

# OSTROM WORKSHOP COLLOQUIUM SERIES

## Tonja Jacobi

*Northwestern Pritzker School of Law*

“Justice, Interrupted: Gender, Ideology, and Seniority in Oral Arguments”

**Monday, March 20, 2017**

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park



This article examines how the justices compete for influence at oral argument by interrupting each other, and how advocates interrupt the justices, contrary to the rules of the Court. We find that interruptions are highly gendered, with women being interrupted at disproportionate rates by their male colleagues, as well as by male advocates. Oral argument interruptions are also highly ideological, both because interruptions occur primarily across ideological lines, and conservatives dominate liberals. Seniority also has some influence, but primarily through the female justices learning over time how to behave more like male justices, avoiding traditionally female linguistic framing. We use two separate databases: a publicly available database of Roberts Court oral arguments, and another that we created, providing in-depth analysis of the 2015, 2002, and 1990 Terms, which shows that the effects of gender, ideology, and seniority are consistent over time.



**Tonja Jacobi** is professor of law at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. She has a PhD in political science from Stanford University; a Masters from the University of California, Berkeley; and a law degree with First Class Honors from the Australian National University. Jacobi specializes in judicial behavior and strategy in public law. Her research combines doctrinal, empirical, and formal analysis to examine judicial behavior. Her current projects include empirical studies of interruptions at the Supreme Court, a formal analysis of certiorari, and a doctrinal analysis of *Terry* stops in the car context ([website](#)).

Presentations are open to the public and are live streamed (see our website for URL and papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon ([sturgeon@iu.edu](mailto:sturgeon@iu.edu); 812/855-3151).