

Research Fellowships awarded to Birmingham Senior Lecturer

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Dr Veronica Rodriguez-Blanco has been awarded a Jean Braudel Senior Research Fellowship at the European University Institute, Florence (from January to June 2012) and also a Research Fellowship at the University Centre-Saint Ignatius, University of Antwerp, Belgium (from October to December 2011).



Veronica studied Law (MJur) and Philosophy (Mg. Sc., PhD) at Oxford (Balliol College) and Cambridge (Corpus Christi College) and is currently Senior Lecturer at Birmingham Law School. Her research has focused on the objectivity of law and the possible relationships between objectively moral and legal propositions. She has also made contributions in the field of the methodology of law and the authoritative and normative character of law. Her articles have been published in the most prestigious international journals in the field of jurisprudence (*Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, *Law and Philosophy*, *Ratio Juris*, *Legal Theory*, *The Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence*). Her research has previously been funded by the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation, Cambridge Overseas Trust, British Academy and the British Council. She has been invited to deliver keynote lectures and papers at Chicago Law School, Yale Law School, Georgia State University, Toronto Law School, University of Girona, Nanterre, Palermo, Antwerp, Belgrade and Edinburgh.

During her stay at the European University Institute as Jean Braudel Senior Research Fellow and at the University of Antwerp, she will complete a monograph on the normative and authoritative character of law. The provisional title of the book is *Law Under the Guise of the Good*. It focuses on the question 'How can the active selves of the citizens of a State be engaged in the action of rule-following when legal rules are externally imposed on them?' In the paradigmatic case it is argued that in order to be able to follow and be guided by legal rules agents need to avow the grounding reasons as good-making characteristics of legal rules. Consequently, the monograph argues that the classical or scholastic model of the 'guise of the good' is applicable to legal rules. Contrary to common wisdom which argues that engagement with the merits of legal rules debases the authoritative character of law, the study advances the substantive view that the authoritative character of law can only be understood in an 'ethical-political' way. Thus, legal rules make salient the reasons for actions as good-making characteristics and in doing so citizens are able to engage with the grounding reasons of legal rules. In this way, there is a continuity between our practical knowledge and law. The 'guise of the good' model of legal rules, therefore, is compatible with the idea that law provides a service to its citizens and can make a practical difference to our lives and plans.

The investigation is located at the intersection of ancient and medieval philosophy of action (Aristotle and Aquinas), contemporary philosophy of action (with special focus on Elizabeth Anscombe's theoretical framework on intentional action and practical knowledge) and legal philosophy.