Welcome

It is the tradition in Trinity College Dublin that newly appointed Professors are invited to give an inaugural lecture.

The lecture provides an opportunity to showcase their achievements in research, innovation, engagement and teaching activities before members of the University community, invited stakeholders and the general public. An inaugural lecture is a significant moment in an academic staff member’s career.

The Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences is proud to present the inaugural lecture of Professor Neville Cox.
About me

Neville Cox is Professor of Law and Morality in the Law School of Trinity College Dublin where he has been a lecturer since 1996. Since 2021 he has also been the University and College Registrar in Trinity. Between 2016 and 2020 he was the University’s Dean of Graduate Studies. As a lecturer he was an early recipient of a Provost’s Teaching award. He has been a visiting professor in many US law schools, notably Notre Dame University of South Bend, the University of California at Berkeley, Indiana University Bloomington. He has formerly a practising barrister working in family and employment law.

He is the author of multiple books, most recently Behind the Veil (2018), with Eoin McCullough SC. Defamation law (2006) and Employment Law in Ireland (2020) with Mark Connaughton SC and Val Corbett SC. He is also the author of numerous articles published in leading national and international peer-reviewed journals.

His work, which is regularly cited in judgments of the superior courts has focused on the relationship between rights – especially the rights to freedom of expression, good name and freedom from harassment – and moral principles.

Abstract

Defamation law exists to protect and vindicate the right to a good name but is in balance with the right to freedom of expression. In the spring of 2019, Ireland acquitted the publisher of a new defamation bill that will significantly reform the Defamation Act 2009 and still, it is believed, did so in a manner that for the most part favours the publisher of allegedly defamatory material. In this lecture, I seek to outline the key arguments as to the importance of good name and, in particular why this right should be so strongly protected in a fractured society.

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A defamatory verdict, from a jury and in favour of the victim by contrast is a redemptive counterweight to the defamation, which restores the previous good name of that victim, rehabilitates them into the community and promotes social cohesion. A defamation verdict, from a jury and in favour of the victim by contrast is a redemptive counterweight to the defamation, which restores the previous good name of that victim, rehabilitates them into the community and promotes social cohesion. What this means is that a strong protection for a right to a good name is critical in far from protecting social. This was always true but is especially so in a social media era where many people – and especially generation Z - live out their lives in contexts which are exponentially higher than it has been before.

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Embedding a broad and deep tradition of public service, our most renowned graduates and professions include two former Presidents of Ireland – Mary Robinson who served as a human rights envoy and Mary Robinson who served as a human rights envoy and Government Minister in post-Apartheid South Africa. Whether on the bench or in the Dáil, Trinity Law School has helped to shape the law, but also to challenge and shape it.

Research is at the heart of the School’s activities. Staff are engaged in scholarship that focuses on Irish, European, and International legal developments, as well as the relationship between law and society.

The School values research that contributes to public policy debate and reform, which is an essential part of the School’s engagement with the wider community.

The School’s research is disseminated through the annual production of the Dublin University Law Journal (DULJ), one of Ireland’s leading peer-reviewed legal journals, and the Irish Supreme Court Review.

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The Law School educates students not just to work in law, but also to challenge and shape it. This was always true but is especially so in a social media era where many people – and especially generation Z - live out their lives in contexts which are exponentially higher than it has been before.

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