

UNIVERSITY OF
LUCERNE

FACULTY OF LAW

INSTITUTE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY
LEGAL STUDIES – LUCERNAIURIS

CRITICAL TIMES 2026

BODIES

LAW AND HUMANITIES SUMMER SCHOOL

MONDAY 6 TO FRIDAY 10 JULY 2026
UNIVERSITY OF LUCERNE



Lucernaiuris
Institut für Juristische Grundlagen

Image: @Pascal Boyart, The Raft of the Medusa, 2019.
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Programme

Monday 6 July

09.45-10.00	Welcome Room 3.B58
10.00-12.30	Seminar 1 Does the Law Need a Body? Julen Etxabe (University of British Columbia) Room 3.B58 Coffee Break 11.00-11.30
12.30-14.00	Lunch Mensa
14.00-15.30	Presentation Session 1 Moderation: Shane Chalmers (University of Hong Kong) Room 3.B58 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Healing the Nation: Reconciliation and Emotionality in Human Rights-Based Commemoration Maïke Middeler (Helmut Schmidt University, Hamburg) · Queer Bodies on Trial: The ECtHR's Complicity in Symbolic Violence Amélie Courtine (University of Leicester) · The Corpse as Feminist Posthumanist Figuration: The Potential of a Liberatory (Approach to) IHRL Amira Fretz (University of Leiden)
15.30-16.00	Coffee Break Mensa
16.00-17.30	Presentation Session 2 Moderation: Sabarish Suresh (New York University Abu Dhabi) Room 3.B58 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The (In)Visible Body: Rethinking Violence Against Women in International Law Alessia Nicastro (Graduate Institute, Geneva) · Deportable Bodies: Legal Status and the Transnational Afterlife of Migration Control Sandra King-Savic (University of Zurich) · Disabling Borders: The Use of Boundaries and Bodies in Constructing Environmental Legal Personality Amy Crean (University of Amsterdam)
18.15-19.30	Special Event 1 Bodies in Space: Atmospheres Illan Wall (University of Galway) Room 3.B58 Moderation: Steven Howe (University of Lucerne)
19.30-21.00	Apéro Mensa, University of Lucerne

Tuesday 7 July

10.00-12.30	Seminar 2 Proaesthetic Bodies of Law and Colonialism Shane Chalmers (University of Hong Kong) Room 3.B58 Coffee Break 11.00-11.30
12.30-14.00	Lunch Mensa
14.00-15.30	Presentation Session 3 Moderation: Vagias Karavas (University of Lucerne) Room 3.B58 <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Embodied Data Rights: Refusing Law's Disembodied Future Ksenia Lavrenteva (University of Exeter)· Be Right Back: Butler and the 'Body' of AIE Quinn Edwards (University of the Sunshine Coast)· Valuing Bodies, Securing Assets: Access to Medicines and the Financialization of Global Health Dena Kirpalani (Graduate Institute, Geneva)
15.30-16.00	Coffee Break Mensa
16.00-17.00	Presentation Session 4 Moderation: Mónica López Lerma (Reed College) Room 3.B58 <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Mediated Ends: Refiguring Death Politics and Bodily Autonomy Anna Jayne Kimmel (George Washington University)· Negotiating Space Within Indian Classical Dances: Disabled Bodies, Inclusion and Legitimacy Trupti Panigrahi (Queen Mary University of London)
17.30-18.30	Special Event 2 Unicity of the Legal Body Sabarish Suresh (New York University Abu Dhabi) Room 3.B58

Wednesday 8 July

10.00-12.30	Seminar 3 Intimate Reading Christine Abbt and Damian Nussbaumer (University of St. Gallen) Room 3.B58 Coffee Break 11.00-11.30
12.30-14.00	Lunch Mensa
14.00-15.30	Presentation Session 5 Moderation: Julen Etxabe (University of British Columbia) Room 3.B58 · Blood and Tongue in Indigenous Status Jack Y-J Chou (University of Hong Kong) · Translation or Participation: How do Bodies of Law Meet? Aidan Hookey (University of Melbourne) · Of Children and Murder Clementine Tong (University of Hong Kong)
15.30-16.00	Coffee Break Mensa
18.00-20.30	Special Event 3 Trans-Corporeal Encounters in Post-Pandemic Times: Fauna (Pau Faus, 2023) Film screening and talk with Mónica López Lerma (Reed College) Stattkino, Bourbaki Moderation & Response: Andrea Leiter (University of Amsterdam)
20.30-22.00	Apéro Stattkino, Bourbaki

Thursday 9 July

10.00-12.30	Seminar 4 The Unexpected Subject: Female Sexuality, Autonomy and Freedom Angela Condello (University of Messina) Room 3.B58 Coffee Break 11.00-11.30
12.30-14.00	Lunch Mensa
14.00-15.30	Presentation Session 6 Moderation: Greta Olson (University of Giessen) Room 3.B58 <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Withered by the Law: The Ordeal of Justice as an Affective Regime of Bodily Exhaustion Harun Bodur (Erciyes University)· Bodies in Transit: Borders, Abjection and Political Imagination in Latin America Daniel Lopez Contreras (University of Michigan)· Beyond Inside/Outside Dichotomies: A Body Forward Ethnographic Account of Sexual Consent in a Global South City Mini Saxena (SOAS University of London)
15.30-16.00	Coffee Break Mensa
16.00-17.00	Presentation Session 7 Moderation: Tiziano Toracca (University of Udine) Room 3.B58 <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Measuring Bodies, Defining the Criminal? Silvan Schenkel (University of Lucerne) and Lorena Gisler (University of Bern / University of Lucerne)· Between Visibility and Illegality: 'Forbidden' Bodies in Interwar Germany Grigorij Tschernjowskyj (Ghent University)
17.30-18.30	Special Event 4 Can't Get You Out of my Life: A Conversation about Work, Play and the Performance of Academia Laura Petersen (University of Lucerne) and Valeria Vázquez Guevara (University of Hong Kong) Room 3.B58

Friday 10 July

10.00-12.30	Seminar 5 Bodies as Borders and Sites of Legal Struggle Greta Olson (University of Giessen) Room 3.B58 Coffee Break 11.00-11.30
12.30-12.45	Closing Remarks Room 3.B58
12.45-14.00	Lunch Mensa
17.30-20.00	Farewell Drinks Kulturhof Hinter Musegg

Seminars

Seminar 1

Does the Law Need a Body?

Julen Etxabe (University of British Columbia)



That the law forms a body to be apprehended runs through the Western legal imagination from at least the times of Emperor Justinian's *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, to the great legal codifications of the 19th century, to the systematic analysis of legal doctrine in the various fields of law. But what does it mean to say that the law can, and perhaps must, be thought as a body? What kind of body is this and what does it bring to the law? Is there a way to think of law without a body (for example, in the context of A.I. and algorithmic decision-making), or does law need a body to be manifested? Is the body of law the same as its materiality? And what is the significance of the modern injunction that all law – and perhaps justice too – must be embodied?

The seminar will be an opportunity to reflect on the body or the bodies of law, with examples drawn from history and literature, moving from the singularity of the one to the multiplicity of the many.

Readings

- Julen Etxabe, 'Introduction: Writing a Cultural History of Law in Antiquity,' in *A Cultural History of Law in Antiquity*, ed. by Julen Etxabe et al. (London, 2019), pp. 1-19
- Margaret Davies, 'Subject and Perspectives,' in *Law Unlimited* (Abingdon, 2017), pp. 108-128
- *Judgment*, Adrian Conejo Arias and L.C.R. vs. Kristi Noem et al.

Seminar 2

Proaesthetic Bodies of Law and Colonialism

Shane Chalmers (University of Hong Kong)

“I am overdetermined from without. I am the slave not of the ‘idea’ that others have of me but of my own appearance.”
- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986 [1952])

“In a sense, the union of men can only be symbolized; it has no palpable shape or substance. The state is invisible; it must be personified before it can be seen, symbolized before it can be loved, imagined before it can be conceived.”
- Michael Walzer, “On the Role of Symbolism in Political Thought” (1967)



Bodies human and bodies politic have long been sites, carriers, and constructs of law and colonialism. This seminar will think through some of the ways in which this is true – and how aesthetics (literary, visual, ideational) is implicated in creating and sustaining colonial bodies, human and political, while providing possibilities for anticolonial resistance and postcolonial futures.

The first part of the seminar will focus on the human as a subject of law and colonialism, guided by scholarship in traditions of Indigenous studies and postcolonial theory. The second part of the seminar will then focus on the state, to think about how (as Michael Walzer put it), “an image like the body politic is not simply a decorative metaphor, applied by a writer who has already grasped the nature of political association and now wishes felicitously to convey his understanding. Rather, the image is prior to understanding or, at any rate, to theoretic understanding, as it is to articulation, and necessary to both”. Here, legal cartographers and scholars associated with Third World Approaches to International Law will show us the way.

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Readings

- Jolene Rickard, ‘Art, Visual Sovereignty and Pushing Perceptions’, in *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Art Histories in the United States and Canada*, ed. by Heather Igloliorte and Carla Taunton (Abingdon, 2022), pp. 21-29
- Sabarish Suresh, ‘The Union of India: Bodily Unity in Indian Law and Literature’, *Law & Literature* (online 2025), 1-19

Further Reading

- Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minnesota, 2014), pp. 25-49

Image: Oswaldo Guayasamín, *Ramblas No 2* (1989)

Seminar 3

Intimate Reading

Christine Abbt and Damian Nussbaumer (University of St. Gallen)



Reading texts is an integral part of everyday academic life. The habit of generating content as effectively as possible causes other dimensions of understanding texts to recede into the background. Reading is thus increasingly understood as receiving stable and unambiguous content. Seen in this light, texts are one-way streets that convey unambiguous information. In contrast, the practice of intimate reading is based on a multi-layered and embodied understanding of reading. Within this framework, understanding is seen as a dynamic process that is supported by social relations, which it updates and reconfigures, and that emerges simultaneously on a social and individual level. Intimate reading considers that texts challenge readers with a promise and as a testimony. To think and exercise reading as the enactment of bodies in relations entails ethical, epistemic, and political consequences. In the seminar, we will reflect on, explore, and discuss these dimensions in depth.

Readings

- Sara Ahmed, 'Orientations Toward Objects', in *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others* (London & Durham, 2006), pp. 25-63
- Miranda Fricker, 'Hermeneutical Injustice', in *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 174-175
- Cecilie Steenbuch Traberg et al., 'AI is Turning Research into a Scientific Monoculture', *Communications Psychology* 4 (37) (2026), 1-4

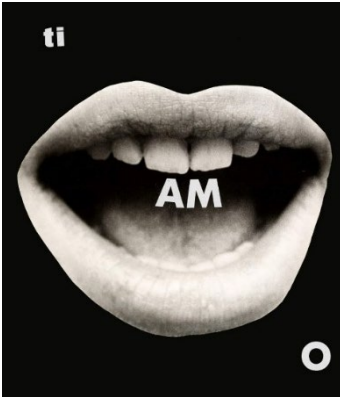
Further Reading

- Christine Abbt, 'Intimate Reading. Zur Aktualität einer Lektürepraxis unter Bedingungen datenbasierter Sprach-Systeme', *Orbis Litterarum* (2026) [forthcoming, in German only]

Seminar 4

The Unexpected Subject: Female Sexuality, Autonomy and Freedom

Angela Condello (University of Messina)



In this seminar we will consider female sexuality as a discovery that – through bodies, nudity, and pleasure (as opposed to reproduction) – has liberated women and constituted new political subjects, starting from the affirmation of autonomy and self-determination over their own bodies. In particular, drawing on some passages from Lou Andreas Salomé (1910) and Carla Lonzi (1970s), we will identify and discuss a continuity between their theories of female sexuality as a field of struggle and liberation (we will also refer to Millet's *Sexual Politics*). The female body, and female sexuality in particular, will emerge as a space both of struggle and of social revolution, through consciousness-raising and practices of nudity, on the one hand, and through theoretical reflections on the necessary separation of reproduction and enjoyment on the other, that led to making abortion legal in Italy (1978).

Readings

- Lou Andreas Salomé. 'The Erotic', in *The Erotic*, trans. John Crisp (New Brunswick, 2012), pp. 49-107
- Carla Lonzi et al., 'Rivolta femminile' [excerpts]

Seminar 5

Bodies as Borders and Sites of Struggle

Greta Olson (Center for Diversity, Media and Law, University of Giessen)



This seminar looks at struggles surrounding the construction of bodies as property and as legal subjects in law. Focusing on the U.S. American media-ecological and common law context, we discuss increasing state interventions into women and pregnant people's bodies after *Dobbs v. Jackson Women Health Organization* (2022), noting that *Dobbs's* legal reasoning has become the basis for anti-trans legal initiatives and bans on gender-affirming care. We locate the tropes and narratives that underline these developments. Further, we examine media interventions in current struggles over feminized bodies and the degree of autonomy they are allowed. Social-media discourse becomes the source of popular legality, where judgments can outweigh legal processual outcomes.

Readings

- Alan Hyde, 'The Body as Property', in *Bodies of Law* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 48-79
- Greta Olson and Lilli von Stengel, 'The New Misogynies and Popular Legality – The Trials by TikTok of Amber Heard, Blake Lively, and Cassandra Ventura,' in *Law and Popular Culture Handbook*, ed. Honni van Rijswijk and Penny Croft (Cheltenham, in print)
- Greta Olson and Laura Borchert, 'Transing / Narrative Authority, Affective Unreliability, and Transing Law,' in *Research Handbook in Law and Literature*, ed. Daniela Gandorfer, Cecilia Gebruers and Peter Goodrich (Cheltenham, 2022), pp. 378-400

Special Events

Special Event 1

Bodies in Space: Atmospheres

Illan Wall (University of Galway)



There is something essential that modern law seems to dislike about bodies in space. The plural is important here, not ‘a body in space’, but the act of gathering together: the heaving mob, the density of the crowd, the rhythms and movement of the mass. What best explains this suspicion? Is it the generativity of crowded feeling, that growing sense of (counter)power, the instability of crowded moods, the way the pre-givens of spatiality are redrawn? As a way into this suspicion of bodies in space, we will look at the category of ‘atmosphere’. Atmospheres operate from the background. They are an ambient force in which capacities and affordances are framed. In common usage, atmosphere denotes a set of spatialised affects that are recognisable when they reach a particular threshold of intensity: the bustle of a rush hour train station, the roar of a stadium, the hue of a seascape as the sun sets, blood red. Bodies in space are deeply atmo-genic, but also deeply subject to atmospheric changes. Atmosphere gives us a non-reductive way of thinking about bodies in space, which emphasises a protean sharing.

Special Event 2

Unicity of the Legal Body

Sabarish Suresh (New York University, Abu Dhabi)



It has been observed that law is mired in a territorial trap. I will spin that phraseology to claim that law is in fact unconsciously mired in a bodily trap. Territory remains a visceral and predominant motif for legal authority, and this is well known. Despite appraisals of territories as becoming evanescent in the face of globalisation, cross border digital networks, and satellite connectivity, territory lingers as the essential substrate through which sovereignty and national identity are amalgamated. What best explains this recalcitrance? To apprehend the persistence of territory requires an excavation of the unconscious fiction of a unified body. Understanding the unicity of the legal body, and what it represses to gain its coherence, holds the key to understanding the resilience of territorial thought in law today. Territory, in this rendition, is but a displaced manifestation of the obsession of covering over phantasmagoric fragmentations. What this fragmentation does, and the ways in which its operations, including its role as a primordial mover for both seemingly unified national identities as well as the ostensible unicity of individual subjectivities, will be the focus of this seminar.

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Readings

- Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formation of the I Function: As Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,' in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York, 2006), 75-81
- Pierre Bekcouce, 'Division of Man, Division of Men. Why is the Territory a Strong Component of Contemporary Collective Identity?' *GeoJournal* 60 (4) (2004), 381-387

Further Reading

- Sabarish Suresh, 'The Union of India: Bodily Unity in Indian Law and Literature,' *Law and Literature* (2025), 1-25

Special Event 3

Trans-Corporeal Encounters in Post-Pandemic Times: Fauna (Pau Faus, 2023)

Film screening and talk with Mónica López Lerma (Reed College)



Set in the rural outskirts of Barcelona, Pau Faus's *Fauna* (2023) is, in the director's own words, a "pastoral science fiction fable" that mediates on the tensions between tradition and technology. In this session, we will examine trans-corporeal encounters between human and non-human bodies during post-pandemic times via a close analysis of the film. By making visible the permeability of bodily and environmental boundaries and their ongoing entanglements, *Fauna* reveals the material-discursive processes through which human and nonhuman bodies continually co-constitute one another within shared – yet often asymmetrical – ecological, economic, political, and legal systems.

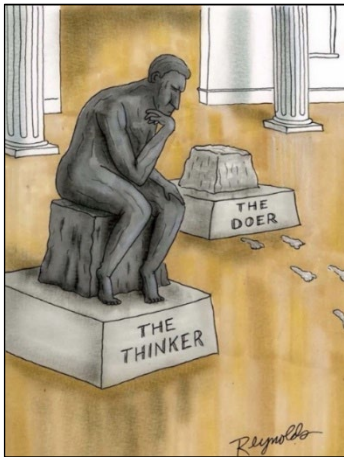
Special Event 4

Can't Get You Out of My Life: A Conversation about Work, Play and the Performance of Academia

Laura Petersen (University of Lucerne) and Valeria Vázquez Guevara (University of Hong Kong)

"I felt elation. All of this was play, it was enjoyable. From the late 80s to the 2000s when I retired, every day was terrific. Each morning, I couldn't wait to come in."

- Professor Richard Robson, winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 2025,
University of Melbourne



Join us for an interactive and informal conversation about how the ‘body’ – and all of its permutations and protheses – is part of the reality of academic life as an early career scholar. More often than not, the intellectual nature of academia tends to erase from our imaginary how the creative process of research – conceiving an idea, developing a research project, wrestling with it, writing it, publishing it – cannot be fully separated from our own bodily existence on earth. Drawing on the experience of transforming our PhD research into published monographs, we wish to invite open discussion, share practical advice as well as prompt more theoretical reflection on how we ‘see’, ‘feel’ and ‘write’ our research. The aim is to reflect on feeling (and being) incredibly vulnerable to the critique of others; how to deal with perfectionism (when is it good enough?); how to develop confidence in our research without sacrificing friendships and solidarity in a highly-competitive profession; and eventually, how to try to be curious and to learn to play again.

Facilitators & Speakers



Christine Abbt is Professor of Philosophy at the University of St. Gallen. Her work focuses on democratic theory, cultural philosophy, political aesthetics and memory theory and spans historical contexts (European Antiquity, the Enlightenment, 1968, and the present). Current projects include *Political Orders of Indeterminacy*, *Rethinking the Democratic Ethos* and *The Political Space: Democratic Self-Understanding and Identity Politics*. She writes widely on philosophy, politics and aesthetics, and her publications include *Ich vergesse. Über Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Denkens aus philosophischer Perspektive* (*I Forget: Possibilities and Limits of Thinking from a Philosophical Perspective*) and *Mit Texten denken. Eine Literatur-Philosophie* (*Thinking with Texts. A Philosophy of Literature*, with Christian Benne).

Christine collaborates frequently with researchers in law, politics, and cultural and literary studies. She has been a visitor at several international institutions including the School of Theory and Criticism at Cornell University, the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, the Swiss Institute in Rome, and the Normative Orders Cluster of Excellence at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main.



Shane Chalmers is an Assistant Professor at the University of Hong Kong Faculty of Law, Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Adelaide Law School, a Vice President of the Law, Literature and Humanities Association of Australasia, and Book Review Editor of *Law & Literature*. He is currently completing a book on *The Colonial Legal Imaginary: A Carnavalesque Jurisprudence* (CUP, forthcoming), with previous publications including *Liberia and the Dialectic of Law: Critical Theory, Pluralism, and the Rule of Law* (Routledge 2018), *The Routledge Handbook of International Law and the Humanities* (Routledge 2021, with Sundhya Pahuja) and a special issue of *Law & Literature* on *Colonial Legal Imaginaries | Southern Literary Futures* (with Desmond Manderson).



Angela Condello is an Associate Professor of Philosophy of Law at the University of Messina. She has been awarded numerous international scholarships and has served as principal investigator of a Jean Monnet module on rights and critical legal thought, as well as a Jean Monnet project on labor and social identity. In 2026, she was awarded a Horizon project on the rule of law in Europe.

Among her most recent publications are *Law as Method and Algorithmic Science*, *Legal Feminism*, and *Law, Labour and the Humanities*. A short volume on women's freedom and social justice is forthcoming.

In 2013, she worked as a consultant for the Human Rights Commission of the Italian Senate. In 2026, she was appointed as one of four members of the ethics committee of the Observatory on Artificial Intelligence by the Minister of Labor and Social Policies. She is a partner of the Forum on Inequality and Diversity, where she is working on models of care. She collaborates with newspapers (*Corriere della Sera*, *Jacobin*, *Il Manifesto*) and mainly writes about feminism and law.



Julen Etxabe is Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in Jurisprudence and Human Rights at the Peter A. Allard School of Law, University of British Columbia. His current research combines legal and literary theory to identify a new model of dialogical judgment emerging in the area of human rights, which is transforming inherited notions of reasoning, rights, authority, and law in the post-national and diverse societies of the 21st century.

Grounded in cultural and humanistic approaches to law, Julen is the author of *The Experience of Tragic Judgment* (2013) and has edited *Cultural History of Law in Antiquity* (2019). He is also the co-editor of *Rancière and Law* (2018) and *Living in a Law Transformed: Encounters with the Works of James Boyd White* (2014). From 2012 to 2017 he was editor-in-chief of *No-Foundations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Law and Justice* and is a member of the editorial committee of *Law & Humanities*. Julen has been a recipient of numerous fellowships, including a Fulbright Fellowship to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Michigan Law School and the Kone Foundation Research Grant.



Steven Howe is Senior Research Fellow at the University of Lucerne, where he also serves as Associate Director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Legal Studies. He studied German and Comparative Literature at the universities of Manchester, Hamburg and Exeter, and has been a visiting fellow at the Humanities Research Centre of The Australian National University in Canberra. Recent publications include essays on legal cinema in interwar Germany, on contemporary British tribunal theatre, and on artistic pre-enactments, as well as a special issue of the journal *Pólemos* on 'Law and Art in the Aftermath', co-edited with Laura Petersen. In 2022, he was awarded a grant by the Swiss National Science Foundation to lead the interdisciplinary project *Imagining Justice: Law, Politics and Popular Visual Culture in Weimar Germany*.

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Vagias Karavas is Professor of Legal Sociology, Legal Theory and Private Law at the University of Lucerne. He is currently Head of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Legal Studies and a founding member of the Centre for Law and Health in Lucerne. Vagias studied in Athens and Frankfurt, and completed his Habilitation at the University of Fribourg in 2016. His book publications include *Digitale Grundrechte: Elemente einer Verfassung des Informationsflusses im Internet* (2007) and *Körperverfassungsrecht: Entwurf eines inklusiven Biomedizinrechts* (2018). Vagias has been a visiting fellow at the Department for Anthropology at the University of California Irvine, and at the Institute for Comparative Research in Law & Political Economy at Osgoode Hall Law School, Toronto. His teaching and research focus on interdisciplinary themes in legal sociology and legal theory, including biomedicine law and the law of new technologies.



Andrea Leiter is the Acting Director of Research at the Amsterdam Center for International Law. She researches on global inequality and transnational law making through private actors with a focus on the digital economy and blockchain technology. Her current project, '(Re)coding Value(s) in the Digital Economy', is supported by a VENI grant from the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

Andrea obtained her PhD in a jointly-awarded degree program between the University of Melbourne and the University of Vienna, where she was funded by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Her resulting manuscript, titled 'Making the World Safe for Investment: The Protection of Foreign Property 1922-1959', was published with Cambridge University Press. She is a junior faculty member at the Institute for Global Law and Policy at Harvard Law School and currently a visiting fellow at the Zug Institute for Blockchain Research at the University of Lucerne.



Mónica López Lerma is an Associate Professor of Spanish and Humanities at Reed College. She received a PhD in Comparative Literature and a Graduate Certificate in Film Studies from the University of Michigan. She also holds a law degree from the University of Valencia and an LL.M. in Jurisprudence from the European Academy of Legal Theory. At Reed she teaches a variety of interdisciplinary courses in film theory, political documentaries, law and violence, justice and the senses, cinema and human rights, and comparative literature.

Mónica is the author of *Sensing Justice through Contemporary Spanish Cinema: Aesthetics, Politics, Law* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021), co-editor of *Rancière and Law* (Routledge, 2018) and editor of *Cartografías in/justas: Representaciones culturales del espacio urbano y rural en la España contemporánea* (Editorial Comares, 2024). She is currently working on a new book project that is tentatively titled *Documentaries Against the Law: Evidence, Affect, and Reflexivity*.



Damian Nussbaumer is a doctoral researcher, lecturer and assistant at the Department of Philosophy at the University of St. Gallen. He studied political science and philosophy at the universities of Zurich, Vienna, and Fribourg. His research covers the fields of phenomenology, political philosophy, and critical theory. His publications to date focus primarily on the critical dimension of phenomenological thought as well as the relationship between affects and language. This work combines bodily-phenomenological considerations with relevant theories from political philosophy. His doctoral project examines Merleau-Ponty's concept of the institution and demonstrates how a critical theory of subjectivation can be derived from it. The concept of the institution combines a description of the process of becoming of socio-historical conditions with processes of meaning formation that intertwine embodiment and textuality.



Greta Olson is Director of the Center for Diversity, Media, and Law (DiML) and Professor of American and British Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Giessen, Germany. She is Principal Investigator of a project on images of migration and human rights in the interdisciplinary research group “Human Rights Discourse in Migration Societies” (MeDiMi). Greta was Fellow at the Käte Hamburger Center for Advanced Study in the Humanities “Law as Culture” in Bonn (2014, 2016), was general editor of the European Journal of English Studies (EJES) from 2010 through 2024, and is, with Jeanne Gaakeer, the co-founder of the European Network for Law and Literature. Greta authored *From Law and Literature to Legality and Affect* (Oxford UP, 2022), is co-creator of the film *Beyond the Gaze: Media Awareness for Media Inclusivity* (2023), and co-edited *Diversity Issues in the U.S.A.: Transnational Perspectives on the 2024 Presidential Elections* (transcript 2024). She works and wishes to facilitate projects on the nexus between artistic practice, political activism, and academic analysis and publishes in the areas of critical American studies, law and culture, feminism and sexuality studies, and narrative and politics.



Laura Petersen is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Lucerne, Switzerland and an Adjunct Research Fellow at La Trobe University, Australia. Her research is cross-disciplinary, integrating approaches to visual culture and literature with jurisprudence, particularly in Germany in the 20th Century. Currently, Laura is working with Steven Howe and Nicole Schraner on a major SNSF research grant on the project “Imagining Justice: Law, Politics and Visual Culture in Weimar Germany”. Laura won the international writing prize Zipporah B. Wiseman Prize for Scholarship on Law, Literature and Justice (2021) and the Harold Luntz Prize (2023). Her first monograph, *Practices of Restitution: Law and Aesthetics in Modern Germany*, was published open access by Cambridge University Press in 2026. Now she is co-editing two forthcoming volumes: *Law, Politics and the Visual in Weimar Germany*, with Steven Howe (Camden House, 2026) and *The Cambridge Handbook of Law, History and the Visual*, with Steven Howe and Desmond Manderson (CUP, 2027).



Sabarish Suresh is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Legal Studies at the New York University Abu Dhabi. He researches in the fields of law and humanities, legal history, constitutional law, and criminal law. His book, *The Trauma of the Indian Constitution: Partition and Repetition*, is forthcoming with the Edinburgh University Press. His work has appeared in the *Law and History Review*, *Law and Literature*, *International Journal of Law in Context* and *Law, Culture and the Humanities*.



Tiziano Toracca is Assistant Professor of Literary Criticism and Comparative Literature at the Department of Humanities and Cultural Heritage of the University of Udine. He is the author of *Il romanzo neomodernista italiano*. Dalla fine del neorealismo alla seconda metà degli anni Settanta (Palumbo, 2022) and of Paolo Volponi. *Corporale, Il pianeta irritabile, Le mosche del capitale: una trama continua* (Morlacchi, 2020). He is co-author of *A Theory of Law and Literature. Across Two Arts of Compromising* (Brill, 2020, with Angela Condello). He has written articles on Modernism and Contemporary Italian literature, on the representation of Work, and on the relationship between Law and Literature. He is co-editor of *Studi Novecenteschi* and a member of the editorial board of *Allegoria* and *L'Ospite ingrato*.



Valeria Vázquez Guevara is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong. Her research and teaching engage law-and-humanities methodologies to examine how law and institutions – in its public and private dimensions – shape the quality of public life, particularly in the Global South and in North-South relations. Valeria is the author of *Truth Commissions and International Law: Jurisdiction, Representation, Authority* (Cambridge University Press, July 2026). Her research has been published in *Leiden Journal of International Law*, *London Review of International Law*, the *Routledge Handbook of International Law* and the *Humanities*, among others. Valeria's doctoral thesis won the 2024 University of Melbourne Chancellor's Prize for Excellence and Melbourne Law School's Harold Luntz Thesis Prize. Valeria currently serves as vice-president of the Law, Literature and Humanities Association of Australasia, and as and co-convenor of ESIL's Critical Approaches to International Law Interest Group.



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Illan works on critical legal theory, particularly through legal geography, affect studies and post-structural theory. He applies these insights to questions of rights, protest, strikes, revolt, policing and security. He has published on key debates around sovereignty, constituent power and legal affect. He is the author of *Law and Disorder* (2021) and *Human Rights and Constituent Power* (2012), and editor of *The Critical Legal Pocketbook* (2021) and *New Critical Legal Thinking* (2012). He has published in leading cultural studies, socio-legal and critical legal journals, and is one of the founding editors of criticallegalthinking.com. He is also Managing Editor of the open access publisher Counterpress.

Presentations & Abstracts

Listed in alphabetical order according to surnames

Withered by the Law: The Ordeal of Justice as an Affective Regime of Bodily Exhaustion

Harun Bodur (Erciyes University)

Law often presents itself as an abstract, neutral, and disembodied order. Yet for those who encounter it, justice is rarely experienced as a decisive moment of judgment. More often, it is lived as a prolonged bodily ordeal—marked by waiting, repetition, fatigue, and endurance. Caroline Bynum's question, "Why all the fuss about the body?", thus becomes not merely theoretical but acutely political in legal contexts. This presentation argues that law's claim to disembodiment is continuously undermined by the very procedures through which it operates. From a Critical Legal Studies perspective, legal indeterminacy is not primarily resolved but managed. Authority is stabilised less through substantive decisions than through procedural delay, deferral, and circulation.

Drawing on Harold Garfinkel's notion of degradation ceremonies, the paper conceptualizes legal processes as routinized practices that diminish the legal subject without overt punishment. Law disciplines not by exclusion, but by testing the body's capacity for endurance. This entails an affective and existential exhaustion through which the subject's capacity to insist is gradually worn down. Cinema renders this regime visible by showing justice as an embodied struggle enacted through time and space.

Davacı (The Plaintiff, 1986, dir. Zeki Ökten, Turkey) serves as the primary case study, following a villager's decades-long, absurd legal battle over a boundary dispute. The film depicts justice as an affective economy of attrition; the claimant's repeated physical presence in corridors reveals how procedural neutrality is sustained through bodily fatigue. *The Story of Qiu Ju* (1992, Dir. Zhang Yimou, China) provides a comparative reference, featuring a pregnant woman who travels from her rural village to the city to seek an apology for her injured husband. In both films, the distance between village and courthouse is not merely geographical but corporeal; law converts spatial separation into a test of endurance. Qiu Ju's pregnant body, moving through bureaucratic hierarchies, demands recognition through persistence rather than legal language. Following Judith Butler, this is read as a differential distribution of vulnerability: law operates as an affective regime that organizes which bodies must insist—and at what cost—before they are heard.

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Blood and Tongue in Indigenous Status

Jack Y-J Chou (University of Hong Kong)

As a symptom of thinking juridically, the state-recognised legal status of being indigenous is commonly determined by criteria that are characterised as either objective or subjective. On the so-called objective end, there is, say, the requirements of indigenous descent or (cultural) distinctiveness; on the so-called subjective end, there is the element of self-identification in both individual and collective aspects. While the subjective criterion of self-identification has been polemically emphasised in various occasions as 'fundamental', it has also been criticised that its overemphasis may lead to ambiguity, arbitrariness, appropriation, or even fraud; as a cure, the subjective is moderated by the objective, so that unless some other criteria are fulfilled, indigenous status is usually not recognised by the state simply because an individual or a collective self-identifies as such.

In this presentation, I argue that the objective and subjective criteria are reflections of a more complex matter. Looking at indigenous communities and their members ethnically, they exist and perform through a bodily web of 'blood' (kinship) and 'tongue' (language), which is neither objective nor subjective, neither fixated nor voluntary, and neither truly natural nor truly artificial, but an interplay between these qualities. It follows that the objective and subjective criteria for indigenous status are, in this regard, often oversimplifications or distortions of the web, for they reduce a holistic matter into dogmas and checkboxes. Meanwhile, as this critique is more or less coming from an ethnological concern, I argue that the state-recognised legal status of being indigenous goes beyond a purely ethnical understanding, for it is also inevitably juridical. That is, indigenous status is characterised precisely by the translation of the bodily web of 'blood' and 'tongue' from ethnology into law—and by the tension inherent in the translation; within which is where agency in the indigenous context is contained and signified.

Queer Bodies on Trial: The ECtHR's Complicity in Symbolic Violence

Amélie Courtine (University of Leicester)

This paper examines how the ECtHR, despite its claims to neutrality, perpetuates oppressive norms through its treatment of Queer bodies. While the Court presents itself as an impartial arbiter of human rights, its jurisprudence often reinforces the very structures of exclusion it purports to challenge. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, this paper exposes how legal discourse, far from being objective or neutral, actively participates in shaping and policing bodies. The Court's rulings do not merely reflect existing social hierarchies, they produce and legitimise them, rendering Queer bodies intelligible only through assimilation into dominant norms or outright exclusion. By privileging certain forms of embodiment over others, the ECtHR's judgments contribute to a system that marginalizes queer existence, framing it as either deviant, or pathological.

Through an analysis of the ECtHR's case law, this study demonstrates how legal categorisations and judicial language can function as tools of regulation, rather than protection. Queer bodies are frequently pathologized, disciplined, or erased within legal discourse, revealing the material consequences of symbolic violence. This violence is not abstract but deeply embodied, inscribed onto individuals through the Court's interpretations, classifications, and silences. For instance, the ECtHR's reluctance to recognise gender diversity outside of binary frameworks or its conditional protection of sexual minorities underscores how law can become an instrument of subjugation rather than liberation.

By centring the body as both a site of regulation and resistance, this work uncovers the hidden mechanisms through which law sustains systemic oppression. The Court's failure to acknowledge Queer bodies diversity highlights the urgent need for a new legal paradigm. A truly transformative jurisprudence must move beyond superficial inclusivity and confront the ways in which legal institutions reproduce inequality.

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Disabling Borders: The Use of Boundaries and Bodies in Constructing Environmental Legal Personality

Amy Crean (University of Amsterdam)

Rights of nature has emerged as an optimistic challenge to the anthropocentric legal sphere and as a site of possibility for restructuring human-nature relations in the developing ecological crisis. This paper seeks to offer a critical reading of environmental legal personality, utilising disability theory to dismantle notions of independent subjectivity. It looks to critical engagement with the disabled body and how disability disrupts notions of self and person by extending and remaining the borders of selfhood. Through assistive devices and prosthetics many disabled people locate and articulate their dignity and autonomy, yet the law struggles to understand these aids as closer to person than to property. Rendering the embodied person as a legible legal construction can obscure these relationships and reliance, ultimately reducing disabled people's personhood by expecting an independent, biological and non-modified standard of physical capability.

The paper proposes that disabled confrontations with the law have demonstrated that a relational conception of the self and the body can be determined contextually, by reconsidering the relevant constituent factors of subjectivity. By resisting the characterisation of the person as being limited to the embodied self, but instead as relationally and socially constructed, it argues that failures of legal readings of the body and subjectivity are at risk of replication in the context of environmental legal personality (ELP). Reading case studies of ELP demonstrate the power relations at play in determining borders of the natural environmental subject: colonial cartographies have determined the boundaries of forests vying for legal personality, and national borders have led to rivers being legal subjects in one region and natural resource in another. These strict readings of the physical site of subjects place unnecessary burdens on those working towards realising justice for environmental entities and the core problem to be addressed is the limitation of the law in reading and designing borders, bodies, and boundaries. Disability-informed notions of personhood disrupt such assumptions and enable a vision of environmental legal participation that operates differently, to different ends. Working towards this model must be predicated on fundamental notions of interdependence as being key to a just mode of facilitating the environment as its own being in law.

Be Right Back: Butler and the 'Body' of AIE

Quinn Edwards (University of the Sunshine Coast)

Examining the rights and obligations that cluster to form legal personhood, one key strand is intrinsically tied to the concept of 'body'. Kurki's 'ultimate value' is a context of legal personhood that goes behind the practical considerations like commercial activity and liability, examining the more moral, social, and physical dimensions of the proposition.

While Butler is not mentioned in Kurki's work, the underdeveloped application of ultimate value as it pertains to AIE provides scope for a more nuanced analysis. And, when analysing a legal body, who better than Butler? Butler's theories of grievability, precariousness and performativity, when applied to personhood rather than life, provide an essential set of factors to analyse which artificially intelligent entities could possess a level of ultimate value, and to what extent.

To demonstrate the utility of these factors establishing a spectrum of ultimate value for AIE, a cultural legal reading has been conducted on the episode *Be Right Back*, from British anthology series *Black Mirror*. By examining the growth and development of the AIE character, Ash, within the episode through the lens of Butler's theories, this presentation will demonstrate that AIE can and should be granted levels of ultimate value in some contexts, however not to the extent of a natural person.

The Corpse as Feminist Posthumanist Figuration: The Potential of a Liberatory (Approach to) IHRL

Amira Fretz (University of Leiden)

A serious engagement with the corpse raises profound questions for IHRL. It invites a(n) (re)assessment of the very notion of humanness at the core of human rights and the subjects of international law writ large; and it troubles the relationship between IHRL and its ability to deliver a particular form of justice, adding to long established critiques of its liberatory potential. These questions are even more urgent as international law operates in, and is arguably conducive to, the condition of the Anthropocene. Mass death and displacement resulting from violent conflict, the climate crisis and ecological collapse, as well as the technological apparatus that enables these, are interlinked – and the distribution of harms this epoch effects is inequitable. Considering the role of IHRL in being able to do justice to the corpse therefore entails not just a reconsideration of the limits of humanness in its canon, but the relationship between that notion of the human to nature. In direct response to one of the prompts in the programme description of this workshop, then, it is my argument that corpses very much do matter; but they are also seriously engaged in practices of mattering.

With this presentation, I would like to workshop especially my methodology and mixed-methods approach to conceiving (of) post-mortem justice. As a methodology, feminist posthumanism converges the linguistic-discursive and empirical dimension to push forward a transdisciplinary mode of analysis and engagement. The primary and overarching method of the project, then, is feminist figuration. Encompassed within this is first, necessarily, a brief critical doctrinal legal analysis of the corpse under the current IHRL regime; this is immediately complicated by a 'feminist posthumanist legal discourse analysis'; as well as, finally, an ethnographic intervention in two key locations, centring two types of particularly vulnerable corpses. It is the interaction of these methods that amount to an exercise in figuring the corpse in/of IHRL. The project thus ultimately attends to both a political commitment to the materialisations of oppressive structures with/in the necessarily sexed, racialised, classed corpse, and an orientation towards the potentials for resistance of such an ontological intervention.

Translation or Participation: How do Bodies of Law Meet?

Aidan Hookey (University of Melbourne)

This paper looks at the language of translation, used by the High Court of Australia, in thinking relationships and meetings between embodied speakers of different languages of law. Recently, the High Court granted Yolŋu (an Indigenous group in the north of the Australian continent) compensation for the unlawful appropriation of Yolŋu lands by the Australian government. The plaintiff Dr Yunupingu, a Yolŋu leader, lawman and interpreter, had criticised an earlier judgment, arguing that the Judge wasn't "participating in Yolŋu law. Yolŋu law wasn't inside to him anymore. He just judged how good he was in law of his own." So, did the High Court in 2025 decide to "participate" in Yolŋu law, and how does "participation" interact with the account of "translation"? This paper provides a reading of the judgment as an expression of a meeting between penultimate authorities on different languages of law, from the perspective of a particular tradition of "treaty" associated with Dr Yunupingu. The reading raises questions of the (il)legibility of law in the judgment in circumstances where legal pluralism is at once relied upon yet denied.

Mediated Ends: Refiguring Death Politics and Bodily Autonomy

Anna Jayne Kimmel (George Washington University)

The question of the right to die and its many ethical, legal, political and bio-medical contours are both well-rehearsed and unresolved. "Mediated Ends: Refiguring Death Politics and Bodily Autonomy" theorizes the right to die through the interarticulation of bodily autonomy, performance philosophy, and deathscapes. In this book project, I bring together 20th and 21st century performance installations which centre death politics alongside legal scholars and case-law analysis from the right to die movement to provide a more material understanding of the body as its perceived autonomy shifts at the end. Performances, including their critical reception, render the esoteric debate exoteric—both returned to the public and to the body. "Mediated Ends" thus presses the corporeal back into a disembodied landscape of the right to die within legal and political philosophy.

In this presentation, I offer a comparative case study for entry into these themes: "The Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land" (1990), a performance work by acclaimed American choreographer Bill T. Jones and "The Last Supper" (2024), an initiative by British-Ghanian multi-media artist Joseph Awuah-Darko who publicly announced, and then capitalized upon, a personal decision to migrate in pursuit of physician-assisted suicide. Both works address end-of-life sovereignty with particular emphasis on the projections of race, capitalism, and queer identity. This turn to performance invites a counter reading to Chief Justice Rehnquist's opinion in *Washington v. Glucksberg* (1997) who, in upholding suicide bans, argued that such acts "were not deeply rooted in the nation's history." Read against one another, uncanny in their recurrent parallels if significantly divorced in time and space, the two performances locate shared tropes surrounding the racial body which emerge in legal histories of the public-private distribution of bodily autonomy. At stake are issues of governance, sovereignty, and biopolitical figurations of bodily ends, understanding flesh to be a site of jurisgenerative production.

Deportable Bodies: Legal Status and the Transnational Afterlife of Migration Control

Sandra King-Savic (University of Zurich)

The proposed presentation asks what happens when we take the deportable body - not the border - as the starting point for analysing migration control. Rather than treating deportation and return as discrete events that conclude migration trajectories, I approach them as transnational socio-legal processes that reorganize and redistribute the effects of legal status across space. The paper emerges from an early-stage research project on Swiss migration governance since the 1990s and examines how legal status adheres to migrant bodies beyond the territorial limits of the state. In Switzerland, so-called "voluntary return" programs have become a central and politically sanctioned mechanism for managing unwanted presence. Although framed as humanitarian alternatives to forced removal, these programs operate within broader regimes of legal

stratification that differentiate access to work, welfare, and mobility. Deportability, in this sense, is not reducible to the moment of enforcement. It is produced and sustained through everyday administrative practices, prolonged uncertainty, and conditional inclusion, including forms of governance that shape how migrant bodies can appear, move, labour, and remain.

Drawing on multi-sited qualitative research connecting residence in Switzerland with post-return trajectories in the Western Balkans, the project combines historical analysis of migration policy with ethnographic and biographical methods. Following individuals across residence, departure, and post-return life, I trace how earlier periods of irregularisation and precarious status continue to structure labour market incorporation, welfare access, and mobility after return. Legal status does not simply end at the border. Instead, legal status travels, thus potentially sedimenting in biographies and reconfiguring vulnerability elsewhere.

By foregrounding embodiment, the paper suggests that deportation and return do not terminate migration governance but extend it. The deportable body becomes the medium through which law persists across jurisdictions. In doing so, the project contributes to debates on deportability, legal stratification, and the transnational reach of migration control, while asking more broadly how bodies remain governed even after they have ostensibly “returned”.

Valuing Bodies, Securing Assets: Access to Medicines and the Financialization of Global Health

Dena Kirpalani (Graduate Institute, Geneva)

This paper examines the construction of value in global health - through processes of valuation, standard-setting and legal expertise. It explores how these innovative financing instruments for health as legal technologies systemically abstract the human body. Drawing on Liu's discussions on queer Marxism, I argue that the protection of intangible assets renders the ill body legible only insofar as it can be translated into financial risk, future revenue streams, and are able to support systems of value extraction. These differences produced by capital and its interests are reflected in how the ill-body of the subaltern is reduced to a possible yet underdelivering consumer of health-related goods.

The global health development project, I contend, privileges the interests of asset-holders by universalizing regulatory frameworks that stabilize existing distributions of economic power. Legal expertise functions as a technology that reframes access to medicines as a problem of administration rather than structural inequity. These processes are not neutral; they constitute techniques of dehumanization - making some bodies matter while rendering others invisible or illegible. Access to medicines, ironically, becomes an arena that conditions welfare interests as contingent on economic subjectivity. If value is something that is embodied, political and performative, then the abstraction of bodily suffering into financial risk demands sustained critique. I attempt to bring insights from feminist and queer political economy to this discussion. In doing so, I ask how do financial interests decide who is legibly human within economic systems, and what happens when access to medicines is directed by the imperative to protect asset values?

By approaching law as technology and valuation as a site of political struggle, this paper contributes to ongoing conversations within critical legal studies, and seeks to challenge the processes that condition which bodies are worthy of care.

Embodied Data Rights: Refusing Law's Disembodied Future

Ksenia Lavrenteva (University of Exeter)

This paper presents a framework of Embodied data rights aimed at the proper recognition and governance of data extracted from human bodies, including voices, gestures, facial expressions, and movements. It begins by arguing that law's failure to recognise the full meaning of bodies is rooted in a Cartesian dualism that privileges the abstract mind while devaluing the corporeal body. As a result, law struggles to acknowledge bodies as sites of knowledge, culture, labour, and personality.

To address this limitation, the paper draws on embodiment theory, building on feminist, phenomenological, and practice-based approaches. Human movement serves as an entry point for the analysis, as it renders visible how bodily value is generated, captured, and transformed into data. Tracing this process from early dance notation and encyclopaedias depicting craft practices to Taylorism and contemporary techniques of motion capture, the paper shows how law has remained largely blind to these forms of bodily value, instead accommodating and facilitating their extraction. By foregrounding movement and skilled embodiment, the analysis demonstrates how bodily practices produce meaning and value that exceed legal categories centred on cognition, intention, or ownership. The paper concludes by outlining how a shift towards embodiment could enable law to better recognise the value produced by human bodies, without reducing them to mere sources of extractable data.

Bodies in Transit: Borders, Abjection and Political Imagination in Latin America

Daniel Lopez Contreras (University of Michigan)

State-based communities in Latin America—once ostensibly safeguarded by the rule of law and liberal models of nationality—are currently undergoing a profound crisis. At the intersection between state formation and the contemporary condition of international law in the region, there emerge bodies—bordered, foreign, and abject—that unsettle classical notions of nationality and citizenship. These bodies not only challenge established juridical and political frameworks but also give rise to alternative modes of inhabiting territories historically marked by subalternity as well as to new configurations of political imagination in an era characterized by the total subsumption of social life under the dynamics of capital.

This research is situated within a critical reappraisal of the concepts of “imagined communities” and “foundational fictions” in Latin America (Anderson, Sommer). Building on this, it explores the potential articulation of alternative models of community (Nancy), which respond to the contemporary condition marked by what has been described as the erosion or defeat of law (Gargarella, Atria, Balibar). Furthermore, the study engages the persistence of subjectivities and forms of world-making that exceed liberal paradigms (Segato, Cusicanqui). These perspectives open onto alternative understandings of citizenship (Isin, Nielsen), which range from transnational structures to imagined forms of abjection (Kristeva, Nussbaum).

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Healing the Nation: Reconciliation and Emotionality in Human Rights-Based Commemoration

Maike Middeler (Helmut Schmidt University, Hamburg)

In my presentation, I analyse the work that legalised memory does through the lens of emotionality. I advance the argument that human rights-based conceptualisations see memory as a means to foster social cohesion in post-conflict societies, as a tool to “heal the nation”. More specifically, I analyse the role that emotions and emotionality is assigned by the law in that process. With Sara Ahmed, I ask “how emotions work to shape the ‘surfaces’ of individual and collective bodies” (Ahmed, 2004). Historical memory is seen to bring up many emotions. Which emotions may depend on the event and how this was experienced. Remembering harm can bring up pain and grief, or it can bring up guilt and shame. These emotions tend to be assigned to different identities, often along an imagined binary of victims and perpetrators. They may thus work to separate groups. Emotions and emotionality, then, are not neutral forces in human rights-based commemoration. In fact, “repressed” emotions regarding past events tend to be seen as a danger to reconciliation processes and the promise of a peaceful future. This is an idea that is entangled with the psychoanalytical notion of “repetition compulsion”, a theory that posits that a person who has not sufficiently “worked through” a troubled past is bound to unconsciously act it out in the present in the form of socially maladaptive behaviour (Freud, 1924). Healing in this case is achieved through the integration of the traumatic memory into the present consciousness and acknowledging its underlying affects. In a way, regulating memory hence is regulating emotionality. Looking at it through this lens allows to make visible the individual and collective bodies that the law imagines as remembering and remembered. This in turn shows which emotions or whose emotionality is seen as a danger or a benefit to the project of reconciliation or social cohesion. It is thus a fundamental component of understanding the work legalised memory does in post-conflict contexts.

The (In)Visible Body: Rethinking Violence Against Women in International Law

Alessia Nicastro (Graduate Institute, Geneva)

This paper, drawn from my doctoral research, develops a methodological reflection on how to study international law provisions on violence against women (VAW). Placing the body as a central analytical category, it asks what international law sees—and fails to see—as “violence” from a feminist legal perspective. This shift matters because the legal concept of VAW is often invoked without questioning what violence and which woman the law is addressing.

The doctoral project combines feminist legal inquiry with black-letter analysis. Feminist legal methods foreground lived experience, embodiment, and situated knowledge, while black-letter analysis exposes how international instruments define VAW and position “woman” as simultaneously a subject and object of law. This combination places the doctrinal definitions within the continuum of violence over women’s bodies. Critical legal analysis, drawing on Catharine MacKinnon’s question “are women human?”, treats the pervasiveness of male violence not as background social fact but as a sign of women’s only partial incorporation as human rights subjects.

Lonzi’s notion of women as “unexpected subjects” further informs the methodology by highlighting how women’s claims to rights and freedoms have historically appeared accidental or disruptive within a male-forged legal and social order, and how women’s bodies are regulated precisely because they deviate from the male norm. Although international law scholarship has rarely engaged explicitly with feminist philosophies of the body, the paper argues that transposing Lonzi’s and related reflections into legal analysis opens up new ways of thinking about the categories “violence” and “woman” in VAW norms. This resonates with feminist critiques by Charlesworth and others that international law mirrors and reinforces gendered hierarchies even as it gradually expands protection.

In dialogue with the summer school’s theme of “bodies”, the paper conceptualises “the woman” of violence against women provisions as a legally embodied subject: regulated and protected because of her difference from the male norm, yet never fully centred as a human rights bearer.

Negotiating Space Within Indian Classical Dances: Disabled Bodies, Inclusion and Legitimacy

Trupti Panigrahi (Queen Mary University of London)

Indian classical dances derive their authenticity, form, and grammar from ancient Indian texts like the *Natyashastra* and *Abhinay Darpan*. These texts prescribe rules in the form of qualifications and disqualifications of a dancer that directly exclude persons with disabilities. However, many dancers have attempted to create a space within the Indian classical dance styles that allows them access, sometimes by defying these rules, and other times by modifying them to suit their accessibility needs. While their efforts are celebrated and works recognised, they do not necessarily translate to inclusion. Through examples, I will demonstrate in my presentation how practice, performance, perception, and narratives highlight the knotty inclusion-exclusion dynamics through which disabled bodies negotiate their position within the Indian classical dance system. In doing so, I will discuss the rules from the ancient texts, the intention of dancers when presenting their dance, and audience perception and recognition as contributors in this negotiation. It asks whether inclusion in Indian classical dances means adapting disabled bodies to pre-existing standards of the style, or allowing disability itself to reshape the grammar of classical dance movements, pedagogy, and audience reception. In other words, this discussion seeks to understand if the form’s aesthetic imagination expands when disabled performers create their space or whether their dance merely means participation without disturbing fixed standards of legitimacy.

Beyond Inside/Outside Dichotomies: A Body Forward Ethnographic Account of Sexual Consent in a Global South City

Mini Saxena (SOAS University of London)

This paper reflects on two insider/outsider dichotomies that emerged from my use of legal anthropology as a methodology for conducting qualitative fieldwork. My doctoral research explores whether and how the law should respond to breaches of conditional consent to sexual relations. Conditional sexual consent occurs where someone consents but with conditions attached: either explicit (e.g., using protection) or implicit (e.g., representing oneself as a doctor). While most, if not all, of the current scholarship on conditional consent addresses it in Global North jurisdictions, I seek to flip this narrative by conducting empirical work in the Global South. My fieldwork took place over seven months in New Delhi, the capital of India.

In this paper, I first explore my own positionality as both an insider who grew up in Delhi, as well as an outsider who left in 2015, and its implications for my empirical methods. Specifically, I reflect on the role of the researcher's (my own) body in occupying public space, including its visible markers of class and caste. I seek to understand whether it is possible to conduct ethnographic work on consent in a body forward way, and what that means for the concept of consent.

I use these reflections to posit that legal research can benefit from explorations outside the legal. While legal anthropology is usually conducted inside courtrooms, bringing the rigidity of law to anthropology, my research attempts to fold in the everydayness of consent as it operates outside the courtroom, specifically within the bodies of myself and my interlocutors, in all its messiness and complexity. This paper therefore endeavours to shift my empirical analysis by engaging with the methodological analytically, complicating the dichotomy of consent versus law.

Urging legal anthropologists to look outside the law, I contend that it is by looking outside the law that one can provide an even richer insight into the law. With respect to consent and sexual misconduct, the researcher's body, positionality, and erotic subjectivity, has much to offer to the simplistic and binary notion of consent that the law presents us with.

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Measuring Bodies, Defining the Criminal?

Silvan Schenkel (University of Lucerne) and Lorena Gisler (University of Bern / University of Lucerne)

Until the 18th century, the direct punishment of the body played a central role. In this context, the offender's body served as a «stage for punishment». Over the course of the 19th century, the significance of the body in the penal system underwent a fundamental shift. With the advent of imprisonment, the body lost its significance as the immediate site of punishment. The focus now shifted to intervening in the offender's mind, soul, and social behaviour. With the emergence of criminobiological frameworks, offenders were increasingly classified as psychologically abnormal and dangerous individuals from whom society needed to be protected. In this context, the body became a source of knowledge, as an object that could be calculated and measured according to medical and scientific criteria. In this presentation, we will outline the historical development of forensic biological concepts for interpreting criminal offences and analyse the significance and role of the body in criminological discourse during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Of Children and Murder

Clementine Tong (University of Hong Kong)

The House of Lords quashed the 15-year tariff in *R v Secretary of State for the Home Department, ex parte Venables and Thompson* [1998] A.C. 407. Yet the judgment left no one – not the defendants, nor the victim's family, nor the community that had sent 280,000 signatures to the Home Secretary – with a sense that justice had been served.

For Hannah Arendt, the criminal law does not merely punish what has been done but stages the criminal body in the space of appearance. I argue that the impulses between rehabilitation and retribution in criminal law precluded Venables and Thompson from answering for themselves before the community, because they never stood as they were, but only appeared as the law had made them.

Perhaps the law cannot do both at once. Perhaps the most we can ask for is a halfway house for sentencing that rejects the exclusivity of either protection or vengeance, and sits with the subject not innocently as child, not fully as murderer, but as a question that communities have not been prepared to answer.

Between Visibility and Illegality: 'Forbidden' Bodies in Interwar Germany

Grigorij Tschernjowskyj (Ghent University)

The end of both the Great War and the “long nineteenth century” produced a period marked by recurring crisis and states of emergency in nearly every aspect of Weimar society, rapidly transforming legal, political, and social institutions. Yet perhaps most often overlooked was the equally drastic change in the status and conditions of individuals from marginalized, stigmatized, criminalized or newly visible groups. Their bodies, previously hidden, censored, or aestheticized into more “acceptable” forms, were now omnipresent in the streets, challenging established notions of public morality and exposing society’s collective trauma. Whereas the laws and societal norms of the newly established republic were largely inherited from the previous regime, social reality increasingly diverged from these outdated rules, while politicians and lawyers were seldom successful in reforming and adapting the legal system to these new conditions. Artists, by contrast, emerged as sharp and observant witnesses of this “fragile modernity”, portraying its tensions relentlessly and often without compromise. This contribution examines the relationship between law, visual culture, and those “forbidden” bodies caught between everyday visibility and partial illegality in interwar Germany. It focuses particularly on: war-injured bodies begging in uniform, once a proud symbol of imperial power and absolute state authority, now a constant reminder of military defeat and humiliation; queer bodies now actively and openly participating in cultural life, entering art, literature, and cinematography, despite homosexuality remaining a criminal offense associated by many with moral decay; female bodies entering politics and lawmaking, now not only covering prostitution, but violent crime, health, abortions, and motherhood, thereby illuminating poverty, abuse, and appalling living conditions; dead bodies of participants in violent street fighting throughout the various uprisings, clashes, and coups lying in public spaces as visible signs of the fragility of the new democratic order.