

## “Rights Enable Agency”

BY **Dr Siegfried Van Duffel, Nazarbayev University**

THURSDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2019

5.00PM TO 7.00PM

FEDERAL CONFERENCE ROOM

FEDERAL BUILDING, NUS LAW (BUKIT TIMAH CAMPUS)

### ABSTRACT

The debate over the nature of rights has become quite sophisticated in the last two decades. Until recently, it was predominantly the territory of adherents of Interest Theory and Will Theory, each defending the merits of their own account and highlighting the shortcomings of rival theories. Many now see the debate as having ended in a standoff and increasingly, philosophers are becoming convinced that the truth about rights must be found elsewhere - perhaps in a hybrid of both theories.

In this talk, the speaker will present a new conceptual analysis of rights, and show that it combines the virtues of existing theories while avoiding all of their shortcomings as well as some that have gone largely unnoticed. An additional advantage of his analysis is that it explains why the debate over the nature of rights has taken the form we have been able to witness. He will suggest that rights enable agency and that they do so in two distinct ways.

### ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Siegfried Van Duffel was trained as a philosopher and completed a PhD. in law at Ghent University (Belgium). Before coming to Nazarbayev University, he taught Ethics and Political Theory at the University of Groningen (the Netherlands) and The University of Hong Kong. He also held post-doc positions at the National University of Singapore and the Center of Excellence in Philosophical Psychology, Morality and Politics of the University of Helsinki and was Visiting Associate Professor at Huafan University and National Taiwan University. Siegfried's main research interest is cultural differences, which is why he felt it necessary to leave Europe and continue living and working in a non-Western society. His current project is to complete a book on human rights and cultural differences. The aim of this book is to describe human rights theories as an aspect of the culture in which they were developed. He also hopes to do comparative empirical research on intuitions related to human rights. His work has been published in international peer-reviewed journals such as *The Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, *The Monist*, and *The European Journal of Philosophy*.

### REGISTRATION

Participation is by invitation only.  
Visit [http://bit.ly/NUS\\_CLT3Oct19](http://bit.ly/NUS_CLT3Oct19) or scan the QR Code.

Registration commences at 4.45pm. Light refreshments will be served.  
For more information, please contact Ms Alexandria Chan (E) [rescle@nus.edu.sg](mailto:rescle@nus.edu.sg)

