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The Penn Law logo features a red shield with a white cross and four smaller shields, with the text "Penn Law" in a serif font and "UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA CAREY LAW SCHOOL" in a smaller sans-serif font below it. To the right of the logo is a photograph of the bronze statue "The Thinker" by Auguste Rodin, showing a man in deep thought, sitting on a rock. The background of the banner is a light teal color.

Institute for Law & Philosophy

VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE

**Please join the Institute for Law & Philosophy in welcoming
Philosopher Dr. Renee Jorgensen Bolinger for a discussion about her
latest book-in-progress entitled
"Rewriting Rights: Making Reasonable Mistakes in a Social Context"**



Assistant Professor, Department of Politics & University Center for Human Values
Princeton University / University of Michigan

The book (*Rewriting Rights: Making Reasonable Mistakes in a Social Context*) concerns the objective demands of rights given our epistemic limits, and the role and significance of ‘reasonable’ mistakes. Bolinger focuses on moral coordination problems arising when B is uncertain whether A has acted to change her moral duties, e.g. by *promising*, *consenting*, or *threatening unjust aggressive harm*. While theorists disagree about whether B’s objective duties are to match some underlying facts or to do what is best on her evidence, there is broad consensus that a mistake is *reasonable* if it was rational on B’s evidence to expect that her action was appropriate. Bolinger argues that this approach predictably yields unjust distributions of the risk of suffering a mistake. Instead, we must characterize what agents owe each other by reference to the norms that best coordinate the activity of the whole network of similarly situated people who aim to avoid making or suffering any mistakes. Bolinger develops a view of what our rights demand of each other that is essentially social, mediated by convention, and communicated through social signals. The first half of the book outlines the view and mechanics, and the second half applies it to solve longstanding problems in the ethics of consent, and self-defense, and discusses issues related to changing pernicious social norms

This two-part discussion will take place on the following dates and times via Zoom Meeting.

Pre-read of material is mandatory.

Friday, July 16th 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. ET

and / or

Friday, August 20th 12:00 – 2:30 p.m. ET

SESSIONS.

Once successfully registered for the series you will receive a zoom link and access to the password-protected paper.

Each session will cover approximately two chapters' worth of material.

The first session (July 16th) will center on the theoretical underpinnings of the project, as developed in selections from the first four chapters. These chapters focus on moral theory, engaging with whether we should conceive of rights as fact- or evidence-relative, arguing for a cooperation-centric view, and outlining the positive account of the mechanics of rights-claims on the Social Approach.

The second session (August 20) will cover material from chapters 5-7, in which Bolinger argues that given the strong gender bias in mistakes about consent, and the racial bias in defensive mistakes, a standard that guides agents to follow their best guess on their evidence can be expected to compound the unjust concentration of mistakes. By contrast, the social approach creates space to explicitly evaluate and reject the heuristics which yield these disproportionate error distributions, and so is plausibly the coordination norm with the best claim to distribute the risks and costs of mistakes fairly *as implemented with actual agents*.

We will make a 4-5 page summary of the first half of the book available for those who would like to participate in this session but who did not participate in the July session.

Register for July 16

Register for August 20
