

Call for Papers

Third Annual Legal Studies Graduate Student Conference

“Law, Language, and the Archive”

Friday and Saturday, April 27th - 28th, 2018 at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

Deadline for submission: March 1, 2018 | Acceptance notification by: March 15, 2018

Language is a conduit of information, a reflection of the social and political constructions of bygone eras, as well as our present. It can be deployed in the service of beauty, expression, liberation, punishment, control, and /or shame. Moreover, language, an essential tool of the law, is ordered and organized according to an often contradictory sedimentation of norms, assumptions, and customs. As legal scholars, we employ a number of methodologies to confront and interpret the messy entanglements of language, law, and lived experience. The legal archive, like law and language, “straddles the material and the ideational,”¹ sometimes tracking these myriad modes of legal speech, sometimes itself symbolically producing ‘the law’ as a heavily guarded and precise linguistic apparatus, filled with loopholes and traps.²

The Brown Legal Studies initiative invites paper submissions on the subject of “Law, Language, and the Archive” for its third annual graduate student conference. At a moment when important political and legal institutions in the United States are challenged from within and without, our conference will consider the interaction of language and the law, contemporarily and in broader historical and comparatist contexts, and the ways we, as scholars, interact and interpret the language of the law in the archival sources we use. We hope to foster interdisciplinary conversation and so encourage papers from any discipline, including (but not limited to): Jurisprudence, History, Ethnic Studies, Philosophy, Anthropology, Literature, Classics, Political Science, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Economics, and Sociology. We welcome abstracts addressing any geographical area or historical period. Possible topics of discussion may include:

- law and / as literature
- jurisdiction
- ethical, political, and vulnerability considerations of legal archival work
- legal narrative
- legal claims as speech acts
- queering the legal archive
- deletions, ellisions, absences, silences, and hauntings in the legal archive
- legal testimony
- bearing witness in the court and the archive
- expressing/liberating gender, race, ethnicity, nationhood, and indigeneity
- disciplining/containing gender, race, ethnicity, nationhood, and indigeneity
- epistemology/ways of knowing and the law
- fugitivity in the legal archive

Please submit a 250-500 word abstract, along with a copy of your C.V., by Thursday March 1, 2018. Submissions should be sent to brownlegalstudies2018@gmail.com. If you have questions, please contact Anne Gray Fischer (anne_gray_fischer@brown.edu) or Sherri Cummings (sherri_cummings@brown.edu).

More information is also available at www.brownlegalstudies.org.

¹ Justin Richland, “Jurisdiction: Grounding Law in Language” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 42:No. 1,; 211

² Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008.