

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

1st Edition of the 'Stanford-Hamburg Conferences on (Global) Legal History'

The question of the basis and origin of law received very different answers in the 16th to 20th centuries. Starting with medieval Christian natural law, there were various different theoretical approaches in the 17th and 18th centuries that were based on natural law and rationalism. This optimistic era, which led to the first modern codifications, was followed by a sharp departure in the late 19th and early 20th century towards positivism, which was based on epistemological skepticism. After the catastrophe of the Second World War, natural law thinking experienced a renaissance in Germany but the mood tilted towards a pragmatic positivism and a remarkable disinterest in the foundations of law at the end of the 20th century. In the common-law world, a variety of approaches were developed, pitting positivism against interpretivist approaches focused more immediately on moral and social consequences. The resulting differences between common law and, in particular, German legal thinking, is evident not least from the very different approaches taken to legal education.

This conference will shed light on the various factors that explain these developments in legal thought, as well as their consequences—looking both at the law in the books and the law in action. At a moment when the post-war foundations of liberal democratic regimes in the West are under severe challenge from both ends of the political spectrum, this conference provides a timely opportunity to revisit the core question of how we justify and explain legal authority.

ORGANIZERS

Prof. Dr. Matthias Armgardt

Nucleus Professor for Global Legal History, Private Law and Computational Legal Theory, University of Hamburg

Prof. Dr. Amalia D. Kessler

Lewis Talbot and Nadine Hearn Shelton Professor of International Legal Studies, Stanford Law School

Prof. Dr. Saskia Lettmaier

Professor for Private Law and Global Legal History with a focus on Common Law, University of Hamburg

MODERATORS

Monday

Prof. Dr. Werner Rieß (University of Hamburg)

Prof. Dr. Martin Sunnqvist (Lund University)

Prof. Dr. Jochen Bung (University of Hamburg)

Tuesday

Prof. Dr. Mattias Wendel (University of Hamburg)

Prof. Dr. Stefan Oeter (University of Hamburg)

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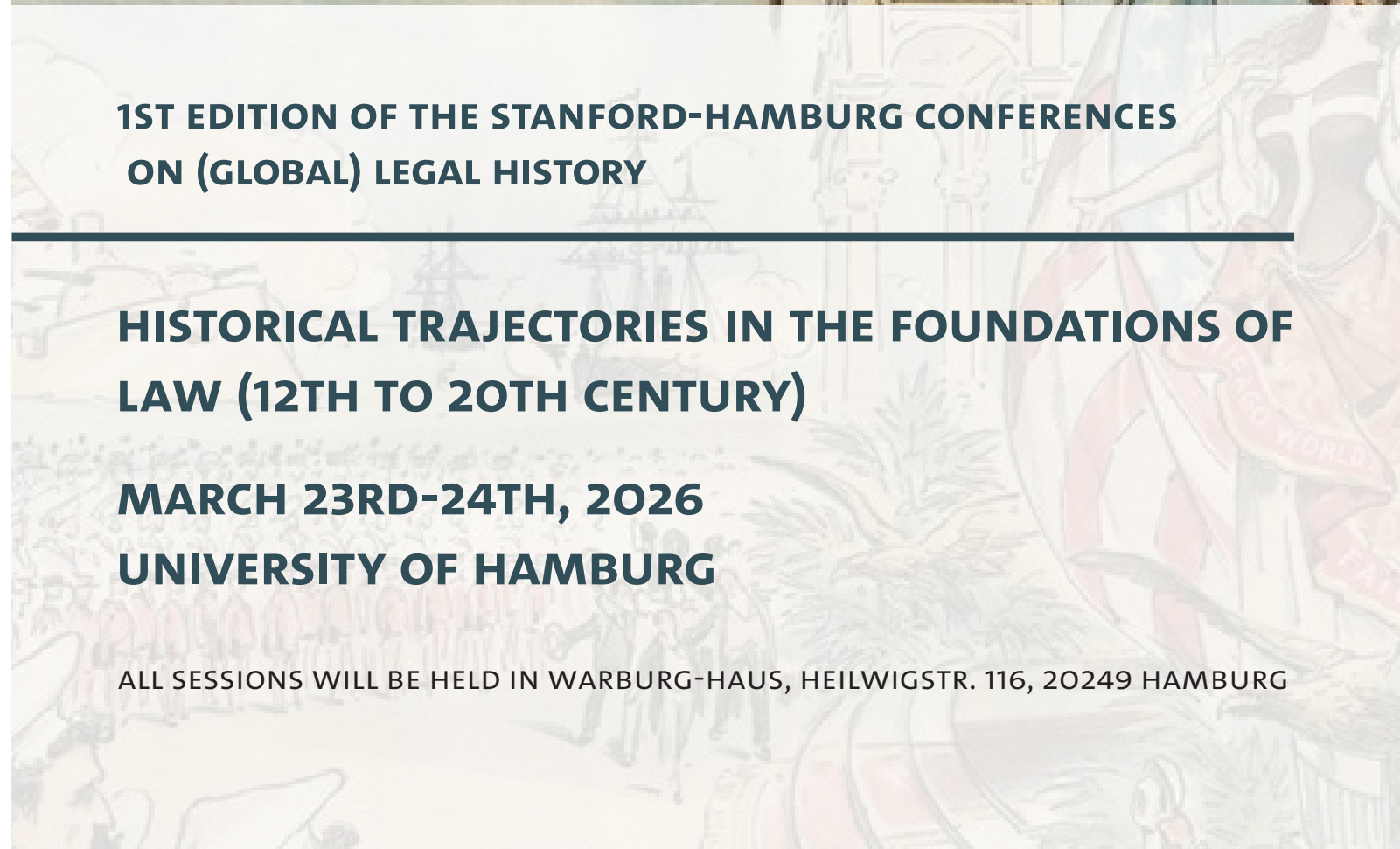
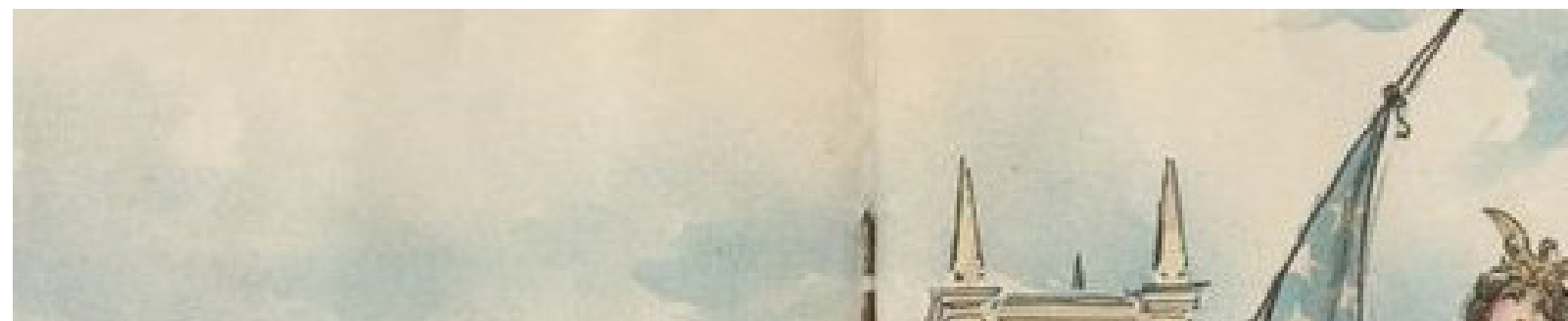
Stanford
LawSchool

1ST EDITION OF THE STANFORD-HAMBURG CONFERENCES ON (GLOBAL) LEGAL HISTORY

HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF LAW (12TH TO 20TH CENTURY)

MARCH 23RD-24TH, 2026
UNIVERSITY OF HAMBURG

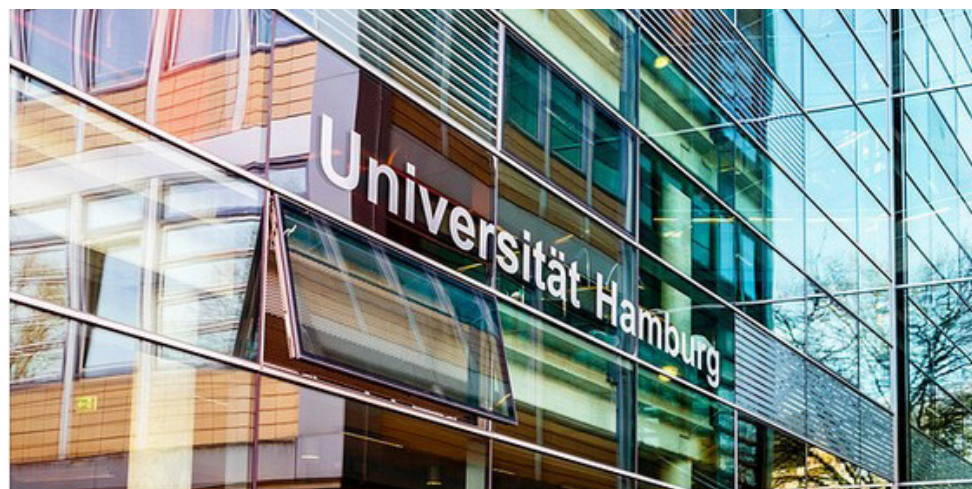
ALL SESSIONS WILL BE HELD IN WARBURG-HAUS, HEILWIGSTR. 116, 20249 HAMBURG



MONDAY, 23RD MARCH 2026

Warburg-Haus, Heilwigstr. 116, 20249 Hamburg

- 9:30 – 10:15** **OPENING OF CONFERENCE** (TOPIC: HUGO GROTIUS)
Prof. Dr. Tilman Reppen, Dean of Faculty of Law, University of Hamburg, Germany
- MIDDLE AGES** (MODERATOR: PROF. DR. WERNER RIEß)
- 10:15 – 11:15** **A TEXTUAL REPUBLIC: JURISTS, AUTHORITY, AND THE MAKING OF WESTERN LEGAL NORMATIVITY**
Prof. Dr. Emanuele Conte, Professor for Jurisprudence, Roma Tre University, Italy
- 11:15 – 11:45** **COFFEE BREAK**
- 11:45 – 12:45** **CANON LAW, SECULAR LAW OR JUST MEDIEVAL LAW? LAW IN THIRTEENTH CENTURY SCANDINAVIA**
Prof. Dr. Helle Vogt, Professor for Nordic Law and Legal Practice, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- 13:00 – 14:00** **LUNCH BREAK**
- EARLY MODERN** (MODERATOR: PROF. DR. MARTIN SUNNQVIST)
- 14:00 – 15:00** **LEIBNIZ'S CONCEPT OF NATURAL LAW**
Prof. Dr. Matthias Armgardt, Nucleus Professor for Global Legal History, Private Law and Computational Legal Theory, University of Hamburg, Germany
- 15:00 – 15:30** **COFFEE BREAK**
- 18TH TO 20TH CENTURIES** (MODERATOR: PROF. DR. JOCHEN BUNG)
- 15:30 – 16:30** **ENLIGHTENMENT REASONING AND THE LAW OF MARRIAGE: BRITAIN AND THE GERMAN LANDS IN THE 18TH CENTURY**
Prof. Dr. Saskia Lettmaier, Professor for Private Law and Global Legal History with a focus on Common Law, University of Hamburg, Germany
- 17:30** **DINNER ATRISTORANTE E PIZZERIA DI MARIO**
ROBERT-KOCH-STRASSE 36, 20249 HAMBURG



Faculty of Law (Rechtshaus), University of Hamburg

TUESDAY, 24TH MARCH 2026

Warburg-Haus, Heilwigstr. 116, 20249 Hamburg

- 19TH/20TH CENTURY** (MODERATOR: PROF. DR. MATTIAS WENDEL)
- 9:00 – 10:00** **LEGAL REALISM AND THE AMERICAN TURN TO ARBITRATION**
Prof. Dr. Amalia Kessler, Lewis Talbot and Nadine Hearn Shelton Professor of International Legal Studies, Stanford Law School, USA
- 10:00 – 10:30** **COFFEE BREAK**
- 10:30 – 11:30** **BETWEEN LAW AND DEMOCRACY: SHIFTING JUSTIFICATION FOR EXECUTIVE POWER**
Prof. Dr. Bernadette Meyler, Carl and Sheila Spaeth Professor of Law, Stanford Law School, USA
- 11:30 – 12:00** **COFFEE BREAK**
- 12:00 – 13:00** **THE GERMAN SONDERWEG IN DEFINING PROPERTY AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GERMAN WELFARE CAPITALISM**
Prof. Dr. Marietta Auer, Director of Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory, Germany
- 13:00 – 14:00** **LUNCH BREAK**
- (MODERATOR: PROF. DR. STEFAN OETER)
- 14:00 – 15:00** **GUSTAV RADBRUCH'S LEGAL PHILOSOPHY**
Prof Dr. Martin Borowski, Professor for Public Law, Constitutional Theory and Legal Philosophy, Heidelberg University, Germany
- 15:00 – 15:30** **COFFEE BREAK**
- 15:30 – 16:30** **KELSEN ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF LAW**
Prof. Dr. Pierluigi Chiassoni, Professor of Jurisprudence, University of Genoa, Italy
- 16:30 – 17:00** **COFFEE BREAK**
- 17:00 – 17:30** **FINAL REMARKS**



Conference room "Leseraum" at Warburg-Haus

PROGRAMME