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Department of Law

The Jurisprudence Centre of the Department of Law
cordially invites you to a lecture by

**Dr Rueban Balasubramaniam,
Department of Law, Carleton University**

Malaysia's Blocked Social Contract Debate

**Loeb Building, Room D492
Thursday, December 1 2011, 12:00pm**

There is currently divisive and intractable disagreement between ethnocrats and liberals about the foundational principles of political morality that underlie the Malaysian legal-political order. There is therefore a dire need to find principles drawn from shared concepts that they jointly endorse as vital to claims of truth in Malaysian law and politics that may be used to adjudicate their debate. In this paper, I suggest that it is worth exploring the possibility of what is known as Malaysia's "social contract" as a concept that may be suited to this task and diagnose what I take to be the most significant block that stands in the way of this possibility. The block is the influence of an instrumental conception of legal authority that encourages the belief that truth in law and politics boils down to matters of plain-historical fact, rather than normative and interpretive debate about the meaning of fundamental values.

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