

**Faith, Values, and the Rule of Law: An Interdisciplinary Conference**  
**Seton Hall Law School**  
**February 4 – 5, 2026**  
**One Newark Center, Newark, NJ 07102**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026 (\*ALL TIMES EST)**

**8:15 – 8:45 a.m. REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST – Rodino Reading Room**

**8:45 a.m. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS – Rodino Reading Room**

- **Ron Weich**, *Dean and Professor of Law, Seton Hall University School of Law*
- **Brett Canaval**, *Executive Director, Program on Faith, Values, and the Rule of Law, Seton Hall University School of Law*
- **David W. Opderbeck**, *Professor of Law and Director, Program on Faith, Values, and the Rule of Law, Seton Hall University School of Law*

**9:15 - 10:15 a.m. BREAKFAST KEYNOTE – Rodino Reading Room**

- **Imam Dr. Mohamad Jebara**, *Islamic Scholar, Scriptural Philologist & Author of The Life of the Qur'an*

**10:15 – 10:30 a.m. BREAK**

**10:30 – 11:30 a.m. BREAKOUT SESSIONS A & B**

- Breakout Group A – *Narratives and Schools of Thought* - **Rodino Reading Room**
- **Moderator: Patrick Manning, Ph.D.**, Associate Prof. of Pastoral Theology & Director of the Center for Catholic Studies, Seton Hall University
  - **Felipe Carvalho (virtual)** – *Ius est obiectum iustitiae: The School of Salamanca and the Origins of the Rule of Law*
    - Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Coimbra
  - **Anas Chakkala** - *Literature as Moral Law: The Role of Narrative Ethics in Islamic Civilization*
    - Research Scholar, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies
  - **Br. Albert Augustine Kerstiens, OP, JD** - *Completing Law: How the Thomist School of Salamanca Stands to Inform US Jurisprudence*
    - Dominican Friars of St. Martin de Porres; Aquinas Institute

- Breakout Group B – *Human Dignity and Human Rights* - **5<sup>th</sup> Floor Paula A. Franzese Faculty Library**
- **Moderator: David M. White**, Director, Conflict Management Program & Assistant Professor of Law, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Doron Kalir** - *Jewish Human Dignity: Equality Before God & Men*
    - Senior Clinical Professor of Law; Dean's Scholar, Cleveland-State University College of Law
  - **Paula Franzese** - *Catholic Social Teaching and the Right to Housing: Foundations for Justice, Human Dignity, and the Rule of Law*
    - Peter W. Rodino Professor of Law, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Rev. Dr. Brent A. Strawn, Ph.D.** - *Emic vs. Etic Approaches to Human Dignity in Biblical Law*
    - D. Moody Smith Distinguished Professor of Old Testament and Professor of Law, Duke University

**11:30 – 11:45 a.m. BREAK**

**11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. LUNCH & LUNCHEON KEYNOTE – Rodino Reading Room**

- **Dr. Cristina Traina**, *Professor of Theology, Fordham University*

**1:00 – 1:15 p.m. BREAK**

**1:15 – 2:15 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSIONS C & D**

- Breakout Group C – *Concepts of the Rule of Law* - **Rodino Reading Room**
- **Moderator: Brian Sheppard**, Professor of Law, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Michael Baur** - *The Rule of Law: What It Means, Why It Is Threatened, and What Can be Done About It*
    - Associate Professor of Philosophy and Adjunct Professor of Law, Fordham University, Philosophy Department and Law School
  - **Bruce Ledewitz** - *Recovering the Faith in Values Necessary for a Rule of Law*
    - Professor of Law Emeritus, Thomas Kline School of Law of Duquesne University
- Breakout Group D – *Applications of Rule of Law Concepts* - **5<sup>th</sup> Floor Paula A. Franzese Faculty Library**
- **Moderator: Devon Corneal**, Associate Dean for Academics, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Rabea Benhalim** - *Upholding the Rule of Law through Loopholes*
    - Associate Professor, The University of Colorado Law School

- **John Quinn** – [“Tradition” and Its Discontents: Examining Dobbs Through an Aggadic Lens of Literary Abortion Narrative, The American Gothic, and Lot’s Wife](#)
  - Assistant Professor of Law, Touro University Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center
- **Andrew Hall** - [Consular Despotism: A Legal and Theological Critique of Department of State v. Muñoz](#)
  - Ph.D. Student in Theological Ethics, Boston College

**2:15 – 2:30 p.m. BREAK**

**2:30 – 3:30 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSIONS E & F**

- Breakout Group E – *Faith, Reason, and Law* - **Rodino Reading Room**
- **Moderator: Angela Carmella**, Professor of Law, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Trevor Wedman (virtual)** - [Faith, Revelation, and Reason in the Law](#)
    - Assistant Professor of Law, Oklahoma City University School of Law
  - **Ragul Olakkur Vijayakumar (virtual)** - [Faith Roots of Justice and the Rule of Law](#)
    - Researcher in Law/Advocate, Madras High Court, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India
  - **Raleigh Adams (virtual)** - [Law, Order, and Dignity: Recovering and Critiquing the Christian Theological Roots of the Rule of Law](#)
    - Student, Master of Arts in Religion and Ethics, Yale Divinity School
- Breakout Group F – *Virtues, Values, and Practices* - **5<sup>th</sup> Floor Paula A. Franzese Faculty Library**
- **Moderator: Paula A. Franzese**, Peter W. Rodino Professor of Law, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Kara Perry** - [Beyond Doctrine: Spiritual Intelligence, Values Alignment, and the Embodied Practice of Upholding the Rule of Law](#)
    - Senior Fellow with the Center on Dispute Resolution, Quinnipiac University School of Law & Adjunct Professor, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Dr. Waithanji Mutiti (virtual)** – [Faith Communities and Legal Reform: Religion as an Ethical Force in Strengthening the Rule of Law in Africa](#)
    - Lecturer in Philosophy of Religion, University of Kabianga
  - **Munaem Khan (virtual)** - [Prof. Hallaq's Theory of Sharia as the Rule of Law in Islamic Constitutional Discourse: Bangladesh in Context](#)
    - Lecturer, School of Law, Eastern University (Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh)

**3:30 – 3:45 p.m. BREAK**

### 3:45 – 4:45 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSIONS G & H

- Breakout Group G – *Faith, Religion, and Resistance* - **Rodino Reading Room**
- **Moderator: Jenny-Brooke Condon**, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, Professor of Law & Director, Equal Justice Clinic, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Orit Avishai** - *Faithful Resistance: Progressive Christian Leaders in Defense of Pluralistic Public Education*
    - Professor of Sociology and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Fordham University
  - **Elizabeth Wambiri** - *Christian Values as a Veil to Mask Accountability in Cases of Criminal Misconduct by Church Leadership in Kenya*
    - University of Kwa Zulu Natal
- Breakout Group H – *CST, Synodality, and the Rule of Law* - **5<sup>th</sup> Floor Paula A. Franzese Faculty Library**
- **Moderator: Jonathan Heaps, Ph.D.**, Director, Bernard J. Lonergan Institute & Toth-Lonergan Visiting Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Center for Catholic Studies, Seton Hall University
  - **Angela Carmella** - *The Vatican II Declaration on Religious Freedom: The Catholic Answer to Illiberal Movements*
    - Professor of Law, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Daniel Rober** - *Vatican II and the Delayed Catholic Reception of Rule of Law*
    - Associate Professor of Catholic Studies, Sacred Heart University
  - **Stephen McNulty** - *Rule of Law for Twenty-First Century Catholicism? Synodality and the Rebirth of Ecclesial Constitutionalism*
    - MTS Student, Boston College Clough School of Theology and Ministry

### 4:45 – 5:00 p.m. BREAK

### 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. AFTERNOON KEYNOTE – Rodino Reading Room

- **Rabbi Shai Held**, *President and Dean, Hadar Institute & Author of Judaism is About Love*

### 6:30 p.m. CONFERENCE DINNER AT MOMPOU TAPAS BAR & RESTAURANT

- 77 Ferry Street, Newark, NJ 07105 (5-10 minute walk)

## **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026 (\*ALL TIMES EST)**

**8:30 – 9:00 a.m. REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST – Rodino Reading Room**

**9:00 a.m. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS – Rodino Reading Room**

- David W. Opderbeck, *Professor of Law and Director, Program on Faith, Values, and the Rule of Law, Seton Hall University School of Law*

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**9:15 - 10:15 a.m. BREAKFAST KEYNOTE – Rodino Reading Room**

- **Quinta Jurecic**, *Staff Writer, The Atlantic*

**10:15 – 10:30 p.m. BREAK**

**10:30 – 11:30 a.m. BREAKOUT SESSIONS I & J**

- Breakout Group I – *Faith, Religion, and Authoritarianism, and Pluralism* - **Rodino Reading Room**
- **Moderator: Edward Hartnett**, Richard J. Hughes Professor of Law, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Diane Kemker** - *Jewish North American Diasporic Perspectives on Nationalism and Authoritarianism*
    - Clinical Assistant Professor of Law, Loyola University Chicago School of Law
  - **Mark Modak-Truran** - *Toward a Pluralistic Postsecular Foundation for the Rule of Law*
    - Professor of Law, Mississippi College School of Law
- Breakout Group J – *Legal Practice and Legal Structures* - **5<sup>th</sup> Floor Paula A. Franzese Faculty Library**
- **Moderator: Lori Borgen**, Associate Dean for Experiential Education & Associate Clinical Professor, & Director, Center for Social Justice, Seton Hall Law School
  - **Scott Pryor** – *Real Entity Theory, Contractarianism, and the Common-Good Firm*
    - Emeritus Professor, Campbell University School of Law (Ret.)
  - **Tiffany Williams Brewer & Rev. Dr. Eric Brewer** - *Faith, Freedom, and the Rule of Law: Christian Responsibility and the Liberative Vocation of the Lawyer as Social Engineer*
    - Associate Professor, Howard University School of Law (Tiffany)
    - Director of Field Education, Adjunct Professor & Program Director, Black Congregations Resource Center, Howard University School of Divinity (Eric)

**11:30 – 11:45 a.m. BREAK**

## 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSION K

- Breakout Group K – *Challenge, Complexity, and Hope* - **Rodino Reading Room**
- **Moderator: David W. Opderbeck**, Professor of Law and Director, Program on Faith, Values, and the Rule of Law, Seton Hall University School of Law
  - **Nikhil Purohit** - [The Mahabharata's Ethical Complexity and the Challenge of Hindu Nationalism in India](#)
    - University of Cambridge; National Law School of India University, Bangalore & Advocate, Supreme Court of India, Independent Researcher
  - **Richard Crane** - [Might an Apocalyptic Theological Imagination Reinforce Christian Commitment to the Rule of Law \(in this precarious moment\)?](#)
    - Alan C. Olson and Associates, S.C. and Retired Professor of Theology, Messiah University
  - **Eugene Policastri** - [Confronting Social Injustice with the Theological Narrative of Hope](#)
    - Managing Member & Attorney, Policastri Law Firm and M.Div. Student, Boston University School of Theology

## 12:45 p.m. PROGRAM CONCLUSION & BOXED LUNCHES TO GO