

## Jotwell Legal Scholarship Conference Next Week

**Author :** Jotwell

**Date :** October 30, 2014

Our 5th Anniversary conference on “[Legal Scholarship We Like and Why It Matters](#)” is coming up late next week. In the United States, the role of scholarship is under assault in contemporary conversations about law schools; meanwhile in many other countries legal scholars are routinely pressed to value their work according to metrics or with reference to fixed conceptions of the role of legal scholarship. We asked contributors to write addressing at least one of three broad topics: improving the craft of legal scholarship, improving the reach of legal scholarship, or when and how legal scholarship matters.

The [program](#) promises to be stimulating to say the least. The papers [are or will be available online](#). Papers discuss what makes legal scholarship great (or terrible), what legal scholarship is good for, how to make it more accessible, what role metrics should play in the sorting of legal scholarship, and how best to make more of the good stuff. The Keynote will be by Margaret Jane Radin, which she has titled *Then and Now: Developing Your Scholarship, Developing Its Audience*.

It's already clear from the submissions that there will be controversy. Consider, for example, the opening words of *Improve Yourself; Not the World* by Jeanne L. Schroeder & David Gray Carlson (footnotes omitted),

We question the common assumption that most legal scholarship should be oriented towards policy, or to quote the title of this session, at improving the world. Jurisprudential, critical and doctrinal scholarship should have equal prestige with policy-oriented scholarship because they more closely relate to the practice of law. Consequently, we start with one policy recommendation : “Lay off the policy recommendations.”

Policy oriented scholarship is what French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, called a “university discourse.” This terminology is ironic, referring to what academics tend to do, not what they should do.

We'll post some more teasers in the coming days. Meanwhile, it's not too late to [Register](#).