

Department of Economics presents
David S. Saurman
Provocative Lecture Series 2021



Bart Wilson

*Professor, Donald P. Kennedy Chair in Economics and Law
Director, Smith Institute for Political Economy and Philosophy*

“The Property Species: Mine, Yours, and the Human Mind”

Bart J. Wilson will explore how humans acquire, perceive, and know the custom of property, and why this might be relevant to understanding how property works in the twenty-first century. Arguing that neither the sciences nor the humanities synthesizes a full account of property, Professor Wilson offers a cross-disciplinary compromise that is sure to be controversial: Property is a universal and uniquely human custom. Integrating cognitive linguistics with philosophy of property and a fresh look at property disputes in the common law, Professor Wilson makes the case that symbolic-thinking humans locate the meaning of property within a thing. That is, all human beings and only human beings have property in things, and at its core, property rests on custom, not rights. Such an alternative to conventional thinking contends that the origins of property lie not in food, mates, territory, or land, but in the very human act of creating, with symbolic thought, something new that did not previously exist.

Bio: Bart J. Wilson is the Donald P. Kennedy Endowed Chair in Economics and Law at Chapman University. He is a founding member of the Economic Science Institute and founding member and Director of the Smith Institute for Political Economy and Philosophy. His research uses experimental economics to explore the foundations of exchange and specialization and the origins of property. Another of his research programs compares decision making in humans, apes, and monkeys. Bart has published papers in the *American Economic Review*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, and *Nature Human Behaviour*. His research has been supported with grants from the National Science Foundation and the Federal Trade Commission. In 2019 he co-authored with Vernon Smith a Cambridge University Press book entitled, "Humanomics: Moral Sentiments and the Wealth of Nations for the Twenty-First Century."

**Thursday,
April 22nd**
5:30–7:00pm (PST)

**Via Zoom
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receive the link**

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The Department of Economics invites students, faculty, and the general public to consider intellectual arguments on controversial topics. This series fosters the tradition of higher education to challenge ideas and develop critical thinking in an environment of respect for intellectual discourse. Our goal is that you engage critical thinking skills to reach your own informed position on controversial issues. We invite you to attend, relax, ponder, and enjoy the thought process.

For more information, please contact: Justin.Rietz@sjsu.edu

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