

## Book of Abstracts: Workshops at 2026 IUW in Jena

Lecturer	<i>from...</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Abstract</i>
<p><b>Trine Skjævestad Ask,</b> Ass. Prof.</p>  <p>Photo credit: Private</p>	<p><b>University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), Porsgrunn, Norway</b></p>	<p><b>Home and Human Rights</b></p>	<p>In this workshop, we explore human rights in the context of home and vice versa. We reflect on the meaning of home for each and every one of us. How do our ideas about home coincide within the group, and how do they differ from one another? How is the home—often culturally understood as private and intimate—connected to internationally overarching human rights? And how do we understand and work with our cultural ideas about home in social work? Join an exploratory workshop where we ask questions about the most intimate sphere, the home, and overarching international guidelines, human rights, in an interchangeable manner.</p>
<p><b>Mattanja de Jong</b></p>  <p>Photo credit: Lectoraat Jeugd, Educatie &amp; Samenleving</p>	<p><b>Hanze University of Applied Sciences (UAS), Netherlands</b></p>	<p><b>Human Rights Under Pressure; Social Work in the Dutch Democratic Context</b></p>	<p>This workshop explores how human rights and democratic values are challenged in everyday social work practice in the Netherlands. Through three real-life Dutch cases—youth mental health care waiting lists, youth homelessness, and the childcare benefits scandal—students analyse tensions between policy, professional ethics, and human rights. Using case-based discussion and reflection, participants examine the role of social workers as frontline professionals who identify rights violations, advocate for vulnerable groups, and navigate structural constraints within the welfare state. The workshop encourages critical reflection on professional responsibility, ethical decision-making, and the practical meaning of human rights in contemporary Dutch social work.</p>

<p><b>Dorothea Gläßer, M.Sc.</b></p>  <p>Photo credit: Martin Geisler</p>	<p><i><b>EAH – University of Applied Sciences, Jena, Germany</b></i></p>	<p><b>Empathy &amp; Intercultural Friendship as Democratic Practice</b></p>	<p>Intercultural and interracial friendships are important yet often underestimated spaces in which democratic values and human rights are practised in everyday life. Building on contact theory (e.g. Pettigrew &amp; Tropp, 2006) and recent research on empathy (Gläßer et al., 2026), this workshop explores how empathy and friendship mutually shape intercultural perspectives.</p>
<p><b>Prof. Dr. Nicole Harth</b></p>  <p>Photo credit: Matthias Eimer</p>			<p>Empathy is presented as a relational, two-sided concept that involves both understanding others and feeling understood, highlighting potential asymmetries in intercultural relationships.</p> <p>The workshop combines very short theoretical inputs with interactive methods such as self-reflection and group exercises. Participants reflect on their experiences, engage in perspective-taking, and discuss critical situations in intercultural friendships. The workshop emphasises empathy and friendship as core democratic competencies and key values of social work in promoting human rights, inclusion, and mutual recognition.</p>
<p><b>Anne-Sofie Hedengran Vedel</b></p>  <p>Photo Credit: UCL, Kommunikation og Markedsføring</p>	<p><i><b>UCL University College, Odense, Denmark</b></i></p>	<p><b>Dilemmas in Social Work Regarding Democracy and Human Rights</b></p>	<p>In this workshop, participants will explore the complex relationship between social work, democracy, and human rights, focusing on the ethical challenges and dilemmas that arise when these principles are put into practice.</p> <p>The aim is to equip future social workers with skills and knowledge that can help them address these challenges and promote democratic participation, equality, and the protection of fundamental rights.</p>

<p><b>Prof. Mag. Alois Huber</b></p>  <p>Photo credit: USTP St. Pölten</p>	<p><i>University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten, Austria</i></p>	<p><b>Employee Assistance Programs, a Concept for Social Work "Be part of the World"</b></p>	<p>In this context, social work integrates perspectives from the economy and public health, contributing to integrative knowledge and democratic practice. Modern social work has its impact not only on marginalized groups but on society as a whole. Employee Assistance Programs represent an important intersection between social work and occupational health. By addressing personal and systemic challenges within the workplace, EAPs contribute to both employee well-being and organizational effectiveness—making them a valuable topic for contemporary social work practice and research. EAPs reflect core social work values: the person-in-environment perspective, confidentiality, empowerment, and advocacy. Social workers in EAP settings assess both individual needs and organizational dynamics, promoting healthier workplaces and stronger support systems.</p>
<p><b>Lara Morcillo Sanchez &amp; students</b></p>  <p>Photo credit: private</p>	<p><i>University of Girona, Catalonia / Spain</i></p>	<p><b>The Violence We Do Not See: Bureaucracy, Immigration Detention Centres and Hate Speech</b></p>	<p>This workshop addresses the need to highlight realities that are often obscured by administrative procedures, laws, and institutional discourses that present themselves as neutral yet have very real consequences for the lives of thousands of people in an irregular administrative situation. Administrative violence is not always explicit or physical; rather, it operates constantly and profoundly through endless delays, impossible requirements, fear of identification, arbitrary detention, and deprivation of liberty in Immigration Detention Centres, despite no criminal offence having been committed. The workshop focuses on individuals in this situation within the Spanish context. However, this is not an territory-specific problem but part of a broader dynamic present across Europe, marked by the rise of the far right and the tightening of restrictive migration policies.</p>

<p><b>Mgr. Dr. Stanislav Ondrášek</b></p>  <p>Photo credit: private</p>	<p><i>University of South Bohemia, České Budějovice, Czech Republic</i></p>	<p><b>Excluded People in Democratic Society</b></p>	<p>Socially excluded people often do not participate fully in democratic society due to a combination of structural, economic, and social barriers. Long-term poverty, low levels of education, unemployment, and unstable housing limit access to information, political institutions, and opportunities for civic engagement. Many individuals feel that their voices are not heard and that political decisions do not reflect their needs, leading to distrust in democratic institutions. This sense of powerlessness is reinforced by discrimination, stigma, and negative experiences with authorities, causing withdrawal from public life. As a result, participation in elections, community activities, and public debates remains low. This weakens democratic processes, as democracy depends on the active participation of all citizens. Systematic exclusion makes decision-making less representative and reproduces social inequalities, creating a difficult cycle to break.</p>
<p><b>Prof. Dr. Christian Stark</b></p>  <p>Photo credit: University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria</p>	<p><i>University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Linz, Austria</i></p>	<p><b>Participation in Social Work: Possibilities and Limitations of Participation of Services Users</b></p>	<p>This workshop describes the possibilities and limitations of service user participation using the example of homeless people. Participation is defined as the involvement of individuals, groups, and communities in decision-making processes that affect them directly or indirectly. Empowerment is regarded as a fundamental precondition for participation, through which individuals and communities enhance their capacity to be informed, make choices, and transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes. The presentation illustrates forms of and approaches to participation and provides concrete examples of participation practices in service user organisations for homeless people. The lecture underlines that participation is a matter of power and the transfer of power as a measure of participation. Where participation is not connected to decision-making, it becomes merely a talking shop and tokenism. Participation does not exclude the need for support; rather, it concerns how support is provided and aims at increasing autonomy.</p>

<p><b>Anu Utter and Eeva Mäntylä</b></p>  <p>Photo credit: private</p>	<p><i>HUMAK, University of Applied Sciences, Finland</i></p>	<p><b>Do You Need a Timeout? Now is Your Chance to Take one Together</b></p>	<p>We invite you to join us in a dialogue exploring the culture of debate in today's world. Whose voices are heard and deserve to be heard? Whose voices are not heard, and what can be done about it? What do cultures of debate in different parts of Europe look like from the perspective of democracy and human rights? Timeout is a discussion method that enables constructive debate on social issues. It offers an opportunity to pause and reflect on a shared theme, listen to others, and create space for one's own thoughts. The starting point is equal interaction and the creation of deeper understanding. We are interested in your experiences. In the Timeout discussion, we aim to deepen our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world. Participants speak from their own experiences and listen to others. No prior expertise is required. After a short introduction, we will discuss prevailing discussion cultures and whose voices are heard. No decisions will be made or issues resolved. The focus is on understanding and shared experiences. The Timeout method provides a tool that participants can later use in their work as social workers or community educators.</p>
<p><b>Jutta Verstraeten</b></p> 	<p><i>Hoge- school PXL, Hasselt, Belgium</i></p>	<p><b>Online Polarisation and Radicalization</b></p>	<p>This lecture explores the complex phenomena of online polarisation and radicalisation. Students are introduced to key concepts and definitions, followed by an in-depth examination of the mechanisms and dynamics driving these processes in digital environments.</p> <p>The session then moves into a collaborative discussion on the role of social workers in prevention and intervention strategies. By analysing practical approaches and ethical considerations, the lecture aims to identify how social work can help mitigate risks and foster resilience in communities affected by online extremism.</p>

**Steinar Vikholt, Ass. Prof.**



Photo credit: Jan Klasbu

*University  
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**From  
Casework to  
Civic  
Courage -  
Social Work  
in an Age  
of  
Polarisation**

In a time of democratic backsliding and shrinking spaces of civil society, social work faces a fundamental question: Are social workers neutral service providers, or human rights defenders with a responsibility to challenge injustice?

This interactive workshop explores the ideological foundations of social work and the tensions between professional neutrality and political engagement. Rather than focusing on democratic backsliding as a political phenomenon, the workshop examines how social work itself may contribute to shrinking civic space when the profession retreats from advocacy, collective responsibility, and structural critique. Through short inputs and guided discussions, participants will reflect on how ethical principles such as human rights, social justice, and dignity are translated into everyday practice—especially when democracy and human rights are under pressure.

**Tim Vermeiren and  
Students of the  
University College  
Leuven Limburg (UCLL)**



Photo credit: private

**University  
College  
Leuven  
Limburg  
(UCLL),  
Belgium**

**Social  
Inequality in  
the Children’s  
Everyday  
School Life**

This workshop explores how social inequality manifests in children’s everyday school life and how it affects their opportunities, self-image, and future prospects.

Education is often seen as a space of equal opportunity, yet students’ experiences show that this is not always the case. Factors such as socioeconomic status, home environment, language, migration background, and access to support influence how safe, seen, and supported students feel.

Topics include unequal access to laptops or study guidance, teachers’ expectations, stereotyping, and subtle forms of exclusion. These issues are linked to human rights, particularly the right to education and equal treatment. The workshop encourages dialogue, empathy, and critical awareness with the aim of stimulating change.

**Miriam Weinzierl**



Photo credit: Melanie Steckelberg

**Hoch-  
schule  
Emden/  
Leer,  
Germany**

**The Right to  
Be Heard:  
Exploring  
Freedom of  
Speech  
Through  
Theatre**

This workshop explores Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: freedom of expression. Participants engage in creative exercises to examine how speech is expressed, limited, or contested. They reflect on the boundaries of expression and on whose voices are heard or marginalised.

Through practical, hands-on theatre methods, the workshop demonstrates how theatre can be used in social work as an instrument for human rights education. All participants, with or without theatre experience, are welcome.

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This document was prepared by the IUW-team from University of Applied Sciences Jena (EAH) on behalf of Prof. Dr. Frederik v. Harbou, 03/2026.