



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF LAW AND SOCIETY BERKELEY LAW

CSLS SPEAKER SERIES

Monday, March 6, 2017

ARZOO OSANLOO

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Director, Middle East Center,
University of Washington

“‘When Mercy Seasons Justice’: Revelation and Reform in Iranian Criminal Sanctioning”

Iran’s criminal justice system affords victims of crime the right of retributive sanctioning. At the same time, the law encourages victims to forgo that right. The penal code also compels judicial officials to attempt to achieve reconciliation. However, the law provides little guidance, either to victims or judicial officials, on how to bring about reconciliation. This compulsion without regulation, I suggest, sets into motion a “semi-autonomous” social field that generates a cottage industry of mercy and forgiveness work involving numerous and diverse agents. The different actors, sometimes competitors with varying motivations, forge and participate in this loosely regulated marketplace of reconciliation and settlement (*solh va sauzesh*).

In this talk, Professor Osanloo will explore how the work of mercy serves to “season” justice in a context in which its exercise manifests through a property right that the state affords to individual victims or their successors. Drawing from the Derridian translation of the term “to season” as “*relever*,” she will also consider the ethico-religious dynamics at play within the scriptural revelations on which the law is based and reflect on some of the on-going efforts for penal reform.

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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