Professor Robert Blitt joined the University of Tennessee, College of Law as an Associate Professor in 2007. He came to Tennessee from Washington, DC, where he served as International Law Specialist for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent, bi-partisan agency created by Congress to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad. Prior to joining the Commission, Professor Blitt spent over five years in the Middle East, where, among other things, he served with the Department of International Agreements in Israel’s Ministry of Justice, clerked for the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Israel, and directed projects at Physicians for Human Rights (Israel). In 2002, Professor Blitt was a Rabin Fellow for Peace and Tolerance at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Professor Blitt’s scholarship explores the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in promoting international human rights norms, NGO regulation, and issues related to the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief. His current research projects include studying the horizontal and vertical movement of anti-constitutional ideas both across states and within the international system. Among his writings, Professor Blitt has produced a detailed [human rights analysis of Iraq’s 2005 constitution](http://www.uscirf.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1888&Itemid=1), as well as other articles including *The Bottom Up Journey of ‘Defamation of Religion’ from Muslim States to the United Nations: A Case Study of the Migration of Anti-Constitutional Ideas,*The Religion-State Relationship and the Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief: A Comparative Textual Analysis of the Constitutions of Predominantly Muslim Countries, and Who Will Watch the Watchdogs: The Case for Regulating International Human Rights Nongovernmental Organizations. His published writing is available through the [Social Science Research Network](http://ssrn.com/author=491678) (SSRN).

Professor Blitt has lectured and presented his research findings in the United States and abroad, including at international conferences in Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Israel, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom. He has published op-eds and been interviewed and quoted in national and international media outlets, most recently on subjects including [freedom of expression](http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/01/11/defending-islam-free-speech-muslim-oic-un-hate-speech-criticism-column/21609273/), the [UN Commission of Inquiry for Gaza](http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.613490), the[Arab Spring](http://law.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ArabSpring.pdf), [defamation of religion](http://law.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/JerusalemPost.pdf), [Iraq’s constitution](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2005/08/08/DI2005080801005.html), [freedom of religion or belief under international law](http://www.abc.net.au/rn/spiritofthings/stories/2009/2712753.htm), and [U.S. policies relating to detention and torture](http://law.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/TennesseanOpEdonObama.pdf).

Professor Blitt is past co-chair of the American Society for International Law’s Human Rights Interest Group and is an executive committee member of the American Association of Law Schools’ Section on International Human Rights. He is also a founding board member of the University of Tennessee’s [Center for the Study of Social Justice](http://cssj.utk.edu/) as well as an Advisory Committee member for UT’s [Program in Judaic Studies](http://web.utk.edu/%7Ejudaic/).