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TEA WITH JEDIDIAH

# Suspended in Empire: The Imperial Legacies of American Territorial Labor

Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-5:30pm

Allard Hall – Terrace Lounge, Room 402

## Abstract

A great deal of recent attention has been given to acknowledging the full historical scope of American empire and its legal foundations. A recurrent focus of this attention has been the impact of the *Insular Cases*—a set of early twentieth century doctrines that legitimate American territorial acquisitions while denying their full incorporation under the United States Constitution. Issues of political citizenship and property have thus predominated critical work on the *Insular Cases*.

This article expands on this resurgent interest by focusing on another critical element of this acknowledgment: the history of the territorial labor which has long been central to the political economy of American empire. Explicating the role and regulation of territorial labor enables a more complete picture of American empire, as well as the evolving pursuit of new legal forms to project national power while avoiding democratic accountability.

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Jedidiah Kroncke is an associate professor of law at the University of Hong Kong, where he teaches private law and comparative law subjects. He currently serves as Director of Early Career Research, Director of the Global Academic Fellows program, and Director of the JD Program. Previously, he was a professor at FGV Sao Paulo School of Law and Senior Research Fellow at the East Asian Legal Studies program at Harvard Law School. Professor Kroncke's research centers on international legal history and the comparative law and political economy. His first book, *The Futility of Law and Development: China and the Dangers of Exporting American Law* (Oxford University Press 2016), explores the role of U.S.-China relations in the formation of modern American legal internationalism.

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