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BOOK NOTES*

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Aviram, Hadar. *Behind Ancient Bars: Narratives of Incarceration in the Hebrew Bible.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2026. Pp. xiii + 202. $29.95 paper. Aviram challenges the conventional assumption that incarceration is an artifact of modernity by looking back to depictions of detention and confinement in the Hebrew Bible, through creative re-readings of five stories: Joseph in Egypt, Esther in Persia, Daniel in Babylonia, Samson in Gaza, and Jeremiah in Jerusalem. Drawing on her experience as an advocate against mass incarceration, she finds connections between antiquity and the contemporary understanding of incarceration that encompasses not just the prison itself but also pretrial/immigration detention bail electronic monitoring parole and post-release supervision.

Greene, Joss T., *Gender Bound: Prisons, Trans Lives and Abolitionist Horizon.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2026. Pp. xiii + 198. $34.95 paper. Available via UC Open Access. Greene investigates how and why California prisons have attempted to manage gender nonconformity over the past eighty years (California's creation of tailored housing policies for gender-nonconforming prisoners began in 1941) and how incarcerated people have responded in turn. Drawing on archival research, ethnographic observation, and 136 interviews with formerly incarcerated trans people as well as advocates, policymakers, and former prison staff, he seeks to offer new insight into the history of gender, the intersectional nature of punishment, and steadfast struggles for freedom.

Gurusami, Susila. *Break the System: Criminalized Black Mothers and the Reproductive Politics of Abolition.* Chicago: University of Chicago, 2026. Pp. ix + 208. $24.00 paper. Drawing on ethnographic data and interviews with formerly incarcerated Black women in South Los Angeles, Gurusami challenges dominant assumptions about mothering and criminal justice reform. She finds that criminalized Black women endure multigenerational political, social, and embodied assaults–what she calls "reproductive warfare"—and still, they build networks, practices, and theories of radical care that protect Black maternal life, legacies, and futures. She concludes that their everyday mothering work—what she calls "abolitionist motherwork"—is essential to imagining the end of incarceration and ultimately achieving it.

Iacobelli, Nick. *Wards of the State: Care and Custody in a Maximum-Security Prison.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2026. Pp. xii + 266. $29.95 paper. This book

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examines the everyday instantiation of incarcerated people's right to healthcare–established by a 1976 U.S. Supreme Court decision– within a men's maximum-security prison in Pennsylvania. Iacobelli finds that the prison's medical unit operates as a "ward of the state," reproducing the state's commitment to punishment. He concludes that, while these dynamics result in complex systems of dependence, refusal, and skepticism—and troubling ideas of what constitutes health and illness in prison–the right to care also opens spaces for men to envision futures and make both personal and structural appeals to justice.

LAW AND AUTHORITARIANISM

Thornhill, Chris, Rustamjon Urinboyev, and Tolibjon Mustafoev. *Public Law in a Hybrid State: Legal Reform and Global Sociology in Uzbekistan.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2026. Pp. viii + 217. $34.95 paper. Free eBook available through Luminos. Thornhill, Urinboyev, and Mustafoev present a sociological analysis of legal developments in contemporary Uzbekistan, using this example to assess why states with some authoritarian features may promote legal reforms and why the modernization of legal institutions may generate benefits for governments. One focus is on how, alongside constitutional changes, reforms in administrative law play an important role in polities with hybrid constitutions, shaping the architecture of government and constructing procedures to manage exchanges between government and citizens.

LAW AND CULTURE

Goodrich, Peter, Anna Jayne Kimmel, and Bernadette Meyler, eds. *Performing Law: Actors, Affects, Spaces.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2026. Pp. xvii + 324. $45.00 paper. Available as open access on Cambridge Core. In this collection edited by Goodrich, Kimmel, and Meyler, international scholars from performance studies, theater history, aesthetics, dance, film, history, and law provide critical analyses of the sites, dramas and stage directions to be found in the orchestration of the tragedies and comedies acted out in multiple forums of contemporary legality. A key focus is on the symbolically staged enactment of a trial.

LAW AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Garrison, Tim Alan. *Sovereignty on Trial: The Cherokee Nation and the Fight for Native Rights.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2026. Pp. xi + 294. $32.99 paper. Garrison tells the story of a trio of landmark United States Supreme Court cases—*Johnson v. M'Intosh* (1823), *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832)—that considered the legal status of Native nations. Known as the Marshall Trilogy—opinions all written by Chief Justice John Marshall—the decisions are inconsistent in their holdings and reasoning. For example, his opinion in *M'Intosh* ultimately placed Native people in a dependent status, but at the end of his judicial career, his opinion in *Worcester* was a powerful acclamation of Native political sovereignty and territorial rights.

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 an ethnographic 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 LABOR

Kahraman, Filiz. *Labor in Hard Times: Worker's Legal Mobilization at the European Court of Human Rights.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2025. Pp. xx + 296. $34.99 paper. Focusing on public sector unionists in Turkey and blacklisted construction workers in the UK, Kahraman offers a view of how grassroots activists and lawyers mobilized international law as a tactical resource: Workers engaged rights discourse strategically to pursue concrete goals, while remaining rooted in class-based solidarity. Drawing on extensive fieldwork and a unique database of labor rights cases, the book traces how workers used litigation at the European Court of Human Rights not just to win legal victories, but to build political pressure, assert legitimacy, and reclaim space for collective action.

LAW AND MEDICINE

Romain, Jonathan. *A Better Death: The Case for Assisted Dying*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2026. Pp. ii + 135. $18.00 cloth. Romain lays out the moral, legal, and practical dimensions of the debate over assisted dying, drawing on real-life experiences, exploring opposing viewpoints, and examining wider social and ethical implications.

LAW AND PROPERTY

Brisman, Shira. *The Goldsmith's Debt: Conceptions of Property in Early Modern Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2026. Pp. ix + 468. $65.00 cloth. Considering how works of art can shape a social order, this book explores what a 16th century German goldsmith's etchings and goblets reveal about how goldsmiths' patrons used commissioned works to legitimize their claims over land and the rights of others. Drawing on a range of textual and material evidence—including commentaries on Roman and customary laws, wills and civic statutes, printed designs, and study of lidded cups in dozens of major European institutions—Brisman seeks to place the goldsmith at the heart of the era's arguments about how people and lands should be subjugated.

LAW AND TAXATION

Campbell, Andrea Louise. *Taxation and Resentment: Race, Party, and Class in American Tax Attitudes*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2025. Pp. xvii + 326. $29.95 paper.

Campbell examines U.S. public opinion on taxation, exploring why what Americans favor in principle differs from what they accept in practice, arguing that the complexity of the tax code leaves the public confused about who benefits from the convoluted tax code and leads to tax preferences that are driven by factors other than principles or interests. She also finds that tax attitudes vary little by income or by party, but that white opinion on nearly every tax is racialized.

LEGAL REALISM

Leiter, Brian. *From a Realist Point of View*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2026. Pp. xv + 436. $170 cloth. Leiter's collection of his new and recent work seeks to offer a systematic and philosophically ambitious account of legal realism and its links to political realism. In one part of the book, he examines the problem of theoretical disagreement, the relation between legal positivism and realism, and the realist theory of precedent, concluding with a critique of the metaphysical inflation of general jurisprudence. In another part, he brings the realist perspective to bear on courts and democracy, morality (understood as a culturally variably human artifact) and moral philosophy (treated as ethnographic data, irrelevant to political practice).

REGULATION

Svantesson, Dan Jerker B., et al. *Beer Law*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2025. Pp. xviii + 250. £24.00 paper. The regulation of beer goes back thousands of years, and beer laws have shaped society in both obvious and unexpected ways. Svantesson engages with a broad range of beer law topics including health, intellectual property, consumer protection and unfair competition, contract, competition, international trade, environment, and tax. He also explores beer, beer culture and beer laws across a wide range of jurisdictions, including Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Nordic countries, North America, and Britain and Ireland.

RIGHTS

Blain, Harry. *Legislating Against Liberties: How Congress Suppresses Constitutional Rights After Wars.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2026. Pp. xiii + 272. $32.99 paper. Blain argues that the U.S. Congress is the key national actor in sustaining postwar restrictions on civil liberties, wielding tools that make it, not the executive, the primary institutional threat to civil liberties in the aftermath of war. For example, the House used its exclusion power to refuse to seat the socialist Victor Berger, disenfranchising voters in the process; Congress used its power to compel testimony during the Red Scares in an effort to discredit and humiliate their political enemies; and legislators have removed, or threatened to remove, Supreme Court jurisdiction over *habeas corpus* petitions throughout US history.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Shelden, Rachel A. *The Political Supreme Court: A Forgotten History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2026. Pp. x + 434. $35.00 cloth. Shelden finds that, for

the first century of U.S. history, Supreme Court justices were expected to engage in partisan politics—there was no concern that such engagement would lead to corruption or undue bias—and they remained deeply involved in civic debate and the electoral process. Nineteenth-century justices wrote for partisan newspapers, drafted legislation, advised partisan allies, campaigned for colleagues, and even ran for political offices from the bench. Her book also charts shifts at the turn of the twentieth century, when members of the Court and the legal community refashioned the judiciary as an apolitical institution.

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