

**Conference on History and Metaphysics of the laws of nature
12-14 July, Budapest, Central European University**

Laws of nature (or scientific laws) are central to the sciences, especially to fundamental physics. They provide the explanatory backbone of the sciences by grounding explanations, causal relations, predictions and counterfactuals. They are intimately related to natures of time, space, and objective probability. While it is the task of scientists to discover what laws there are, it is the task of philosophers to provide accounts of what laws are, i.e. what makes a generalization or equation express a law? As Hawking puts it, "What breathes fire into the equations?" Addressing this question involves attention to both the history of philosophy and science and current work in the metaphysics and philosophy of science.

The goal of the conference is to bring together philosophers working both on the history of the concept of laws and on metaphysical issues concerning laws, causation, and chance to interact and exchange views. Conference participants will examine how the idea that nature is law governed came to prominence in physics (and other sciences) and how the origin and history of the concept of laws influences contemporary philosophical debates regarding the metaphysics of laws, chance, and causation.

The conference will be held immediately after a summer school at CEU on the same topics and will likely be attended by many of the participants in the course.

Confirmed Speakers/Commentators:

David Albert, Columbia University

Thomas Blanchard, Illinois Wesleyan University

Heather Demarest, University of Colorado

Mauro Dorato, University of Rome "*Technology and Theology as the main forces that shaped the modern conception of laws of nature*"

Alison Fernandes, Dublin University "*Three Accounts of Laws and Time*"

Mathias Fisch, Hannover University

Chris Weaver University of Illinois "*Feynman Diagrams as Causal Models: Causally Interpreting the Laws of QED and QCD*"

Mike Hicks, Cologne University

Andreas Hutterman, Cologne University "*How Laws Explain*"

Barry Loewer, Rutgers University "*Physics with a Humean Face*"

Elizabeth Miller, Yale University

Jessica Riskin, Stanford University Commentator at large

Howard Robinson, CEU

For more information contact Barry Loewer (loewer@rutgers.edu)