

Mateo Taussig-Rubbo

Professor of Law, State University of New York at Buffalo
taussig@buffalo.edu; current as of April 2025

Education

- 2007 **University of Chicago**, Ph.D., Anthropology
- 2001 **Yale University**, J.D.
- 1998 **Cambridge University**, King's College, M.Phil.
- 1994 **University of Chicago**, B.A.

Legal and academic experience

- 2013-present **Professor of Law** (tenured), University at Buffalo, Law School, Buffalo, NY.
- 2020-present **Director**, Doctor of Juridical Science (J.S.D.) Program, University at Buffalo, Law School, Buffalo, NY.
- 2007-2013 **Associate Professor of Law**, University at Buffalo Law School, Buffalo, NY.
- 2010-present **Adjunct Professor**, Department of Anthropology, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY.
- 2006-07 **Visiting Assistant Professor**, Department of Anthropology, Graduate Faculty New School for Social Research, New York, NY.
- 2002-03 **Law Clerk**, Hon. Robert W. Sweet, U.S. District Court, S.D.N.Y., New York, NY.
- 2001-02 **Associate Lawyer**, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, New York, NY.
- 1994-95 **Planner**, Red Hook Community Justice Center, Midtown Community Court New York, NY.

Research positions

- 2022 Spring **Visiting Scholar**, Center for the Study of Law and Society, University of California, Berkeley, CA.
- 2013 Spring **Research Affiliate**, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya.
- 2012 Spring **Schell Fellow**, Orville H. Schell, Jr. Center for International Human Rights Yale Law School, New Haven, CT.
- 2003 Spring **Visitor**, School of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ

Publications

- 2016 *Appraising 9/11: Sacred Value and Heritage in Neoliberal Times*, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA JOURNAL OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, vol. 18 (4): 1179-1230.
- 2012 *The Value of Valor: Money, Medals and Military Labor*, NORTH DAKOTA LAW REV., vol. 88 (2): 101-137.
- 2012 *From the 'Stranger King' to the 'Stranger Constitution': Domesticating Sovereignty in*

Kenya, CONSTELLATIONS: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CRITICAL AND DEMOCRATIC THEORY, vol. 19 (2): 248-266.

- 2011 *Pirate Trials, the International Criminal Court and Mob Justice: Reflections on Postcolonial Sovereignty in Kenya*, HUMANITY, Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, vol. 2 (1): 51-74.
- 2011 *The Unsacrificeable Subject?, WHO DESERVES TO DIE?*, Austin Sarat and Karl Shoemaker, eds., Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 131-150.
- 2011 *Sacred Property: Searching for Value in the Rubble of 9/11*, AFTER SECULAR LAW, Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Robert Yelle, and Mateo Taussig-Rubbo, eds., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 322-340.
- 2011 *Introduction*, co-author, Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Robert Yelle and Mateo Taussig-Rubbo, AFTER SECULAR LAW, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1-19.
- 2009 *Outsourcing Sacrifice: the Labor of Private Military Contractors*, YALE JOURNAL OF LAW & THE HUMANITIES, vol. 21 (1): 105-170.
- 2009 *Sacrifice and Sovereignty*, STATES OF VIOLENCE: WAR, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, AND LETTING DIE, Jennifer Culbert and Austin Sarat, eds., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 83-126.

Book and dissertation

- 2011 AFTER SECULAR LAW, Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Robert Yelle and Mateo Taussig-Rubbo, eds., Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 2007 *The Sovereign's Gift: Reciprocity and Invisibility in United States Immigration Detention Camps*. University of Chicago, Anthropology, Ph.D. Committee: J.L. Comaroff, E. Povinelli, M. D. Sahlin. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest (accession no. 200923225).

Work in progress

Property Rites and Rituals: Reflections on Land Acknowledgements.

Theories of the Event in Climate Change Law and Policy.

Spanish language chapters

- 2011 *Juicios piratas, CIJ, y justicia de turbas: formas postcoloniales de justicia en Kenia*, in INSEGURIDAD, DEMOCRACIA Y EL DERECHO, Buenos Aires: Libreria Ediciones, 87-119.
- 2009 *Propiedad sagrada: buscando valor en los escombros del 11-S*, in P. Bergallo, ed., DERECHO Y PROPIEDAD, Buenos Aires: Libreria Ediciones, 51-68.

Areas of interest and teaching

Research interests: legal anthropology; comparative climate change studies; theory of how events (e.g., 9/11, climate change) transform legal and cultural structures; value/s; postcolonial African sovereignty; political theology and religion; theories of self-sacrifice in U.S. political and legal culture.

Current and recent courses: law and anthropology; indigenous law and culture; foundations of law; law and political economy; constitutional law; comparative law; contracts; advanced topics in contract law.

Grants and awards

- 2022 Research Grant, Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy
- 2009 Research Grant, Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy
- 2004 Josephine De Kármán Trust Fellowship, dissertation writing grant
- 2000 National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant

- 1998 Orville H. Schell Fellowship in International Human Rights, Yale Law School
- 1996 King's College, Cambridge University, Graduate Research Fund
- 1994 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow 3-year term
- 1993 Phi Beta Kappa

Reviews, reports, magazine and web publications

- 2013 *Wartime or Peacetime at the Flight 93 Crash Site*, BALKINIZATION, 2pp. <http://balkin.blogspot.com/2013/02/wartime-or-peacetime-at-flight-93-crash.html>.
- 2011 *The Political Theology of Freedom and Unfreedom*, Social Science Research Council, THE IMMANENT FRAME, 4pp. <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/political-theology-book-blog> (reviewing PAUL KAHN, POLITICAL THEOLOGY: FOUR NEW CHAPTERS ON THE CONCEPT OF SOVEREIGNTY).
- 2009 Book Review: REBECCA SOLNIT, A PARADISE BUILT IN HELL: THE EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNITIES THAT ARISE IN DISASTER, in THE BROKER, 17: 30, www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/articles/Solidarity-in-the-face-of-disaster.
- 2009 *Sacred Property: Searching for Value in the 9/11 Rubble*, at Religion & Culture Web Forum, Martin Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion, University of Chicago, <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/publications/webforum/archive.shtml>. Responses by Jeremy Biles, Kathryn Lofton, Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Kristen Tobey.
- 2008 Book Review: THE CULTURAL LIVES OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, A. Sarat and C. Boulanger, eds., in POLAR: POLITICAL AND LEGAL ANTHROPOLOGY REV., 31, 2: 348-350.
- 2008 *Outsourcing Sacrifice*, Final Word essay for UB TODAY, magazine distributed to 100,000+ alumni, Spring/Summer, http://issuu.com/rfarnham/docs/ub_today, 48.
- 2003 *Participatory Urban Planning and Design in Slums*, UN Millennium Project, Task Force on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers, background paper, co-authors A. Rubbo, N. Gurran, and M. Hall.
- 2003 *Alarmingly Useless: the Case for Banning Car Alarms in New York City*, co-author with A. Friedman and A. Naparstek on behalf of Transportation Alternatives, at www.transportationalternatives.org/files/newsroom/reports/caralarms/report.pdf.
- 2002 *Review of States' Procedures and Practices Relating to Detention of Asylum Seekers*, with Jaya Ramji and other colleagues at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP on behalf of Human Rights First.
- 2002 *Authority of New York City to Impose Carpool Rule and the Tolls on East River Bridges*, co-author and supervising attorney, prepared for Transportation Alternatives, www.transalt.org/campaigns/sensible/tollscarpoollegalmemo.pdf.

Scholarly presentations

- 2025 *Property Rites and Rituals: Reflections on Land Acknowledgements*; Association of Law, Property and Society; Sydney, Australia.
- 2024 *Indigenous Title in the Peruvian Amazon*; Property Works in Progress, Boston University School of Law; co-presenter with C. Priest.

- 2022 *The Structure of the Conjuncture of Climate Change in Ghana*; Law and Society annual conference, roundtable presentation, Lisbon, Portugal.
- 2022 *Theories of the Event in Climate Change Law and Policy*, co-presenter Zoe Hamstead, invited presentation, University of California Berkeley, Center for the Study of Law and Society.
- 2021 *Heat Law*, co-author Zoe Hamstead, UB Law School faculty workshop.
- 2018 *The Future of Sacrifice*, invited presentation, United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO.
- 2017 *Between the Wound and the Scar: Notes on the recent Warzone Worker Insurance Litigation*, Law & Society annual meeting, Mexico City.
- 2016 *Appraising 9/11: Just Compensation Dilemmas from the United Airlines Flight 93 Crash Site*, invited lecture, Law & Humanities Colloquium, Cornell Law School.
- 2015 *Neoliberal Sacrifice: Notes on the Blackwater Memoir*, World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Erfurt, Germany.
- 2014 *Contract Law and the Human Economy*, invited lecture, University of Pretoria, Human Economy Program, South Africa.
- 2014 *Kenyan Contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan: New Forms of Transnational Military Labor and Sacrifice*, invited lecture, University of Pretoria, Human Economy Program, South Africa.
- 2013 *From the King's African Rifles to DynCorp: Notes on Transnational Military Labor and Sacrifice*, American Anthropological Association, Chicago, IL.
- 2013 *Appraising 9/11: Just Compensation Dilemmas from the United Airlines Flight 93 Crash Site*, invited lecture, School of Social Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 2013 *Wartime or Peacetime at the Flight 93 Crash Site*, invited presentation, Association of American Law Schools, Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.
- 2012 *The Value of Valor: Money, Medals and Military Contractors*, invited lecture, Schell Center for International Human Rights, Yale Law School, New Haven, CT.
- 2012 *Constitution and Culture in the Postcolony: Lessons from Kenya*, invited presentation, Center for Law and Global Affairs, Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ.
- 2012 *Constitution and Culture in the Postcolony: Lessons from Kenya*, invited lecture, Global Governance Program, European University Institute, Florence, Italy.
- 2011 *The Value of Valor: Money, Medals and Military Contractors*, invited lecture, Legal Theory Workshop, McGill Law School, Montreal, Canada.
- 2011 *From the 'Stranger King' to the 'Stranger-Constitution': Domesticating Sovereignty in Kenya*, Conference on Comparative Constitutional Cultures, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Canada.
- 2010 *Pirate Trials, the ICC and Mob Justice: Forms of Sovereignty in Kenya*, Yale Law School Seminario en Latinoamérica de Teoría Constitucional y Política, Santiago, Chile, www.law.yale.edu/intellectuallife/selanews.htm.
- 2010 *Pirate Trials, the ICC and Mob Justice: Forms of Sovereignty in Kenya*, Ethnographic Dreamworlds, convened by A. Shelton, Burchfield Penney Art Center, Buffalo NY.

- 2009 *Outsourcing Sacrifice: the Labor of Private Military Contractors*, Legal Theory Workshop, Columbia University Law School, New York, NY.
- 2009 *Sacred Property: Searching for Value in the 9/11 Rubble*, at conference Re-Describing the Sacred/Secular Divide: The Legal Story II, SUNY-Buffalo Law School.
- 2009 *Beyond Constantine's Sword: Sacralization versus the Desacralization of Violence*, at Law, Culture & Humanities annual conference, Suffolk Law School, Boston, MA.
- 2009 *The Inverted Panopticon: a Model of the Border*, section on Immigration Law organized by Prof. Leti Volpp, American Assoc. of Law Schools, San Diego, CA.
- 2008 *The Unsacrificeable Subject?* invited paper for conference Who Deserves to Die? Amherst College, Amherst MA.
- 2008 *Dying to be Citizens: Race, Sacrifice and Citizenship*, Immigration Crucible Series, convened by T. Miller, University at Buffalo.
- 2008 *The Labor of Private Military Contractors*, at event with Paul W. Kahn and Avril McDonald, the Center for the Humanities, CUNY, New York, NY.
- 2008 *Sacred Property: Searching for Value in the 9/11 Rubble*, Seminario en Latinoamérica de Teoría Constitucional y Política, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- 2008 *The Labor of Private Military Contractors*, invited lecture, Goldsmiths College, Department of Anthropology, University of London, UK.
- 2007 *Outsourcing Sacrifice: Rethinking Private Military Contractors*, Workshop on Religion and the Social convened by H. Agrama and D. Rutherford, University of Chicago.
- 2007 *Consecrating Violence in Sacrificial and Non-Sacrificial Contexts*, Law & Society Colloquium convened by S.E. Merry, New York University/New York Law School.
- 2006 *Dying to be Citizens: Race, Sacrifice and Citizenship*, conference on New Racisms, convener: G. Hage, Institute for Humanities and Soc. Sciences, U. of Sydney, Australia.
- 2006 *Kingship in Comparative Ethnography: the Stranger-King and His (Impossible) Domestication*, seminar convened by A. Arato and J. Cohen, New School/Columbia U.
- 2006 *Sacrificed Citizens: Interpreting 9/11*, circulated to participants, National Humanities Center SIAS Summer Institute convened at Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Germany.
- 2005 *Consecrating Violence in Post-Sacrificial Contexts*, National Humanities Center SIAS Summer Institute convened by U. Haltern and P. Kahn at Yale Law School.
- 2004 *Sacrifice/Gift/Contract: Reframing Relations in the Modern State*, invited lecture, Senior Seminar, Department of Social Anthropology, Cambridge University, UK.
- 2003 *Modernity and Divided Mankind: Notes on a Constitutional Culture*, Institute for Advanced Study, School of Social Sciences, Princeton NJ.

Conferences, panels and events organized

- 2022 *Governing Through Heat in an Era of Climate Change*, panel organizer; participants: Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah, Paul Coseo, Zoe Hamstead, Paul W. Kahn, Jonathan Simon; Law and Society annual conference, Lisbon, Portugal.
- 2017 *Trumpism and the Law*, speaker series; co-organizer with Jonathan Manes; SUNY Buffalo Law

- School, Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy.
- 2013 *The Concept of Peace in Law, Culture and Society*, co-organizer with Mary Dudziak. Association of American Law Schools, Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.
- 2012 *The Future of Heritage: Laws, Ethics, Sustainability*, co-organizer with P. Biehl and N. Olsen of international and interdisciplinary conference sponsored by the Baldy Center.
- 2010 Program Committee, 13th Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Law, Culture and the Humanities, at Brown University; Chair: S. Schmeiser.
- 2009 *Detective Fictions and Sovereign Pursuits: Further Adventures Policing the Postcolony*, Professor John L. Comaroff, University of Chicago; UB Law School, Baldy Center.
- 2009 *Re-Describing the Sacred/Secular Divide: The Legal Story II*, four-day conference with 20 participants from U.S. and W. Europe in law, anthropology and history; co-organizers: Winnifred Sullivan and Robert Yelle; UB Law, Baldy Center.
- 2009 *The Yagé Tapes: Shamanism and Intellectual Property in Colombia*, panel with Michael Taussig, Columbia University; Mark Bartholomew, UB; Marcus Boon, English, York University; and Dawson Prater, Locust Music; UB Law School, Baldy Center.
- 2008 *Be Like Others: Transsexuals in Iran*, public film screening and discussion with director Tanaz Eshaghian; UB Law School, Baldy Center.
- 2007 *Sacrifice, Sovereignty, and the General Economy*, co-organizer with P. Ghassem-Fachandi; participants: Arjun Appadurai, Faisal Devji, Thomas Blom Hansen, Claudio Lomnitz, and Hylton White; American Anthropological Assoc., Washington DC.

Field research

- 2024 Indigenous legal title in Puerto Maldonado, Peru; 2 weeks; with C. Priest.
- 2022 Climate change and governance in the postcolony: an empirical study in Ghana; four weeks.
- 2013 Constitutional implementation and national elections in Nairobi, Kenya; six weeks.
- 2010 Constitutional referendum in Nairobi, Kenya; one week.
- 2010 Piracy trials in Mombasa, Kenya; interviews; ethnographic research; two weeks.
- 2009 Piracy trials in Mombasa, Kenya; interviews; ethnographic research; one month.
- 2008 Preliminary research on U.S. war on terror in Kenya; one month.
- 2000 Ph.D. field research at Port Isabel, CA immigration detention center; 11 months.

Memberships, community activities and service

- 2025-present Co-Director. Anthropology of Law MA program, with Dept. of Anthropology.
- 2023-24 Chair, Faculty Appointments Committee, UB Law School (elected position).
- 2022-23 Chair, Faculty Appointments Committee, UB Law School (elected position).
- 2021-25 Faculty Appointments Committee, UB Law School (elected position).
- 2020-25 Advisory Committee, Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy.
- 2018-25 Board Member, *Nusantara Arts*. Buffalo, NY.
- 2016-20 Editorial Committee, *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*.
- 2018-20 UB Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate Exec. Comm., (elected positions)

- 2017-20 President's Review Board (university-level committee advising Provost on tenure decisions).
- 2016-17 Chair, Faculty Appointments Committee, UB Law School (elected position).
- 2007-12 Advisory Committee, Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy.
- 2010-11 Reunion Gift Committee, Yale Law School.
- 2008-10 Co-director, Law & Anthropology Group, Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy.
- 2008-10 Faculty Appointments Committee, UB Law School (elected position).
- 2006-14 Member, SELA; annual conference in Latin America; convener: Yale Law School.
- 2006-present External reviewer for *African Security Review*; *Anthropological Quarterly*; *Architectural Theory Review*; *Constellations*; *Cultural Anthropology*; *Journal of Markets & Morality*; *Law, Culture & Humanities*; *Law & Social Inquiry*; *POLAR (Political and Legal Anthropology Review)*; *Political Theology*; *Punishment and Society*; *University of Chicago Press*.
- 2004 Member, American Anthropological Association.
- 2003-present Member, Bar of the State of New York.
- 2002-06 Volunteer lawyer, Transportation Alternatives, New York, NY.

Media notice

- 2012 David Isenberg, *The Price of Sacrifice*, HUFFINGTON POST, www.huffingtonpost.com/david-isenberg/the-price-of-sacrifice_b_1541331.html
- 2011 Dan Barry, *The 9/11 Decade – Feeling the Power of Mundane Relics*, NEW YORK TIMES, Sept. 11, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/09/08/us/sept-11-reckoning/relics.html?pagewanted=all.