



# COMPARATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY COLLOQUIUM

## New con-law colloquium gives students a seat at the table with top scholars

**C**ONSTITUTIONAL democracies around the world and, indeed, in the United States, are showing signs of weakening, indicating a possible global crisis with worrying implications for American and world politics. In response, Maryland Carey Law launched a special opportunity for students to engage with new thinking on this topic. The course, Comparative Constitutional Democracy Colloquium, offered for the first time in spring 2020, brings together Maryland Carey Law students and faculty, and prominent comparative constitutional law scholars from the United States and Europe.

The colloquium builds on the leading work in comparative constitutional law of Prof. Mark Graber in his recent book, *Constitutional Democracy in Crisis?*, co-edited with Sanford Levinson and Mark Tushnet; and the recent work of Prof. Peter Danchin in international

law in a new global research partnership with Australian National University and Indiana University on “Navigating the Backlash Against Global Law and Institutions.”

For the inaugural semester, co-leaders Danchin and Graber welcomed 14 students, several Maryland Carey Law faculty members, and seven featured speakers. Each presentation was followed by commentary from one faculty member and one student, after which an open discussion ensued.

Maryland Carey Law professors took turns providing a first commentary after the presentations, and the students rotated to present their critiques. Besides Danchin and Graber, faculty commentators included Professors Richard Boldt, Paula Monopoli, Max Stearns, and Marley Weiss.

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### Featured Spring 2020 Presenters

#### Peter Quint

Maryland Carey Law  
Jacob A. France Professor  
Emeritus of Constitutional Law  
Topic: Development of Judicial Review in Europe

#### Oran Doyle

Trinity College Dublin  
Professor in Law  
Topic: How to Establish National Boundaries

#### Fernanda Nicola

American University Washington College of Law  
Professor of Law and Director, International Organizations, Law and Development  
Topic: The Increasing Influence of Courts on Foreign Policy

#### Aziz Huq

University of Chicago Law School  
Frank and Bernice J. Greenberg Professor of Law, Mark Claster Mamolen Teaching Scholar  
Topic: Comparative Impeachment Law

“The idea is to get students in the habit of thinking of themselves as professionals,” says Graber, explaining how the format prepares students to speak up in boardrooms and courtrooms alike. Instead of discussing a scholarly work guided by a professor, students are equal participants in a conversation with the scholars themselves. Visiting scholars included Prof. Oran Doyle from Trinity College in Ireland, Prof. Fernanda Nicola from American University in D.C., and Prof. Aziz Huq from the University of Chicago, with discussion topics ranging from comparative impeachment law to the influence of courts on foreign policy to establishing national boundaries.

Chukwukpee Nzegwu '20 was one of the advanced law students in the colloquium. He and his classmates were required to read the visiting scholars' work, sometimes still in process, write a reflection paper, and be prepared to speak up either as a commentator or during the discussion. Having the chance to engage as equals with top scholars from around the world, says Nzegwu, was “a really unique and valuable experience.”

When Huq, whose new book *How to Save a Constitutional Democracy* won the International Society of Public Law ICON-S Book Prize, was the class's featured scholar in February, the entire law school was also treated to a program in which Huq presented on his book,

followed by a panel of faculty commentators. Nzegwu, who has experience presenting at international conferences and was a star on the Maryland Carey Law National Trial Team, also presented a student commentary, which received high praise from attendees. Nzegwu's performance in the class was a factor in his selection by faculty for the Elizabeth Maxwell Carroll Chesnut Prize for scholarship at graduation.

Slated for the final two meetings were Assoc. Prof. Yvonne Tew from Georgetown Law and Distinguished Visiting Prof. Penelope Andrews from New York Law School. Their sessions were replaced with presentations by Danchin and Graber when Maryland Carey Law School classes went online because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Though meeting in person is preferable, now that they have experience delivering an online seminar, Graber and Danchin are confident they could easily incorporate distant scholars back into the class and see the advantage of a remote format in alleviating the burden of travel on scholars. “Whatever the format,” Graber says, “we are looking forward to a rich array of distinguished presenters and an even richer conversation among students committed to exploring the state of constitutional democracy throughout the world.” ■

**Featured Spring 2020 Presenters Continued**

**Ioanna Tourkochoriti**  
NUI Galway  
Visiting Fellow  
Topic: Government Ability, Freedom of Speech, and Combatting Prejudice

**Mark Graber**  
Maryland Carey Law  
University of Maryland Regents Professor  
Topic: Is There a Global Constitutionalism Crisis?

**Peter Danchin**  
Maryland Carey Law  
Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development, Professor of Law, Director, International and Comparative Law Program  
Topic: The Nature of a Written and Unwritten Constitution

