

Seminars

Monday 6 July

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.

Tuesday 7 July

Proaesthetic Bodies of Law and Colonialism

Shane Chalmers (University of Hong Kong)

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, with Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Patricia Williams, Michel Foucault (amongst others) as guides. The second part of the seminar will then focus on the state, to think about how (as Michael Walzer puts 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, scholars associated with Third World Approaches to International Law, and legal cartographers, will show us the way.

Wednesday 8 July

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* takes into account 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.

Thursday 9 July

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).

Friday 10 July

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.

Special Events

Monday 6 July

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.

Tuesday 7 July

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.

Wednesday 8 July

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 nonhuman 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.

Thursday 9 July

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)

Join us for an interactive and informal conversation about how the 'body' – and all of its permutations and prostheses – 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.