

# Yonathan A. Arbel

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## Current Appointment

### The University of Alabama, School of Law, TUSCALOOSA, AL

2017–

Teaching: Contracts, AI & the Law, Sales, Secured Transactions, Defamation; Contract Theory, Law, Economics, and Society

#### Rose Professor of Law · Director, AI Studies

2024–

#### Associate Professor of Law

2020–2024

#### Assistant Professor of Law

2017–2020

### CLAIR, the Center for Law & AI Risk

2024–

#### Co-Director & Founder

Raised \$500,000 in philanthropic contributions to support the mission of the organization

## Education

### Harvard Law School

2015

Doctoral Degree (SJD) | CAMBRIDGE, MA

- Dissertation: The Execution and Enforcement of Private Legal Obligations
- Committee: Steven Shavell, Louis Kaplow, Duncan Kennedy

### Stanford Law School

2009

JSM Degree in Law | PALO ALTO, CA

SPILS fellow, focus on empirical methods

### Hebrew University, Faculty of Law

2008

Joint LL.B. in Law and the Humanities ("Amirim") | JERUSALEM, IL

- Summa Cum Laude, Salutatorian
- Member of a university-wide honors program, full scholarship. Various merit awards
- Articles Editor, Mishpatim Law Review

## Journal Articles & Essays

### Racing to Safety: Tax Policy for AI Safety-by-Design

2026

SMU L. Rev. (Forthcoming, 2026) (With Mirit Eyal)

2025

### Governing AI Beyond the Grave

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW (Forthcoming, 2025) (with Alberto Lopez)

### Judicial Economy in the Age of AI

invited essay, Colorado Law Review 96 (2025) 549

Legal theory blog: "Very cool. Highly recommended. Download it while it's hot!"

### How Smart are Smart Readers?

in CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK ON EMERGING ISSUES AT THE INTERSECTION OF COMMERCIAL LAW AND TECHNOLOGY (KIM & STACEY-ELVY EDS. 2025) (with Samuel Becher)

2024

### The Readability of Contracts: Big Data Analysis

21 JOURNAL OF EMPIRICAL LEGAL STUDIES 927 (2024)

Featured in [Shawn Bayern, Consumer Contracts Have Many Problems, but "Readability" May Not Be One](#), JOTWELL

(November 18, 2024)

### **Generative Interpretation**

99 NYU LAW REVIEW 451 (2024) (with David Hoffman)

- "A profoundly important article. . . . When I say, "Must Read," I mean that literally. Every legal scholar should read this—even if you have no interest in contract interpretation. Highly recommended. Download it while it is incandescent!" – Lawrence Solum, Legal Theory Blog
- Selected for review in **JOTWELL: The Journal of Things We Like (Lots)**, 2023
- Cited in *Snell v. United Specialty Insurance Company*, No. 22-12581 (11th Cir. 2024)

### **Systemic Regulation of AI**

56 ARIZONA STATE LAW JOURNAL 545 (2024) (With Matthew Tokson and Albert Lin)

### **The False Choice in the Debate Over Artificial Intelligence Regulation**

LAWFARE (2024) (With Matthew Tokson and Albert Lin)

### **Open Questions in Law and AI Safety: An Emerging Research Agenda**

LAWFARE (2024) (MULTIPLE AUTHORS)

### **A Status Theory of Defamation Law**

14 UC IRVINE LAW REVIEW 768 (2024)

Selected for Yale Freedom of Expression Forum

### **Truth Bounties: A Market Solution to Fake News**

102 NORTH CAROLINA LAW REVIEW 509 (2024) (with Michael Gilbert)

Selected for ALEA 2022

### **Time and Contract Interpretation: Lessons from Machine Learning**

in RESEARCH HANDBOOK ON LAW AND TIME (forthcoming 2024, Cambridge University Press 2024, Frank Fagan & Saul Levmore Eds.)

2023

### **On the Scales of Private Law: Nano Contracts**

37 HARVARD JOURNAL OF LAW & TECHNOLOGY 151 (2023)

- Selected for Stanford / Penn / Northwestern Law & Stem (2022)
- Featured **Gilbert + Tobin**

### **The Credibility Effect: Defamation Law and Audiences**

52 JOURNAL OF LEGAL STUDIES 417 (2023)

Selected for Yale Freedom of Expression Conference, ALEA 2022, CLEA 2022, CELS 2022

### **Defamation Law & Bayesian Audiences**

52 JOURNAL OF LEGAL STUDIES 445 (2023) (With Murat Mungan)

2021

### **Contracts in the Age of Smart Readers**

GEO. WASH. L. REV. (2021) (With Samuel Becher)

- Selected for review in **JOTWELL: The Journal of Things We Like (Lots)**, 2022
- Featured essay: **The Regulatory Review**

2020

### **ALL-CAPS**

17 JOURNAL OF EMPIRICAL LEGAL STUDIES 862 (2020) (With Andrew Toler)

Reviewed in **Nancy Kim, Hidden in Plain Sight and In All-Caps**, **JOTWELL: The Journal of Things We Like (Lots)** 2020, ContractsProf Blog, Psych News

### **Payday**

98 WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW 1 (2020)

- Winner of the American College of Consumer Financial Services' Annual Writing Competition 2021
- Reviewed in **Tom C.W. Lin, A New Payday(s)**, **JOTWELL: The Journal of Things We Like (Lots)**, 2020

- Featured: Business Law Podcast

### **Slicing Defamation by Contract**

CHICAGO LAW REVIEW ONLINE (2020)

### **Theory of the Nudnik: The Future of Consumer Activism and What We Can Do to Stop It**

73 VANDERBILT LAW REVIEW, 929 (2020) (with Roy Shapira)

- Selected for the Stanford Junior Forum for Law & STEM
- Featured: Marginal Revolution; Marker; Ipse Dixit Podcast

2019

### **The Case Against Expanding Defamation Laws**

71 ALABAMA LAW REVIEW 453 (2019) (with Murat Mungan)

Selected for the Stanford/Yale/Harvard Junior Faculty Forum

### **Reputation Failure: Market Discipline and its Limits**

54 WAKE FOREST LAW REVIEW 1239 (2019)

### **Consumer Activism: From the Informed Minority to the Crusading Minority**

DEPAUL LAW REVIEW (Forthcoming, 2019) (Invited symposium contribution, Rising Stars in Legal Academia) (with Roy Shapira)

2018

### **Book Review: Reconsidering Civil Justice**

37 CIVIL JUSTICE QUARTERLY 509, 2018 (INVITED)

### **Admininstration: Gatekeeping Consumer Contracts**

71 VANDERBILT LAW REVIEW 121 (2018)

Selected for the Stanford/Yale/Harvard Junior Faculty Forum

2017

### **Tort Reform through the Backdoor: A Critique of Law and Apologies**

90 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LAW REVIEW 1199 (2017) (with Yotam Kaplan)

2016

### **Shielding of Assets and Lending Contracts**

48 INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF LAW & ECONOMICS 26 (2016) (PEER REVIEWED)

2015

### **Contract Remedies in Action: Specific Performance**

118 WEST VIRGINIA LAW REVIEW 100 (2015).

Reviewed in Caprice Roberts, *Studying Specific Performance*, JOTWELL: The Journal of Things We Like (Lots), 2017.

### **Legal and Practice Experience**

#### **Lexidale, Legal Policy Consulting**

*Co-Founder and Managing Partner*

2009–2015

- Co-founded international legal policy consulting firm advising EU institutions, national governments, and top firms.
- Led studies covering over 28 countries worldwide.
- Successful exit in 2015.

#### **Supreme Court of Israel**

*Clerk, Justice Ayala Procaccia*

2007–2008

#### **Supreme Court of Israel**

*Research Assistant to Retired Chief Justice Aharon Barak*

2007

#### **Minister of Interior, Israel**

2005–2007

## Honors

**Award Winner, American College of Consumer Financial Services' Annual Writing Competition 2021**  
**Selected for "Rising Stars in Legal Academia", 25th Annual Clifford Symposium on Civil Justice**

**Affiliate, Google Research Innovators 2023**

## Works in Progress

**Governing X-Risk (with Matthew Tokson)**

**Governing AGI (with Peter Salib)**

**The Silicon Reasonable Person**

**The Failed Quest for Misinformation Institutions: On Law Reviews**

## Selected Media Appearances

- Broadband Breakfast, AI Regulation (2025)
- ABC 3340, Covid and contracts (2020)
- Financial Times, Defamation (2023)
- Broadband Breakfast, Generative AI (2024)

## Teaching and Research Interests

**Contracts**

**AI and the Law**

**Commercial Law**

**Torts**

**Consumer Law**

**Law & Economics**

**Empirical Methods**

## Teaching Experience

**Villanova School of Law**

2016–2017

*Visiting Assistant Professor of Law, Contracts, Advanced Contracts Seminar | VILLANOVA, PA*

**Harvard Law School**

2015–2016

*Postdoctoral Private Law Fellow | CAMBRIDGE, MA*

**Harvard Law School**

2015–2016

*Teaching Fellow, Inside Government (Professor Cass Sunstein) | CAMBRIDGE, MA*

**Harvard Law School**

2011, 2014, 2015

*Teaching Fellow, LL.M. Writer's Workshop, Private Law Section | CAMBRIDGE, MA*

**Harvard Law School**

2013–2014

*Lecturer, Byse Workshop: Debt, Contracts, and Default | CAMBRIDGE, MA*

**Harvard Economics Department**

2010–2016

*Instructor, Economic Analysis of Contract Law | CAMBRIDGE, MA*

Five Distinction-in-Teaching awards

## Graduate Fellowships, Research, and Teaching

**Harvard Law School**

2011–2015

*Olin & Considine Fellow in Law and Economics | CAMBRIDGE, MA*

**Harvard Law School**

2012–2013

*Project on Predatory Student Lending, clinical fellowship | CAMBRIDGE, MA*

**Harvard Law School**

2010

*Summer Public Interest Program, research fellowship | CAMBRIDGE, MA*

<b>Israel Democracy Institute</b>	2005–2007
Research fellow   JERUSALEM, IL	
<b>Hebrew University</b>	2004–2006

*Teaching Fellow, Torts, Criminal Law, Jurisprudence | JERUSALEM, IL*

## Other Publications

<b>New Private Law Blog</b>	2016
CONTRIBUTOR AND MANAGING EDITOR (2016)	
<b>Asset Freezing in Israel</b>	
in ASSET FREEZING (2016, KLUWER, with Elad Peled)	2015
<b>The Execution and Enforcement of Private Legal Obligations</b>	
(MAY 25, 2015) (SJD DISSERTATION, HARVARD LAW SCHOOL)	2012
<b>Study on the Application of the Cross Border Mergers Directive</b>	
FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION, DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR THE INTERNAL MARKET AND SERVICES (PROJECT LEADER, PROFESSIONAL REPORT, EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS IN 28 COUNTRIES) (2012)	2010

## Information Wants to be Free

(2010). Co-AUTHORED with Tehila Altshuler. (232 pp, policy paper)

## Referee & Review

<b>Journal of Legal Studies, Northwestern University Law Review, Law &amp; Social Inquiry, Tenure Review (Boston University, Hebrew University), Israel ISF Grant Funds, European Law and Economics Association, International Review of Law &amp; Economics</b>	
<b>Law, Technology, and Humans (Queensland)</b>	
<b>Journal of Empirical Legal Studies</b>	
<b>The Theory and Practice of Legislation</b>	
<b>CM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAcCT)</b>	
<b>The Theory and Practice of Legislation.</b>	

## Academic Service

<b>Dissertation Review</b>	2024–2025
Hebrew University	
<b>Committee Member</b>	2023–
Israel National Science Fund	
<b>Director &amp; Founder</b>	2023–
AI Legal Safety Initiative	
<b>AI Taskforce</b>	
Curriculum Committee, Chair	2022–2023
<b>AALS, Defamation and Privacy Law, Secretary</b>	2023–2024
<b>AALS, Law &amp; Economics Section Member</b>	2022–2023
Textbook Committee, Member	2020–2022
<b>Jones Chair Search Committee, Member</b>	2021–2022
<b>Business Student Association, Adviser</b>	2019–2021

<b>Curriculum Committee, Member</b>	2019–2022
<b>Dissertation Committee</b>	2018–2020
<b>Faculty Appointments Committee</b>	2018, 2019
<b>Co-Organizer, MLEA Conference</b>	
<b>American Law &amp; Economics Conference, Harvard Law School, Organizer</b>	

### Selected Conferences and Presentations

- Stanford Law School, Law & Econ Workshop
- Bar Association Fifth Circuit, New Orleans
- AI & Existential Risk, City University of Hong Kong
- Regulation of AGI, Harvard Law School
- Risk, Regulation, & Insurance, Nashville
- Law Following AI, Cambridge, UK
- Inaugural Roundtable AI Safety, Alabama Law
- Herzog Conference on AI, Hebrew University
- Fifth Circuit Judge Conference, Florida
- Privacy Forum, George Mason Law
- ALAJ Winter Summit, Birmingham, AL
- Faculty workshop, Arizona University Law School
- Future of Contracts, University of Miami Law School
- The Demand for BS, University of Florida Law School
- Judicial Conference, US Virgin Islands
- Faculty workshop, Florida University Law School
- National Appellate Judge Conference, Nashville, NCIJ
- Law & Technology Seminar, Tel Aviv University
- AI Safety: Vista Fellows
- Empirical Contract Law, Carey Law School
- AI & Innovation, Seattle Law
- Zoom Lectures (Ono College, Israel, Tennessee, Howard Law)
- Constitutional Law & Economics, Maryland Law School
- AI Futures Fellows, Mexico City
- Law & Economics Seminar, Chicago Law School
- Empirical Contract Law, NYU University
- Law & Data Science, Fordham University
- American Law & Economics, Boston University
- Future of Disinformation Panel, Harvard Law School
- Law & Economics Seminar, Harvard Law School
- AALS, San-Diego
- Bar-Ilan, Law & Tech Seminar
- MLEA, Chicago Law
- Stanford/Penn/Nw Law & Stem, Northwestern
- American Law & Economics, Columbia Law School
- Society New Institutional Economics, Toronto, Canada
- Freedom of Expression X, Yale Law School
- Law & Society, Lisbon, Portugal
- Canadian Law & Economics, Ottawa, Canada
- Faculty Workshop, Boston University
- Law & Economics Workshop, Virginia Law School
- Faculty Workshop, Villanova Law School
- Faculty Workshop, Pepperdine Law School
- Virtual L&E Workshop, virtual
- L&E Workshop, Hebrew University
- Faculty Workshop, Haifa University
- Future of Legal Education, virtual
- Consumer Markets, Boston University
- AALS, Section on Contracts
- Faculty Workshop, IDC
- Constitutional Law & Economics, Virtual
- Private Law Workshop, Hebrew University
- Society New Institutional Economics, MIT
- American Law & Economics, Chicago (online)
- Law & Economics, GMU Scalia Law
- Law & Economics, Tel-Aviv University
- Private Law Workshop, Hebrew University
- Faculty Workshop, SMU Law School
- Colloquium on Contract and Economic Organization, Columbia Law School
- Consumer Law Conference, Berkeley Law School
- KCON XIV, McGeorge University
- Legal Scholarship Workshop, University of Chicago

- Conference on Empirical Legal Studies, Claremont College
- Law & Stem, Stanford Law School
- European Law & Economics, Tel-Aviv University
- Lumps and Slices Book Symposium, Chicago Law School
- Yale/Harvard/Stanford Junior Faculty, Yale Law School
- Clifford Symposium, Rising Stars, DePaul University
- Kcon XIV, Tulane University
- ASIL, Washington & Lee University
- American Law & Economics, New York University
- Faculty Workshop, BIU
- Legal Scholarship Workshop, University of Chicago
- Faculty Workshop, University of Alabama
- European Law & Economics, University of Milano, Italy
- Midwestern Law & Economics, University of Alabama
- American Law & Economics, Boston University
- KCon XIII, Barry University
- MLEA, Marquette Law School
- Southeastern Senior/Junior Workshop, University of Washington, St. Louis
- Society for Institutional Economics (SIOE), Columbia Law School
- Villanova Business Colloquium, Villanova Law School
- Law & Religion Meets Law & Economics, Villanova Law School
- Private Law & IP Conference, Harvard Law School, invited panel moderator
- New England Junior Faculty Workshop, New England School of Law
- American Law & Economics Conference, Columbia Law School
- North American Private Law Workshop, Toronto, Canada