

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

Location: Dekanatssitzungssaal (Staircase 8, 2nd Floor)
University of Vienna, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna



09:30 – 10:45 | Panel 1: Jewish Thought in Modern Transformations and Crises

Asher J. Mattern: Jewish conceptual constellations and fascist thought

Elisabeth Becker-Topkara: "Why not peace?" Albert Einstein and the Jewish universalist tradition in crisis

Moderator: Leora Batnitzky

10:45 – 11:00 | Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:15 | Panel 2: Interreligious Formation and Dialogue

Fahimah Ulfat: Crises and Critique in Interreligious Educational Processes: Self-Critical Perspectives on the Historical and Current Relationships Between Jews and Muslims from an Islamic Religious Education Perspective

Shankar Nair: From Self-Blame to Sultan-Critique: Repentance in Sarmad Kashani (d. 1661), A Jewish Mystic in Muslim/Hindu South Asia

Moderator: Ufuk Topkara

12:30 – 13:30 | Lunch Break

14:30 – 16:30 | City Tour of Muslim / Jewish Vienna (G. G. Stanfel / E. Shapira)

17:30 – 18:00 | Coffee Break / Regroup

18:00 – 19:30 | Keynote Address and Concluding Remarks

Welcome: Rabbi Schlomo Elieser Hofmeister (MSc, Community Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Vienna (IKG Wien))

Introduction: Asher Biemann

Ufuk Topkara: Crisis and Self-Critique: A Current Assessment from a Muslim perspective

Moderator: Noemi Call

Music: Gernot Galib Stanfel

20:00 | Dinner for Conference Participants



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Forum on Religion & Democracy



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FORUM ON JEWISH-MUSLIM THOUGHT & THEOLOGY

CRISIS CRITIQUE SELF- CRITICISM

Program

Perspectives from
Jewish & Muslim
Traditions

International Workshop
University of Vienna

October 20 – 22
2025

Monday, October 20, 2025

Location: Dekanatssitzungssaal (Staircase 8, 2nd Floor)
University of Vienna, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna



9:30 – 10:30 | Welcome and Opening Remarks

Tuğrul Kurt, Asher Biemann, Ufuk Topkara (Conference Organizers)
Andrea Lehner-Hartmann (Dean of the Faculty of Catholic Theology)
Kurt Appel, Director (Research Center „Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society“)
Wolfgang Sobotka (Former Minister of the Interior and President of the National Council of Austria)

10:30 – 10:45 | Break

10:45 – 12:00 | Panel 1: Self-Criticism and Dialogue

Shlomo Zuckier: Holy Envy and Holy Sites: Zero Sum and Additive Models
Ephraim Meir: Self-Criticism in Martin Buber's 'I and Thou' and in Martin Nguyen's 'Modern Muslim Theology'
Moderator: **Alexa Altmann**

12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch

13:00 – 14:15 | Panel 2: Philosophical Approaches to Critique. Text Study

Jennifer Geddes: Hannah Arendt and critique
Elliot Niblock: Walter Benjamin and critique
Moderator: **Ufuk Topkara**

14:15 – 14:30 | Coffee break

14:30 – 15:45 | Panel 3: Sunni Discourses on Crisis and Critique

Frank Griffel: Sunni Islam's Crisis at the end of the 11th Century and the Formation of Post-Classical Islam
Mohammad Gharaibeh: Sunni Discourses on Critique and Self-Critique Across premodern and modern Periods
Moderator: **Serdar Kurnaz**

15:45 – 16:00 | Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:30 | Panel 4: Modern Philosophy, Crisis, and Interreligious Perspectives

Esma Ünsal: From Crisis to Critique: İsmail Hakkı İzmirli's New Kalām and Mustafa Şekip Tunç's Philosophy of Religion
Randi Rashkover: Continuity, Crisis and the Sciences: An Examination of the thought of Leo Strauss and Muhammad Iqbal
Cedric Cohen-Skalli: Abraham Serfati (1926-2010), Political and Religious Critique and Self-Criticism, in Morocco, Israel-Palestine, and France
Moderator: **Yemima Hadad**

17:30 – 18:00 | Break

18:00 – 19:30 | Keynote Address and Welcome

Welcome: **Ümit Vural** (President of the Islamic Religious Community in Austria, IGGÖ)
Introduction: **Ufuk Topkara**
Natan Sznajder: Crisis, Critique and Self-Critique: A Current Assessment from a Jewish Perspective: The views of Hannah Arendt and Albert Memmi.
Moderator: **Katharina Ivany**

Music: Seda & Aziz Erol

19:30 | Reception

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

Location: Department of Islamic-Theological Studies (Seminar Room i2/3
Ground Floor) University of Vienna, Schenkenstraße 8-10, 1010 Vienna



09:30 – 10:45 | Panel 1: Critique and Self-Critique in Cultural and Political Contexts

Yaniv Feller: Museums as Sites of Critique and Self-Critique
Esra Almas and Jack Kugelmass: Absent Critique: Jewish Museums in Istanbul and Athens
Moderator: **Asher Biemann**

10:45 – 11:00 | Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 | Panel 2: Political Theology and the Nation-State

Elias Sacks: Political Theology and the Jewish Jesus: The Case of Elijah Zvi Soloveitchik
Menahem Lorberbaum: Sovereignty or Soul: The Theological-Political Snare of the Nation State
Shira Billet: No Truthfulness without Humility: Jewish Philosophical Approaches to Self-Knowledge, Self-Examination, and Self-Criticism as Building Blocks of Knowledge
Moderator: **Charles Mathewes**

12:30 – 13:30 | Lunch Break

14:00 – 16:30 | City Tour Muslim / Jewish Vienna (Gernot Galib Stanfel / Elana Shapira)

16:30 – 17:00 | Coffee Break / Regroup

17:00 – 18:30 | Panel 3: Mysticism, Nonmaterial Politics, and Esoteric Traditions

Nicholas Judt: My Place is Placeless: Nonmaterial Politics Between the Murīdiyya of Senegal and Early Hasidism
Nermin Hatay: The Methodologies of Zahir-Batin Distinctions in Sufi Thought and Jewish Traditions
Arthur Schechter: "Critique and Moral Failure: Was the Rise of Shi'ism in Iran Ethically Legible?"
Moderator: **Tuğrul Kurt**

19:00 | Dinner for Conference Participants