



# Law and Humanities Roundtable 2025

## CALL FOR PAPERS

11 July 2025

### *Jane Austen's Legal World*

This seventh annual *Law and Humanities* roundtable invites original, interdisciplinary, and humanities-focused paper presentations occasioned by the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Jane Austen in 1775.

Writing after her death, Austen's nephew claimed that she 'was always very careful not to meddle with matters which she did not thoroughly understand' and so 'never touched upon politics, law or medicine'. It's the kind of patronizing assessment with which generations of women writers have had to contend. In fact, Austen's novels constantly touch on legal issues relating to inheritance, property, marriage, and divorce, and lawyers feature regularly (if not always positively) among her cast of characters. She was clearly aware of how the profound inequalities of her world – in terms of class, gender, and race – were sustained by law. Her lightness of touch in alluding to such issues also raises interesting questions about what can be deduced about legal literacy at the time and what Austen's contemporary readers would have taken from her legal allusions.

The roundtable event will take place on **11 July 2025**, at the University of Exeter, reflecting the Devonshire setting of Austen's first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility*.

If you would like to present a paper at this event, please send your title and abstract (**up to 200 words**) by **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2025** to Rebecca Probert (School of Law, University of Exeter; convenor: [R.J.Probert@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:R.J.Probert@exeter.ac.uk)). Please do note that papers should take a humanities perspective on a legal issue or theme. Papers chosen for presentation will tend to be those that address a relevant law theme regarding the issues raised by Austen's work.

We look forward to welcoming participants to Exeter Law School. This is an in-person event, and we have a budget to subsidise speakers' regional and UK travel to Exeter. For speakers based further away from Exeter, and without funds to travel, there will also be an option to present online.

The roundtable is organised in association with the journal [Law and Humanities](#) – and its publisher (Routledge/Taylor & Francis). *Law and Humanities* is a peer-reviewed journal, providing a forum for scholarly discourse within the arts and humanities around the subject of law. Contributors to the roundtable are encouraged, though not obliged, to consider writing up their paper for submission to the journal either as a full-length peer reviewed article, or as a shorter comment piece. The Editor, Professor David Gurnham ([d.gurnham@soton.ac.uk](mailto:d.gurnham@soton.ac.uk)) will be happy to discuss this with authors who may be interested in submitting a paper for consideration.

Convenor: Professor Rebecca Probert