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**MEDIA RELEASE**

# New institute focuses on values in policy and science

March 08, 2011

[Tweet](#) [Facebook](#) [Pinterest](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)**Contact:**Lisa Shapiro, SFU Philosophy, 778.782.3343, [lshapiro@sfu.ca](mailto:lshapiro@sfu.ca)Richard Overgaard, SFU Arts and Social Sciences, 778.782.8985, [fasscomm@sfu.ca](mailto:fasscomm@sfu.ca)Dixon Tam, SFU media relations, 778.782.8742, [dixont@sfu.ca](mailto:dixont@sfu.ca)

Simon Fraser University is launching its new [Institute for Values in Policy and Science](#) with an inaugural lecture by University of Pittsburgh philosophy of science professor [Sandra D. Mitchell](#).

The launch event on March 9, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., at SFU Harbour Centre (Room 1400), will be an opportunity for faculty, students, policymakers, media and the broader community to engage on a series of questions about how to make decisions when facing unknown risks to human and animal wellbeing, for example with genetically modified organisms. Mitchell will address these questions in her lecture entitled, *Policy in the Face of Complexity and Deep Uncertainty*.

[Lisa Shapiro](#), chair of SFU Philosophy, says the new interdisciplinary institute “aims to enter into discussions with British Columbians and provide relevant information about prominent ethical issues in science-based policy.”

She adds the institute will promote and demonstrate how the tools of ethics can help communities and governments make better-informed decisions on a variety of issues.

“Science and technology play an increasingly critical role in public policy. Essential decisions about issues ranging from climate change to the impact of genetics technology must be addressed at local and national levels,” says Shapiro. “Unfortunately, policymakers are not always equipped with a full understanding of the ethical and social implications of their decisions. The Institute for Values in Policy and Science will bring together SFU faculty experts and researchers to engage with members of the public to address the many complex and intersecting aspects of science-based policy.”

A public lecture series is set for 2011-2013:

- In 2011-2012, the public lecture series will look at the ethical implications of climate change. Some issues the series will explore include the impact of climate change on biodiversity, the fair and just distribution of future carbon emissions, and the issues of justice surrounding climate refugees. Planned speakers include SFU economist Mark Jaccard, philosopher Dale Jamieson (NYU), and biologist Michel Loreau (McGill).
- For the 2012-2013 public lecture series, the institute will take on the impact of technology on personal privacy. Technologies to be considered include genetic technology (how could the availability of genetic information affect our privacy and who should own it?) as well as information technology (how much personal information should companies acquire through computer usage patterns and is efficiency worth the price of privacy loss?) The series will also address questions of copyright and privacy more generally.

Please RSVP for the event by going to [www.sfu.ca/reserve](http://www.sfu.ca/reserve) or send e-mail to [vips@sfu.ca](mailto:vips@sfu.ca) for more information.

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Simon Fraser University

8888 University Drive

Burnaby, B.C.

Canada V5A 1S6

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