

## Hal Pepinsky

*Professor of Criminal Justice*

Harold Eugene “Hal” Pepinsky is a founder of peacemaking criminology. He has spent his academic career exploring what we have in common with people who engage in deviant behavior, rather than trying to define the differences in ways to make marginalizing “criminals” a more efficient process.

In the classroom Hal has to a great extent given up the power professors hold over students. A grading method he originated, essentially allowing students to pick their own grades by the amount of relevant writing they produce, has never led to straight A’s, to the surprise of some of his colleagues. His signature undergraduate course, *Alternative Social Control Systems*, continues to challenge undergraduates to think for themselves.

Hal holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School, and, in spite of referring to himself as a “recovering lawyer,” he is happy to mentor students who are interested in the practicalities of law and policy. His study of languages—Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Swahili, Chinese, Russian, French, Arabic—gives a clue to both his comparative scholarship interests and the circle of students, colleagues, and friends from the community who gather around him.

His early book with Paul Jesilow, *Myths That Cause Crime*, won the 1986 Outstanding Book Award from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and pointed the way to his contrarian interpretations that would lead him to challenge the idea that individual violence is morally equivalent to institutional violence—let alone worse.

In 1991 he wrote *The Geometry of Violence and Democracy* and co-edited (with Richard Quinney) *Criminology As Peacemaking*, both published by Indiana University Press and both seminal works in establishing peacemaking criminology as an alternative analysis to the top-down and force-based conventional paradigm of crime control.

In 2006 the University of Ottawa Press published Hal Pepinsky’s professional memoir, *Peacemaking: Reflections of a Radical Criminologist*, a legacy to criminal justice, along with more than 80 of his articles and chapters.

Hal would say that his real legacy is in the generations of students he has influenced to think critically and write creatively. It has always been known among graduate students in the department that the least expensive way to attend a professional meeting is with a sleeping bag on the floor of Hal’s hotel room, and that the conversations around the tables at the inexpensive ethnic restaurants Hal discovers everywhere he goes are not to be missed.

In the short term, Hal will be joining his wife, Jill M. Bystydzienski, who is chair of women's studies at The Ohio State University in Columbus. They will be two miles down the road from his mother who still lives in a house he grew up in.

*~Steve Russell*