in cooperation with the UCLA Sociology Department’s Knowledge & Cognitive Systems Working Group presents

Matthew Fox

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Tuesday, November 20, 2018
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Entrepreneurs Hall room C514, UCLA Anderson School

“Social Re-Construction of Criminal Justice: Findings from Anti-Bribery Statutes, Child-Endangerment Laws and Jury Decisions” by Matthew Fox

This talk is given in preparation for an upcoming campus visit and will follow the university’s job-talk format (a 50-minute presentation + Q &A). For the first part of my talk, I will describe the different threads of my research agenda. Broadly, I am interested in how human behavior shapes the development and implementation of criminal law. I have studied these effects through analyses of the enforcement of international anti-bribery statutes, diffusion of child-endangerment laws and functioning of criminal juries. The focus of this talk will be on my jury work, as well as a related project with David Gibson (Notre Dame). These projects analyze conversation during actual criminal jury deliberations in order to understand how ordinary citizens orient to criminal law and criminal justice. These projects address both tasks of the criminal jury: deciding what actually occurred from competing case facts and evaluating these facts through legal instructions to reach a verdict. My talk will highlight how jurors wield common sense to evaluate case facts, which often leads to biases against defendants from racial, ethnic, class and gender groups different than the jurors. Then, I will argue about how jurors’ belief that they need to reach verdicts that comport with their understandings of law affect their invocation of the court’s legal instructions. Lastly, I will end my talk with a discussion of how these two projects connect to my future research agenda.