

# REBECCA LIVERNOIS

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Centre for Ethics  
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*AoS*: Environmental Philosophy; Philosophy of Economics

*AoC*: Philosophy of Social Science; History of Economics; Rational Choice Theory

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**DISSERTATION:** *A Philosophical Analysis of the Concept of an Externality  
in Economic Theory and Policy*

Committee: Margaret Schabas (supervisor), John Beatty, and Alison Wylie  
Examiners: David Schmidtz (external); Matt Bedke and Brian Copeland (internal)

Economists generally define an externality as an unpriced spillover effect. The paradigmatic case is pollution because it is unpriced and because it affects individuals who are not involved in the choices that lead to its production. One solution to an externality is to set a tax, called a Pigovian tax, on the unpriced activity at the value of the externality in equilibrium. In the case of carbon dioxide emissions, the standard Pigovian policy is to impose a carbon tax. This policy response depends, however, on the way an externality is defined, yet there is a notable lack of consensus among economists on a precise definition of this concept. In my dissertation, I develop an account of the concept of an externality that is based on the way it is modelled in contemporary microeconomics. I argue that there are two plausible interpretations of an externality that are consistent with this account, both of which are problematic. It is therefore unclear whether this concept could be instantiated in any concrete sense. Consequently, I suggest that policies that aim to internalize an externality cannot be fully justified. Furthermore, I argue that the solution to the problem of climate change is not exhausted by the containment of externalities, as some economists suggest. Even if all externalities were resolved and if private and social interests were aligned, there might still be an incentive to pollute beyond the socially optimal level. This is due to the peculiar cost structure of climate change in which the marginal costs of polluting are uninformative of the total costs.

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## EDUCATION

Ph.D. Philosophy, University of British Columbia, 2014 – 2019

M.A. Economics, University of British Columbia, 2012 – 2013

B.A. Honours Economics and Philosophy, University of Guelph, 2007 – 2011

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## EMPLOYMENT

SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for Ethics, University of Toronto, 2021-2023

Postdoctoral Associate, Rotman Institute of Philosophy, University of Western Ontario,  
2019 – 2021

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## PUBLICATIONS

Livernois, Rebecca. 2018. “Regretful Decisions and Climate Change” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 48, 2: 168-191

## WORKS UNDER REVIEW/IN PROGRESS

(Titles withheld online for blind review)

- A paper on the policy relevance of externalities
  - A paper on the ethics of green nudges, with C. Tyler DesRoches, Daniel Fischer, Julia Silver, Phil Arthur, Gil Hersch, and Michiru Nagatsu
  - A paper on environmental preferences, well-being, and measures of willingness to pay
  - A paper on the controversy over the contingent valuation method in contemporary economic debates
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## PRESENTATIONS

2021 “Is the Social Cost of Carbon a Measure of an Externality?” at the International Network for Economic Method; forthcoming (refereed; accepted)

“Is the Social Cost of Carbon a Measure of an Externality?” at the Canadian Philosophical Association (refereed)

2020 “What’s Philosophy of Economics?” for the University of Western Ontario Politics, Philosophy, Economics Society (invited)

“What environmental impact assessment can learn from the economics of externalities, and vice versa” in the Panel “Socio-ecological systems in the applied environmental science field of impact assessment: some cross-disciplinary considerations” at the Canadian Society for History and Philosophy of Science (refereed; cancelled)

“Is the Social Cost of Carbon a Measure of an Externality?” at PPE Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans (refereed; declined)

- 2019 “Epistemic Ascriptions and the Actualization of Externalities” at Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Research Seminar, Arizona State University (invited)
- “Contingent Valuation and the Ambiguity of Externalities” at 22<sup>nd</sup> Summer School on History of Economic Thought, Economic Philosophy and Economic History: Applied economics and the development of new fields in modern economics, University of Porto (refereed)
- Comments on Léa Villequey “The New Triptych “Cartel, Competition, State:” A liberal defense by Louis Marlio” at 22<sup>nd</sup> Summer School on History of Economic Thought, Economic Philosophy and Economic History: Applied economics and the development of new fields in modern economics, University of Porto (invited)
- “Contingent Valuation and the Problem of Measuring Externalities” at Economic Behaviours: Models, Measurements, and Policies, Como, Italy (refereed)
- Comments on Marco Martinez “Decision Theory for Policy Design and Adoption” at Economic Behaviours: Models, Measurements, and Policies, Como, Italy (invited)
- “Contingent Valuation and the Ambiguity of Externalities” at The Biennial Conference of the International Network for Economic Method, University of Helsinki (refereed)
- “Epistemic Ascriptions and the Actualization of Externalities” at Institute for New Economic Thinking: Young Scholars Initiative North America Convening, USC Dornsife (refereed)
- 2018 “Are Externalities Ever Truly Actualized?” at The Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association, Seattle (invited)
- “Epistemic Ascriptions and the Actualization of Externalities” at CIRED Workshop 2018: Facts in Environmental and Energy Economics, Models and Practices, Past and Present, Paris (refereed)
- “Externality, Pollution, and Policy” at Eye of the Storm: Ethics in the Age of Inaction, University of Washington (refereed)
- “Externality, Pollution, and Policy” at Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science, University of Regina (refereed)
- “Externality, Pollution, and Policy” at Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress, Montréal (refereed)
- 2017 “Regretful Decisions and Climate Change” at Philosophy of Social Science Roundtable, University of British Columbia (refereed)
- Comments on Werner Antweiler “Scrapping for clean air: Emissions savings from the BC SCRAP-IT program” at Innovation, Sustainability, and Precaution, University of British Columbia (invited)
- 2016 “Regretful Decisions and Climate Change” at Athena in Action: A networking and mentorship workshop for graduate student women in philosophy, Princeton University (refereed)

2015 “Regretful Decisions and Climate Change” at Montréal Summer School in the History of Science and Economics, Université du Québec à Montréal (refereed)

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## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2021 – 2023 SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship to be held in the Centre for Ethics at the University of Toronto, \$90,000

2019 – 2021 Western Postdoctoral Fellowship Award, Western University, \$40,000

2019 Institute for New Economic Thinking Young Scholars Initiative Travel Award

2019 Rotman Institute of Philosophy Travel Award, Western University

2018 Summer School on Sustainable Climate Risk Management Travel Award, Penn State University

2018 UBC Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Travel Award

2018 UBC Philosophy Department Travel Award

2016 – 2018 Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Doctoral Fellowship, \$62,000

2016 – 2019 Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship - Doctoral, Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, \$105,000

2016 – 2020 Four Year Doctoral Fellowship, University of British Columbia, \$80,000

2016 – 2019 Graduate Fellowship, University of British Columbia, \$54,000 (declined)

2016 Athena in Action Travel Award, Princeton University

2016 Brian Laetz Essay Prize, Philosophy Department, University of British Columbia

2015 – 2016 Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship – Masters, \$17,500

2015 UBC Philosophy Department Travel Award

2014 – 2016 Faculty of Arts Graduate Award, University of British Columbia, \$20,000

2012 – 2013 Faculty of Arts Graduate Award, University of British Columbia, \$8,000

2010 John Kenneth Galbraith Scholarship in Economics, Department of Economics, University of Guelph

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## RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

### Workshop and Summer School Participation

2019 22<sup>nd</sup> Summer School on History of Economic Thought, Economic Philosophy and Economic History: Applied economics and the development of new fields in modern economics, Sept 2-6, University of Porto

- Economic Behaviours: Models, Measurements, and Policies, July 1-5, Como, Italy
- 2018 Centre International de Recherche sur l'Environnement et le Développement (CIRED) Workshop 2018: Facts in environmental and energy economics, models and practices, past and present, Oct 19-20, Paris
- Summer School on Sustainable Climate Risk Management, July 30-Aug 3, Penn State University
- 2016 Athena in Action: A networking and mentorship workshop for graduate student women in philosophy, Aug 16-19, Princeton University
- Workshop on Innovation, Sustainability, and Precaution, Apr 26, University of British Columbia
- 2015 Montréal Summer School in the History of Science and Economics, July 14-19, Université du Québec à Montréal
- Summer Institute on the History of Economics, June 1-12, Duke University

### Research Positions

- 2017 – 2018 Graduate student assistant for Alison Wylie, University of British Columbia
- 2013 – 2014 Policy Researcher, British Columbia Care Providers Association
- 2011 – 2012 Research assistant (economics) for Mike Hoy, University of Guelph
- 2011 – 2012 Research assistant (economics) for Louise Grogan, University of Guelph
- 2010 Research assistant (economics) for David Prescott, University of Guelph

### Departmental and Professional Service

- 2021 Scientific Committee for International Network for Economic Method Conference 2021
- 2020 Rotman Institute Strategic Planning Subcommittee, University of Western Ontario
- 2019 – 2020 Rotman Institute Steering Committee, University of Western Ontario
- 2018 Referee for *Philosophical Studies*
- 2017 – 2018 Graduate Student Representative, Department of Philosophy, University of British Columbia
- 2016 – 2017 Hiring Committee, Department of Philosophy, University of British Columbia

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### GRADUATE COURSEWORK

**Philosophy, University of British Columbia**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Margaret Schabas  | Introduction to Science and Technology Studies (audit) (STS 501)                    |
| John Beatty       | Environmental Philosophy (PHIL 535A)  |
| Margaret Schabas  | History and Philosophy of Economics (PHIL 585)                                      |
| Paul Bartha       | Philosophy of Science (PHIL 560A)   |
| Chris Stephens    | Philosophy of Science: Probability in Philosophy (PHIL 560B)                        |
| John Beatty       | Authority: Political and Scientific (PHIL 581A)                                     |
| Paul Russell      | Ethical Theory and Practice (PHIL 532A)   |
| Margaret Schabas  | Early Modern Philosophy: David Hume's <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> (PHIL 514A) |
| Murat Aydede      | Philosophy of Mind: Pain, Pleasure, Affect (PHIL 551A 002)                          |
| Eric Margolis     | Philosophy of Mind: Nativism and Innate Ideas (PHIL 551A 001)                       |
| Jonathan Ichikawa | Epistemology (PHIL 540A)  |

**Economics, University of British Columbia**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Brian Copeland  | Environmental Economics (ECON 573)                            |
| Carol McAusland | Economics of Trade and the Environment (ECON 574)             |
| Siwan Anderson  | Economic Development (ECON 541)                               |
| Kevin Milligan  | Research Design and Policy Evaluation in Economics (ECON 562) |
| Joshua Gottlieb | Applied Economics (ECON 594)                                  |
| Joshua Gottlieb | Major Essay (ECON 595)  |
| Hao Li          | Microeconomics (ECON 500)                                     |
| Geoffrey Dunbar | Macroeconomics (ECON 502)                                     |
| Vadim Marmer    | Econometric Methods of Economic Research (ECON 527)           |
| Paul Schrimpf   | Mathematics for Economics (ECON 526)                          |

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE****Teaching Development**

Winter 2018            Instructional Skills Workshop Certificate (INDS 501)

**Instructor**

Winter 2022            Environmental Ethics (Phil 373); University of Toronto

Fall 2020              Philosophy of Economics (Phil 2026) (Online synchronous course with an asynchronous option); Western University

**Guest Lecturer (UBC)**

Winter 2018            "Thomas Nagel's "The Absurd"" in Introduction to Philosophy

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Fall 2017   | “Thomas Robert Malthus’s <i>An Essay on the Principle of Population</i> ” in History and Philosophy of Economics from Aristotle to Adam Smith |
| Winter 2017 | “Amartya Sen’s ‘Rational Fools’” in History and Philosophy of Economics from Ricardo to Keynes  |
| Fall 2016   | “Thomas Robert Malthus’s <i>An Essay on the Principle of Population</i> ” in History and Philosophy of Economics from Aristotle to Adam Smith |
| Fall 2016   | “Albert O. Hirschman’s <i>The Passions and the Interests</i> ” in History and Philosophy of Economics from Aristotle to Adam Smith            |
| Winter 2016 | “Milton Friedman’s ‘Methodology of Positive Economics’” in History and Philosophy of Economics from Ricardo to Keynes                         |
| Winter 2016 | “William Stanley Jevons” in History and Philosophy of Economics from Ricardo to Keynes  |

### **Teaching Assistant (UBC)**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Fall 2018   | History and Philosophy of Economics from Aristotle to Adam Smith (Phil 362/Econ 318)                                |
| Winter 2018 | Introduction to Philosophy (Phil 100); introductory material on epistemology and metaphysics                        |
| Fall 2017   | Introduction to Philosophy (Phil 100); introductory material on moral philosophy and applied ethics                 |
| Winter 2017 | History and Philosophy of Economics from Ricardo to Keynes (Phil 363/Econ 319)                                      |
| Fall 2016   | History and Philosophy of Economics from Aristotle to Adam Smith (Phil 362/Econ 318)                                |
| Winter 2016 | History and Philosophy of Economics from Ricardo to Keynes (Phil 363/Econ 319)                                      |
| Fall 2015   | History and Philosophy of Economics from Aristotle to Adam Smith (Phil 362/Econ 318)                                |
| Winter 2015 | Introduction to Philosophy II (Phil 102); introductory material on value theory                                     |
| Fall 2014   | Introduction to Philosophy I (Phil 101); introductory material on epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of mind |
| Summer 2013 | Economics of the Environment (Econ 371)<br>Women in the Economy (Econ 351)  |
| Winter 2013 | The Economic Consequences of Religion (Econ 482)  |
| Fall 2012   | Economic History of Modern Europe (Econ 334)  |

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## Summary of Teaching Effectiveness

| Semester | Course    | Response Rate | Instructor's Effectiveness |
|----------|-----------|---------------|----------------------------|
| T1 2020  | Phil 2026 | 31% (15/49)   | 6.9/7                      |

| Semester                 | Course   | Response Rate | TA's Overall Contribution |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------|---------------------------|
| T1 2018                  | Phil 362 | 19% (16/84)   | 3.94/5                    |
| T1&T2 2017-18, section 4 | Phil 100 | 58% (7/12)    | 5/5                       |
| T1&T2 2017-18, section 3 | Phil 100 | 48% (10/21)   | 4.5/5                     |
| T2 2017                  | Phil 363 | 22% (17/77)   | 4.2/5                     |
| T1 2016                  | Phil 362 | 25% (21/85)   | 4/5                       |
| T2 2016                  | Phil 363 | 33% (17/51)   | 4.4/5                     |
| T1 2015                  | Phil 362 | 22% (16/73)   | 4.1/5                     |
| T2 2015, section 7       | Phil 102 | 44% (8/18)    | 4.4/5                     |
| T2 2015, section 8       | Phil 102 | 44% (11/25)   | 4.4/5                     |
|                          |          |               | <b>Average: 4.3/5</b>     |

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## References

Margaret Schabas – Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of British Columbia  
 Email: [margaret.schabas@ubc.ca](mailto:margaret.schabas@ubc.ca)  
 Website: <https://philosophy.ubc.ca/persons/margaret-schabas/>  
 Phone: 1-604-822-2820

John Beatty – Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of British Columbia  
 Email: [john.beatty@ubc.ca](mailto:john.beatty@ubc.ca)  
 Website: <https://philosophy.ubc.ca/persons/john-beatty/>  
 Phone: 1-604-822-2444

Alison Wylie – Professor and Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Philosophy of the Social and Historical Sciences, Department of Philosophy, University of British Columbia  
 Email: [alison.wylie@ubc.ca](mailto:alison.wylie@ubc.ca)  
 Website: <http://alisonwylie.net/>  
 Phone: 1-604-822-6574

Eric Desjardins – Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Western University  
 Email: [edesjar3@uwo.ca](mailto:edesjar3@uwo.ca)



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