

# Yonathan A. Arbel

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Last updated: 1.1.26

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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)  
**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](#)

### **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)

2019

2018

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

37 CIVIL JUSTICE QUARTERLY 509, 2018 (INVITED)

#### **Adminization: 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**

2009–2015

*Co-Founder and Managing Partner*

- 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**

2007–2008

*Clerk, Justice Ayala Procaccia*

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

2007

*Research Assistant to Retired Chief Justice Aharon Barak*

#### **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)
- Financial Times, Defamation (2023)
- ABC 3340, Covid and contracts (2020)
- 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
<i>Research fellow   JERUSALEM, IL</i>	
<b>Hebrew University</b>	2004–2006
<i>Teaching Fellow, Torts, Criminal Law, Jurisprudence   JERUSALEM, IL</i>	

## 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
<b>Information Wants to be Free</b>	
(2010). CO-AUTHORED with Tehila Altshuler. (232 pp, policy paper)	

## Referee & Review

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

## Academic Service

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

Curriculum Committee, Member

2019–2022

Dissertation Committee

2018–2020

Faculty Appointments Committee

2018, 2019

Co-Organizer, MLEA Conference

American Law & Economics Conference, Harvard Law School, Organizer

### 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