Minutes - BCCAT 2021 Philosophy Articulation Annual Meeting

May 21st, 2021

13:00 – 16:30

Chair: **Bruce Howes, Okanagan College**

Attendees

Michael Bourke, British Columbia Institute of Technology

Leslie Burkholder, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Tim Christie, Fraser International College

Lyle Crawford, Alexander College

Bob Doede, Trinity Western University

Rob-Roy Douglas, Northern Lights College

Reuben Gabriel, College of New Caledonia

Brian Garrett, Kwantlen Polytechnic

James Gifford, Farleigh Dickenson University

Giovanni Grandi, University of British Columbia, Okanagan

Wayne Henry, University of the Fraser Valley & Langara College

Eric Hochstein, University of Victoria

Bruce Howes, Okanagan College, Chair

Calla Lu Zhang, Yorkville University

Dale Martelli, British Columbia Social Studies Teaching Association

Vance Mattson, College of the Rockies

Jeff McLaughlin, Thompson Rivers University

Fiona McQuarrie, BCCAT

William Rubel, Canada West University

Andrew Sewell, Pearson College

Edrie Sobstyl, Douglas College

Carolyn Swanson, Vancouver Island University

Jonathan Vanderhoek, Selkirk College

1. **Acknowledgment - Syilx territory**

   BH: I'd like to acknowledge that this meeting is being hosted by my institution, Okanagan College, which is located on the unceded land of the Syilx people.

2. **Approval of May 24th, 2019 meeting minutes**

   The minutes were approved.

3. **Approval of May 21, 2021 agenda**

   With minor corrections, the agenda was approved.

4. **Identify 2022 Committee Chair**

   Current chair noted that in the minutes of the 2019 meeting Fraser Valley stated an interest in hosting the next meeting (after the current one). Fraser Valley's representative, Wayne Henry, was

not currently in the meeting (he came later), so it could not be determined at this point if this offer was to be renewed. As a fall back, James Gifford offered to host the 2022 meeting at Farleigh Dickenson University in Vancouver, if Fraser Valley proved to be no longer able to host.

[Note: Wayne Henry did agree to be Chair and host the 2022 meeting at University of Fraser Valley.]

5. **Business Arising: BC secondary "Philosophy 12" course (Dale Martelli)**

BH: PHIL 12 as a means of making PHIL a teachable for Education students in the province. DM will review for us the curriculum documents for PHIL 12.

DM: Working on curriculum transformation since 2012; currently in abeyance at the Ministry level, hopefully further revisions will be possible next year.

Latest count, about 80% of Vancouver Secondary Schools have the capability of teaching PHIL 12.

[sharing screen – Document: "Curricular Competency"; source – curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/social-studies/12/philosophy]

I wrote PHIL 12 curriculum as an attempt to make sure that 'basket weaving' wasn't being taught under the banner of PHIL in high schools.

Keep subject matters (on curriculum docs) as 'slim' as possible in order to the teachers to be as creative as they can be with them. Keep it to simple and general terms.

However, part of the ongoing problem is that there are not a lot of teachers in the system with an academic background in PHIL.

Ministry does not currently supply any reading resources. BCTF is in the process of redesigning resource site; the Ministry may participate in this process.

There are currently no requirements in the Secondary system in BC for teaching philosophy courses.

Philosophy 12 is on the books, but we don't have personnel to teach it with a philosophy background, since PHIL has not been a teachable.

6. **Business Arising: Update: philosophy as a teachable for prospective Secondary School teachers (Dale Martelli)**

Note: making PHIL a teachable makes those who graduate with a PHIL major or minor qualified to enter a BEd program with the aim of teaching Social Studies in Secondary schools.

The status of the push to make PHIL a teachable is unclear because the TRB [Teacher Regulation Branch – "created under the *Teachers' Act*, is the professional regulatory body for teachers in BC. The branch establishes standards for the education of teachers, issues teaching certificates, conducts certificate reviews and, where necessary, suspends or cancels certificates."] seems to be

no more. It seems to have been split off from the Teacher's Council. And that had an effect of slowing things down a bit. So right now, the philosophy question is tied up in Ministry limbo. The philosophy as teachable question will likely not even be considered until next year.

7. **Business Arising: the utility of the committee Moodle Website (Vance Mattson)**

Only 7 people have logged onto the website as of today. So, the question is: is the website useful? Most articulation committees have a website. It's a repository for all the documents relevant to the committee. It's a place to share communications, have chats, etc.

There is a procedure for signing onto the website: You would have to go to the website (hosted by Kwantlen - https://onlinelearning.kpu.ca/login/index.php#section-1) and then you would have to send me an email, as the Moodle 'support person' for the committee. [MATTSON@cotr.bc.ca]

8. **BCCAT report: Fiona McQuarrie**
   Here's a link to the BCCAT Spring update document.
   (https://bccat.ca/Media/NEWBCCAT/pubs/Resources/ACUpdate202104.pdf)

   Some updates since this doc was dropped.

   Micro-credentials: New BCCAT research reports are available, one on 'micro-credentials' [see https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021AEST0012-000225], how they are structured, how they operate in non-BC parts of Canada and outside Canada.
   A micro-credential is a credential shorter than a certificate, so around 9 credits. And they are intended to be 'stackable', so that multiple micro-credentials could be collectively accepted for credit for a higher level credential or for a credit course.
   JAM 2021: Usually Jam is just Chairs and SLPs. But JAM Zoom meeting held this year was open to anyone who wanted to attend. There were 350 attendees. All the sessions (including one on micro-credentialing) were recorded and are now available on the new BCCAT YouTube channel. [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCekj2w_orRdumXCxl-it-dw]
   Due to uncertainty about COVID coming into the Fall term, the JAM in November 2021 will be held online and open to anyone to attend as well.
   New Moodle host needed: Kwantlen has notified BCCAT that they will no longer be able to host the articulation committee Moodle sites. BCCAT will continue to offer and support such sites, but a new host is needed. Once one has been found, the articulation committees will be notified. A fairly seamless transition is anticipated.
   Review of articulation agreements: Roughly 35% of articulation agreements in BC transfer guide have not been reviewed in over 10 years. BCCAT is updating the underlying software of BC transfer guide ("transfer credit system") to encourage (sending and receiving) institutions to review existing articulation agreements more regularly. Each member institution of the BC transfer system has a transfer credit contact designated at the institution. Contact this person if you think that an articulation agreement in your program/department may need to be reviewed/updated.
   Changes to the BC Transfer Guide
1. [See New Business Arising below]
2. Funding for articulation matters

As of 2020, BCCAT makes funding available to articulation committees for research projects around transfer and articulation in their disciplines (i.e., the "Articulation Committee Funding Project Program"). The amount per project is $15, 000. Here's the link (https://bccat.ca/articulation/projects)

9. **New Business: "System Liaison Person" (SLP) (Fiona McQuarrie)**

FM: The SLP is a non-voting member of the articulation committee. And usually they hold an administrative role at a member institution, at the program head, associate dean, or dean level. Their role is to be a bridge between the committee and any and all outside groups.

There is not a huge time commitment in being an SLP. The SLP attends the committees annual meeting, and attends the BCCAT JAM (Joint Annual Meeting) which is annual. And the SLP really is important for establishing connections with relevant external organizations (government and non-government).

The process for finding an SLP. The means of approach is up to the committee. BCCAT can provide information to the candidate about SLP role. Once the committee identifies someone they want and the person agrees to do it, notify the committee coordinator at BCCAT.

Every other articulation committee has an SLP but for PHIL.

The SLP would serve at the pleasure of the committee.

BH: If anybody knows someone at their institution or elsewhere that might fit the bill, send me an email. Let's do it this way: is there anyone who objects to attempting to find an SLP?

[no objections were voiced]

BH: <u>Action item</u>: a non-voting member SLP is something we should seek to add to our committee, and we'll be fielding suggestions from the committee as to who we might approach to fill this role. And either at the next meeting or before (via email, etc.), we'll have a vote on a proffered candidate.

10. **New Business: New agreement system that includes non-BC institutions (Fiona McQuarrie)**
    The inclusion of Canadian and International equivalencies.
    Previously agreements were limited to BC member institutions. Increased student mobility has meant an increasing influx of transfer requests from institutions outside BC. The Guide has been updated to include accepted course for transfer credits from outside BC that have been granted by 7 BC institutions that volunteered this info: (UBC, UBCO, VIU, UNBC, Douglas, OC, NIC, CMC). 3 more institutions are in the process of supplying this data.
    A sub-committee of the Transfer and Articulation Committee of BCCAT has been struck to review the definition of course inclusion in the BC Transfer Guide. Currently the definition is effectively 'university credit bearing courses.' Which some contend is too vague and so requires too many case-by-case decisions. A recommendation from the sub-committee will likely be forthcoming in early 2022.

11. New Business: A request for info regarding applied ethics courses in BC (Bruce Howes)

I would like if at all possible for you guys to send to me some information. I'm trying to understand what our attitudes are about ethics on the applied side and whether that should be something that we, as a discipline, protect as PHIL territory. I have no idea what the situation is in most institutions. I know there are business departments in BC, for example, that have 'in-housed' their ethics courses. I would imagine there are other professional disciplines that have also done this.

I'm just looking to gather some data from you on what applied ethics courses are taught at your institutions by the philosophy department, and what applied ethics-like courses are taught by other departments at your institutions.

A member: Perhaps there should also be a question on the document about whether there has been any **conflict** between departments over who should teach applied ethics courses, so that there is a collective record.

BH: I will add such a question to the document.

A member: This has come up at a previous meeting of our articulation committee. In 2012, a rep from U Vic came to the PHIL articulation committee with a similar problem: the nursing department had (as they put it) "repatriated" their nursing ethics course. A motion was drawn that year by the articulation committee that was a request for dialogue about this issue be sent to the U Vic nursing department. We got a letter back from the Chair of nursing there effectively saying 'who are you to think you have any say in this matter?' So, nothing much came of this effort of the committee.

A member: It is a mixed bag across different institutions in BC as to whether PHIL or the home department teaches applied ethics. I've never heard of another case of a department "repatriating" such a course. But that example seems to send a signal that once a department decides to in-house their ethics course, there doesn't seem to be much that can be done without the support of the administration of the institution.

A member: I wonder if a unifying theme amongst PHIL departments in BC should be that PHIL should have some input or some role in this.

A member: Nursing programs are involved in such controversies because they, by design, usually don't have transferable courses. You are expected to start and finish your degree at that institution.

A member: It might be interesting to compare this to 1st year Composition, in terms of the turf issue. It comes up in terms of transferability in the same way. If a composition course is taught by, say, the forestry department, and is part of a program designed to have no transferable courses, then any receiving institution should know that the course cannot be used to fulfill 1st year composition requirement for the purposes of any other program.

A member: I know from past experience in working with those teaching ethics within the Professions at large institutions in BC that when applied ethics courses revert to non-philosophy department taught, it's really quite startling how flawed their understanding of ethical theory, and how they lack an understanding of the need to bring different theories into collision, rather than just teach from a utilitarian perspective, for example.

So I think this is a serious issue. And I think it would be very helpful for someone like me to have a back-up statement of some kind from this body.

A member: I'm of a different view here. It should not surprise us that subject areas should want to cut the umbilical cord. That's always happened. Philosophy is the parent subject that given birth to all these other subjects which have over time expanded and flourished and gained new ground and there's been so much expansion that they don't have time to get back to foundational matters or get to matter that we are discussing. If ethics is doing that now, if it is being taught with lesser depth within the disciplines, then we must take it this way rather than being confrontational or seeing these other disciplines as confrontational. For example with Business, they will not take the rational, moral, altruistic approach that philosophy does. Business will have a very capitalist, self-centered, persuasion model. And the same will be true of bio-medical and nursing, etc. They have a different focus that philosophy, that's why they will keep us out, and we should accept that.

A member: There is a middle ground here. Co-teaching was working very well for us. It's one thing to say 'be free' and cut the cord, but we're finding that those disciplines want our guidance because their students benefit from it enormously.

A member: With all due respect, this is a confusion two different episodes in the history of philosophy. There was a time when philosophy did cut the cord with many disciplines, but this is distinct from the case of applied ethics. Applied ethics began in the early 1990s with the notion that these practical disciplines that have great implications for society – the conduct of business, the conduct of health care workers, etc. – society and the practitioners of these fields would be well served by having some sensitivity to the conflicting theories and nuance of interpretation and perspectives that only philosophy can bring. I think that the development of these applied ethics courses within the disciplines in the 1990s was, and still is, the correct approach.

BH: Maybe it would be good if we, in PHIL, could in some way teach the teachers, i.e., teach those whom the discipline would hire to teach these applied ethics courses.

A member: If you're going be graduating from a business school, learning how not to get sued is really valuable skill. In a psychology department, having a course dedicated to experimental design for the purpose of passing the institution's ethics board requirements, that's a really valuable skill. For the purposes of articulation it would be a really good thing to keep these separate. So just as the psych department of the receiving institution would say your Gen Ed ethics course is not appropriate for our purposes which needs a course that teaches ethically appropriate experimental design.

We should have a reasonable mechanism through articulation to say: this Gen Ed course that is run through a designation of business at, say, TRU, is taught by a philosopher and is not exclusively fixated on not getting sued, but rather is genuinely an introduction to ethics and should and should as such fulfill a Gen Ed requirement at, say, Langara. And because we use the term to mean different things in different professional designations, we need to maintain clarity over that issue of interpretation. I.e., which purpose is this course serving? How does this relate to the agreements we have with each other in the BC transfer system? And how do our colleagues in related or distal disciplines take that into account? If your Gen Ed ethics course does not discuss business ethics, then it will not fulfill their business program's ethics requirements. And the reverse should also be true: learning how to fulfill your requirements in the BC College of Nurses is not sufficient with reaching or demonstrating familiarity with Gen Ed requirements in a history major.

A member: There's probably always going to be a tension in teaching applied ethics in a genuinely philosophical way within the domain of some professional field when those fields have got some sort of codes already in place. I know Comosun College had a Nursing Ethics course done with the nursing department and one of the assignments was to critically evaluate some item in the BC Nursing code of ethics. The point is to take a critical stance. And that was just a red line for the nursing department. Questioning what was in place was just a no-go. This may be an extreme case, but I'm sure engineering and business probably have experienced similar cases.

BH: Yes that's true: most professionals do have a red-letter law code of behaviours that you 'shall' do this this and you 'shall' not do that. That tension is likely inherent. That could be a destructive or a constructive tension. And part of understanding the grounding of those codes comes from those sorts of discussions.

A member: Tying into what was said earlier. The example of the WHO definition of 'health' which is what the nurses use as their definition. This is what they have to follow and to challenge that challenges their whole profession. They have to meet these certain requirements. Talking about business: how do we not get sued, how do we not damage our image, how do we do this, as opposed to how it's done in philosophy, i.e., having a discussion, analyzing arguments.

Also I'm wondering with this conversation we're having here, where do we want to go, if anywhere?

BH: That's a good question. At this point, what I would like to do is gather an overview of the different institutions: which applied ethics are taught there? Which are taught by the PHIL department? Which are taught by other departments? And as to where we could even go – what would be a practical result of that? Could there be some sort of clear line that we come up with as a committee representing the discipline of philosophy in the jurisdiction of BC? I guess that's in the back of my mind. It would certainly be helpful to clarify where we are and where we would like to be. I don't have a clear road map. It depends on what you guys want to do. And it depends on what kind of information I get from you guys.

A member: Maybe that should be a question on the survey as well?

BH: Maybe it should.

12. **Next meeting**

BH: Wayne, I mentioned in the 2019 minutes that you volunteered to either host this time or next at Fraser Valley. I don't know if that's something you would be interested in…?

WH: I would certainly be willing to do it but I should at least confer with the department by email first. I'll send confirmation back to you when I get a response.

As stated above, Wayne gave me confirmation that he would be Chair and host the BC PHIL articulation meeting at U of Fraser Valley. He has since sent out **an email to chairs (Feb. 6th, 2022)** specifying that the meet will be **via Zoom on Friday, May 20, 1:00 - 4:30pm (a zoom link will be sent closer to the event).**