



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF LAW AND SOCIETY
BERKELEY LAW

CSLS SPEAKER SERIES

Monday, October 17, 2016

LISA MILLER

Professor of Political Science
Rutgers University

“The Myth of Mob Rule: Violent Crime and Democratic Politics”

Can majorities be entrusted to support rational policy ideas on issues like crime and security? Or are they inevitably *la bella mulitorom capitum*, the many-headed beast, demanding impulsive, irrational and mercurial policies, even when actual risk is very low? Using a comparative case study design, this project analyzes the public and political salience of crime across three countries (U.K., U.S., and the Netherlands) over fifty years. I find that serious violent crime is a necessary but not sufficient condition for sustained public and political attention to crime, and that high crime and low salience is a far more common condition than high salience and low crime. In addition, the structure of political institutions plays a crucial role in shaping policy responses to crime. Contrary to much received wisdom, I argue that the most punitive nation in the world -- the United States -- suffers from a *democratic deficit*, rather than a democratic surplus, and that it is this deficit that leads to high crime *and* high rates of imprisonment.

Prof. Miller will speak about her book *The Myth of Mob Rule: Violent Crime and Democratic Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2016). Her 2015 article published in *Punishment & Society*, covering many of the themes in the book as they pertain to the U.S., is available to download on the CSLS website and in hard copy at the Center.

PLACE Selznick Seminar Room, 2240 Piedmont Ave.
TIME **12:45 – 2:00pm**. Coffee and water provided. Bag lunches welcome.
INFO <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/centers/center-for-the-study-of-law-society/>
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