



with the *UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs*

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS: TRANSNATIONAL RE-IMAGININGS

UCLA’s Critical Race Studies Program, Promise Institute for Human Rights, International and Comparative Law Program and *Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs* are planning a one-day conference at the UCLA School of Law on **Friday, March 8th, 2019**, exploring critical topics in contemporary international human rights law from the joint perspectives of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL). Contemporary global and national political crises, many of which threaten the human rights of millions and even the international human rights system itself, call for novel, radical ways of re-imagining the role of law and legal institutions for a more just and humane future. The national oppression of politically marginal groups cannot fully be understood apart from the global structures that condition national dynamics. Similarly, global systems cannot fully be understood apart from the national contexts that give them content. Racial structures and systems central to colonization and neo-colonialism are crucial dimensions of the overall framework. The aim of this conference is to foster a transnational, interdisciplinary academic dialogue among human rights, TWAIL and CRT scholars on some of the most pressing issues of our time.

The TWAIL umbrella brings together scholars with diverse interests and methodologies who begin from the premise that the “Third World” is a political reality that unifies much of the world outside Western Europe, the United States and Canada. Nations of the Third World remain politically and economically subordinate to the powers in these two regions, and this subordination cannot be understood apart from European colonialism and its legacy. TWAIL scholars locate international law in this colonial project; attempt to understand and deconstruct the ways in which this genealogy still defines international law as a system of empire and subordination; and some reconceptualize international law in ways that disrupt hierarchies of power. Critical Race Theory scholars seek to understand the deep interconnections between race and law, particularly the ways in which race and law are mutually constitutive as well as the imperviousness of racism to efforts at legal reform. They have done so mainly with a focus on the United States and other former British colonies, though increasingly with an eye on the broader international context including the role of American imperialism in the Third World. Contrary to the traditional notion that racial subordination represents a deviation from the liberal legal ideal, CRT scholars recast the role of law as central to and complicit in upholding racial hierarchy as well hierarchies of gender, social class, sexual orientation, and disability among others. The conference will bring the TWAIL and CRT frames together to bear on questions of law, history, political economy, and others as they relate to the field of human rights, broadly construed.



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CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite interdisciplinary paper submissions from across disciplines and methodologies with an emphasis on the following three cluster of topics:

- **MIGRATION:** This theme includes displacement as a consequence of climate change; rights and protection regimes for economic migrants; and the fraying system of protections for refugees, among other topics. We invite submissions that, among others, address such topics with particular attention to the racial dimensions of migrant exclusion, the historical roots of contemporary trajectories; criminalization and detention; the political economy of the drivers of migration, including labor migration; and the institutional and normative responses to migration.
- **POLITICAL EQUALITY:** This theme invites engagement with the myriad criticisms of the claims to universalism in the human rights system, including those that address the normative framing, the institutional structure and allegations of the fundamental ineffectiveness of the human rights system. We invite submissions that, among others, engage such topics as: the international sovereignty regime and Third World claims to equality and effective participation in the international order; the function of the norm of non-intervention in an age of militarized humanitarianism; reconstructing or challenging the emancipatory potential of human rights; and intellectual histories of human rights.
- **SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY:** This theme engages with the especially pointed challenge to a human rights system that has failed to adequately address economic and social rights during the seven decades since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. We invite submissions that address, from CRT and TWAIL perspectives, such topics as: transnational labor protections in an era of free trade; social backlash to neoliberal globalization and its implications; the global rise of populism; health protections and environmental sustainability in the international human rights system; multilateral governance of the international economic order; and critical engagements with paradigms of “development.”

We will draw from paper submissions on the above topics for both plenary panels and concurrent sessions. Additional themes on which we welcome submissions for concurrent sessions include:

- Climate change
- Populism
- Criminal justice and human rights
- Race and the international order
- Critical race feminism
- Post-colonial and/or decolonized sovereignties
- Fourth world approaches to indigeneity
- Comparative CRT
- Intersectionality



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Submission Information

If you wish to submit an abstract for consideration for inclusion in the conference, please follow all of the following instructions, as only complete applications will be reviewed:

- Abstract of no more than 500 words describing the paper you wish to present
- Cover letter with:
 - Your name, institutional affiliation (if any) and email contact information
 - Five key words associated with the paper
 - An indication of which of the conference themes the paper addresses
- C.V. (no longer than 2 pages)

The **deadline** for submissions is **Monday, October 1st, 2018 by 5pm Pacific Time**. Please submit materials via email to yuan@law.ucla.edu with the subject line: Symposium Proposal. Successful applicants will be notified via email no later than November 1st, 2018.