Concepts for International Law

Contributions to Disciplinary Thought

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Concepts shape how we understand and participate in international legal affairs. They are an important site for order, struggle and change. This comprehensive and authoritative volume introduces a large number of concepts that have shaped, at various points in history, international legal practice and thought; intimates at how the many projects of international law have grappled with, and influenced, the world through certain concepts; and introduces new concepts into the discipline.

‘This volume offers an indispensable guide to the concepts that have shaped the life of international law in theory and practice. With contributions from a stellar cast of innovative scholars, Concepts for International Law reveals the power of international legal language and the worlds it makes possible.’
– Anne Orford, Melbourne Law School, Australia

‘Visiting this collection brings to mind an elegant small Euro-Atlantic art museum from a single period, eclectic but coherent and unified by the imaginative taste of the curators. The entries are fine exemplars rather than comprehensive, the contributors respectably avant-garde and many already very well known or will be, the whole engagingly luminous.’
– Benedict Kingsbury, New York University, School of Law, US

‘This volume traverses the concepts that aim to anchor international law. Presented as an “experiment”, the work assembles the greatest voices to interrogate the power of international law’s core concepts. And it does so with much success. This is a magnificent work.’
– Larissa van den Herik, Leiden University, the Netherlands

‘The editors of this book offer it as a response to what they see as a profound contemporary malaise in international law, connected to a faltering faith in the liberal cosmopolitanism, and a deep understanding of international law’s implications in many of the world’s most horrific inequities and injustices. Through its diverse chapters, they explore the counterintuitive but intriguing proposition that the way out may lie in a new mode of “conceptualisation”, that is to say, a way of being in which the flawed conceptual heritage of international law is understood to require not just powerful critique, but also an attitude of gentle and knowing stewardship.’
– Andrew Lang, University of Edinburgh, UK

‘This is an extremely rich and diverse collection of chapters on some important foundational concepts in international law. The chapters reflect the variety of approaches in international law today. I really enjoyed reading the book, as it challenged several of my assumptions about the field.’
– Wouter Werner, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands