

BY **SHAWN GUDE** | FEBRUARY 13, 2009 | From [The Daily Iowan](#) | [Original Article](#)

The passionate scene outside the Boyd Law Building on Thursday drew a stark contrast to what was occurring inside the building.

Approximately 25 protesters lined up outside, some with signs — “I disapprove of Yoo,” “Shame on Yoo,” “Who Would Jesus Torture” — while three symbolically wore black pillow cases over their heads.

Inside, controversial University of California-Berkeley Professor John Yoo delivered a chapter from his upcoming book, *Globalization and Structure*, to around 25 UI College of Law faculty members and two students. A 40-minute question-and-answer session followed.

Notably absent, however, were questions about Yoo’s much-debated role in former President George W. Bush’s administration, which was the bone of contention for protesters outside.

Instead of addressing accusations of war crimes levied by some, UI law Professor Todd Pettys said Yoo focused on the effect globalization has on American constitutional law.

From 2001-03, Yoo served as deputy assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Counsel of the U.S. Department of Justice, a role in which he provided a limited legal definition of torture and argued the Geneva Conventions didn’t apply to detainees from the war in Afghanistan.

Those positions have earned him the ire of civil libertarians and liberals around the country, including Iowa City.

“John Yoo thinks it’s OK to torture people, and it’s not,” West High senior Robert Mlejnek said. “It is not morally correct.”

UI graduate Liz Mick, who organized the protest, echoed the sentiment.

“We want to show that Iowa City does not condone torture and even with a new administration — we need to make our voices heard,” she said.

Yoo’s visit is one of 21 law faculty-only lectures this year, law Dean Carolyn Jones said. Thus, despite his prominence and controversial opinions on the war on terror, attendees limited their inquiries to Yoo’s presentation.

“That’s just sort of the nature of the forum,” Jones said. “It’s basically just workshopping a paper.”

Akin to other faculty-only lecturers, Yoo will be reimbursed for his travel expenses and will receive \$250 from the privately funded Iowa Law School Foundation.

Controversy and zeal aside, Jones lauded the way those involved handled themselves. “I’m pleased that all had the chance to do their part and voice their positions,” she said. “I believe the protesters had the chance to profess their view, and Professor Yoo had the chance to present his paper and get responses to it. And I guess I view that as a pretty good thing, because I’m in charge of an academic operation.”

DI reporter Alex Braddy contributed to this report.