



## UCL LAWS POSTGRADUATE & EARLY CAREER CONFERENCE 2014

### CALL FOR PAPERS

We would like to invite all postgraduate research students and early career academics to submit abstracts for UCL Laws' first annual postgraduate and early career conference. The conference will run for one day at UCL in London on **Monday 3 November 2014**.

### CONFERENCE THEME: *Creative Constraints*

The theme of the conference is "**Creative Constraints**". We invite participants to set aside the disciplinary taxonomy generally used to organise legal thinking (e.g. torts, constitutional law, human rights, commercial transactions) in order to take a fresh look at their research. Participants are invited to submit an abstract casting their proposed presentation in one of the **four conference streams**.

Each stream is comprised of a pair of opposite words. These streams are designed as prompts to stimulate creative thinking and to see a particular area of law in a new light. We provide a short description of each stream, but these should be seen as sources of inspiration rather than as limitations. For example, paper abstracts could address a pairing as a whole or could focus on only one of its terms. We hope this approach will allow participants to consider how their research relates to the work of other researchers, how other disciplines or perspectives might influence their work, and whether this might lead to new research methods, questions or collaborations.

The four streams are:

#### **STREAM 1: One/Many**

The law comprises singularity as much as it comprises plurality. Some laws juxtapose the individual and the community, by protecting the human being as an autonomous entity and shielding her from the demands of the majority, while some are intended to protect the many from the actions of one. The tension between the interests of one and the interests of many is thus at the core of a wide array of legal problems. It is also embedded in the regulation of the relations between states participating in the international order; in the question of whether a single, overarching law would better address specific problems than a multitude of smaller-scale laws; in states coming together to form another law-generating entity; and in the operation of many different legal systems in parallel or in convergence.

#### **STREAM 2: Silence/Noise**

The law can be deafening, noisy, excessive. Law is everywhere and speaks loudly of a society's commitments, values and goals. Law is also involved in regulating the noise of others, both literally - as in noise pollution laws and restrictions on freedom of speech - and conceptually, when it moderates disputes between individuals in the law of tort, contract or trusts. But the law is implicated in silence as well. This can occur passively, through its omissions and its failure to intervene or be enforced in given cases. Law is also actively involved in creating, reproducing or regulating silence. The requirement to cast one's claim in law's language and the often restrictive normative basis of many laws operates to silence certain voices or groups, or render certain ideas or possibilities unsayable. Silence and noise track vulnerability and power in many unseen ways.

### **STREAM 3: Gateways/Barriers**

The law is a gateway in itself. It provides routes to citizenship and the professions. It creates opportunities through social protection and licensing to belong, to learn and to work. The law also creates physical and conceptual barriers. It protects intellectual property, bodily integrity and rights. It divides and separates through imprisonment and property rights. Remarkably, some areas of law are both gateways and barriers: immigration can prevent freedom of movement or provide rights to live and work in a new country. The law promotes access and opportunities in some circumstances, and yet in others it restricts and separates.

### **STREAM 4: Entanglement/Unraveling**

The law binds; it brings persons, things and ideals together. It grounds networks and communities: cities, partnerships, religions and professions. It can be difficult to extract ourselves from the place where the law has put us, yet other times we yearn to belong. Human projects also fail and ties are unfastened, loosened or reinvented. Corporations are liquidated, treaty obligations repudiated, states secede. Sometimes the law ensures that the aftermath unfolds in an orderly fashion; however, legal processes themselves can also be used to disruptive effect, such as in the case of strategic lawsuits against public participation or patent trolling. Regimes, schemes and institutions that withstood the test of time suddenly or progressively cease fulfilling their functions. Yet the law also provides some of the means to protect ourselves from breakdowns and catastrophes.

### **WORKSHOPS**

The conference includes two parallel workshop sessions. The first will provide guidance on developing advanced skills in academic writing, and the second will assist PhD students and early career academics in navigating the academic job market. The workshops provide a unique opportunity for participants to develop key skills and gain practical insight into a career in legal academia.

Delegates will be asked to choose which workshop they wish to attend at registration. Please note that participation in the workshops is on a first come, first served basis and that we may therefore not be able to accommodate first choices for late registrations.

### **PRIZES**

Prizes will be awarded for best presentation, and for most original contribution to the conference. These will be judged by conference attendees based on feedback after each panel session.

### **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Please send your 300-word abstract by **Friday 20 June 2014** to the organizing committee at [pecc@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:pecc@ucl.ac.uk). Your abstract should make clear which of the four streams you are following.

Applicants whose abstracts are accepted will be notified by **Friday 18 July 2014**, and will be asked to write either a short conference paper of up to 3000 words, or an extended abstract following the 'Mumford Method' by Friday 12 September 2014. For more information on the Mumford Method, see: <http://tinyurl.com/cnufskt>

The conference has a fee of £20. To register, please visit: <http://pecc-ucl.eventbrite.co.uk>

For more information on the conference, accommodation, travel, and venue please see our website at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/laws/conferences/pecc/>

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