

# Evidence, Argument, and Reason in an Era of »Post-Truth« Politics and Law

15 March 2018, 6:30 p.m.

**Sigmund Freud University**  
Freudplatz 1, 1020 Vienna, Austria

**Prof. Scott Brewer**  
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Introduction

**Jürgen Busch**  
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Comments

**Prof. Christoph Bezemek**  
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Professor Scott Brewer will present a lecture on the topic of the relation between evidence and reason in a world of »post truth« politics and law. The Enlightenment project sought to place reason at the center of understanding both the world and the human being. On this view, evidence was an essential tool of reasoned understanding – evidence from the world, from the study of humans’ political and social existence, and from introspection of the human mind itself. But this *faith in reason and reasoned evidence* became, and remains, deeply shaken. In part, this shaken faith was enabled by the work of three great Doubters: Nietzsche (who taught that we should be suspicious of our religious, moral, and political beliefs and actions), Freud (who taught that we should doubt our psychological motives), and Marx (who taught that we should doubt our economic and political motives). These three great types of doubt have received support and energy in what is now widely referred to as the era of »post-truth« politics. In a »post-truth«, or »non-truth«

political or legal space, canons that call for careful weighing of evidence and the testing of judgments about what is true are either overtly rejected and disparaged or silently disrespected and unheeded.

The shaken Enlightenment commitment to reason and evidence rests deeply on a commitment to *arguments* that reason with evidence presented. Professor Brewer will address the question, How does the close analysis of evidence and argument illuminate the problem of post-truth, or non-truth, politics and law? What are the criteria of good argument and evidence in politics and law? What can a focus on the nature of argument and evidence tell us about the viability of the Enlightenment commitment to using reason to create a prosperous, just, fair society?

Please register by 13 March 2018  
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