



Photo: Shannon Kringen

Workshop: Personhood: Do We Make It or Know It?

MAY
17
FRI

12:00 – 1:30 PM
4080 HSSB

For many of us today, the artifice of legal personhood – the corporate person in particular – provokes outrage. Focusing on the legal fiction of slave personhood, this paper argues that in the 19th-century U.S., the greater danger came from naturalizing this artifice by attaching it to actual African American people, regardless of condition. This reconsideration of legal personhood contributes to current efforts by political theorists, legal historians, classicists, and philosophers to historicize the concept of dignity prior to the 20th-century human rights regime. DeLombard contends that what critic and novelist Ralph Ellison once called “the indignities of slavery” pertained less to the metaphysical value of humans than to the status of legal persons. *Brown-bag lunches are welcome.*

JEANNINE DELOMBARD
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This workshop centers on the first chapter from DeLombard’s current book manuscript, “Bound to Respect: Democratic Dignity and the Indignities of Slavery.”

The pre-circulated paper will be available on May 1; please visit: <https://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/event/research-focus-group-workshop-personhood-do-we-make-it-or-know-it>

Jeannine DeLombard is Associate Professor of English at UC Santa Barbara. She is the author of *In the Shadow of the Gallows: Race, Crime, and American Civic Identity* (Penn, 2012) and *Slavery on Trial: Law, Abolitionism, and Print Culture* (UNC, 2007).

Sponsored by the IHC’s Slavery, Captivity, and the Meaning of Freedom Research Focus Group