Ariël Decoster, PhD

Florida State University College of Law
425 W Jefferson St, Tallahassee, FL 32306 (office)
adecoster@law.fsu.edu | (850) 644-3256 (office)

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Florida State University College of Law, Tallahassee, FL — 2025 – present
Visiting Assistant Professor
Teaching: Property Law Theory, Family Law

University of Antwerp & Ghent University, Antwerp (Belgium) — 2020 – 2025
PhD researcher

University of California, Irvine School of Law, Irvine, CA — 01/2023 – 07/2023
Visiting researcher

King's College London, London (United Kingdom) — 01/2022 – 03/2022
Visiting researcher

EDUCATION

University of Antwerp & Ghent University, Antwerp (Belgium) — 2025
PhD in law
Dissertation: "Masculinity as Property"
Supervisors: Prof. Eva Brems & Prof. Kristof Van Assche

University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA — 2020
LLM
Fulbright award
Ranked 4th out of 212; GPA: 4.017
Specialization: Critical Race Studies and Law & Sexuality

University of Antwerp, Antwerp (Belgium) — 2019
Master in law
Magna Cum Laude
Specialization: Human Rights and Sustainable Development

Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles, Brussels (Belgium) — 2017
Bachelor in philosophy (BPhil)
Magna Cum Laude

Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles, Brussels (Belgium) — 2016
Bachelor in law (LLB)
Magna Cum Laude

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Primary: property law; family law; law and gender; international law.

Other: (feminist) legal theory/jurisprudence; human rights; trusts and estates; community property; women and the law; constitutional law; European Union law.

PUBLICATIONS

Works in progress

Quasi-Territorial Property: Private Islands and the Gaps in U.S. Offshore Law (law review article).

Law review articles, peer reviewed articles and book chapters in English

Preserving Gender Norms Through Harm-Based Reasoning: The Best Interest of the Child Standard and Transgender Parents 79 SMU L. REV. 677 (2026).

Masculinity as Resource: Bridging Identity and Structural Gender Inequality through Property Theory, 29 MEN & MASCULINITIES 283 (2026).

Men in/and Law: Developing "Critical Legal Studies of Men and Masculinities," 34 FEM. LEGAL STUD. 73 (2026) (Feminist Legal Studies' Best Article of 2025-2026 Award).

"POSTED: No Trespassing": On the Performativity of Property and Gender as Intertwined Social Practices of Power, 34 SOC. & LEGAL STUD. 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 INT'L J. GENDER, SEXUALITY & L. 26 (2020) (with Pieter Cannoot).

Peer reviewed articles and book chapters in Dutch

"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 49 (Pieter Cannoot, Elise Goossens & Marie Spinoy eds., 2025).

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).

Other/online published entries

Legal Sex/Gender Recognition beyond the Binary: Human Rights Centre Submits Third Party Intervention, STRASBOURG OBSERVERS (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).

Genderregistratie en Positieve Actie: Hoe Transmisogynie Vrouwenrechten Ondermijnt (translation: "Legal Gender Recognition and Affirmative Action: How Women's Rights are undermined by Transmisogyny"), TIJD VOOR MENSENRECHTEN (March 10, 2023), https://tijd.mensenrechten.be/2023/03/10/genderregistratie-en-positieve-actie-hoe-transmisogynie-vrouwenrechten-ondermijnt/.

ACADEMIC GRANTS

Research Foundation-Flanders (FWO), Antwerp (Belgium) 11/2020 – 06/2025
PhD grant (approx. €150,000 ~ $170,580 USD)
FWO is one of Belgium's national scientific councils, which is responsible for funding innovative research. The FWO's PhD grants 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.

Fulbright, Los Angeles, CA 08/2019 – 08/2020
Fulbright Award (€19,000 ~ $21,135 USD)
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) (€3,000 ~ $3,425 USD)
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".

FELLOWSHIPS & EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

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.

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 appropriate lawyers.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Conference panel presentations

SEALS – Family Law Workshop – "Family Law in Courts" – Jacksonville, FL (USA) – 26 July – 1 August 2026.

Association for Law, Property and Society (ALPS) – "Private Islands and the Gaps in U.S. Offshore Law" – Tulane University School of Law, New Orleans, LA (USA) – 4-6 June 2026.

Law & Society Association (LSA) – "Constructing Threat, Reproducing Gender Norms: Trans Parents and the Best Interest of the Child Standard" – San Francisco, CA (USA) – 28-31 May 2026.

West Coast Sexuality, Gender and the Law Conference – "Constructing Threat, Reproducing Gender Norms: Trans Parents and the Best Interest of the Child Standard" – Irvine, CA (USA) – 13-14 March 2026.

Annual Association of American Law Schools (AALS) – "Affirmative Action Across the Atlantic: On Positive Action, Men's Rights, and the Limits of EU Anti-Discrimination Law" – 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" – "Conceptualizing Masculinity as Resource" – University of Antwerp, Antwerp (Belgium) – 7-8 July 2025.

Association for Law, Property and Society (ALPS) – "On Performing Property and Gender" Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA (USA) – 13-June 2024.

Law & Society Association (LSA) – "Men in/and Law" – Denver, CO (USA) – 6-9 June 2024.

Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA) – "Men's Worth: on Property, Identity and the Resource of Masculinity" – University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth (UK) – 26-28 March 2024.

Conference on "Contested Equality: International and Comparative Legal Perspectives" – "Positive Action in the EU: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" – University of Zürich, Zürich (Switzerland) – 20/21 October 2022.

Berkeley Center for Comparative Equality Law – "Masculinity as Property" – University of Hong Kong, online (virtual) – 22/24 June 2022.

Association for Property, Law and Society (ALPS) – "Masculinity as Property" – online (virtual) – 13 May 2022.

Annual Feminist Legal Theory Conference – "Big Ideas"– "Masculinity as Property" – Center on Applied Feminism – University of Baltimore, Baltimore (USA) – 7/8 April 2022.

Sophia Gender Studies Network – "Gender Studies in Belgium: State of the Art" – "Masculinity as Property" – Brussels – 20/21 October 2021.

Workshops

FSU Faculty Summer Workshop Series – "Constructing Threat, Reproducing Gender Norms" – Florida State University College of Law, Tallahassee, FL (USA) – 25 June 2026.

"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 – USOS & Bamko vzw – University of Antwerp, Antwerp (Belgium) – March-April 2021.

Guest lectures and invited talks

Guest lecture in Law & Sexuality Class (Prof. Kim Pearson) – "The Best Interest of the Child Standard and Transgender Parents" – *Gonzaga University* School of Law, WA (USA) – 1 April 2026.

Presentation at Study Day on Feminist and Queer Legal Research Methods – "Critical Masculinities Studies in Law" – *University of Antwerp*, Belgium – 16 May 2025.

Roundtable discussion 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) – "Legal Gender Recognition in International Human Rights Law" – *Ghent University*, Ghent, Belgium – 18 November 2024

Guest lecture in Law & Gender Discrimination class (Prof. Jogchum Vlierink) – "Trans rights: legal gender recognition from the international and Belgian legal perspectives" – *Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles* (Belgium) – 19 November 2024.

Guest lecture in Gender, Sexuality and Law class (Prof. Elise Goosens) – "Critical Legal Masculinities Studies of Men" – *University of Antwerp*, Belgium – 2 December 2024.

Guest lecture in Gender and Law class (Prof. Katayoun Alidadi) – "Challenges and intersections between trans and feminist politics and legal theory" – *Bryant University*, RI (USA) – 28 February 2024.

Guest lecture in Gender, Sexuality and Law class (Prof. Elise Goosens) – "Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities in law" – *University of Antwerp*, Belgium – 12 December 2022.

Guest lecture in Legal Research Methodologies class (Dr. Deborah Casalin) – "Feminist legal research methods" – *University of Antwerp*, Belgium – 7 December 2022.

Guest lecture in Law & Gender Discrimination class (Prof. Jogchum Vlierink) – "Trans rights: legal gender recognition from the international and Belgian legal perspectives" – *Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles* (Belgium) – 22 November 2022.

Workshop for the *Fulbright Commission Brussels* – "'A Posttranssexual Manifesto': Are We There Yet?" – Series on race & identity, with Sven Van den Bossche – online – 16 November 2021.

Presentation at the Human Rights Centre – "Why Equality Law won't Save You" – *Ghent University*, Ghent (Belgium) – 15 November 2021.

Moderator at BAMKO decolonial and anti-racism workshop with USOS – "Intersectionaliteit, Afrofeminisme en LGBTQI+" – *University of Antwerp*, online – 25 March 2021.

Public lecture by Wetenschap aan de Stroom – "De X in M/V/X: waarom gender ons allemaal aangaat" ("The X in M/F/X: why gender concerns all of us") – *University of Antwerp*, Antwerp (Belgium) – 19 May 2021.

SERVICE/COMMITTEES

Student Note Advisor, *Florida State University Law Review* (2026-2027).

Peer Reviewer, *Gender Issues* (2026).

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

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

Co-organizer, *Too Far, Too Close: A Training Day on Positionality for Junior Researchers*, University of Antwerp (25 November 2021) (with Sven Van den Bossche, Emma Verhoeven and Maxim Delodder).

Founding Member, QT@UA Trans Action Group, University of Antwerp (2020); contributed to policy reforms including university-wide gender-inclusive communication guidelines.

SKILLS & INTERESTS

- I am fluent in Dutch, English, and French; conversational in Spanish, Italian, and German; with basic knowledge of Arabic and Russian.
- I practice hot yoga three times a week, mediate daily and enjoy hikes and dancing.
- I value empathy, kindness and strive to put feminist principles of interdependency, vulnerability and care into practice.