



Akademie der Wissenschaften
und der Literatur | Mainz



Hans Kelsen
Werke

universität freiburg

Call for Papers

6th Annual Workshop on the Vienna School of Jurisprudence and the Pure Theory of Law 13–14 April 2026

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 well-developed approach to law, normativity and legal scholarship. Yet, just as not all of the writings of its founder Hans Kelsen (1881–1973) are 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 (1890–1970), as well as their global post-war heirs have developed and modified this body of thought.

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 significantly to those fields. Its global theoretical appeal, however, is much broader than that.

Premise

We, the Hans Kelsen Research Group at the University of Freiburg, Germany, are currently publishing the 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.

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.

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 (up to a maximum of € 150 for intra-German, € 400 for European and € 800 for transcontinental travel). The workshop will take place in an informal seminar and retreat hotel in a remote rural setting retreat in the Black Forest, near the town of Freiburg.

Application Procedure

- An abstract and a *curriculum vitae* should be sent to rechtstheorie@jura.uni-freiburg.de up to and including **31 December 2025**. Please note that we cannot guarantee a confirmation of receipt.
- The abstract of no more than 500 words, including references, should be delivered as a text file, **not as PDF**.
- Selected speakers should be ready to submit short papers (max. 5000 words) to the conference organisers by **13 March 2026**.

Links

[Hans Kelsen Online](#) [Freiburg University Chair](#) [Hans Kelsen Werke at Mohr Siebeck](#)