4-1-2009

New Works by Our Professors: The UB Law Bookshelf

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New works by our professors

The UB Law bookshelf

Prison Religion: Faith-Based Reform, and the Constitution
By Winnifred Fallers Sullivan
(Princeton University Press)

Navigators of the Contemporary: Why Ethnography Matters
By David A. Westbrook
(University of Chicago Press)

Human Rights NGOs in East Africa: Political and Normative Tensions
Edited by Makau W. Mutua
(University of Pennsylvania Press)

Trials of a Forensic Psychologist: A Casebook
By Charles Patrick Ewing
(John Wiley and Sons)

Professor Sullivan, director of the Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy, looks at “faith-based” prison programs in light of the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state. Sullivan takes as her springboard a recent trial challenging the constitutionality of a faith-based residential rehabilitation program in an Iowa state prison. In that trial she served as an expert witness for the plaintiffs, a group of prisoners who were assigned to the “God Pod,” a section of the prison administered by a faith-based organization that equated crime with sin.

Sullivan argues that church-state separation is no longer possible because religious authority has shifted from institutions to individuals, making it difficult even to define religion, let alone disentangle it from the government.

Professor Westbrook, a Floyd H. and Hilda L. Hurst Faculty Scholar, here argues for the importance of ethnography – the descriptive study of human societies based on fieldwork – as a way to understand our interconnected, yet mysterious, worlds. Though ethnography traditionally has been used by Western anthropologists to study far-flung cultures, Westbrook says they are now using the tools of this discipline to study such close-to-home cultures as corporations, the scientific establishment, the military and organized religion.

In an informal and relatively brief book, written in a conversational style and without footnotes, Westbrook reaches out to a wide audience with what he calls “a publicly available meditation on intellectual life.”

Dean Mutua’s new book chronicles the human rights movement in East Africa as set against the series of political transitions in the region. In particular it examines the role of nongovernmental organizations and broader “civil society,” the social organizations that Mutua sees as key to the success of political democracy in African nations. Recognizing that the state remains one of the major challenges to the human rights effort, these essays also acknowledge serious internal problems in the movement to ensure human rights throughout Africa.

The book brings together some of the most celebrated human rights thinkers in East Africa, as well as writers from South Africa and the United States. Mutua, a SUNY Distinguished Professor, also directs UB Law’s Human Rights Center.

Ewing, a SUNY Distinguished Service Professor and widely known expert on criminal psychology, details 10 high-profile cases from U.S. courtrooms in which forensic psychologist – psychologists applying their knowledge in a legal setting – played a crucial role. Drawing from his experiences testifying as an expert witness over three decades, Ewing brings to life the personal as well as the legal stories in these cases, and shows how the forensic psychologist’s craft applies to such issues as the ability to waive Miranda rights, the insanity defense, battered woman syndrome and evaluating allegations of child sexual abuse.

“I have tried to paint a detailed and compelling portrait of the evidence and the testimony,” Ewing says, “and leave it to readers to decide who was right and whether justice was done.”