



Akademie der Wissenschaften
und der Literatur | Mainz

universität freiburg



Call for Papers

Annual Workshop on the Vienna School of Jurisprudence and the Pure Theory of Law 4–5 March 2024

Background. The Pure Theory of Law (*Reine Rechtslehre*) is one of the most important legal theories to emerge in the 20th century. It provides a particular approach to law, normativity and legal scholarship. Yet, just as the writings of its founder Hans Kelsen (1881–1973) are not all contributions to the Pure Theory (for example his theory of democracy), the Pure Theory, in turn, is not limited to Kelsen's writings. The original members of the Vienna School of Jurisprudence, such as Adolf Julius Merkl, as well as their global post-war heirs have developed and modified this body of thought. While neither the Pure Theory nor Kelsen's writings have lost their potential to spark interest and controversy, this approach also generates a fair amount of perplexity. The Vienna School originated as a response to the problems of mainstream legal scholarship of its day and was intimately connected to doctrines of constitutional, administrative and international law – its members have also contributed greatly to those fields. Its global theoretical appeal, however, is much broader than that.

The premise. We, the Hans Kelsen Research Group at the University of Freiburg, Germany, is currently publishing a complete works edition of Hans Kelsen's writings (*Hans Kelsen Werke*). We would like to invite you to a scholarly conversation on the Pure Theory of Law as a theoretical framework for the role of legal scholarship and the functioning of law. The Annual Workshop is an intensive small two-day event where you will have the opportunity to present and discuss your ideas with the other participants of the workshop, with in-house experts, such as Matthias Jestaedt, Jörg Kammerhofer and Rodrigo Cadore, and with an international guest expert, this year **Thomas Hochmann** of Paris Nanterre University.

We encourage those identifying themselves as 'junior scholars' in a very broad sense (PhD students and beyond) to apply to present cutting-edge research ideas on Kelsen, the Vienna School and/or the Pure Theory. Proposals for **all topics broadly within the remit** of the workshop are welcome.

This year we particularly encourage **contributions challenging the Pure Theory's theoretical framework on the basis of other modern approaches** to legal theory or philosophy.

Our Annual Workshops are limited to ten speakers; papers may be presented in English or German. Accommodation and food will be provided by the organisers in addition to a staggered subsidy for travel expenses (max. € 150 for intra-German, € 400 for European, € 800 for transcontinental travel). The workshop will take place in a rural retreat in the Black Forest, near the town of Freiburg.

Application procedure. Please send an abstract (max. 500 words) as text file (.rtf or .docx, *not* .pdf) and a *curriculum vitae* to rechtstheorie@jura.uni-freiburg.de until **31 October 2023**. Selected speakers should be ready to submit short papers (max. 5000 words) to the conference organisers by **12 February 2024**.

Links. [Hans Kelsen Research Group](#); [Hans Kelsen Werke at Mohr Siebeck Publishers](#)