



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF LAW AND SOCIETY
BERKELEY LAW

CSLS SPEAKER SERIES
Monday, September 16, 2019

SAM ERMAN

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***Almost Citizens:
Puerto Rico, the U.S. Constitution, and Empire***
(Cambridge University Press, 2018)

Almost Citizens lays out the tragic story of how the United States denied Puerto Ricans full citizenship following annexation of the island in 1898. As America became an overseas empire, a handful of remarkable Puerto Ricans debated with U.S. legislators, presidents, judges, and others over who was a citizen and what citizenship meant. This struggle caused a fundamental shift in constitutional jurisprudence: away from the post-Civil War regime of citizenship, rights, and statehood and toward doctrines that accommodated racist imperial governance. Erman's gripping account shows how, in the wake of the Spanish-American War, administrators, lawmakers, and presidents, together with judges, deployed creativity and ambiguity to transform constitutional law and interpretation over a quarter century of debate and litigation. The result is a history in which the United States and Latin America, Reconstruction and empire, and law and bureaucracy intertwine.

The Intro and Chapter 4 of *Almost Citizens* is available online and in hard copy at the Center.

PLACE Selznick Seminar Room, 2240 Piedmont Avenue
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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