The Office of the Provost cordially invites you to the second lecture in the Humanities and Social Sciences Lecture Series.

"Synergies and Critique in the Humanities and the Social Sciences" is the theme of the first of a series of lectures organized by the Provost's Office. The series explores points of engagement between the humanities and the social sciences, through lectures and seminars delivered by leading scholars working at the interface of the two areas. The series is part of a wider initiative at CEU to promote the humanities and their continued engagement with the social sciences.

“LUCRETIUS AND THE TOLERATION OF INTOLERABLE IDEAS”

delivered by

Stephen Greenblatt
Cogan University Professor of the Humanities, Harvard University

How do we ever take in concepts that are initially alien or offensive to us? This talk will be about why and how Lucretius' great poem, many of whose central ideas were utterly repugnant to the Christian culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe, made it through the period's tight web of censorship and violent repression. The Renaissance was not a tolerant age; it was the heir to the conviction that dangerous beliefs, like poisoned bread, should not be allowed to circulate. But it was also an age in love with beauty, and that love, as Greenblatt will show, turns out to have played a crucial role.

Chair: John Shattuck, President and Rector

Date: Friday, May 23, 2014
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Venue: CEU Auditorium, Nador u. 9

STEPHEN GREENBLATT is Cogan University Professor of the Humanities, Harvard University. Among Greenblatt’s named lecture series are the Adorno Lectures at Frankfurt, the University Lectures at Princeton, and the Clarendon Lectures at Oxford. Greenblatt has held visiting professorships at universities in Beijing, Kyoto, London, Paris, Florence, Torino, Trieste, and Bologna, as well as the Renaissance residency at the American Academy, Rome. He was president of the Modern Language Association of America and is a permanent fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study, Berlin. He has been elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Letters, and the American Philosophical Society.

Greenblatt’s honors include the 2012 Pulitzer Prize and the 2011 National Book Award for The Swerve, MLA’s James Russell Lowell Prize (twice), Harvard University's Cabot Fellowship, the Distinguished Humanist Award from the Mellon Foundation, Yale’s Wilbur Cross Medal, the William Shakespeare Award for Classical Theatre, the Erasmus Institute Prize, two Guggenheim Fellowships, and the Distinguished Teaching Award from the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of 12 books, including The Swerve: How the World Became Modern; Shakespeare’s Freedom; Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare; Hamlet in Purgatory; Marvelous Possessions; and Renaissance Self-fashioning. Greenblatt is General Editor of The Norton Anthology of English Literature and of The Norton Shakespeare, has edited seven collections of criticism, and is a founding editor of the journal Representations.

Reception to follow