

Spring 2025

**Cardozo-Columbia Colloquium on Citizenship:
Solidarity and Alienation in a Changing World**

Co-Convenors:

Professor Seyla Benhabib (Columbia Law School)
Professor Susanna Mancini (University of Bologna/Visiting
Professor Cardozo)
Prof. Michel Rosenfeld (Cardozo)

Description

Citizenship is a multifaceted and contested concept. Under international law, the relation between states and their citizens is a legal bond that must be respected by other states and that entails certain duties between states. Citizenship, however, may refer to different types of political communities within and beyond independent states. Moreover, the liberal understanding of citizenship as membership in a self-governing political community does not easily apply to authoritarian states, where individuals do not participate in the political process.

From the domestic perspective, liberal citizenship is a set of rights enjoyed in an equal manner by all members of a certain nation. Citizenship is also an exclusionary concept. While in the past century access to citizenship has been remarkably widened, through the removal of gender and racial barriers, citizenship remains the key mechanism for inclusion and exclusion, distinguishing insiders from outsiders. In a world of deep disparities and mass migration, however, political membership, that is, the principles of incorporating aliens and strangers, immigrants and newcomers into existing polities, becomes a fundamental question of domestic and international justice.

Citizenship also raises questions of identity: indeed, contemporary citizenship oscillates between de-ethnicization and re-ethnicization. On the one hand, as societies become increasingly diverse, and supranational systems, such as the European Union, apportion rights and benefits to individuals, the idea that citizenship entails some commonalities, some level of cultural affinity, seems to lose appeal and importance. On the other hand, when confronted with mass migration, refugees and asylum seekers, states typically react by reinforcing their boundaries and by accentuating the need to preserve their national traditions.

This colloquium will examine the issues raised above, including recent uses of denaturalization by states as a punitive measure; the cause and consequences of statelessness; citizenship acquisition through national amnesties; sale of citizenship by small nations for pecuniary benefits, multi-level citizenship as in the case of the European Union.

The colloquium will comprise students from both Cardozo and from Columbia and will meet on a weekly basis alternatively at Cardozo and at Columbia Law School. After a general introduction at the first class meeting by the three colloquium co-convenors, colloquium

sessions will consist of presentations by, and discussion with, a series of leading invited speakers from the US and many foreign countries specializing in law and certain other fields, such as political science and history, who are engaged in cutting-edge work on subject matters within the scope of the colloquium. Each invited speaker will present a paper to the colloquium, and students will have access to the said paper at least one week before its presentation. Students will be required to read the papers in advance of their presentation and to submit to the co-convenors a short-written response (1 to 3 pages maximum) with questions and comments due on the eve of the presentation. Students will be graded on the basis of their short written responses to all the speakers who will make presentations at the colloquium.

The list of speakers is currently being finalized. At present, the following speakers have already accepted to present papers:

Professor **Linda Bosniak**, Distinguished Professor of Law and Political Science, Rutgers University (author of *The Citizen and The Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership* (Princeton University Press, 2006), and many chapters and articles on immigration, citizenship, nationalism, equality and globalization).

Professor **Frédéric Mégret**, James S. Carpentier Visiting Professor of Law at Columbia Law School and the Hans & Tamar Oppenheimer Chair in Public International Law at the Faculty of Law, McGill University (co-author of *Diasporas and the Making of Transnational Law*, forthcoming).

Professor **David Owen**, Professor of Social and Political Philosophy within the School of Economic, Social and Political Sciences at the University of Southampton, United Kingdom (his books include: *What do we owe to refugees?* (Polity, 200), *Prospects for Citizenship*, co-authored with Gerry Stoker et al. (Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

Professor **Daniel Bonilla Maldonado**, Los Andes University, Bogota, Colombia (has written extensively on indigenous and cultural minorities in South America).

Professor **Ayelet Shachar**, the Irving G. and Eleanor D. Tragen Chair in Comparative Law, University of California, Berkeley (has published extensively on the topic of citizenship theory, and is the author of *[The Birthright Lottery: Citizenship and Global Inequality](#)* (Harvard University Press, 2009).

Professor **Maggie Blackhawk**, New York University School of Law (a prize-winning scholar and teacher of federal Indian law and constitutional law, and author of "American Colonialism and the Constitution in the Early Republic").

Professor **Cristina Rodriguez**, Leighton Homer Surbeck Professor of Law, Yale Law School (teaches in constitutional law and immigration law and is co-author of *[The President and Immigration Law](#)* (Oxford University Press 2020).