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## ***Die Junge Akademie* launches interdisciplinary film series**

***Junge Akademie* members discuss the ways they work and share their views on academic freedom and its importance**

*Die Junge Akademie* has launched two of a four-part series of short films which address research routines and their disciplinary differences as well as the notion of academic freedom. The first two films focus on the fields of astrophysics and legal studies, and feature two members who discuss their individual academic backgrounds, elaborate on what research entails in their respective disciplines, and share their views on the meaning of academic freedom in their fields, the ways in which academic freedom can be restricted, and what it takes to ensure the freedom of academic research. The films provide an insight into each member's field of expertise, offer a glimpse of their day-to-day work, and illustrate the importance of academic freedom to this work.

Attacks on academic freedom can take many different forms, from restrictions on the freedom of movement to limiting access to research literature to the suppression of politically undesirable research questions. In Germany, academic research is occasionally subjected to a cost-benefit analysis, with theoretical research and so-called "exotic subjects" in particular forced to justify their relevance. However, academic freedom as such is never questioned. In his short film on dark matter, Fabian Schmidt, an astrophysicist at the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics (MPA) in Garching and a member of *Die Junge Akademie* since 2016, pleads that the public should regard academia with trust and goodwill: "We are motivated by the desire to learn more about nature. The more revolutionary the findings, the better. That's why we need the public's trust in the fact that we are truly searching for new knowledge and not simply trying to support a mainstream hypothesis." In the second film, legal expert Anuscheh Farahat, who teaches law at the Goethe University Frankfurt and conducts research at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, discusses academic freedom in legal scholarship and draws on an example taken from migration law. "Legal scholars play an important critical role. In order to fulfil this role, we must have the opportunity to conduct research free from financial limitations. Furthermore, unimpeded access to methods and texts is vital to our work."

The release of two more films – on sinology (Anna Lisa Ahlers) and art history (Nausikaä El-Mecky), respectively – is planned for the second half of 2018. The film series aims to increase public awareness for the different approaches to research and to point to the dangers inherent in restricting academic freedom. In order to make the project accessible to an even broader audience, the first two films have been submitted to the Fast Forward Science webvideo competition. The series is a collaboration between *Die Junge Akademie*, Antonia Schanze (videojournalist), and Christopher Kuß (media- and communication designer).



Film 1 “Astrophysics”: <https://youtu.be/iBn24fBLbW4>



Film 2 “Legal Studies”: <https://youtu.be/Ax2yRK6uBN8>

More details about the project, the researchers involved, and the new films are available [here](#).

Information on [Antonia Schanze](#)

Information on [Christopher Kuß](#)

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*Die Junge Akademie* was founded in 2000 as first academy for the new academic generation worldwide. The members of *Die Junge Akademie*, young academics and artists from German-speaking countries, are dedicated to interdisciplinary discourse and are active at the interfaces between academia and society. *Die Junge Akademie* is supported by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. The office is located in Berlin.

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