



Hoi, Hallo, Nazdar, Cześć, Sholem Aleichem, and Szia!

Vol. 3/February 2025

It's my pleasure to write you, dear friends of the **Austria Centre Leiden**, with the third edition of our semi-annual newsletter. As many of you know, my name is Sarah A. Cramsey and I am the Special Chair for Central European Studies, a University Lecturer in Judaism and Diaspora Studies at Leiden University and Director of the **Austria Centre Leiden** which is one of nine Austria Centers around the world that are generously sponsored by the Austrian Government. We are also supported by the Austrian Studies Fund at the LUF, or Leiden University Fund (have you made your donation yet?!). We will feature some of our generous supporters in consequent issues of our newsletter. We are so grateful for your support of Central European Studies at Leiden

As you can see below, **we have a very exciting program for the Spring 2025 semester!** Notably, we will welcome our Visiting Professor of Central European Studies Prof. Eva Pfanzelter (Innsbruck) to spend a semester with us and we will host Dr. Hans Petschar of the Austrian National Library to give the Sixth Annual Austrian Studies Program Lecture on April 14, 2025. **Keep reading to learn about all the events that you can expect over the next few months and hear what we did in Fall 2024.** For starters we hosted an event featuring Dr. Hana Kubátová (Charles University, Prague) on academic freedom and neutrality which we planned with the student organization CIROS, the Central and East European Studies Program at Leiden and the Czech Centre Rotterdam. I traveled to Vienna to meet the Dutch Ambassador to Austria and deliver a Cleveringa Lecture entitled "Care, Children and the Jewish Catastrophe" and introduced a film at the Czech Centre Rotterdam's Czechoslovak New Wave Film Festival. All of us (and many students) attended successful lunch talks featuring Dr. Kate Brackney, Dr. Jonathan Singerton and Dr. Dorine Schellens. And, finally, last semester I learned that a 1.5 million euro "Starting Grant" from the European Research Council will fund my new project "A Century of Care: Early childcare and invisible work in central and eastern Europe, 1905-2004" and support a research team of two PhD students and one postdoctoral researcher over the next five years at Leiden!

As always, I am here to receive RSVPs, take suggestions for events and find more ways to celebrate the unique culture and remember the complex history of the region we call "Central Europe." **Email me at s.a.cramsey@hum.leidenuniv.nl.**

Warm regards to all of you, Sarah



Preliminary Schedule of Events | Spring 2025
To RSVP email s.a.cramsey@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Monday, Feb. 10, 2025

Prof. Eva Pfanzer (Visiting Professor of Central European Studies, Leiden)

Lunch Talk: “Introducing the Visiting Professor”

Faculty Club, 13:15-15:00 | Lunch will served ! | Please RSVP!

Monday, Feb. 10, 2025

Book Roundtable with Dr. Kate Brackney (Institute History, Leiden)

Introducing the new book *Surreal Geographies: A New History of Holocaust Consciousness*

Faculty Club, 16:15-18:00 | Reception to follow | *Co-sponsored with Leiden Jewish Studies Network*

Monday, Mar. 10, 2025

Prof. Eva Pfanzer (Visiting Professor of Central European Studies, Leiden)

Public Talk: “The South Tyrolean Option and Return Option 1939-1954. Research Approaches and Discursive Changes”

12:30-14:00 | Location TBD | *Co-sponsored by the Leiden Interdisciplinary Migration Seminars*

Thursday, Mar. 27, 2025

Prof. Jill Massimo (Univ. of North Carolina, Charlotte)

LunchTalk: Introducing *Everyday Postsocialism in East. Europe: History Doesn't Travel in One Direction*

12:15 – 14:00 | Lunch served at Restaurant Tabu! | Please RSVP! | *Co-sponsored by the CEES*

Monday, April 14, 2025

Dr. Hans Petschar (Austrian National Library, Vienna)

Sixth Annual Austrian Studies Lecture

“Austria’s Present Past: A visual journey through Austrian history 1925 – 2025”

And presentation of the **Mr. Hugo Weiland Thesis Prize**

Faculty Club, 16:15-18:00 | Reception to follow

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Ms. Esther Rachow (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)

Lunch Talk: “Spatial Narratives of Historical Experiences: 3D Visualizations of Prisoner Art as Tools for Knowledge Production and Transfer at Holocaust Memorials”

Faculty Club, 12:15-14:00 | Lunch will be served! | Please RSVP!

Prof. Eva Pfanzelter joins Leiden as the Visiting Professor in Central European Studies



For the spring semester 2025, the Austria Centre Leiden and the Institute History are excited to welcome Prof. Eva Pfanzelter to Leiden for her term as Visiting Professor in Central European Studies. Prof. Pfanzelter will teach two classes, give public talks in Leiden and around The Netherlands and strengthen Leiden's connections to Central Europe. We are very grateful to the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Research for their support of this Visiting Professorship. We asked Prof. Pfanzelter some questions so we can learn more about her work.

Where do you usually work as a professor and what do you study?

I am a professor at the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. My research mainly focusses on the interconnections between history and digitization and I have three main areas that I work on in in this context: migration and return (or circular) migration, Holocaust studies and European minority studies. All three areas are highly relevant issues for current day events and that makes them intriguing and fascinating to work on.

Why were you drawn to apply to this Visiting Professorship in Central European Studies at Leiden University?

In the spring-term of 2023 I was a visiting professor at Center Austria at the University of New Orleans. Through these channels the Visiting Professorhip was promoted and I decided to apply especially because to teach at Leiden University and collaborate with renowned colleagues from the history department was really appealing.

What courses are you teaching and what else do you have planned for your time in The Netherlands?

The two courses I am going to teach are a BA-General History lecture course on the history of ethnic minorities in Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries and a MA-research seminar on "return migration" from the 1850s. Also, I have been invited by colleagues from research networks and other universities in the Netherlands to participate in round tables and to give talks. My schedule has filled up really quickly now and I am looking forward to an interesting exchange. I hope to be able to use this time to initiate future collaborations and I am positive that this will come about. But of course, I am also looking forward to travel around the country and see all the wonderful cities and places the Netherlands has to offer.

Dr. Hana Kubátová speaks about academic freedom and neutrality to CIROS, CEES and the Austria Centre Leiden

In November 2024, Dr. Hana Kubátová (Charles University, Prague) visited Leiden to talk with students and our community about academic freedom and neutrality at the university. This meaningful event was planned by student leaders from CIROS (Community for International Relations and Organisations Students) with the support of the Center for Central and East European Studies and the Austria Centre Leiden. Two students, Ms. Anna Kowal and Ms. Aadya Choudhary, asked Dr. Kubatova questions during the public event. Dr. Kubátová also joined students and faculty members for breakfasts, lunches and dinners in Leiden during her stay. Finally, she spoke about her new book, *Christian Nationalism, Nation-Building, and the Making of the Holocaust in Slovakia*, which is forthcoming with Oxford University Press.



How the work of CIROS connect with the broader Leiden community? What do you want us to know about CIROS?

CIROS is a place for dialogue, mutual support, and intellectual and personal growth. We strive to create spaces and events where political science students can connect beyond lectures and workgroups. As a student organization, we try to do that through social events, fundraising for issues dear to our hearts, embassy visits and academic events with Leiden University researchers and lecturers. However, CIROS is also about bringing together students from different programs and faculties and academic staff of Leiden University. As an external officer and academic committee member, we both actively work to facilitate that. If there is one thing we would like a reader of this article to know about us, it is that we are open to meeting and getting to know you and are excited about new experiences and new people!

Tell us about your experience interviewing Dr. Kubatova for the event last semester. What did you learn about orchestrating an event like that?

Interviewing Dr. Kubátová was an amazing experience. Her openness to discuss with both students and professors present in the room made everyone feel welcome and heard, regardless of differences in political views or conceptualizations of academic freedom. This atmosphere encouraged countless interesting and important questions from the audience, which we were truly happy about. However, the amount of them made our job as interviewers more challenging, as we had to manage our time well and prioritize some issues over others. While difficult, we both consider this a great learning experience for our future work.

Furthermore, working on this event taught us how important it is to make everyone feel welcome and taken care of, both the speaker and our guests. Seeing students, exchange students, and members of the academic staff of Leiden University feel confident to actively engage in the conversation with Dr. Kubatova was incredibly rewarding.

Why are discussions about academic freedom important for students today? What did Dr. Kubátová's words teach you about academic freedom more broadly?

While we, as students of political science, are only at the beginning of our life and academic journey we feel that the times we live in are becoming increasingly turbulent. This prompts many discussions not only during university classes but also during social and family gatherings. We consider differences of opinion as part of politics and part of academia and therefore care about the freedom to voice our opinions constructively and publicly. Dr. Kubátová's insightful discussions highlighted the challenges faced by pioneers of academic freedom and neutrality, ranging from political pressure to societal stigma. She pointed out that academic freedom empowers and protects the rights of those working in academia, but also facilitates, inspires and encourages students to pick up critical thinking skills and independently analyse issues and perspectives. Furthermore, Dr. Kubátová prioritized that protecting academic freedom is not a temporary procedure, but requires long-term oversight and practical engagement from all sectors within academia.

Our guest's words and her approach to discussion with the audience taught us a lot about openness to different opinions without giving up our own. She encouraged and led by example discussions between people of different opinions that can be fruitful and result in broadening one's worldview.

Special Chair for Central European Studies gives Cleveringa Lecture in Vienna

On December 3, 2024, Prof. dr. Sarah Cramsey delivered a Cleveringa Lecture in Vienna. Cramsey was the special guest of the Dutch Ambassador to Austria, Mr. Peter Potman. After a lunch at the residence with colleagues based in Austria, Cramsey delivered a lecture entitled "The Other Holocaust: Care, Children and the Jewish Catastrophe" before more than 100 attendees, including ambassadors from Israel and Poland as well as dozens of students who are studying diplomacy in Vienna. Also in attendance were Leiden alum Ingrid d'Hooghe, the wife of Ambassador Potman, and other Leiden alumni who recognized the importance of this tradition.

This event in Vienna commemorated a protest lecture delivered by Professor Rudolf Cleveringa delivered more than eighty years ago, professor Clevering in Leiden's Great Auditorium. He denounced the measure taken by the German occupiers of removing all Jewish professors from their posts. To commemorate professor Cleveringa's speech, dozens of Cleveringa committees, in collaboration with Leiden University Fund, organise special lectures around the world on and around November 26 for their fellow alumni and anyone with a heart for science. Cramsey was delighted to deliver her first Cleveringa Lecture in Vienna, the heart of Central Europe.



Dr. Jonathan Singerton talks about Central Europe and the 19th century World

In December 2024, Dr. Jonathan Singerton (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) was the featured guest speaker at the last lunch talk of the Fall 2025 semester. A full house assembled to hear Dr. Singerton take us on a journey across the Habsburg Empire and to spots far-flung from Vienna.

What did you talk about the Austria Centre Leiden lunchtime talk?

The core of my talk at the Austria Centre Leiden was on the historical entanglements of Habsburg history beyond the European mainland. Anchored in the nineteenth century, I recounted how Habsburg political interests developed in post-Napoleonic period and took on a global dimension in terms of economic and geostrategic thinking. The talk, entitled "A Spiritual Lacuna? Austria-Hungary's Religious Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century" used the lens of the Austrian Empire's religious activities during this period as a means to explore these wider worldwide ambitions and influences. After detailing the expansive vision of the Viennese court together with their Trieste mercantile allies, I showed how these machinations tied into the wider resurgence of Christian, particularly Roman Catholic missionizing in the early nineteenth century that took the form of several charitable organizations based in Vienna and other parts of Central Europe. These organizations held considerable influence in the African interior and the American Midwest, both places of acute colonial conquest and of growing economic interest to the Habsburg monarchy.

Why is it important to study Central Europe in The Netherlands today?

The Austrian government is right to support several Austria Centres across the world today as they all enrich and support the study of Central Europe from a broader perspective. Yet it is from the Dutch angle that we can profit the most. Long remembered in this country as ancient enemies, the Habsburgs are a dynasty intricately linked to the Low Countries through, first, the Spanish inheritance and then, as a neighbouring power during the Austrian period of rule in present-day Belgium right up until the fall of the monarchy. This connection is a long history, but one that still offers up fresh reminders of timely debates and themes: the nature of political rights and representation, the competition for resources, the effects of global trade, and the limits of just wars. It is a shared history. Recognising this interplay is one reason why the study of Central Europe is so important for the Netherlands, but studying this region here is a worthwhile endeavour because it combines one Europe's greatest scholarly environments in Dutch academia with the exploration of Europe's most complex and fascinating historical landscapes, the lands of the Habsburgs.