

UNIVERSITY of NORTH TEXAS

Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies

presents

A Lecture By

Dr. Heather Douglas

The Obligations of Expertise: What do scientists owe the public?



In traditional research ethics, the obligations of scientists are relatively straightforward. Do not falsify data; do not claim work as your own that is not; attribute credit where credit is due; be open about your methods and discoveries. Yet these obligations are directed primarily at the scientific community. They express the norms that must be followed if science is to be effectively produced by this community. What of obligations to people outside of this community?

Since World War II, science and scientists have played an increasingly important role in public life, and science has grown tremendously with public funding. Although private funding of science now exceeds public funding in the U.S., it is still an open question what obligations arise from this increased public role. This talk will explore the view that the public authority of science gives rise to public obligations among scientists that go well beyond traditional internal research ethics. The implications for the norms of scientific practice will be discussed, as will the potential for forbidden research topics, and how these issues may be dealt with while protecting scientific autonomy.



Heather Douglas is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Tennessee. Her research focuses on the relationships among science, values, and policy-making, and has been supported by the National Science Foundation. Her work has been published in *Philosophy of Science*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Synthese* and *Foundations of Chemistry*.

Friday, February 25, 3:30 pm in EESAT 115

This lecture is free and open to the public.

For special accommodation, contact us at 565-2266 or
philosophy@unt.edu