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BOOK NOTES*

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Brown, Michelle, and Travis Linnemann. *Under the Gun: Criminology Goes Back to the Movies.* New York: NYU Press, 2026. Pp. x + 235. $35.00 paper. Brown and Linnemann propose a fresh way of looking at cinema, using the concepts and analytical tools of criminology to uncover previously unnoticed meanings in film. Stepping into the fray between the gritty realities of crime and punishment and their mediated forms, they seek to bring into relief the ways that crime theory might birth the seeds of its own undoing, and to ask criminologists to a take up the cultural work that is truly foundational to the study of harm, violence, and justice.

Garnsey, Peter. *Rethinking Capital Punishment: The Pre-History of the Abolition of the Death Penalty.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2026. Pp. vii + 193. $40.00 cloth. Garnsey traces the origins of ideas supporting the abolition of the death penalty, beginning with the Lex Talionis in the Code of Hammurabi and moving across the Bible, Plato, to the Renaissance, and the emergence of utilitarianism in the 18th century, when Giuseppe Pelli of Florence and Cesare Beccaria of Milan produced works calling for its abolition, and countries began to seriously consider that route.

Haynes, Marta-Laura. *Untrusting: In Pursuit of Democratic Policing in Brazil.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2026. Pp. xvi + 269. $35.00 paper. Haynes follows Brazilian police officers and favela residents through patrols, crime scenes, fishing trips, drumming circles, and neighborhood gatherings, finding that trust is not simply given or earned—but actively performed, negotiated, and also refused. Far from being a stable foundation for democracy, trust in this context is a high-stakes wager, shaped by local hierarchies of race, gender, and class. In response, communities develop what she calls "untrusting"– a mode of engagement that refuses blind faith in the state and instead turns mistrust into a form of care, resistance, and survival, thus reimagining the relationship between trust and democratic ideals.

Schrader, Stuart. *Blue Power: How Police Organized to Protect and Serve Themselves.* New York, NY: Basic Books, 2026. Pp. vii + 423. $34.00 cloth. Schrader narrates the rise of a movement of rank-and-file police officers, whom he finds lifted policing above the law. Organizers launched their campaign in the 1960s, courting a public backlash against urban uprisings and civil rights protests. They formed unions and other organizations that won control over working conditions and, he finds, impunity from

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overnight and insulation from lean budgets. He concludes that by the 2000s, this movement had triumphed nationally, shoring up the power of the police to overrule the public interest in the name of law and order.

Thai, Mai. *Kid Cops: What Communities Gain and Lose from Junior Police in Schools*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2026. Pp. viii + 236. $24.00 paper. This book draws on observations and interviews with educators, police officers, and kids to study US junior police academies–high school programs in which police officers provide courses, mentorship, and job training in communities with high rates of juvenile delinquency and poverty. Common goals of these programs are for students to graduate and enter college or the workforce, while cultivating a positive image of the police. But Thai finds that these programs tighten the relationship between marginalized youth, schools, and the criminal justice system and strain the students' relationships with their peers, families, and each other.

LAW AND BELONGING

David, Joseph E. *Kinship, Law and Politics: An Anatomy of Belonging*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2026. Pp. xiv + 155. $39.99 paper. David seeks to transport readers to crucial historical moments in which perceptions of belonging have been formed, transformed, or dismantled. He presents cases that focus on the pivotal role played by belonging in kinship, law, and political order, stretching across cultural and religious contexts from eleventh-century Mediterranean religious legal debates to twentieth-century statist liberalism in Western societies.

LAW AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Sircar, Oishik, *Ways of Remembering: Law, Cinema and Collective Memory in the New India.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2026. Pp. xxxiii + 337. $135.00 cloth. Sircar studies the relationship between secular law and religious violence by focusing on the memorialization of the 2002 Gujarat pogrom—postcolonial India's most litigated and mediatized event of anti-Muslim mass violence.He argues that the shared narrative of law and cinema engenders ways of remembering in which the rationality of secular law offers a resolution to the irrationality of religious violence. In the public's collective memory, the force of this rationality simultaneously condemns and normalizes violence against Muslims while exonerating secular law from its role in enabling the pogrom.

LAW AND THE COVID PANDEMIC

King, Jeff, and Octávio Luiz Motta Ferraz, eds. *Comparing Covid Laws: A Critical Global Survey*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2026. Pp. xix + 384. £125.00 cloth. Contributors to King and Ferraz's volume draw primarily on data gathered within the Lex-Atlas: Covid-19 (LAC19) project, a worldwide collaboration of jurists that produced fifty-three country reports published in *The Oxford Compendium of National Legal Responses to Covid-19*. The present volume contains the critical judgements of the editorial committee of that project. Topics covered include the use of emergency powers; the role of courts; the impact on women's rights, on privacy, on workers, and

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on the right to protest; and the variation of response across cities, federal countries, and authoritarian settings.

LAW AND IMMUNITY

Driessen, Miriam. *Immunity on Trial: Ethiopian Courts, Chinese Corporations, and Contestations over Sovereignty*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2026. Pp. vii + 206. $34.95 paper. Set against the backdrop of an extraordinary wave of litigation against Chinese corporations in Ethiopia, Driessen probes the question of immunity in everyday encounters steeped in highly asymmetrical power relations. Drawing on observations from the courthouse, interviews with litigants, judges, and court support staff, and analyses of case files, she studies how immunity is debated and delegitimized—or affirmed—by those who fight, exact, grant, or weigh it. From the construction site to the police station, from the registrar's office into the courtroom, her book documents tussles over immunity, unraveling the politics of dignity on which they are founded.

LAW AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Upton, J. Christopher. *Justice at the Boundaries: Mediating Reconciliation and Legal Recognition in Taiwan's Indigenous Courts.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2026. Pp. xviii + 305. $29.95 paper. Upton offers account of the transformative potential and structural limitations of Taiwan's system of ad hoc Chambers of Indigenous Courts. Drawing on fieldwork in courtrooms and Indigenous communities, he examines how judges, Indigenous litigants, and cultural brokers navigate contested terrains of law, identity, and sovereignty in a legal system shaped by ongoing processes of colonialism and aspirations of multiculturalism. He concludes that Taiwan's Indigenous courts and other "boundary institutions" designed to bridge Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds both challenge and reproduce entrenched hierarchies and power dynamics.

LAW AND MARKETS

Choi, Stephen J., Mitu Gulati, and Robert E. Scott. *Contract Hazards: Lawyers and Their Landmines.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2026. Pp. viii + 260. £81.00 cloth. There is a paradox in commercial contracting: Standardization makes possible production efficiencies but at the cost of "landmines"—loopholes that can be used strategically to gain litigation advantage if the transaction collapses. Drawing on interviews with over two hundred market experts and an empirical examination of multiple commercial markets, Choi, Gulati, and Scott argue that landmines are ubiquitous in all markets in which transactions use standardized terms. But they are most persistent and costly in large liquid markets such as sovereign debt and leveraged loans; these costs could be avoided by *ex ante* repairs.

LAW AND RACE

Hamilton, Tikia K. *Nothing Less Than Equality: The Battle over Segregated Education in the Nation's Capital.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2026. Pp. ii + 357. $32.50

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paper. *Brown v. Board of Education*, which barred racial segregation in U.S. public schools, wasn't the only path for Black parents, teachers, and activists who sought equality of educational opportunity. Some believed that reform lay in pressing the federal government to live up to the Jim Crow doctrine of "separate but equal" by providing more resources to Black schools. Hamilton studies the history of educational activism in Washington, D.C. prior to *Brown*, illuminating complex dynamics that provide a counterpoint and backdrop to the landmark Supreme Court case, concluding that there was no linear path to *Brown.*

SOCIOLEGAL THEORY

Bryen, Ari Z. *The Judgment of the Provinces: The Roman Empire and the Origins of Law and Society.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2026. Pp. xiv + 432. $45.00 cloth. Bryen argues that law, as we know it today, emerged from the challenge of governing a diverse and fractious set of imperial Roman subjects. Law offered a means of testing legitimacy and evaluating government and for asking fundamental political questions, claims that were resisted by elites and jurists who reimagined law as a system that excluded the voices of the governed. The result was to separate 'law' from 'society' more broadly, and to define law as a primarily literate and learned practice, rather than the stuff of everyday life.

TRANSFORMATION OF LEGAL SYSTEMS

Schonthal, Benjamin. *Courts, Constitutions and Karma: Buddhism, Law and the Practices of Legal Pluralism in Sri Lanka*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2026. Pp. xvii + 356. $150.00 cloth. Although rarely acknowledged, Buddhist monastics are among the most active lawmakers and jurists in Asia, operating sophisticated networks of courts and constitutions while also navigating—and shaping—secular legal systems. Schonthal draws on nearly a decade of archival, ethnographic and empirical research to study the entanglements Buddhist monastic law with state law in Sri Lanka from 1800 to the present. He focuses on the ways that monks, colonial officials and contemporary lawmakers reconcile the laws of the Buddha and the laws of the land using practices of legal pluralism.

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