



# Doctoral Academy Day 2022 The Myth of Meritocracy? Equal Opportunities for Research Careers

Thursday, November 17, 2022, 2.15–6.00 pm

SZ 15.21, Resowi A, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Universitätsstraße 15, 8010 Graz

Further information & registration for  
the event until November 16 via

[doctoral-academy.uni-graz.at](https://doctoral-academy.uni-graz.at)



*We work for*  
**tomorrow**

[www.uni-graz.at](https://www.uni-graz.at)



Programme

## Opening Statements

**2.15 – 2.30 pm**

Mireille VAN POPPEL

Vice-Rector for Internationalisation and Equal Opportunities

Reinhard ALKOFER

Director of the Doctoral Academy Graz

## Office of Ombudspersons

**2.30 – 2.45 pm**

Peter SCHERRER

Director of the Doctoral Academy 2016-22

## Do We All Have the Same Opportunities?

### Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education and Academia

**2.45 – 4.15 pm**

Ann-Kristin KOLWES

University of Cologne

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**Coffee Break**

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## Table Talks

**4.45 – 5.15 pm and 5.15 – 5.45 pm**

Derya Özkaya | Political Science

*The Role of Language Diversity and Citizenship in Academic Careers*

Ulla KRIEBERNEGG | Age and Care Research

*Towards a Caring University: Reconsidering Vulnerability throughout the Academic Lifecourse*

Iris MENDEL | Education Research

*Making Class (In)Visible: Questions of Equality, Epistemology and Money*

Christa NEUPER | Psychology

*Challenges to Gender Equality in Academia*

## Wrap-up of the Table Talks

**5.45 – 6.00 pm**

**Host**  
Gerald LIND  
Doctoral Academy

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**Snacks & Drinks**

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## The Myth of Meritocracy?

### Equal Opportunities for Research Careers

Academia holds high the meritocratic principle: Only academic achievements shall be decisive for successful research careers. And as public institutions, universities in the EU need to adhere to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: “Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.” (EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 21 - Non-discrimination, Section 1)

Academic reality, however, does not always meet its high ideals of meritocracy. Researchers frequently encounter career obstacles connected with non-academic aspects. It is the aim of this year’s *Doctoral Academy Day* to raise awareness of the non-academic factors that can hinder career progression and explore strategies to create equal career opportunities for all researchers.

## 2.15 to 2.30

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

**Mireille van Poppel** (Vice-Rector for Internationalisation and Equal Opportunities)

**Reinhard Alkofer** (Director of the Doctoral Academy Graz)

Host: Gerald Lind (Team Doctoral Academy)

## 2.30 to 2.45

### DOCTORAL ACADEMY OFFICE OF OMBUDSPERSONS

**Peter Scherrer** (Director of the Doctoral Academy 2016–2022)

The newly established Office of Ombudspersons of the Doctoral Academy offers independent and non-partisan counselling and mediation.

The responsibilities of the ombudspersons are:

- mediation in case of serious conflicts in the frame of doctoral education
- mediation in case of inappropriate behaviour and/or discrimination
- guidance on questions regarding good scientific practice/research integrity
- guidance on individual obstacles encountered during the doctoral phase

The ombudspersons are experienced researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds who follow the principles of strict confidentiality, independence, and neutrality.

## 2.45 to 4.15

### KEYNOTE INCL. DISCUSSION

## Do We All Have the Same Opportunities? Equality of Opportunity in Higher Education and Academia

(Ann-Kristin Kolwes | University of Cologne)

### ABSTRACT

Women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses, individuals from a non-academic background, people with a family history of immigration and internationals coming from different countries – people of all these groups are less likely to pursue a career in academia, and even fewer of them achieve senior positions. But why is that, when supposedly only the research performance determines the success or failure of academic careers? The keynote will discuss how universities reproduce educational inequality, and how we can all contribute to more diversity and equal opportunities in academia.

### CV

Dr. Ann-Kristin Kolwes works as project coordinator for the program *First Generation Doctorate Mentoring+* at the University of Cologne, Germany. She is also a member of the founding board and chair of the non-profit association *Erste Generation Promotion*. In her professional and volunteer work, she advocates more educational equity in the university context and especially supports doctoral candidates with a non-academic family background. Being first generation is also a part of her own biography.

## **4.45 to 5.45**

### **TABLE TALKS**

#### **Challenges to Gender Equality in Academia**

(Christa Neuper | Psychology)

##### **ABSTRACT**

Present-day universities share a strong commitment to gender equality and the promotion of women academics. The initial situation, showing an unequal career success of women and men, is, however, a complex one with a variety of causes and dynamics involved. In this interactive table talk we will share significant career experiences and identify success factors for the advancement of female academics' careers.

##### **CV**

Christa Neuper has been full professor for neuropsychology at the University of Graz (since 2005), and appointed professor of Brain-Computer-Interface at the Graz University of Technology (since 2010). Based on her extensive experience in the field of brain signals, Christa Neuper has been involved in the pioneering development of brain-computer communication systems. She was coinvestigator in a number of national and international research projects and published over 200 scientific papers and book chapters. Christa Neuper was appointed as rector of the University of Graz for two periods (2011 – 2019); during that time, she served as a member of several national and international university committees.

# Making Class (In)Visible: Questions of Equality, Epistemology and Money

(Iris Mendel | Education Research)

## ABSTRACT

In this table talk we discuss classism within the academic system and why it is so difficult to talk about it. We will look at how the myth of meritocracy makes classism invisible and will address the power of feelings associated with classism like shame and fear as well as the feeling of not belonging. Finally, we will discuss if classism may be a challenge for academia not only in terms of equality but also in terms of epistemology.

## CV

Dr. Iris Mendel is a philosopher and social scientist and currently working at the Department of Education Research and Teacher Education at the University of Graz. Her research interests include education and social inequality, feminist theories and critical pedagogy. Iris Mendel has worked at different research institutions and universities in Vienna, Berlin, and Toronto. She has recently participated in the project *Habitus.Macht.Bildung* (University of Graz, 2019–2021) producing teaching material on the role of social inequality in education and pedagogical reflexivity (Froebus, Kink-Hampersberger, Mendel, Schubatzky & Scheer 2021, <https://habitusmachtbildung.uni-graz.at/de/materialien/im-projekt-entwickeltes-material/>).

# The Role of Language Diversity and Citizenship in Academic Careers

(Derya Özkaya | Political Science)

## ABSTRACT

Early-stage researchers have to follow the academic job trail, moving from city to city, from university to university. In this state of permanent transit, they have to adapt quickly to new cultures, languages, work environments, legal regulations, and, of course, people. For displaced scholars, as well as international scholars from outside of Europe, additional bureaucratic and social challenges may emerge. These highly complex life circumstances come with a certain cost but – such is the perspective of this table talk – they also provide the chance to grow not only academically but also as a person.

## CV

Dr. Derya Özkaya is a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Southeast European Studies (CSEES) at the University of Graz. Her academic research interests are primarily centered on the politics of emotions and affect, political ethnography of collective action and resistance, protest movements and contentious politics, collective memory, and contemporary politics of Turkey. She is currently working on her first monograph on the emotional and affective dynamics of popular protests and collective action focusing on Turkey's Gezi uprisings of 2013 and the post-Gezi political landscape in the context of anti-government protests and alliances.



# Towards a Caring University: Reconsidering Vulnerability throughout the Academic Lifecourse

(Ulla Krieberegg | Age and Care Research)

## ABSTRACT

Feeling lost as a „first generation“ student, being exhausted from the increasing pressure to perform under precarious conditions, or feeling cut off and devalued after retirement: University life can come with various challenges at different points throughout the lifecourse. Sometimes, these vulnerabilities are not rooted in personal issues but in organisational structures and processes. Developing a caring university in a neoliberal context requires creating spaces and places for open discussion, exchange, connection, and empathy. It means bringing the perspectives and needs of all members of the university - students, staff, and faculty alike - to the table in a democratic way, and involves questioning hierarchies and traditions. Reconsidering vulnerability in academia, how can we create more caring universities?

## CV

Ulla Krieberegg is director of the *Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Aging and Care (CIRAC)* and Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Graz. In her research and teaching she focuses on North American literary and cultural studies, Aging and Care Studies, and Medical Humanities. Her latest book, *Putting Age in its Place* (forthcoming) deals with the spatiality of care in cultural representations of care homes. Ulla Krieberegg is chair of the *Age and Care Research Group Graz* and deputy chair of the *European Network of Aging Studies (ENAS)*.

**5.45 to ca. 6.00**

**WRAP-UP OF THE TABLE TALKS**

Christa Neuper | Psychology

Iris Mendel | Education Research

Derya Özkaya | Political Sociology

Ulla Kriebnernegg | Age and Care Research

**SNACKS AND DRINKS AFTER THE WRAP-UP OF THE TABLE TALKS!**



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