

Jurisprudence Centre

JurisTalks



From Criminality to Respectability: Familial Recognition, Victimhood, and the Carceral State

Thursday
February 28
Loeb Building B454
11:00 am - 12:30 pm



Kyle Kirkup
Assistant Professor
University of Ottawa

In Anglo-American jurisdictions, queer subjectivity was historically constituted through challenges to both formal aspects of the criminal law and discriminatory police practices. With the advent of human rights protections, same-sex benefits, and relationship recognition over the past thirty years, however, a new version of queer subjectivity has emerged — one that has become increasingly reliant on the politics of coupled, familial respectability and, with it, a turn away from cases where queer people have been cast as perpetrators of crime. This presentation reads queer histories of challenging the criminal law against the contemporary strategies of mainstream Anglo-American human rights organizations. Rather than seeking to challenge the operation of the criminal law in the everyday lives of queer people, these organizations are now beginning to punish in the name of queer equality. This presentation proposes a theory, one I call the law and order queer movement, to account for these contemporary dynamics. The presentation ends by gesturing towards versions of queer subjectivity that go beyond respectable familial formations, along with renewed efforts to challenge practices of criminalization.

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Law and Legal Studies
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