

Research

Influencing the American legal system

Research in the Centre for American Legal Studies (CALS) at Birmingham City University has helped to influence legislation, policy and practice in the USA in areas such as the death penalty and wrongful convictions.



Find out more >>

Sarah Cooper of CALS (pictured below) specialises in research in forensics in relation to wrongful convictions, and in particular, those related to forensic science. Her research helps inform stakeholders in the criminal justice system about the problems associated with such claims.



Research by Jon Yorke of CALS has raised awareness of issues surrounding the death penalty, and informed related policy in the EU.

Wrongful convictions

There have been over 300 post-conviction DNA exonerations in the USA. A DNA exoneration is when a person who is convicted of a crime is later proved innocent via DNA evidence. Improper or invalid forensic science accounts for approximately 50 per cent of those wrongful convictions. Sarah has spoken and published widely in this area.

Death penalty research

Research undertaken by Jon Yorke and the team at CALS has explored the theoretical and legal frameworks of capital punishment and the death penalty, using historical, philosophical and policy research. It has provided important insights into understanding of the death penalty, and as a result it has influenced policy and practice worldwide.

Impact

Jon Yorke is a member of the British Foreign Secretary's Expert Panel on the Death Penalty, and he has advised the European Union and the United Nations. Sarah's research has been cited by lawyers in court motions and has potential global impact. In 2014, she lead and edited the book *Controversies in Innocence Cases in America*, a multidisciplinary volume to inform judges, lawyers and academics of common themes in this area of study. To find out more visit bcu.ac.uk/research/stories

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