

Call for Book Chapters

Inheritance: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Editors:

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Abstract Submission Deadline: January 15, 2022

Why Inheritance?

Inheritance catapults private intimacies into the public domain of law. Behind the seemingly strict legal formalism of inheritance, succession and probate law - writing wills/determining intestacy - lies a whole set of social, cultural, familial, and affective processes. It is this intersection of the social and the legal that interests us.

Inheritance is a topic of interest to a wide range of scholarly fields/inquiry. Historians of the distant and recent past have used wills to reveal and sometimes challenge assumptions about religious practice and the role of women. Philosophers have focused on the principle of testamentary freedom to question the notion of life and harm after death. And the centrality of will-writing in fiction has meant that many literary scholars know more about the subject than most lawyers. More critically, social historians, political theorists, critical race scholars and feminists have focused on inheritance as a site to address issues of nation-making, the creating and entrenching of classed, gendered and racial inequalities, and perpetuating biological models of race, white supremacy and patriarchy. In doing so they expose and trouble the violence underlying colloquial phrases such as 'family money', and the practices and protection of the legal industry of 'estate planning'.

At the same time, other scholars point to inheritance - and particularly will-writing - as practices for sustaining existing religious, and other minority groups and for imagining and recognising new communities and relationships of care. All these scholars highlight the centrality of inheritance to shifting, contesting and queering understandings of 'kinship' and 'family'. Scholarship here - most notably within the field of sexuality studies - looks at inheritance not only as the set of legal processes for the distribution of wealth and property upon death, but as an affective structure of belonging and as co-constitutive relationships between the personal and the social and the legal. In doing so it reveals the richness and complexity of ideas and practices associated with 'passing on', 'legacies' and 'heirlooms' and begs the questions: what do we do with our inheritances, what do our inheritances do to us?

Thinking about inheritance reveals the tenacity of existing power structures but also the essential and constant work of 'private' law to sustain them, and, consequently, the

possibilities of alternatives. In foregrounding 'generationality', scholarship about inheritance provides a space to think about both the past and the future, of both society and the self.

We hope to explore these questions and more and in bringing together contributions from across disciplines our aim is to demonstrate the foundational place of inheritance in law and society. The following are suggestive only of the potential subjects of interest:

- The Politics of Testamentary Freedom
- Making and Remaking Family and Kinship
- Sustaining and Challenging Inequality
- Queering Inheritance
- The Practices of Will-Writing
- Religious Laws and Practices
- Heirlooms and Material Objects
- Inheritance in Literature
- Inheritance & Reparations
- Methodological Approaches to Inheritance
- Property & Kinship
- Historical Perspectives
- Inheritance Families
- Inheritance & Racial Inequalities
- Inheritance in Settler Colonial and Post-Colonial Contexts

We welcome proposals that look beyond legal doctrinal analysis and adopt different approaches and understandings of 'inheritance' from diverse fields such as law, sociology, anthropology, history, political theory, feminism, critical race studies, socio-legal studies, queer studies, and law & literature.

We welcome contributions from both established and junior scholars (including PhD students).

To submit your chapter proposal, please send a 500-word abstract with title, short bio, and contact information to Suzanne Lenon (suzanne.lenon@uleth.ca) and Daniel Monk (d.monk@bbk.ac.uk) by January 15, 2022. Selected authors will be expected to submit a full paper (length 6000-8000 words) by July 15, 2022.

Please feel free to contact us if you would like to informally discuss a potential proposal.

We are in conversation with an academic press regarding publication.