

**Call for Abstracts for Workshop on:  
Interdisciplinary Research in a Disciplinary World –  
Structural Conditions, Lived Experiences, and the Promise of  
Knowledge Beyond Boundaries**

5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of November, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna

The organization of knowledge production is itself historical. The firm boundaries separating academic disciplines – economics from sociology, natural from social sciences, quantitative from qualitative inquiry – are not eternal givens but relatively recent institutional settlements. It was only in the mid-20th century that disciplinary specialization – shared funding agencies, journals, conferences, career tracks – hardened into the structure we now take for granted. Today, that structure is under pressure. On the one hand, we live in an era of multiple crisis: the simultaneous convergence of ecological breakdown, economic precarity, geopolitical reorientation, democratic erosion, and public health shocks. The confluence of these crises – ecological, economic, social, and political – is not a novel condition but a structural feature of the current global order, demanding analytical approaches that can grasp their interconnection rather than treating them in isolation (Kelecha 2026). Because of the intertwined and complex nature of these crises, analysing issues only through the lens of one discipline often is not able to provide the necessary solutions. On the other hand, the epistemic response to this challenge – interdisciplinary research – runs headlong into structural resistance within the very academic system that is supposed to produce it. The call for interdisciplinarity grows louder even as the conditions enabling it grow more precarious.

When interdisciplinary collaboration succeeds, it produces outcomes that no single discipline alone could achieve (Bruine de Bruin et al. 2019). And yet the structural conditions remain deeply unfavorable: Although EU research and science policy provided incentives for interdisciplinary work, tensions emerge over resources, labour, and careers (Müller and Kaltenbrunner 2019). Interdisciplinary work is harder to fund and to publish, researchers who pursue it face early career impediments, and short-term funding structures incentivize quick solutions over the slower, integrative approaches such work requires (Berkes et al. 2024, Vladova et al. 2025).

The contradictions between the rhetoric of interdisciplinarity as a solution for the multiple crisis and the reality of its institutional conditions are not merely bureaucratic inconveniences. They intersect with deeper dynamics of knowledge production under academic capitalism: the financialization of universities, the precarization of academic careers, and the structural pressures that marginalize precisely those scholarly voices and epistemic ambitions most oriented toward complexity and critique.

As part of the interdisciplinary research project EIROC<sup>1</sup>, we have experienced both the intellectual richness and the structural obstacles of this kind of work firsthand. In this concluding workshop, we turn the lens on the meta-level: what does it mean to be an interdisciplinary scholar in a disciplinary world? Our aims are twofold: we invite practitioners' reports (*Praxisberichte*) from researchers across all disciplines sharing their own experiences of working interdisciplinarily: the frictions and rewards, the career costs and intellectual gains as well as theoretical and empirical contributions on the structural conditions and systemic challenges shaping interdisciplinary research, from higher education studies, science and technology studies, research policy, and all other related fields. Together, these contributions will allow us to build, in a grounded way, toward an understanding of what genuine structural support for interdisciplinary inquiry would look like.

### We welcome:

- Practitioners' reports of lived experience with interdisciplinary work – its rewards, frictions, and compromises
- Theoretical or empirical contributions on the conditions for and challenges of interdisciplinary research, from all disciplines and non-disciplines
- Contributions connecting interdisciplinarity to questions of academic labor, precarity, and the political economy of knowledge production

The workshop combines paper presentations and structured discussion rounds with interactive workshops designed to facilitate exchange across disciplines. The evening of the first day will close with a distinguished panel discussion on a question that is at once institutional and political: how can interdisciplinarity not merely be demanded, but structurally enabled.

**Submission of Abstracts:** 200 words; via e-mail to [theresa.hager@jku.at](mailto:theresa.hager@jku.at) , [laura.porak@jku.at](mailto:laura.porak@jku.at) and [susanna.azevedo@univie.ac.at](mailto:susanna.azevedo@univie.ac.at) ; **Deadline: 7. September 2026**

The workshop takes place on the 5th and 6th of November at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, and is part of the concluding event of the EIROC project. There are no workshop fees; however, unfortunately, accommodation and travel expenses cannot be covered by the workshop organizers.

Kelecha, M. (2026). Polycrisis and global inequality. *Global Sustainability*, 9, e5. <https://doi.org/10.1017/sus.2025.10040> Bruine de Bruin, W., & Morgan, M. G. (2019). Reflections on an interdisciplinary collaboration to inform public understanding of climate change, mitigation, and impacts. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(16), 7676–7683. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1803726115> Müller, R., & Kaltenbrunner, W. (2019). Re-disciplining academic careers? Interdisciplinary practice and career development in a Swedish environmental sciences research center. *Minerva*, 57, 479–499. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-019-09373-6> Berkes, E., Marion, M., Milojević, S., & Weinberg, B. A. (2024). Slow convergence: Career impediments to interdisciplinary biomedical research. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 121(32), e2402646121. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2402646121> Vladova, G., Haase, J., & Friesike, S. (2025). Why, with whom, and how to conduct interdisciplinary research? A review from a researcher's perspective. *Science and Public Policy*, 52(2), 165–180. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/scae070>

---

<sup>1</sup> EIROC or “Explicit and Implicit Rules of Competition” is an interdisciplinary research project funded by the Austrian Academy of Science. We study rules of competition in three specific contexts comprising the macro, the meso and the micro level: global inequality, the European Unions way to sustainability and the shortage of affordable housing (more information).