to).

The *Tutorial* is very good. The *Manual* explains decision-making strategies quite well. *Help* is excellent with great hypertexted explanations. The *Glossary* is also excellent. And there is a good PowerPoint slide show at [www.infoharvest.com/infohary/sebest.html](http://www.infoharvest.com/infohary/sebest.html).

A student version of **program** and **tutorial** are installed in all **UCFV computing labs**. You can download them for **free** at [www.infoharvest.com/infohary/CDPFreeDownloads.htm](http://www.infoharvest.com/infohary/CDPFreeDownloads.htm) and install them on **your own computer**, quite easily in my experience. Do make sure that you download the **tutorial** as well as the program.

(If you receive an error message about OLEAUT32.DLL when you attempt to install *Decision+*, read ST\_READMEFIRST.TXT.)

**The only limit to the student version is that decision models are limited to twenty blocks**, so you have to be somewhat careful in setting up component goals and alternatives. But for the level at which we will work, twenty blocks should be enough.

When using *Decision+*, go to **Model/Options** to set those I think are best for our purposes. (However, your experience may indicate otherwise.)

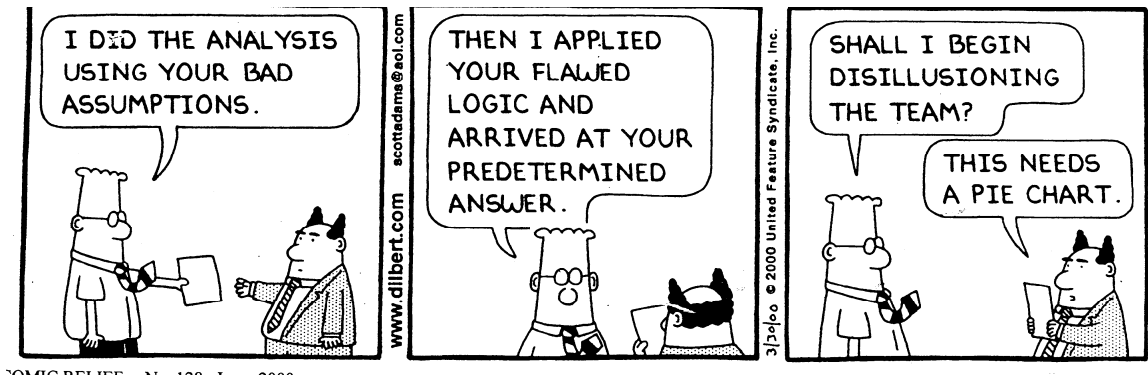
Under **Environment**, the **General** tab, **Brainstorm View**, make sure the following are checked:

- Resize Blocks around Font
- Show Helpful Tips
- Alternatives Visible

Under **Environment**, the **General** tab, **Hierarchy View**, make sure the following are checked:

- Show Helpful Tips
- Show block notes with focus
- Show Unconnected Blocks
- Show Accumulated Weights
- Show Unrated Blocks
- Show Disconnected Blocks

Under **Model/Options**, **New Model**, **General** tab, make sure **Weights** and **SMART** are checked. (I am pretty sure these settings are best. If you try others, make sure you have saved your work first.)



**Course Website: See *Course Website* in the *CoursePack*.**

The *Course Website* may be helpful in many ways, for example, to download course handouts in order to view them as outlines in your word processor and to edit as you see fit. Internet links in documents are **live** when viewed at the *Course Website*. You can access your marks and see how the class is doing as a whole. There is a place for general discussion, and I will set up discussion groups that you can use for course group work.

If you are having trouble with the *Course Website*, contact me or ask a student lab monitor for help or e-mail [online@ucfv.bc.ca](mailto:online@ucfv.bc.ca) or phone (604) 864-4666. **DO NOT SUFFER IN SILENCE!**

### Visitors

Access to the course website is usually limited to me and to students registered in the course. Access to the course requires an ID and Password. **DO NOT SHARE THESE WITH ANYONE ELSE.**

I will be discreet about whom I permit to visit and will let you know if someone will be present for a substantial time (as opposed briefly to fix the software).

It is unlikely anyone would want to visit the course uninvited, but there is no guarantee of privacy anywhere in cyberspace.

**Turning in Work Digitally**

You may send work to me by e-mail or through the course website. See [my address](#) on the first page, under **Telephone and E-Mail**.

**You must turn in hard copy of the final version of your formal written work.**

**Work and Evaluation**

See the [Readings and Assignments](#) handouts for assignments and due dates. **It is your responsibility to use these handouts to keep up with course work.** Keep them in your notebook in some organized fashion so that you do not miss readings or assignments. We shall try to proceed at a pace that fosters discussion and understanding of the material and issues, so due dates are subject to change with ample notice.

**Plagiarism**

**You will not find the final, authoritative answer to a philosophical question in books, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, videos, or cyberspace.** It is essential that you produce and justify your own conclusions, which brings us to the topic of plagiarism.

**Plagiarism is the high crime of intellectual activity;** copying another person's work is a common species. If the question of plagiarism arises, a student should be able to show that a piece of work is the student's own by producing notes and drafts, explaining and defending the work. The minimum consequence for plagiarism is a **NO CREDIT** for that piece of work. More severe penalties, including a **NO CREDIT** for the course, may be imposed.

There are many times when you are allowed, encouraged, or required to work together. If you have doubts about when these times are, please ask me for clarification.

Intellectual property rights are still quite unclear on the Internet, and it is very easy to violate even those that are clear. Err on the side of caution. For example, forwarding someone else's e-mail message without permission may violate moral and legal standards.

**Use of course material from this course is permitted only for your personal, non-commercial purposes.**

**Final Mark**

Your **Final Mark** is based on several activities explained below. You can choose to do more or less work according to your ambitions for a **Final Mark** and the time you have available. You are continuously evaluated on smaller pieces of work so that you can compensate even for the occasional disaster.

Please have some tolerance for flexibility in the assignments since many of these assignment are still in the early stages of evolution.

Your **Final Mark** is calculated on the following basis:

Attendance and Class Contribution	10%
Informal Individual & Co-op Work	30%
Seminars on Justice	20%
Policy Project	40%

Except for *Informal Individual & Co-op Work*, each activity is marked on the following scale:

A+ = 4.33	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	P = 1
A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	NC = 0
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	

Letter grades for cumulative *Informal Individual & Co-op Work* are assigned by making the top mark an A+, about 50% of the top mark about a C-, with the other marks scaled accordingly.

All marks are assigned according to how well the work met the **criteria** explained in the assignment, **not** according to a distribution curve (e.g., 10% As, 20% Bs, etc.).

**Academic Appeal:** Students may appeal academic decisions. See [Academic Appeals Policy](#).

### **Attendance and Class Contribution (10% of Final Mark)**

Your contribution to class sessions is essential to the success of this course. Please ask questions and contribute to class sessions, especially to your co-op work. Your facility in presenting work to the class also counts towards this part of your mark.

Of course, quality, not mere quantity, of class participation is desirable. However, **it is better to err on the side of boldness than of caution**.

**Each student starts with a C** in this area and adds or subtracts from it. The only way to subtract from it is by being obnoxious in class or by regularly not coming to class. Otherwise, your *Informal Individual & Informal Co-op Work* mark is a good indicator of attendance and class contribution, unless you make additional significant contributions to sessions of the class as a whole.

**Lack of civility to any members of the class is not tolerated.**

**If you will be absent from a class, please call or leave me a message** if possible so I can reassign groups before rather than in class.

### **Informal Individual & Co-op Work (30% of Final Mark)**

There are assignments to prepare you for class, work in cooperative groups, and open-book written assignments during class. And then there are assignments you complete in co-op groups, including *Minutes* of your *Policy Project* meetings.

See *Readings and Assignments* for detailed assignments.

**Typically, each assignment is marked on a scale from 0 to 4 points.** More demanding assignments may be marked on a multiple of this scale. The success of the course depends upon your individual preparation before class, so **these assignments are due during class. A late assignment may be turned in at least one day before the next class session with a penalty of one point.**

**Seminars on Justice (20% of Final Mark):** [Seminars on Justice](#) in the *CoursePack*.

Groups will conduct seminars to examine several theories of justice.

**Policy Project (40% of Final Mark):** See [Policy Project](#) in the *CoursePack*.

This project continues throughout the term with many smaller assignments that culminate in an extensive report.

### **Format and due dates**

**Any formal work** (e.g., a handout for the *Seminar* or the *Policy Project Final Report*) should be **typed** double-spaced on 8.5" by 11" paper with at least one inch margins on all sides, secured with a staple or paper clip.

**Non-sexist language** is expected in your written work. (See [Writing without Gender Bias](#) in the *CoursePack* for further explanation.)

**Formal work is due during the class period of the due date and is not accepted more than one week late. Late work is marked down one mark**, e.g., a B is marked down to a B-. (**Exceptions** are possible in extraordinary circumstances.) Any assignment you do not put into my hands—e.g., that you hand in to Faculty Reception—should be **time stamped**, e.g., by the Faculty Assistant or at Records and Registration; otherwise, I will assume it was turned in when I pick it up.

You are welcome to turn in drafts of formal work for my comments.

**Keep a copy of all formal work you turn in for comments or for marking.**