

Professor Ruth Wodak, Hon DLitt

Tuesday 19 July 2022,

Vice-Chancellor

Our honorary graduand this afternoon is one of the foremost scholars in the field of discourse studies, linguistics and politics. I am delighted to introduce PROFESSOR RUTH WODAK.

Ruth Wodak is Emerita Distinguished Professor of Discourse Studies at Lancaster University and affiliated to the University of Vienna. A sociolinguist by training, Ruth is one of the founders of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a research programme that addresses the relationship between language and power, which was quickly embraced by social scientists across Europe and beyond. In 1991, she became Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Vienna and in 1996 was the first female academic to be awarded the Wittgenstein Prize for Elite Researchers. In 2004, she was appointed Distinguished Professor and Chair in Discourse Studies at Lancaster. Her work combines theoretical and empirical research, the analysis of large bodies of data and ethnography. Her immense published output includes over 10 monographs, 27 co-authored monographs, over 60 edited volumes and special issues, and ca 410 peer reviewed journal papers and book chapters; her work has been translated into many different languages, including Arabic, Japanese and Russian. In 2015 she published her award-winning study, *The Politics of Fear*, analysing the discourse, rhetoric and performance of populist, far-right politicians across Europe. Her latest book *Political Discourses from Post-War Austria to the Covid-19 Crisis*, co-authored with Markus Rheindorf, was published in March.

Ruth has applied her scholarship to contemporary social and political problems: she has stood and stands against the rise of xenophobia, anti-Semitism and racism and has shown how truth and lies become blurred in the populist rhetoric. She cares deeply that her work reaches the wider world – that she doesn't remain in 'the ivory tower'. She has made many high-profile public appearances such as the annual Blumenthal Lecture at the Jewish Museum in Berlin in 2019; and she has applied her research in developing as well as improving guidelines for and with teachers, doctors, and lawyers. When asked to discuss the need to use non-discriminatory and inclusive language with police officers in training, she did not shy away from this opportunity to confront everyday racism.

Ruth has held Visiting Professorships at universities in continental Europe, the USA and the UK. In 2008, she was awarded the Kerstin Hesselgren Chair of the Swedish Parliament at Örebro University. Other distinguished academic appointments include the Davis Chair for Interdisciplinary Studies at Georgetown (2014), and the Willy Brandt Chair at the University of Malmö (2017); in 2020, she was Senior Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. She has won many prestigious awards and prizes, including, for lifetime achievements, the *Lebenswerk Preis* from the Austrian Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Bruno Kreisky Prize (2012). She is an Honorary Member of the Senate of the University of Vienna, a member of the British Academy and the Academia Europaea.

Ruth has an ongoing relationship with the University of Warwick through research collaborations, development of curricula and impact work in Discourse Studies. These span a number of departments in Social Sciences, primarily Linguistics and Politics and International Studies Department. She is a rare example of a scholar who has brought paradigm shift in the discipline and has stayed at the forefront of developments in her fields. Today, we celebrate her scholarship.

But Ruth is not only an outstanding scholar. She has also always been very generous in sharing both her expertise and her time with students and colleagues. Her commitment and devotion are an inspiration and a reminder of our responsibility to create the conditions for young people to have a voice and make the world a better place.

We are delighted to warmly welcome her to Warwick.

Vice-Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, PROFESSOR RUTH WODAK.