

# UKRAINE LECTURE SERIES

30 JUNE 2025 | 6 P. M.

SENATSSAAL HG 109  
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY VIADRINA  
GROßE SCHARNSTRASSE 59  
15230 FRANKFURT (ODER)

## Can Civil Peace extend beyond the Nation State?

EUROPE, NATO, AND THE U.S. IN THE  
SHADOW OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

*The keynote lecture is part of the conference, 'The Civil Sphere  
in Central and Eastern Europe' (30 June – 1 July 2025).*

*Full programme and registration:*



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### JEFFREY ALEXANDER (YALE UNIVERSITY)

The civil sphere, as a "pacific" project, aims – and often succeeds – in suppressing political violence within the boundaries of national societies. But can this logic of solidarity and shared aspiration extend beyond the nation-state? In a world shaped by global risks and a need for strategic cooperation, is the emergence of a global civil sphere possible?

This keynote lecture by Jeffrey C. Alexander, founder of cultural sociology and leading civil sphere theorist at Yale University, explores the idea of the global civil sphere by analysing historical and contemporary efforts to institutionalise civil peace on a transnational level. It examines the limited successes of the League of Nations and the United Nations, and contrasts them with the comparatively more effective institutions of NATO and the European Union – all of which were founded not only on geopolitical necessity but also on shared cultural trauma and collective aspirations forged in the aftermath of the world wars.

Nearly eighty years after the Second World War, Jeffrey C. Alexander examines how the fading memory of the war challenges the foundations of civil commitment and mutual understanding in Europe. In this context, the lecture turns to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and its far-reaching consequences for Europe, NATO, and transatlantic solidarity. It also addresses the destabilising influence of U.S. President Donald Trump, whose actions represent a retreat from the ideals of the civil sphere.

**Jeffrey C. Alexander** is the Lillian Chavenson Saden Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Yale University. Founder and co-Director Emeritus of Yale's Center for Cultural Sociology, he is co-editor of the *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. Among his recent publications are *Civil Repair* (2024), *Frontlash/Backlash* (2025), *The Civil Sphere in Canada* (2025, edited with Mervyn Horgan) and *The Indian Civil Sphere* (2025, edited with Suryakant Waghmore).

