

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF LAW AND DEATH

EDITED BY MARC TRABSKY AND IMOGEN JONES

Call for Chapter Proposals

Deadline for Abstracts: 29 April 2022

(Publication by Routledge in 2023)

Death became an object of study in the humanities and social sciences in the nineteenth century. The concept of death as a taboo emerged in sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, and psychoanalysis throughout the twentieth century. Since at least the 1990s, a ‘critical turn’ in sociology has refuted that death is repressed in society. Jenny Hockey (1990), Tony Walter (1994) and Allan Kellehear (2000) have transformed the study of death by revealing the emergence in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries of an incitement to discourse about death. However, what has been missing from this critical turn of death studies has been a comprehensive engagement with the discipline of law. Law remains for the most part absent from a sociology of death, and when it does appear, it is often dismissed as an agent of repression. Sociologists have tended to represent legal institutions as monolithic automatons, sequestering death behind bureaucratic paperwork and frustrating attempts by the living to form continuing relations with the dead.

Law’s interest in death is manifold. Death appears as a topic of concern in many different areas of law, from the tort of negligence to the crime of murder, from the law of estates to the ownership of graves. Law can produce death – sentence a convict to death, authorise police to use lethal force or order hospitals to withdraw life support – and it can save lives. From conducting coronial investigations to developing registration practices, giving voice to the will of the dead to regulating places and methods of disposal, legal institutions have long demonstrated a penchant for discoursing about death.

The *Routledge Handbook of Law and Death* will assemble scholarship that investigates the plurality of legal discourse about death from the past and in the present, and the different ways in which legal institutions cultivate relations with the dying and the dead. The edited collection will showcase how law has contributed to the critical turn in death studies and how the sociology of death has impacted upon legal studies. It will bring together thirty prominent scholars and emerging experts from a diverse range of disciplines in law, the humanities, and the social sciences to examine how law talks about death.

We are seeking contributions from scholars who question what is distinctive about the disciplinary alignment of law and death, who theorise the relations between law, the dead and the dying, and who investigate how law can produce death and save lives.

Proposals of chapters are encouraged in the following areas, which are not exhaustive, but provide direction of the trajectory of the Handbook:

- Epistemologies of death
 - Legal definitions, classifications, and taxonomies
 - The death of law and the laws of death
 - Jurisdictions of dying and the dead
 - Biopolitics, thanatopolitics and necropolitics
- Spatialisations of death
 - Technologies of human and non-human disposal
 - Place-making, sovereignty and (de-)colonisation
 - Forensic architecture
 - Monuments, memorials, and museums
- Materialities of death
 - Body brokering, trafficking and commodification
 - Organ and tissue donation
 - Embalming, plastination and cryogenics
 - Crimes against the dead and crimes caused by the dead
- Contested deaths
 - Coronial investigations and medico-legal examinations
 - Deaths in custody and police shootings
 - Medical rationing and end-of-life care
 - Suicide, assisted suicide and euthanasia
- Mass deaths
 - Environmental and human-made disasters
 - Pandemics, epidemics and communicable illnesses
 - Scarcity and starvation
 - Mass graves, war and conflict

Please email your proposed chapter title, abstract (500 words max) and author biography (150 words max) to both editors:

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Proposed timeline:

Deadline for Submitting Chapter Abstract (500 words): 29 April 2022

Communication of Abstract Acceptance: Late May 2022

Deadline for Submitting Draft Chapters (4,000 – 6,000 words): 26 August 2022

Deadline for Submitting Final Chapters (6,000 words, including references): 23 December 2022