

Ariël Decoster, PhD

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Florida State University College of Law , Tallahassee, FL <i>Visiting Assistant Professor</i> Teaching: Property Law Theory, Family Law	2025 – present
University of Antwerp & Ghent University , Antwerp & Ghent (Belgium) <i>PhD researcher</i>	2020 – 2025
University of California, Irvine School of Law , Irvine, CA <i>Visiting researcher</i>	01/2023 – 07/2023
King's College London , London (United Kingdom) <i>Visiting researcher</i>	01/2022 – 03/2022

EDUCATION

University of Antwerp & Ghent University , Antwerp & Ghent (Belgium) <i>PhD</i> Dissertation: “Masculinity as Property” Supervisors: Prof. Eva Brems & Prof. Kristof Van Assche	2025
University of California, Los Angeles , Los Angeles, CA <i>LLM</i> Fulbright award Ranked 4 th of 2020 cohort; GPA: 4,017/5 Specialization: Critical Race Studies and Law & Sexuality	2020
University of Antwerp , Antwerp, Belgium <i>Master in law</i> Magna Cum Laude Specialization: Human Rights and Sustainable Development	2019
Université Catholique de Louvain Saint-Louis Bruxelles , Brussels, Belgium <i>Bachelor in philosophy (BPhil)</i> Magna Cum Laude	2017
Université Catholique de Louvain Saint-Louis Bruxelles , Brussels, Belgium <i>Bachelor in law (LLB)</i> Magna Cum Laude	2016

PUBLICATIONS

in English

Quasi-Territorial Property: Private Islands and the Gaps in U.S. Offshore Law (work in progress).

Constructing Threat, Reproducing Gender Norms: The Best Interest of the Child Standard and Transgender Parents in Child Custody Disputes 79 SMU L. REV. __ (forthcoming, 2026).

Masculinity as Resource: Bridging Identity and Structural Gender Inequality through Property Theory, 0 MEN AND MASCULINITIES 0 (2026, available online awaiting print).

Men in/and Law: Developing “Critical Legal Studies of Men and Masculinities”, 0 FEMINIST LEGAL STUDIES 0 (2025, available online awaiting print).

Awarded Feminist Legal Studies’ Best Article of 2025

“POSTED: No Trespassing”: *On the Performativity of Property and Gender as Intertwined Social Practices of Power*, 34 SOCIAL AND LEGAL STUDIES 881 (2024).

Hormonal Eligibility Criteria in Women’s Professional Sports Under the ECHR: The Case of Caster Semenya v. Switzerland, in *SPORTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS* 95 (Véronique Boillet, Sophie Weerts & Andreas R. Ziegler eds., 2022) (with Pieter Cannoot, Cathérine Van de Graaf, Claire Poppelwell-Scevak & Sarah Schoentjes).

The Abolition of Sex/Gender Registration in the Age of Gender Self-Determination: an Interdisciplinary, Queer, Feminist and Human Rights Analysis, 1 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF GENDER, SEXUALITY AND LAW 26 (2020) (with Pieter Cannoot).

Legal Sex/Gender Recognition beyond the Binary: Human Rights Centre Submits Third Party Intervention (Dec. 16, 2020), <https://strasbourgobservers.com/2020/12/16/legal-sex-gender-recognition-beyond-the-binary-human-rights-centre-submits-third-party-intervention/> (with Sarah Schoentjes).

in Dutch (title translated)

“Ik Moet wel het Gras Maaien...”: *Hoogtijd voor Rechtswetenschappelijk Onderzoek dat Gebruik Maakt van Kritische Mannelijkheidsstudies* (translation: “‘But I Must Mow the Lawn...’: Time for Legal Research that Incorporates Critical Masculinities Studies”), in *FEMINISTISCHE EN QUEER ONDERZOEKSMETHODEN IN HET RECHT* (Pieter Cannoot, Elise Goossens & Marie Spinoy eds., forthcoming 2025).

Genderregistratie en Positieve Actie: Hoe Transmisogynie Vrouwenrechten Ondermijnt (translation: “Legal Gender Recognition and Affirmative Action: How Women’s Rights are undermined by Transmisogyny”) (March 10, 2023),

<https://tijd.mensenrechten.be/2023/03/10/genderregistratie-en-positieve-actie-hoe-transmisogynie-vrouwenrechten-ondermijnt/>.

Wanneer Antidiscriminatiewetten Deel Zijn van het Probleem: Over Macht, Gender, Affirmative Action en het Recht (translation: “When Anti-Discrimination Legislation Is Part of the Problem: About Power, Gender and Affirmative Action”), 1 *ETHIEK EN MAATSCHAPPIJ* 53 (2021).

Editoriaal: Positieve Discriminatie en de (On)Wenselijkheid van een “Gelijke” Behandeling (translation: “Editorial: Affirmative Action and the (Un)Desirability of ‘Equal’ treatment”), 1 *ETHIEK EN MAATSCHAPPIJ* 29 (2021) (with Kristof Van Assche).

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Primary: property law; family law; constitutional law; law, gender and sexuality; international law; human rights law

Other: immigration law; community property; trusts and estates; women and the law; (feminist) legal theory; philosophy of law; critical race theory; European Union law

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

West Coast Sexuality, Gender and the Law Conference – Irvine, CA (USA) – 13-14 March 2026.

Annual Association of American Law Schools Conference – New Orleans, LA (USA) – 6-9 January 2026.

Personal Rights and Property Rights Research Group International Conference on “The Legal Distinction between Persons and Things: Changing Perspectives” – University of Antwerp, Antwerp (Belgium) – 7-8 July 2025.

Annual Conference of the Association for Law, Property and Society – Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA (USA) – 13-June 2024.

Annual Conference of the Law & Society Association – Denver, CO (USA) – 6-9 June 2024.

Annual Conference of the Socio-Legal Studies Association – University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth (UK) – 26-28 March 2024.

Annual Conference of A* interdisciplinary research network on gender and sexuality – University of Antwerp, Antwerp (Belgium) – 14 May 2024.

“Contested Equality: International and Comparative Legal Perspectives” – University of Zürich, Zürich (Switzerland) – 20/21 October 2022.

“9th Annual Berkeley Center for Comparative Equality Law Conference” – Berkeley Center on Comparative Equality and Anti-Discrimination Law – University of Hong Kong, online (virtual) – 22/24 June 2022.

“Virtual Conference on Law, Property, and Society” – Association for Property, Law and Society – online (virtual) – 13 May 2022.

“13th Annual Feminist Legal Theory Conference – Big Ideas” – Center on Applied Feminism – University of Baltimore, Baltimore (USA) – 7/8 April 2022.

“Gender Studies in Belgium: State of the Art” – Sophia Gender Studies Network – Brussels – 20/21 October 2021.

“Quand distance et droit (se) rapprochent” – Assistentenconferentie, Conférence des Assistant.e.s – Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles, Brussels (Belgium) – 17 September 2021.

“(Re)Connecting Gender Studies Conference” – Sophia Junior Network – online (virtual) – 13 November 2020.

“Queering Love: Across Subjectivities, Temporalities, and Decolonial Imaginaries” – QGrad LGBT studies Conference – University of California, Los Angeles (USA) – 31 January 2020.

INVITED TALKS & GUEST LECTURES

Presentation at Study Day on Feminist and Queer Legal Research Methods – University of Antwerp, Belgium – 16 May 2025.

Title: “Critical Masculinities Studies in Law”

Panel on “Challenging Norms Behind LGBTQ+ Discriminatory Laws” by ROOTS UCOS – Free University Brussels (VUB), Brussels (Belgium) – 9 May 2025.

Guest lecture in “Special Issues in International Human Rights Law” class (Prof. Eva Brems) – Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium – 18 November 2024.

Title: “Legal Gender Recognition in International Human Rights Law”

Guest lecture in Law & Gender Discrimination class (Prof. Jogchum Vlierink) – Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles (Belgium) – 19 November 2024.

Title: “Trans rights: legal gender recognition from the international and Belgian legal perspectives”.

Guest lecture in Gender, Sexuality and Law class (Prof. Elise Goosens) – University of Antwerp, Belgium – 2 December 2024.

Title: “Critical Legal Masculinities Studies of Men”.

Guest lecture in Gender and Law class (Prof. Katayoun Alidadi) – Bryant University, RI (USA) – 28 February 2024.

Title: “Challenges and intersections between trans and feminist politics and legal theory”.

Guest lecture in Gender, Sexuality and Law class (Prof. Elise Goosens) – University of Antwerp, Belgium – 12 December 2022.

Title: “Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities in law”.

Guest lecture in Legal Research Methodologies class (Dr. Deborah Casalin) – University of Antwerp, Belgium – 7 December 2022.

Title: “Feminist legal research methods”.

Guest lecture in Law & Gender Discrimination class (Prof. Jogchum Vlierink) – Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles (Belgium) – 22 November 2022.

Title: “Trans rights: legal gender recognition from the international and Belgian legal perspectives”.

Workshop for the Fulbright Commission Brussels – Series on race & identity, with Sven Van den Bossche – online – 16 November 2021.

Title: “‘A Posttranssexual Manifesto’: Are We There Yet?”.

Presentation at the Human Rights Centre – Ghent University, Ghent (Belgium) – 15 November 2021.

Title: “Why Equality Law won’t Save You”.

Moderator at BAMKO decolonial and anti-racism workshop with USOS – University of Antwerp, online – 25 March 2021.

Title: “Intersectionaliteit, Afrofeminisme en LGBTQI+”.

Public lecture by Wetenschap aan de Stroom – University of Antwerp, Antwerp (Belgium) – 19 May 2021.

Title: “De X in M/V/X: waarom gender ons allemaal aangaat” (“The X in M/F/X: why gender concerns all of us”).

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS & EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Research Foundation-Flanders (FWO), Antwerp (Belgium) 11/2020 – 06/2025
PhD fellowship (approx. €150,000)

FWO is one of Belgium’s national scientific councils, which is responsible for funding innovative research. The FWO’s PhD fellowships are extremely competitive, open to both domestic and international researchers. They provide the opportunity to focus full time on fundamental research, including foreign research stays.

UCLA Promise Institute, Los Angeles, CA 05/2020 – 07/2020
Summer Human Rights Fellowship of the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

I provided research assistance for the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and helped with the preparation of the reports submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Fulbright, Los Angeles, CA 08/2019 – 08/2020
Fulbright Award (€19,000)
The Fulbright Commission's award allowed me to pursue my LLM at the University of California, Los Angeles.

University of Antwerp, Antwerp (Belgium) 11/2021
Support Young Researchers Grant (OJO) (€3000)
This grant allowed me to co-organize a workshop for junior researchers at the University of Antwerp, titled “Too Far, Too Close: A Training Day on Positionality for Junior Researchers”.

Belgian Permanent Representation to the United Nations in Geneva (Human Rights Council), Geneva (Switzerland) 06/2018 – 07/2018
Intern
I followed up on issues related to international law, gender and sexuality. In that regard, I was charged with attending plenary sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva as well as participating in meetings by non-governmental organizations and reporting about them to the Belgian ambassador and diplomats. I also organized meetings with delegates from other states.

Unia Centre For Equal Opportunities and Fight against Discrimination, Brussels (Belgium) 07/2017 – 07/2019
Individual Support Assistant
Unia is Belgium's governmental equality body. As an individual support assistant, I was charged with receiving complaints of discrimination, assisting the victims, making initial legal assessments and transferring the cases to pertinent lawyers.

WORKSHOPS & SUMMER SCHOOLS

Organized

“Too Far, Too Close: A Training Day on Positionality for Junior Researchers”, with keynote lectures by dr. Sophie Withaecx and dr. Marion Wasserbauer – University of Antwerp, Antwerp (Belgium) – 25 November 2021.

Participated in

“Equality, Law and Social Justice Residence” – King's College London (UK) – 19 June 2023-7 July 2023.

“Emerging Voices in EU law workshop” – Amsterdam Centre for European Law and Governance – University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam (Netherlands) – 18 November 2021.

“Annual Workshop of the Belgian section of the International Association for Philosophy of Law” – Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Brussels (Belgium) – 14 September 2021.

“Antiracism & Decolonization Training” – USOS & Bamko vzw – University of Antwerp, Antwerp (Belgium) – March-April 2021.

SERVICE/COMMITTEES

Member of the Council on Diversity and Sustainability of the Law Faculty of the University of Antwerp (2022-2025).

Voting member of the Steering Committee on Diversity and Inclusion of the University of Antwerp (2023-2025).

Founding member of QT@UA Trans Action Group at the University of Antwerp (2020), resulting in policy changes, including university wide gender inclusive communication guidelines.

SKILLS & PASSIONS

I am fluent in Dutch, English, French as well as Spanish and have notions of Italian, German, Arabic and Russian.

Besides work, I can be found practicing hot yoga three times a week, I meditate daily, and I deeply enjoy traveling, nature, dancing the night away, deep sunset talks, or meeting strangers and ask them about their life experiences. I value empathy, kindness and strive to put feminist principles of interdependency, vulnerability and care into practice.