



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

Institute of Criminology

*The Dock on Trial:  
courtroom design and the  
presumption of innocence*



**Dr Meredith Rossner**

Asst Prof in Criminology, London School of Economics and Political Science

Institute of Criminology Public Seminar Series

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016, 5.30pm

Seminar Room B3, Institute of Criminology,  
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA

*A drinks reception in the basement foyer will follow this seminar for attendees*

This seminar examines the place of the criminal dock in courtroom design. Challenges to many contemporary locations of the dock have been based upon the inability of the defendant to hear effectively, to communicate with counsel, to maintain his or her dignity, and to benefit from the presumption of innocence. Increasingly courts are incorporating secure docks, where defendants are partially or completely surrounded by glass (or in some countries, metal bars). To what extent do these changes and modifications undermine the rights of the accused? Dr Rossner presents the results of an experimental mock jury study that was designed to test whether the placement of the accused in a dock influences jurors' perceptions. Jurors are more likely to convict defendants when they are located in a traditional dock or a secure dock, compared to having them sit next to their counsel at the bar table. She concludes by discussing the implications of these findings for trial procedures, counsel communications and courtroom design.

Meredith Rossner is an Assistant Professor of Criminology in the Law Dept at the London School of Economics. She holds a PhD in Criminology and Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research interests include emotions and interactions in criminal justice, criminology theory, restorative justice, and juries. Her research interests focus on the intersection of social interaction and judicial processes. This has led to a number of research projects on the emotional and ritual elements of the justice process, with a particular focus on the role of lay people. She has conducted research on the emotional dynamics of restorative justice conferences, the dynamics and democratic potential of jury deliberation, and how design and technology impact justice proceedings.

This seminar is free, and is open to all interested in attending, with no ticket required.  
If you wish to be added to the seminar mailing list, please contact: Joanne Garner, on: [jf225@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jf225@cam.ac.uk)  
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