

**The Institute for Advanced Study at CEU is pleased to invite you to the workshop**

**Democracy and Academic Freedom:  
University Futures in the Age of Authoritarianism?**

**February 23 Friday, 11:00 - 18:15  
February 24 Saturday, 10:00 - 13:00  
Nádor u. 15, Room 103**



The challenges to academic freedom and university autonomy raise fundamental questions about the relationship between universities and society and, more specifically, the university and democracy.

1. What is the historical link between democracy and the public university?
2. What role do public universities play in sustaining democracy, and democracy – in sustaining public universities?
3. What are the greatest threats to democracy and to public universities today?
4. How can the influence of political and/or market authoritarianism on contemporary universities be challenged or resisted, and what role can democracy and academic freedom play in supporting such resistance?
5. What is at stake in the erosion of university autonomy and freedom to dissent?

This workshop aims to explore key issues relating to the challenges facing higher education – the ‘university-democracy nexus’ – in what might be considered an age of democratic backsliding and increasing authoritarianism. In doing so it will also consider the extent to which universities can still be considered core democratic institutions and whether there are parallels in the way these institutions have been undermined by the policies, practices and impulses of authoritarian leaders.

The workshop brings together scholars from different disciplines (including higher education, politics, democracy studies, the social sciences and the humanities), who will share their disciplinary approaches and insights. Contributions will include theoretical and comparative as well as papers of an empirical nature based on specific local or national case-studies. Some of the contributions of reflexive and autoethnographic kind will speak to the personal, experiential, and affective dimensions of these processes.

## WORKSHOP PROGRAM

**February 23, Friday**

**11:00 – 11:20**

### **Welcome and opening speech**

**Cris Shore**, Senior Joint Budapest Fellow, Institute for Advanced Study, CEU; Emeritus Professor, Goldsmiths University of London

**11:20 – 12:00**

### **Keynote presentation**

*Higher Education and Democracy: Symbiotic Relationship or Accident of History?*

**Susan Wright**, Professor, Co-director of Centre for Higher Education Futures (CHEF), Danish School of Education, Aarhus University

**12:00 – 12:30**

### **Introduction of speakers and participants**

*Lunch break*

**14:00 – 15:30**

### **Panel 1: The 'Democratic Mission' of Higher Education.**

Chair: **Violetta Zentai**, Professor, Department of Public Policy, CEU; Senior Research Fellow, Democracy Institute, CEU

14:00-14:30

*The Geopolitics of Academic Freedom*

**Michael Ignatieff**, Professor, History Department, CEU; Rector Emeritus of CEU (2016-2021)

14:30-14:55

*Culture and hegemony in illiberal Hungary*

**Zsuzsanna Szélényi**, Program Director, Democracy Institute Leadership Academy (DILA), CEU

14:55-15:20:

*Democracy in Question: Higher Education, Excellence and Displaced People in Europe*

**Prem Kumar Rajaram**, Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, CEU; Between 2016-2022, Head of the Open Learning Initiative (OLive), CEU

**Ian M. Cook**, Editor-in-Chief, Allegra Lab; Between 2019-2023, Director of Studies at Open Learning Initiative (OLive), CEU

15:20-15:45

*Marketization under neoliberal nationalism*

**Attila Meleg**, Director, Karl Polanyi Research Center for Global Social Studies

*Coffee break*

**16:10 – 18:15**

**Panel 2: Academic Freedom and University Autonomy: Defending Democracy from Illiberalism, Populism, Capitalism, and War.**

Chair: **Antal Berkes**, Junior Core Fellow, Institute for Advanced Study, CEU; Senior Lecturer, Liverpool Law School, University of Liverpool

16:10-16:35

*Defending university democracy from capitalist capture on the intersection of digital and physical infrastructure: reflections from the UK*

**Mariya Ivancheva**, Senior Lecturer, Strathclyde Institute of Education

16:35-17:00

*Compradors of China's Global Power: The Colonialization of Hungarian and Nicaraguan Academia through Anti-imperialist Tropes*

**Daniel Palm**, Research Fellow, Democracy Institute, CEU

17:00-17:25

*The characteristics of illiberal higher education policy-making: the case of Hungary*

**Gergely Kováts**, Associate professor, Institute of Strategy and Management, Corvinus University; Director, Center for International Higher Education Studies, Corvinus University

17:25-17:50

*Exerting Self-Censorship through Disinformation in Informational Autocracies*

**Péter Krekó**, Habilitated Associate Professor, Department of Social Psychology, ELTE PPK; Research Fellow, Democracy Institute, CEU; Non-resident fellow, GMT ECE program

17:50-18:15

*Acceleration: Disempowering collegial decision-making in the competitive university*

**Mikko Poutanen**, Postdoctoral researcher, Tampere University, Finland

**February 24, Saturday**

**10:00 – 10:50**

**Panel 3: Protecting academic freedom.**

Chair: **Ying Qian**, Senior Core Fellow, Institute for Advanced Study, CEU; Associate Professor, Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures, Columbia University

10:00-10:25

*How academic freedom is monitored - Overview of methods and procedures*

**Zoltán Rónay**, Habilitated Associate Professor, Institute of Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, ELTE; Vice-Dean for Education and Head of Quality Management, Faculty of Education and Psychology, ELTE

10:25-10:50

*The ban of the MA in Gender Studies – Assault on Academic Autonomy and its Possible Contestation (online)*

**Erzsébet Barát**, Visiting Professor, Department of Gender Studies, CEU; Lead researcher, TNT Research group, University of Szeged

*Coffee break*

**11:15-12:30**

**Panel 4: Democracy within the university (Roundtable)**

Chair: **Cris Shore**, Senior Joint Budapest Fellow, Institute for Advanced Study, CEU; Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, Goldsmiths University of London

**Erzsébet Barát** (online), Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Szeged; Visiting Professor, Department of Gender Studies, CEU

**Mariya Ivancheva**, Senior Lecturer, Strathclyde Institute of Education

**Mikko Poutanen**, Postdoctoral researcher, Tampere University, Finland

**Zoltán Rónay**, Habilitated Associate Professor, Institute of Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, ELTE; Vice-Dean for Education and Head of Quality Management, Faculty of Education and Psychology, ELTE

**Susan Wright**, Professor, Co-director of Centre for Higher Education Futures (CHEF), Danish School of Education, Aarhus University

**12:30 – 13:00**

**Conclusion and closing remarks**

**Workshop convener:**

**Cris Shore**

Senior Joint Budapest Fellow, Institute for Advanced Study, CEU  
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, Goldsmiths University of London  
<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Cris-Shore/publications>

**Please register through the following form till February 19 (required only for in-person attendance):**

<https://forms.office.com/e/cBHVEikMvs>

**Zoom link:**

<https://ceu-edu.zoom.us/j/97187248826?pwd=V3ZmYU40QWJQd0x6L0pQbHJWUjB2QT09>

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