

Preface

Risk has become one of the main topics in fields as diverse as engineering, medicine and economics, and it is also studied by social scientists, psychologists and legal scholars. But the topic of risk also leads to more fundamental questions such as: What is risk? What can decision theory contribute to the analysis of risk? What does the human perception of risk mean for society? How should we judge whether a risk is morally acceptable or not? Over the last couple of decades questions like these have attracted interest from philosophers and other scholars into risk theory.

This book presents the *Essentials of Risk Theory*. It is based on the more extensive *Handbook of Risk Theory*. The introductory chapter of the *Essentials of Risk Theory* book provides an overview of the full length *Handbook*. The other chapters are representative for the broad ranges of issues addressed in the *Handbook*. In this way, the *Essentials of Risk Theory* provides for a compact, easily accessible introduction in the various facets of the broad new field of Risk Theory. This makes the *Essentials of Risk Theory* an ideal text book for undergraduate and graduate courses on risk for fields as diverse as psychology, social sciences, economics, decision theory, and ethics.

The contributions are accessibly written and highly relevant to issues that are studied by risk scholars. We hope that the *Essentials of Risk Theory* and the *Handbook of Risk Theory* will be helpful starting points for students as much as for risk scholars who are interested in broadening and deepening their current perspectives.

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