Cordially invites you to:

**Contradictions of the Welfare State Today: revisiting Claus Offe.**

a public lecture by

**John Clarke**
(The Open University, UK)

Thirty years ago, Claus Offe wrote a series of important reflections on the Welfare State, centred on the contradictions that were embedded at the heart of this political arrangement. Most famously, Offe argued that modern capitalism cannot live with the welfare state, but neither can it exist without it. In this presentation, I return to Offe’s work to review his claims about the contradictoriness of the welfare state, and to ask how they might help us to think about welfare states in the present. I suggest that Offe’s insistence on the centrality of contradictions is a vital conceptual move, and one that is increasingly absent in contemporary thinking about welfare states. I also consider whether capitalism – or at least some sections of capital – have been trying to invent ways of living without welfare states and what social and political consequences flow from those inventions. Finally, I consider whether Offe’s approach to thinking about social relations and social forces – and their translation into political forces – addresses the full range of contradictions associated with the welfare state: then and now.

**John Clarke** is a Professor of Social Policy at the Open University, UK and a recurrent Visiting Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, CEU. His work has explored political and cultural transformations of nation, state and welfare, with a particular interest in the role of managerialism and consumerism in the remaking of public services. As a postgraduate student, he was part of the group that wrote *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al., Macmillan, 1979), which examined the emergence of authoritarian populism and the exceptional state in 1970s Britain. His more recent work includes *Changing Welfare, Changing States* (Sage, 2004) and *Publics, Politics and Power* (with Janet Newman, Sage, 2009). He is currently involved in two research and writing collaborations, one on the theme of *Disputing Citizenship*; the other on *Policy as Translation*.

**Monday, March 04, 5:30 pm**

**Popper room**