



# American Philosophical Association Lecture

## “FALSE CONFESSIONS AND TESTIMONIAL INJUSTICE”

Jennifer Lackey

Northwestern University

Friday, November 22  
2:30 p.m.

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Howard University  
Louis Stokes Health  
Sciences Library  
The Gallery Room

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Free and open  
to the public

*Reception to follow*

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Sponsored by the APA and  
the Howard Philosophy  
Department

In the criminal justice system, confessions have long been considered the “gold standard” in evidence. An immediate problem arises for this gold standard, however, when the prevalence of false confessions is taken into account. In this lecture, Professor Lackey will take a close look at false confessions in connection with the phenomenon of testimonial injustice. She will show that false confessions provide a unique and compelling challenge to the current conceptual tools used to understand this epistemic wrong. In particular, she will argue that we cannot make sense of the unjust ways in which false confessions function in our criminal justice system by focusing exclusively on speakers getting *less credibility* than they deserve. She will conclude that the way we conceive of testimonial injustice requires a significant expansion to include what she calls *agential testimonial injustice*—where an unwarranted credibility excess is afforded to speakers when their epistemic agency has been denied or subverted in the obtaining of their testimony.

Jennifer Lackey is the Wayne and Elizabeth Jones Professor of Philosophy at Northwestern University. She specializes in epistemology, with a particular emphasis on a broad range of issues in social epistemology. Her recent work focuses on the duty to object, norms of credibility, the epistemic status of punishment, the epistemology of groups, expertise, and the distribution of epistemic goods.



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