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Introduction to Special Issue

By Ingrid Brunk, Jeffrey Dunoff, and Monica Hakimi

This special book review issue of the *American Journal of International Law* emerged from multiple intuitions. First, there is good reason to believe that the international legal and political order is undergoing profound change. Second, legal scholarship would benefit from creative efforts to analyze how current events in international law connect to both historical trends and prospects for the future. Finally, although book reviews are sometimes underappreciated, they at their best draw together ideas in ways that make lasting contributions to the field. With these intuitions in mind, we have endeavored to curate a provocative and creative set of book review essays that analyze current issues in international law through unusual pairings of books and authors.

The scholars who contributed to this issue approach international law from diverse perspectives using different analytic methods. We pushed them in unconventional directions, including, for example, by soliciting an essay on the representation of international law in popular culture. We often asked authors to put a "classic" text in conversation with a newer one and—the discerning reader will note—we asked some to write on topics outside of their best-known areas of expertise. As a group, the essays cover significant ground on the role of law in the international order, on its relationship to other forms of power, and on its potential for human emancipation. They address these themes in a broad range of contexts, from war to (de)colonization to economic liberalization, artificial intelligence, and maritime relations. We hope that they generate further reflection, conversation, and debate because the production of knowledge, like international law, is a collective enterprise that benefits from sustained engagement by those who work across time, field, space, and method.

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