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BOOK NOTES*

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Bernstein, Alyssa G., *Palestinian Political Organizations in Israeli Prisons.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2024. Pp. xxx + 292. $115 cloth. Drawing on observation-based fieldwork and interviews with ex-prisoners, lawyers, and advocates, this book presents a sociological account of Palestinian prisoners in Israel. Applying a social movement approach and drawing comparisons to other politically motivated prisoner groups, Bernstein explores the characteristics of women's resistance, the effects of the Islamicization, new hunger strike strategies, consumerism within the prison, parenting children, and escapes.

Brust, Richard, *Chambers V. Florida and the Criminal Justice Revolution.* Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2025. Pp. ix + 231. $35.00 cloth. Brust explores the case of *Chambers v Florida*, a 1940 case where local law enforcement officers extracted confessions from four Black migrant workers after a week of torture and abuse. Simuel McGill, a Black lawyer based in Jacksonville, mounted appeals, kept the accused men safe from lynchings, and eventually took the case to the US Supreme Court, where Justice Hugo Black, among other parts of the ruling, compared justice systems in the Jim Crow South to those of totalitarian nations in 1930s Europe.

Cage, E. Claire, *The Science of Proof: Forensic Medicine in Modern France*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2025. Pp. x + 265. $34.99 paper. Cage traces the rise of forensic medicine in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France and examines its implications for our understanding of expert authority. Drawing on a wide base of archival and printed sources, she analyzes how new forms of medical and scientific knowledge, were contested, but ultimately accepted, and applied to legal problems and the administration of justice. Nonetheless, the professional development of medico-legal expertise and its influence in criminal courts sparked debates about the extent to which it could reveal truth, furnish legal proof, and serve justice.

Chan, Wing-Cheong, Mai Sato, and Michael Hor, eds. *Capital Drug Laws in Asia.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2025. Pp. xxv + 274. £100.00 cloth. Contributors to Chan, Sato, and Hor's collection analyze the law and policy related to illicit drugs in various Asian jurisdictions, with specific focus on measures undertaken to combat drug offences and the use of the death penalty for such offences. The areas examined include developments in the law and policy relating to illicit drugs; use of criminal law

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measures to combat drug-related offences; motivations of drug offenders; public support for punitive punishments; structure of the laws; procedural rights of accused persons; mandatory/discretionary sentencing and use of the death penalty.

Christ, Birte. *Imagining the American Death Penalty: The Cultural Work of Popular Visual Representations.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2025. Pp. ix + 305. $115.00 cloth. Christ traces the U.S. American cultural imaginary of capital punishment through popular visual representations from the 1890s to the twenty-first century. The study focuses on three generic and historical clusters of representations: early film from the 1890s through *Intolerance* (1916), crime film noir of the 1950s and 1960s, and legal TV series from the 1990s through the early 2000s. He concludes that increased concern with the death penalty in popular media does not mean that these texts promote an abolitionist agenda: their cultural work is ambiguous at best; and that popular visual representations consistently whitewash the death penalty.

Clark, Tom S., Adam N. Glynn, and Michael Leo Owens. *Deadly Force: Police Shootings in Urban America.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2025. Pp. xvi + 300. $29.95 cloth. Clark, Glynn, and Owens draw on data they collected to examine police shootings, both fatal and non-fatal, in hundreds of American cities, finding wide disparities in when, where, and whom the police shoot. They find that Black and Hispanic residents of large cities are disproportionately exposed to police gunfire, even when they are not themselves the targets of it; there is a disproportionate concentration of shootings by police in the places where most Black and Hispanic urbanites live, even accounting for violent crime rates and other factors.

Cuvi, Jacinto. *The Edge of the Law: Street Vendors and the Erosion of Citizenship in São Paulo.* Chicago: University of Chicago, 2025. Pp. x + 201. $30.00 paper. As São Paulo's city government undertakes a large-scale plan to cancel street vending licenses and evict street vendors, Cuvi examines how the rights of informal workers can be revoked or withheld and how the lines can be redrawn between work that is "legal" and work that takes place under constant fear of law enforcement. Alongside the mechanics of disenfranchisement, he examines the lived experience of criminalization, dissecting the distribution of (shallow) rights among vendors who continually reinvent strategies to eke out a living while dealing with the constraints and pressures of informal citizenship at the edge of the law.

Fields, Shawn E. *The New Public Safety: Police Reform and the Lurking Threat to Civil Liberties.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2025. Pp. ix + 225. $29.95 paper. Fields argues that the US rush to reimagine public safety by offloading at least some of the police function to other providers carries a serious risk: a long history of abuse exists within social welfare systems, and the laws protecting people from police who perpetrate these types of abuses largely do not apply to EMTs, social workers, and other non-police responders.

Fischel, Joseph J. *Sodomy's Solicitations: A Right to Queerness.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2025. Pp. x + 286. $39.95 paper. Fischel indicts U.S. sex offender regulatory regimes as state-sponsored sexual violence; offers a qualified defense for sexual expression in public; and argues that animal sexual abuse laws, with their

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exemptions for industrial agricultural practices, authorize the suffering they were enacted to deter. He argues that laws criminalizing the exchange of sex for money are unconstitutional, proposes that the best way to protect trans and queer children would be to enfranchise them, and champions a right to queerness across rather than within identity formations—a right to relatively unpoliced gender, sexual, and intimate pluralism.

Heath, Deana. *Colonial Terror: Torture and State Violence in Colonial India.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2025. Pp. xi + 228. $40.00 paper. Focusing on India between the early nineteenth century and the First World War, Heath explores the centrality of the torture of Indian bodies to the law-preserving violence of colonial rule. Drawing upon the work of Agamben and Foucault, she contends that it is only possible to understand the terrorizing nature of the colonial police in India by viewing colonial India as a 'regime of exception' in which two forms of exceptionality were in operation: one wrought through the exclusion of particular segments of the Indian population from the law and the other by 'petty sovereigns' in their enactment of illegal violence in the operation of the law.

Howard, Grace E. *The Pregnancy Police: Conceiving Crime, Arresting Personhood*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2024. Pp. x + 284. $29.95 paper. Drawing on detailed analyses of legislation, statements from prosecutors and law enforcement, and records from over a thousand arrest cases, Howard traces the history of state attempts to regulate and control people who have the capacity for pregnancy—from the early twentieth century's white supremacist eugenics to the end of *Roe* and the ever-increasing criminalization of abortion across the United States. A particular focus is on the networks of health-care providers, social workers, and legal personnel participating in the ongoing surveillance and punishment of pregnant people.

Kamal, Daanika. *Domestic Violence in Pakistan: The Legal Construction of 'Bad' and 'Mad' Women.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2025. Pp. xviii + 237. $130.00 cloth. Drawing on feminist post-structuralist accounts relating to the use of gendering strategies in institutional and disciplinary settings, and based on an analysis of more than 100 case files and judgments, 72 interviews, and court observations in three cities of Pakistan, Kamal examines gendered subject formation in discursive spaces, ranging from the use of societal narratives that minimize and silence women's harms, to the deployment of police mechanisms that assist in maintaining the 'secrecy' of familial violence, and the application and enactment of boilerplate lawyerly strategies to present alternative legal 'truths'.

Kolber, Adam J. *Punishment for the Greater Good*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2024. Pp. ix + 248. $110.00 cloth. Kolber argues against retribution as a justification for punishment, holding that we should reduce suffering by deterring crime and incapacitating and rehabilitating dangerous people. Though this consequentialist approach has fallen out of favor in recent decades, he concludes that it is better suited to addressing punishment in the here and now than the approach commonly taken by retributivists.

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Larsen, Matthew D.C. and Mark Letteney. *Ancient Mediterranean Incarceration.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2025. Pp. xix + 236. $34.95 paper. Available through open access. This book examines spaces, practices, and ideologies of incarceration in the ancient Mediterranean basin from 300 BCE to 600 CE. Analyzing legal texts, archaeological findings, documentary evidence, and visual materials, Larsen and Letteney find that prisons were integral to the social, political, and economic fabric of ancient societies and that the prison has been fundamentally intertwined with issues of class, ethnicity, gender, and imperialism.

Munn, Christopher. *Penalties of Empire: Capital Trials in Colonial Hong Kong.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2025. Distributed by University of Chicago Press. Pp. xi + 405. $50.00 cloth. Munn explores how judges, juries, and lawyers strove to deliver justice during the 150 years when the death penalty was in force in Hong Kong. Chapters focus on key capital trials in the first century of British rule, the public debates surrounding each case and the exercise of mercy by governors, the decline of the death penalty after World War II, and the controversies leading to its formal abolition in 1993.

Stitt, Mary Ellen. *Trial by Treatment: Punishing Illness in an Age of Criminal Legal Reform*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2025. Pp. iv + 243. $30.00 paper. Stitt argues that US treatment-based alternatives to traditional punishment– "diversion programs" –have, in fact, expanded the reach of the criminal legal system and its power over the lives of the most vulnerable. Drawing on two years of fieldwork in criminal courtrooms and court-mandated treatment sessions, as well as an original national dataset, in-depth interviews, and experimental survey data, to document the hidden impacts of diversion, she concludes that placing mental healthcare under the control of the courts has helped to legitimize the criminalization of illness, warped treatment environments, and amplified inequalities in punishment.

Ullrich, Leila. *Victims and the Labour of Justice at the International Criminal Court: The Blame Cascade.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2024. Pp. xiii + 364. $145.00 cloth. Arguing against the view that victim participation at the International Criminal Court is an empty promise of justice, Ullrich finds that the ICC's methods of victim engagement are productive, reproducing the Court as a relevant institution and transforming victims in the Global South into highly gendered and racialized labouring subjects. Drawing on critical theory, criminological analysis, and ethnographic fieldwork in The Hague, Kenya, and Uganda, she concludes that the drive to include victims as participants in international criminal justice proceedings also creates and disciplines them as blameworthy capitalist subjects.

JURISPRUDENCE AND SOCIOLEGAL THEORY

Darío Vargas Roncancio, Iván. *Law, Humans and Plants in the Andes-Amazon: The Lawness of Life*. New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2024. Pp. ix + 259. $190.00 cloth. This book challenges traditional Western legal frameworks by exploring how plants and indigenous knowledge reshape our understanding of law. Vargas Roncancio argues that legal systems exclusively focused on human perspectives are inadequate for addressing current socio-ecological crises, advocating instead for a

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post-anthropocentric approach that recognizes the interactions between humans and other-than-human beings as fundamental to legal institutions and decision-making.

LAW AND CONTAGION

Chua, Lynette J., and Jack Jin Gary Lee, eds. *Contagion, Technology, and Law at the Limits*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024. Pp. xiii + 211. $120.00 cloth. Available on open access. Contributors to Chua and Lee's volume explore law, politics, and inequality in fights against infectious diseases. Guided by a theoretical framework called "governing through contagion," they analyze how past and present governments have tried to combat contagious diseases, such as the bubonic plague, cholera, HIV/AIDS, and COVID-19. Although the studies recognize the power of the state, they simultaneously emphasize the active roles of technologies and creatures and consider the implications of strategies of control on marginalized communities and democratic politics.

Mark, Alyx. *Courts Unmasked: Civil Legal System Reform and COVID-19.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2025. Pp. xiii + 200. $69.99 cloth. Drawing on administrative orders disseminated across state court hierarchies and nearly sixty interviews with elite court actors who participated in constructing and implementing these orders, Mark uses the COVID-19 pandemic as the vehicle for exposing and unpacking the realities of power and process in US state civil courts and what this might mean for the future of civil justice reform. She argues that COVID acted as an accelerant for procedural change and laid bare the different approaches to administrative decision-making that characterize the state courts. A particular focus is on states that use a top-down approach to court administration, versus those that don't.

LAW AND EMPIRE

Powers, Allison. *Arbitrating Empire: United States Expansion and the Transformation of International Law.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2024. Pp. xiv + 274. $59.99 cloth. Drawing on extensive archival research in the United States, Mexico, Panama, and the United Kingdom, this book traces how thousands of dispossessed residents of US-annexed territories petitioned international Claims Commissions between the 1870s and the 1930s to charge the United States with violating international legal protections for life and property. Through attention to the consequences of their unexpected claims, Powers finds that colonized subjects, refugees from slavery, and migrant workers transformed a series of tribunals designed to establish the legality of US imperial interventions into sites through which to challenge the legitimacy of US colonial governance.

LAW AND IMMIGRATION

Coutin, Susan Bibler. *On the Record: Papers, Immigration, and Legal Advocacy*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2025. Pp. xii + 170. $34.95 paper. Available through open access. Immigrant residents seeking legal status in the United States face a dilemma: the documents that they need—bank records, paycheck stubs, and

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contracts in their own names—are often challenging for them to obtain. Based on four years of fieldwork and volunteer work in the legal services department of an immigrant-serving nonprofit and in-depth interviews with undocumented persons seeking status, Coutin explores this complex dynamic by taking seriously both documents themselves and the legal craft that has developed around their use.

LAW AND INEQUALITY

Dimick, Matthew. *Ending Income Inequality: A Critical Approach to the Law and Economics of Redistribution*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2025. Pp. xv + 346. $41.99 paper. Dimick challenges arguments made by legal scholars in the field of law and economics, who have preferred the use of the tax system, rather than direct use of legal rules, to combat economic inequality in the US. By examining specific areas of the law such as minimum wage, collective bargaining, antitrust law, intellectual property, and housing regulation, he argues that using legal rules, in addition to income taxes, is a promising path to reverse rising inequality.

LAW AND LABOR

Dasgupta, Simanti. *Prophylactic Rights: Sex Work, HIV/AIDS, and Anti-Trafficking in India*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2024. Pp. xvi + 311. £85.00 cloth. Based on ethnographic work with Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee in Sonagachi, the iconic red-light district in Kolkata, Dasgupta examines the emergence of labor rights at the intersection of HIV/AIDS and anti-trafficking. It addresses the following questions: How does the labor rights narrative emerge through everyday negotiations with an epidemic and the law and what congeries of history, public health policies, legal regimes, and techniques of subjection and subversion impede and impel the labor movement?

LAW AND MEDICINE

Reich, Barbara A. *Intimations of Mortality: Medical Decision-Making at the End of Life*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2025. Pp. xviii + 248. $34.00 paper. Using England and Canada as occasional foils, Reich explores why U.S. physicians, patients, and families struggle to have the conversations necessary to provide seriously ill and dying patients with medical care consistent with their preferences. She finds that a number of different factors –including payment mechanisms, liability fears, cultural phenomena, communication avoidance, death denial, and clinical uncertainty – impact physician-patient communication and medical decision-making, leave patients and families without the tools they need to make informed choices, and instead leave the default practices in place.

LAW AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

Margaria, Alice, and Larissa Vetters, eds. *Leading Works in Law and Anthropology*. New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2025. Pp. xv + 232. $190.00 cloth. The academic disciplines of law and sociocultural anthropology have a long but at times contentious history of drawing on each other in order to study and understand law

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and human experience in its diverse manifestations. Contributors to Margaria and Vetters' volume reflect upon what they consider to be a 'leading work' in the field, seeking to shed light on the changing nature of cross-disciplinary research and collaboration, trace how disciplinary understandings of normativity have cross-fertilised each other, and reflect on choices taken within research on law and anthropology along a continuum of theoretical reflection, critique, engagement, and practical application.

LAW AND PERSONHOOD

Ziegler, Mary. *Personhood: The New Civil War over Reproduction*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2025. Pp. xxi + 347. $35.00 cloth. Ziegler argues that since the 1960s, the goal of the anti-abortion movement has been to secure recognition of fetuses and embryos as persons under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, a step that the modern anti-abortion movement argues would make liberal abortion laws unconstitutional. She explores how Americans came to take for granted that fetal personhood requires criminalization and suggests that other ways of valuing both fetal life and women's equality might be possible.

LAW AND RACE

Cuevas, Ofelia Ortiz. *Visuality of Violence: Witnessing the Policing of Race.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2025. Pp. x + 144. $23.95 paper. This book seeks to provide a holistic mapping of the policing and incarceration of Black and Brown people in the US through the shifting narratives of race by examining the long-running TV series, COPS, and the museum exhibition, *Without Sanctuary*, which features photographs of lynching. Ortiz Cuevas argues that the visual presentations of the racial body throughout history requires a reckoning and acknowledgement of the material and legal effects of the images, narratives, and practices used to maintain hegemonic racial order and inequality.

Gronningsater, Sarah L. H., *The Rising Generation: Gradual Abolition, Black Legal Culture, and the Making of National Freedom*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2024. Pp. vi + 400. $45.00 cloth. This book chronicles the history of emancipation in the United States through the cradle-to-grave experiences of a generation of black New Yorkers born into precarious freedom after the American Revolution and reaching adulthood in the lead-up to the Civil War. Gronningsater begins by exploring how English colonial laws shaped late eighteenth-century gradual abolition acts that freed children born to enslaved mothers; she finds that as these children reached adulthood, they took the lessons of their youth into midcentury campaigns for legal equality, political inclusion, equitable common school education, and the expansion of freedom across the nation.

Jiménez, Mónica A. *Making Never-Never Land: Race and Law in the Creation of Puerto Rico*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2024. Pp. xiii + 174. $24.95 paper. Jiménez argues that despite Puerto Rico's unique position as a twenty-first-century colony, its path to that place was not exceptional. Rather, the federal policies and jurisprudence that created Puerto Rico exist within a larger pantheon of exclusionary,

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race-based laws and policies that have carved out "states of exception" for racial undesirables: Native Americans, African Americans, and the inhabitants of the insular territories.

Kahrl, Andrew W., *The Black Tax: 150 Years of Theft, Exploitation, and Dispossession in America.* Chicago: University of Chicago, 2024. Pp. iv + 443. $20.00 paper. Kahrl examines the structural features and hidden traps within America's tax system–particularly the property tax–that have resulted in Black Americans paying more for less and stripped them of their land and investments.

LAW AND SPORT

Koller, Dionne. *More Than Play: How Law, Policy, and Politics Shape American Youth Sport.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2025. Pp. viii + 219. $29.95 paper. Koller sets out a critical approach to the law and policy assumptions underlying youth sports in the US, arguing that the current model puts children's bodies to work in an activity that generates significant surplus value. She identifies a wide array of beneficiaries who have a stake in a system that is much more than just play—and the political choices that protect these parties' interests at children's expense.

LAW AND VULNERABILITY

Albertson Fineman, Martha, and Laura Spitz. eds. *Law, Vulnerability, and the Responsive State: Beyond Equality and Liberty.* New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2023. Pp. xv + 273. $49.99 paper. Vulnerability Theory argues a "vulnerable legal subject" should displace the "liberal legal subject" that currently dominates law and policy. The theory is based on the fundamental empirical realities of the material body and offers an alternative to a social contract or rights-based notion of state responsibility, both of which tend to privilege abstractions such as rationality or dignity. To achieve a truly comprehensive and inclusive notion of what constitutes social justice or a universal or common good, vulnerability theory mandates a reassessment of both equality and freedom; this is the task that contributors to Fineman and Spitz's collection undertake.

LEGAL DEVELOPMENT

Arrington, Celeste L. *From Manners to Rules: Advocating for Legalism in South Korea and Japan.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2025. Pp. xiii + 412. £110.00 cloth. Drawing on 120 interviews and diverse sources, Arrington challenges the conventional wisdom that law and courts play marginal roles in Korean and Japanese politics and illuminates how legalistic governance is transforming citizens' options for political participation. With a particular focus on recent reforms in disability rights and tobacco control, she focuses on bottom-up sources of institutional and social change, as activists and lawyers advocate for and use more formal rules and procedures.

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PRIVACY

Eiermann, Martin. *The Limiting Principle: How Privacy Became a Public Issue.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2025. Pp. x + 347. $37.00 paper. Drawing on archival materials and computational research methods, Eiermann examines the history, social significance, and limitations of privacy in the modern United States. He seeks to rebut the claim that technological change renders privacy obsolete, arguing that the concept became increasingly capacious when it was applied to the social problems and political disputes of the information age. He concludes that it is often the selectivity—not the ubiquity—of governmental and corporate data collection that should elicit our concerns.

REGULATION BY NONSTATE ACTORS

Talesh, Shauhin A. *Insuring Cyberinsecurity: Insurance Companies as Symbolic Regulators.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2025. Pp. xii + 260. $34.95 paper. Available through open access. Drawing from interviews, observations, and extensive content analysis of the cyber insurance industry, this book argues that US cyber insurers' risk management services convey legitimacy to the public and to insureds but fall short of actually improving data security, rendering them largely symbolic. Speaking directly to broader debates on regulatory delegation to nonstate actors, Talesh proposes a new institutional theory of insurance to explain how insurers shape the content and meaning of privacy law and cybersecurity compliance, offering policy recommendations for how insurers and governments can work together to improve cybersecurity and foster greater algorithmic justice.

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