

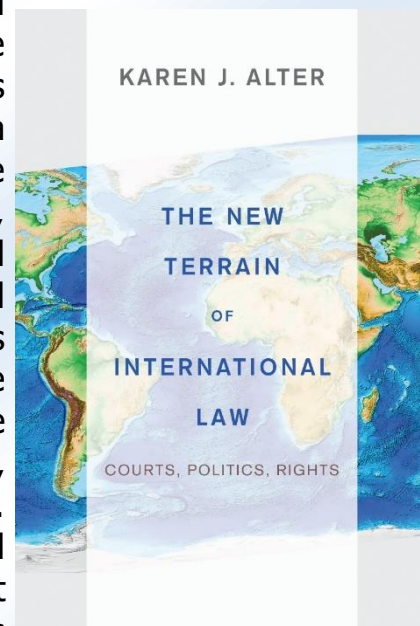
# The New Terrain of International Law: Courts, Politics, Rights

*Professor Karen J. Alter,  
Northwestern University and iCourts, Copenhagen*

**Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2018, 12:00 – 13:00**  
**Room 723, 7/F., Cheng Yu Tung Tower**  
**Centennial Campus, The University of Hong Kong**

The New Terrain of International Law: Courts, Politics, Rights uses the universe of operational permanent international courts (ICs), those with appointed judges that stand ready to receive cases, as a laboratory to explore the changing reach and influence of international courts in contemporary politics. In 1989 when the Cold War ended, there were six operational ICs. Today there are more than two-dozen that have collectively issued over thirty-seven thousand binding legal rulings. The New Terrain of International Law shows how today's international courts differ fundamentally from their Cold War predecessors. The book is first and foremost a social science treatment of the growing role of ICs in politics today. I argue that the trend of creating and using new-style ICs signals a transformation from international law being a breakable contract between governments towards a rule of law mentality. In this talk, Alter will overview the book's main findings, discuss the future of international courts given the current political climate.

**Karen J. Alter** is Professor of Political Science and Law at Northwestern University, a permanent visiting professor at the iCourts Center for Excellence, University of Copenhagen Faculty of Law, and the co-director Research Group on Global Capitalism and Law at the Buffett Institute at Northwestern University. Alter's expertise concerns global and regional judicialization of international relations, with a particular focus on international adjudication. Alter is author of the award-winning book *The New Terrain of International Law: Courts, Politics, Rights* (Princeton University Press, 2014); *International Legal Transplants: Law and Politics of the Andean Tribunal of Justice* (Oxford University Press, 2017, with Laurence Helfer); *The European Court's Political Power* (Oxford University Press, 2009) and *Establishing the Supremacy of European Law* (Oxford University Press, 2001), and more than fifty articles and book chapters on the politics of international law, comparative international courts, and international regime complexity. She is also co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook on International Adjudication* (Oxford University Press, 2014) and *International Court Authority* (Oxford University Press, 2018). Alter's new research focuses on the construction of global economic rules regulating trade and money, and on the determinants of politically sustainable capitalism.



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