

# UNIV

## PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM

### 2019

**Friday, March 29, 2019**

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: BEH 217

Department of Philosophy, Georgetown University

## Rebecca Kukla

### **The Social Epistemology of Maps**

A burgeoning branch of philosophy of science attends to the material and social production of scientific knowledge, and examines how interests are often embedded inextricably in scientific standards and methods.

Cartography and geographic information science have not received this kind of analysis. To the extent that philosophers talk about maps, they generally discuss abstract visual representations isolated from their materiality or the context of their production. But maps are physical entities shaped by the technological, social, economic, and political conditions in which they are generated. They are also potent tools of social power. In this presentation I will examine the social epistemology of maps. I argue that there is no such thing as a neutral map; any map is structured by interest-ridden judgments about how to balance epistemic risks. I explore several ways in which values and interests are built into the production of maps and their epistemic functioning.