

# BI-CO MATHEMATICS COLLOQUIUM

*Mathematics Appreciation Week  
Keynote Speaker*

## **Rebecca Goldin**

George Mason University and  
STATS/Sense about Science USA

*“Should You Believe It? Critical  
Minds in the Information Age”*

**Monday, April 23, 2018**

Talk at 4:00 – Park 243

Tea at 3:30 – Park 339, Math/Physics Lounge

### **Abstract:**

News accounts of science and scientific ideas are filled with numbers and implicit advice. They also tell a story. Do violent video games lead to violence? Can brain scans read our minds? Does chocolate make us smarter?

In contexts as diverse as political surveys, criminal courts, and public health, numbers are playing an increasingly prominent role as data becomes more accessible. Despite our need for clear rendering of numerical information, many media accounts using statistics are misleading. I will share some humorous as well as serious stories about statistical bloopers in the media, peppered with insights about how our minds work. Numerical reasoning can be powerful when we move past politics and morality to clarify what quantitative information actually tells us, what it does not, and what it cannot.

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