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SINGAPORE SYMPOSIUM IN LEGAL THEORY

A Public Conception of Law

BY Professor Alon Harel
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

10 FEBRUARY 2020, TUESDAY
5.00PM – 7.00PM *(TEA RECEPTION STARTS AT 4.45PM)*
FACULTY OF LAW, NUS (BUKIT TIMAH CAMPUS)
CONFERENCE ROOM, LEVEL 1, EU TONG SEN BUILDING

ABSTRACT

This paper re-examines the question of the normativity of law, that is, how can law change (or create) reasons for action. It departs from some influential accounts of law's normativity developed within the legal positivism tradition and within its natural-right counterpart. Both the legal positivists and the natural-right lawyers on which we focus reduce law's normativity to a question concerning its content, namely, how the content of legal norms converges with the demands of right reason. By contrast, we argue that law's normativity is not a matter of content. Rather, it is one of status or standing and, so, legitimacy. Standing requires a certain relation between law-makers and officials, on the one hand, and citizens, on the other, such that the former 'represent' in some sense the latter and, therefore, can speak in their name. Hence, the key to understanding the normativity of law is to understand what counts as public institutions, by which we mean institutions whose officials represent citizens and/or speak in their name.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr Alon Harel is the Mizock Professor of Law at the Hebrew University Law Faculty and member of the Center of Rationality at the Hebrew University.

Professor Harel specializes in legal and political theory and in constitutional theory. He has been a visiting professor at Columbia Law School, Chicago Law School, Texas Law School and Boston University law School. He is the author of Why Law Matters (Oxford University Press, 2014). He is currently writing a book on the nature of public authority at the Wissenschaftkolleg in Berlin.

Participation is By Invitation Only
Registration commences at 4.45pm and light refreshments will be served.
For more information, please contact Ms Wendy Wee at lawwhm@nus.edu.sg