

# W. ROBERT (WILL) THOMAS

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## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN STEPHEN M. ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
2019– Assistant Professor of Business Law

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL  
2017–19 Climenko Fellow & Lecturer in Law

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## EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
2015 PhD in Philosophy

2012 JD *magna cum laude*

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
2006 BA *cum laude* in Philosophy, Economics

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## PUBLICATIONS

- 2022 *But We Haven't Got Corporate Criminal Law!* (w/ Mihailis E. Diamantis) ([pdf](#))  
46 J. CORP. L. 991 (symposium issue)
- 2022 *A Marketing Pitch for Corporate Criminal Law* (w/ Mihailis E. Diamantis) ([SSRN](#))  
1 STETSON BUS. L. REV. \_\_ (inaugural symposium issue)  
*associated coverage on CLS BLUE SKY BLOG* (Aug. 25, 2022) ([link](#))
- 2021 *Corporate Criminal Law Is Too Broad—Worse, It's Too Narrow* ([pdf](#))  
53 ARIZ. ST. L.J. 199  
*reprinted in* 70 DEF. L.J. \_\_ (forthcoming 2022)
- 2021 *The Conventional Problem with Corporate Sentencing (and One Unconventional Solution)* ([pdf](#))  
24 NEW CRIM. L. REV. 397 (symposium issue)
- 2019 *Incapacitating Criminal Corporations* ([pdf](#))  
72 VAND. L. REV. 905
- 2019 *Making Sense of Corporate Criminals: A Tentative Taxonomy* ([pdf](#))  
45 GEO. J.L. & PUB. POL'Y 775 (symposium issue)
- 2018 *How and Why Corporations Became (and Remain) Persons Under the Criminal Law* ([pdf](#))  
45 FLA. ST. U. L. REV. 479

- 2017 *The Ability and Responsibility of Corporate Law to Improve Criminal Fines* ([pdf](#))  
78 OHIO ST. L.J. 601
- 2012 *On Strict Liability Crimes: Preserving Criminal Intent in an Intent-Free Moral World* ([pdf](#))  
110 MICH. L. REV. 647 (student note)

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## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & INVITED TALKS

### *Corporate Shame and Criminal Punishment*

- July 2022 Crimfest! Annual Conference; Cardozo School of Law
- July 2022 Junior Scholars in Legal Studies Series; University of Georgia Terry College of Business \*
- June 2022 National Business Law Scholars Conference; University of Oklahoma College of Law
- May 2022 Marquell Memorial Criminal Justice Colloquium; New York Law School

### *Branding Corporate Criminals*

- Sep 2022 Chicagoland Junior Scholars Conference; Loyola University Chicago School of Law
- June 2022 Big Ten & Friends Colloquium; Michigan Ross School of Business (co-organizer)
- June 2022 National Business Law Scholars Conference; University of Oklahoma College of Law
- Apr 2022 Faculty Workshop; University of Iowa College of Law
- Feb 2022 Symposium: White Collar Crime: A Look into The Past, Present, and Future; Stetson College of Law \*
- Jan 2022 Young Scholars Legal Research Workshop \*

### *But We Haven't Got Corporate Criminal Law!*

- Feb 2022 Hosmer-Hall Interdisciplinary Research Presentation; Ross School of Business
- Oct 2021 Symposium: Imagining a World Without Corporate Criminal Law; Georgetown Law & the Wharton School of Business

### *Is Shareholder Wealth Maximization a Decision-Making Procedure?*

- Aug 2022 Young Scholars Legal Research Workshop \*

### *Corporate Punishment and the Limits of Stigma*

- Aug 2021 Legal Philosophy Workshop; Southeastern Association of Law Schools Annual Conference
- July 2021 Crimfest! Annual Conference; Brooklyn Law School \*
- Jan 2021 Symposium: New Topics in Sentencing Theory; New Criminal Law Review \*

### *What is the SEC Doing If Not Punishing Bad Actors?*

- Aug 2021 Academy of Legal Studies in Business Annual Conference \*
- June 2021 National Business Law Scholars Conference; University of Tennessee Law School \*

### *Corporate Criminal Law is Too Broad—Worse, It's Too Narrow*

- Jan 2021 Works in Progress Panel; Criminal Justice Section, American Association of Law Schools \*
- Oct 2020 Normative Business Ethics Workshop; Carol and Lawrence Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania \*
- Aug 2020 Academy of Legal Studies in Business Annual Conference \*

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\* *Virtual event*

July 2020 Crimfest! Annual Conference; Cardozo School of Law \*

June 2020 National Business Law Scholars Conference; University of Tennessee Law School \*

Feb 2020 Big Ten & Friends Colloquium; University of Indiana Kelley School of Business

Jan 2020 Blue Bag Lunch Series; University of Michigan Center on Finance, Law, and Policy

Aug 2019 Legal Philosophy Workshop; Southeastern Association of Law Schools Annual Conference

*Stakeholder Governance Through Corporate Punishment*

June 2020 Junior Scholars in Legal Studies Series; University of Georgia Terry College of Business \*

June 2020 National Business Law Scholars Conference; University of Tennessee Law School \*

Aug 2019 Academy of Legal Studies in Business Annual Conference

July 2019 Criminal Law and Theory Workshop; University of Toronto Faculty of Law

*Towards a Political Philosophy of Corporate Crime*

July 2019 Crimfest! Annual Conference; Brooklyn Law School

July 2019 Criminal Law and Theory Workshop; University of Toronto Faculty of Law

*Incapacitating Criminal Corporations*

Jan 2019 Faculty Workshop; University of Michigan Ross School of Business

Dec 2018 Faculty Workshop; University of South Carolina Law School

Dec 2018 Criminal Law and Corporate Theory Workshop; University of Iowa Law School

Nov 2018 Faculty Workshop; University of Wyoming School of Law School

Aug 2018 Prospective Faculty Workshop; Southeastern Association of Law Schools Annual Conference

June 2018 National Conference of Business Law Scholars; University of Georgia Law School

Jan 2018 Junior Faculty Law Workshop; New England School of Law

*Criminal Persons and Moral Agents*

Nov 2018 Symposium: Ethics of Corporate Moral Agency; Institute for Study of Markets and Ethics, Georgetown University McDonough School of Business

*Fictionalism About Corporations*

July 2022 Legal Philosophy Workshop; Southeastern Association of Law Schools Annual Conference

May 2018 Symposium on Multinational Entities; American Society of International Law

Oct 2017 Corporate Personhood Workshop; University of Iowa Law School

June 2017 National Conference of Business Law Scholars; University of Utah Law School

*How and Why Corporations Became Persons Under the Criminal Law*

Dec 2016 Faculty Workshop; Boston University School of Law

Nov 2016 Faculty Workshop; Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law

Aug 2016 Workshop, Institute for the Study of Markets and Ethics; Georgetown University McDonough School of Business

*The Ability and Responsibility of Corporate Law to Improve Criminal Fines*

June 2016 National Conference of Business Law Scholars; University of Chicago Law School

Nov 2015 Faculty Workshop; Wharton School of Business

*Does the State Have an Obligation Not to Obey the Law?*

Oct 2015 IPSA/SciencesPo Joint Conference; Paris Institute of Political Studies

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## SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

### COMMENTARY ON TRUMP FOUNDATION, PRESIDENT TRUMP

- Sep. 2022 Michael R. Sisak & Larry Neumeister., *'Art of the Steal' Trump Accused of Vast Fraud in NY Suit*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, Sep. 22, 2022 ([link](#))
- Sep. 2022 Rick Newman, *Why New York State is Suing Trump Instead of Charging Him With Crimes*, YAHOO! FINANCE, Sep. 23, 2022 ([link](#))
- Jan. 2022 Michael R. Sisak et al., *A Fraud Case Against Trump? Not a Slam Dunk, Experts Say*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, Jan. 20, 2022 ([link](#))
- July 2021 Katherine Bang, *Trump Organization & Allen Weisselberg Indicted on Tax Fraud Charges*, PUBLIC RADIO BUSAN, July 6, 2021 ([link](#))
- July 2021 Chris Megerian et al., *Prosecutors: Trump Organization and CFO Allen Weisselberg Dodged Taxes for 15 Years*, L.A. TIMES, July 1, 2021 ([link](#))
- July 2021 Rebecca Jarvis, *Trump Organization, CFO Facing Criminal Charges*, ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT, July 1, 2021
- July 2021 Kris Reyes, *Trump Organization and Its Chief Financial Officer Indicted on Tax Fraud Charges*, CBC NEWS: THE NATIONAL, July 1, 2021 ([link](#))
- Jun 2021 Chris Megerian & Del Wilber, *What Could Happen to Donald Trump's Company If It's Indicted?*, L.A. TIMES, June 30, 2021 ([link](#))
- Jan 2021 Mihailis Diamantis & Will Thomas, Opinion, *The Impeachment Trial Doesn't Have to Be Pointless—Provided It's Not All About Trump*, THE HILL, Feb. 9, 2021 ([link](#))

### COMMENTARY ON CORPORATE AND WHITE-COLLAR CRIME

- Aug 2022 Lateshia Beachum, *Visa Could Be Liable in Suit Over Child Sexual Abuse Material on Pornhub, Other Sites*, WASH. POST, Aug. 1, 2022 ([link](#))
- Mar 2022 Aaron Pressman, *Bizarre Harassment of Natick Couple by eBay was 'Clearly Criminal,' Company Admitted*, BOSTON GLOBE, Mar. 17, 2022 ([link](#))
- June 2020 Will Thomas, Opinion, *PG&E's Conviction Takes Corporate Crime Seriously—Its Punishment Doesn't*, THE HILL, June 20, 2020 ([link](#))
- Mar 2020 Katherine Blunt, *PG&E to Plead Guilty to Involuntary Manslaughter Charges in Deadly California Wildfire*, WALL ST. J., Mar 23, 2020 ([link](#))
- Feb 2020 Michael Hobbs, *The Golden Age of White-Collar Crime*, HUFFINGTON POST, Feb. 10, 2020 ([link](#))

### COVERAGE OF ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP

- Aug 2022 Featured Guest, In Lieu of Fun Podcast, AUG. 1, 2022 ([link](#))
- Oct 2021 Bob Needham, *There's No Such Thing as Corporate Criminal Law, Michigan Ross Professor Says*, MICH. ROSS FACULTY NEWS & RESEARCH, Oct. 21, 2021 ([link](#))
- Oct 2021 *Corporate Criminal Law Doesn't Exist*, CORPORATE CRIME REPORTER, Oct. 12, 2021 ([link](#))
- July 2021 Russell Mokhier, *To Strengthen Corporate Criminal Law, Get Rid of the Doctrine of Respondeat Superior*, CORPORATE CRIME REPORTER, July 26, 2021 ([link](#))
- Mar 2021 Bob Needham, *We Need a New Approach to Corporate Crime, Ross Professor Argues*, MICH. ROSS FACULTY NEWS & RESEARCH, Mar. 9, 2021 ([link](#))
- Apr 2020 Australian Law Reform Commission, Final Report: Corporate Criminal Responsibility, Apr. 1, 2020 ([link](#))

Feb 2019 Russell Mokhier, *William Robert Thomas on Rehabilitating Corporate Retribution and Incapacitation*, CORPORATE CRIME REPORTER, FEB. 5, 2019 ([link](#))

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2015–17 CLEARY GOTTLIEB STEEN & HAMILTON LLP  
Associate, Corporate and White-Collar Investigations

2013–15 OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER  
Appellate Litigation Fellow to the Northern District of Ohio

2012–13 U.S. COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT  
Law Clerk to the Honorable Karen Nelson Moore

2007–08 THE HUFFINGTON POST  
Political Reporter; Associate Editor

2006–07 TALKING POINTS MEMO  
Front Page Editor; Investigative Researcher

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## ACADEMIC SERVICE

SERVICE TO MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

2022– Area Representative, Community Values Committee

2021– Course Coordinator, Business Law & Ethics (BL 300)  
RIS Representative, Business Law & Ethics (BL 300)

Oct 2021 Keynote Speaker, Ross All Access Weekend

2019– Affiliated Research Fellow, University of Michigan Center on Finance, Law, and Policy

### EXTERNAL SERVICE

2021– Founder & Lead Organizer, Junior Scholars Legal Research Workshop ([link](#))  
*National organization formed to provide a supporting research environment for pre-tenure legal scholars. Responsible for hosting three seminar series per year for 25+ participants.*

*recurring* *Ad hoc* Reviewer, CRIMINAL LAW AND PHILOSOPHY (2021), ISRAEL LAW REVIEW (2022),  
JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW (2019, 2020), SYNTHESIS (2021)

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## TEACHING

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, STEPHEN M. ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

2022– Business Law and Ethics (BL 533), OMBA Program

2019– Business Law and Ethics (BL 300), BBA Program

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

2018 Theories of Punishment (reading group)

2017–19 First Year Legal Research & Writing

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

2014 Contemporary Moral Problems: The Corporation and Society

- 2014           Types of Philosophy (graduate student instructor w/ V. Caston)  
2012           Introduction to Moral Principles and Problems  
2010           Introduction to Informal Logic (graduate student instructor w/ D. Jacobson)
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**SELECTED HONORS**

- 2013–15      Rackham Graduate School Dissertation Fellowship  
2012          Order of the Coif  
2012          Allan Lewis Kaufman Award (selected by faculty for best student publication)  
2010–12      Executive Articles Editor, *Michigan Law Review*  
2010–11      Coordinator, Henry M. Campbell Moot Court Competition (selected by faculty)  
2010–11      Center for Ethics in Public Life Predoctoral Fellowship (university-wide)  
2011          Raymond K. and John R. Dykema Scholarship Award (selected by faculty)  
2008–15      University of Michigan Philosophy Department Fellowship