Thank you for agreeing to review for Political and Legal Anthropology Review. Below, I outline the general expectations for our multi-book reviews. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to write.

PoLAR is moving to an online-only publication plan, first with book reviews and eventually with the journal as a whole. All reviews will be Open Access and published through the journal’s website (which will increase readership of the reviews, and potentially the books as well); moreover, before being officially published, we’ll offer a ‘pre-publication’ version of the review on the APLA blog (https://polarjournal.org/) -- a which means your review will be published in 6-8 months after submission. The reviews – just as future articles in the journal – will be formatted to look as if they came from a paper bound version of the journal, with page numbers and proper formatting. Reviews will be indexed to appear in specific issues of the journal. One of the great benefits of moving to an online format is that bibliographies can be as long as needed, and you are encouraged to cite relevant literature. If you have any questions about this process, I am happy to address them.

Please send your completed review to both mwolfmey@binghamton.edu and polar.reviews@gmail.com. After receipt, I will read the review and contact you about any needed or suggested revisions. Upon completion, the review will be copy-edited, and prepared for publication. Wiley-Blackwell takes a very long time to prepare things for final publication, so it can take up to 2 years from the time of submission for the review to be officially published and indexed (hence our ‘pre-publication’ model of publication).

As I mentioned in my email invitation, we’re moving to a review essay format, more like articles in the Annual Review of Anthropology than typical book reviews. By way of example, you might look at Jessica Cattelino's ‘Anthropologies of the United States’ or Julia Paley's ‘Toward an Anthropology of Democracy.’ These suggestions aren’t prescriptive – you should approach the project as you see fit, and I’m happy to discuss possible approaches.

Review essays should be approximately 5000 words long. Generally, for each book being reviewed, add 1000 words (i.e. four books would be 6000 words long).

Bibliographies and in text citations should follow the AAA style guide, available here. Bibliographies do not count towards your word limit.

1) In a page or two, lay out the stakes of the three books and what they have to say about the anthropology of your chosen topic – which should be capacious enough to encompass the content of the books in a productive way. You may, in this section, lay out the history of the topic in anthropology and how it has been considered within political and legal anthropology.
2) In no more than 300 words for each book, describe the content and structure of each of the books. What is the arrangement of chapters? What kinds of evidence does the author use to motivate the chapters and their argumentation? Describe the kinds of fieldwork the author conducted as well as any supplementary research using other methods.

3) In no more than 300 words, what is the author’s guiding argument in each of the books? How is the argument supported in each of the chapters? What kinds of evidence are used to directly support the argument? If there are misalignments between argument and evidence, here is a good place to discuss them.

4) In 300-400 words, how does the author position him- or herself in relation to existing theories in the anthropology of politics and the law? How does the author see his or her contribution to the field? How would you gauge the success of the author, i.e. is the argument a convincing one?, and does it meaningfully contribute to the study of politics and the law?

In terms of 2-4, you needn’t discuss one book at a time, and may move from one book to the next. You can focus on all of the evidentiary concerns across the books, then move to all of the arguments, etc.

5) If one of the books you are reviewing is an edited collection, you should not review all of its contents. Instead, choose several (3-5) chapters that help flesh out the topic you’ve chosen for the review essay, and focus on them. You can refer to other chapters in cursory ways, but most of your discussion should be focused on the chapters of the book most directly relevant to the topic at hand.

Throughout 1-6, what’s most important is giving the reader a sense of what the books contribute to the anthropology of whatever the topic is, and how this relates to the anthropology of politics and the law (as possible). You should end the essay with a page or two synthesizing the books and their approaches, and making suggestions for what they make possible (or foreclose) in anthropology, particularly as it relates to politics and the law. You are encouraged to shape your analysis with your voice – this should not be a cold review, but rather an invitation to possibilities opened up by the books at hand.