

Lecture Series in Law and Economics

Why Constitutions Fail (with Mila Versteeg)

Professor Adam Chilton

Howard G. Krane Professor of Law, University of Chicago Law School

Moderator: Professor Lauren Yu-Hsin Lin
City University of Hong Kong, School of Law



22 April 2025 (Tuesday)
11:00 am - 12:00 pm



LI-6301, City University of
Hong Kong & Online via Zoom

Abstract

Constitution-making often occurs during pivotal moments. At these times, constitutions are typically written with the hope of fixing big social problems, like economic inequality, ethnic violence, or government unresponsive to popular will. This leads constitutional drafters to experiment with new institutional arrangements. But although existing institutional arrangements can be undesirable and, in theory, better alternatives are available, a radical institutional changes often lead new constitution-making projects to fail. The goal of this project is to try to understand what leads constitutional writing projects to fail and what leads them to succeed.

Biography

Adam Chilton is the Howard G. Krane Professor of Law and the Walter Mander Research Scholar at the University of Chicago Law School. Adam also currently serves as an editor of the *Journal of Law and Economics*. Adam's primary research interests lie at the intersection of comparative law, international law, and empirical legal studies. For example, Adam's book, co-authored with Mila Versteeg, *How Constitutional Rights Matter*, uses a variety of empirical methods to explore the impact of including rights into written constitutions on their protection around the world. Adam's book, co-authored with Kyle Rozema, *Trial by Numbers: A Lawyer's Guide to Statistical Evidence*, provides an introduction to empirical research methods that is specifically designed for law students, lawyers, and other members of the legal profession.

The Lecture Series in Law and Economics is a collaborative initiative between the City University of Hong Kong School of Law and the Asian Law and Economics Association. Featuring renowned scholars from around the world, the series explores the application of economic analysis to legal and policy issues, fostering dialogue and collaboration among legal and economics scholars, practitioners, and policymakers.

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