

Call for Papers Obligations X Private Law Inside and Out

The Tenth Biennial Conference on the Law of Obligations will be held at Harvard Law School from July 14–17, 2020. The conference will be co-hosted by Harvard Law School and Melbourne Law School, and will be co-convened by John Goldberg, Andrew Robertson and Henry Smith. The biennial Obligations Conferences bring together scholars and practising lawyers from across and beyond the common law world to discuss current issues in private law. Obligations X will be the first conference in the Obligations series to be held in the United States.

The conference theme is intended to provoke discussion about the inside and outside of private law. The conference will focus on the contrast between ‘internalist’ and ‘externalist’ perspectives on the law in this field. It will also consider the boundaries and relationships between private law and morality, private law and economic efficiency, and private law and other policy goals. A central aspiration of this iteration of Obligations is to give private law scholars working in different intellectual traditions an opportunity to identify previously underappreciated overlaps and synergies, and thereby help to break down methodological barriers to an improved understanding of the field.

Both established and early-career legal scholars are invited to submit proposals to present papers addressing the conference theme, either at a general level or in relation to any aspect of the law of obligations broadly conceived – contract, property (including intellectual property), torts, unfair competition, and unjust enrichment, as well as equity and other topics within or closely related to private law. Papers exploring relevant issues from a civil law perspective are also welcome. Anyone wishing to offer a paper should submit a working title and an abstract (of no more than 500 words) by email to obligationsx@lists.law.harvard.edu by August 15, 2019. Papers will be selected on the basis of quality, originality, engagement with the conference theme and fit with other papers being presented at the conference. Those proposing papers will be notified by October 1, 2019 whether their papers have been accepted. A waiting list may be established, depending on the level of interest. Late submissions will be considered for inclusion in the waiting list.

Speakers will be asked to submit fully written draft papers by June 15, 2020 for distribution to conference participants via a password-protected website. It is expected that a small number of selected papers closely focused on the conference theme will be published in an edited collection following the conference.

Presenters whose offers of papers are accepted will be expected to meet their own travel and accommodation costs and pay a discounted registration fee. A small number of travel grants are available to support the attendance of scholars travelling from countries that have been underrepresented at previous Obligations conferences. Those wishing to apply for a travel grant should include a short statement with their paper proposals indicating that they wish to be considered for a travel grant, setting out an indicative budget and detailing all available sources of institutional financial support.