**COURSE UNIT DESCRIPTION**

| Course unit title | Research field, branch, code | Faculty | Department, Institute |
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| **Critical Studies of Mediated Political Discourse** | Philology, Linguistics, H004 | Philology | Foreign Language Teaching and Research, Institute of Foreign Languages |

| Study cycle | 3rd (doctoral) |
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| Mode of delivery | ECTS credits | Type of the course unit | Language of instruction |
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| Contact (lectures, workshops, tutorials) | 8 | | English |
| Individual or in a group | | | |

| Annotation of the course content |
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| This doctoral course examines how political discourse is produced, circulated, recontextualised, legitimised, contested and transformed across contemporary media environments. It brings Critical Discourse Studies into dialogue with political discourse analysis, mediatisation research and scholarship on digital political communication. Course participants critically compare major traditions in Critical Discourse Studies and evaluate their explanatory and methodological potential for investigating mediated political discourse. The course addresses social actor representation, voice and agency, authority and legitimation, ideology and hegemony, political narratives and metaphor, populism and polarisation, journalistic recontextualisation, media and platform logics, conspiracy narratives, disinformation and epistemic authority.<br><br>The course is organised around participants' doctoral research. Participants formulate an original research problem, position it within relevant scholarly debates, develop an integrated conceptual and methodological framework, construct and justify a principled dataset, operationalise analytical categories and conduct a pilot analysis of authentic mediated political discourse. They critically evaluate methodological limitations, alternative interpretations, research ethics, researcher positionality and the evidential requirements of critical explanation. Seminar discussions, research workshops and peer feedback support participants in refining their theoretical choices, analytical procedures and interpretation of preliminary findings.<br><br>The course concludes with a doctoral research paper and seminar presentation and defence. The final paper should be suitable for further development into a dissertation chapter, conference paper or journal article. The course aims to enable doctoral researchers to:<br>• critically examine the relationships among discourse, political action, media institutions, digital platforms and social power;<br>• compare, evaluate and synthesise theoretical traditions in Critical Discourse Studies and mediated political discourse research;<br>• explain how political meanings and practices are shaped and transformed through mediation, mediatisation, recontextualisation and platformisation;<br>• design conceptually coherent, methodologically transparent and ethically responsible research into mediated political discourse;<br>• evaluate the evidential basis, explanatory potential and limitations of critical discourse research;<br>• produce, present and defend an original contribution to the study of mediated political discourse.<br>**Thematic structure:** 1) Critical inquiry into mediated political discourse; 2) Discourse, power, ideology and hegemony; 3) Mediation, mediatisation and platformed political communication; 4) Representation, voice, agency and legitimation; 5) Political narratives, metaphor and cross-genre recontextualisation; 6) Populism, polarisation and antagonistic politics; 7) Conspiracy narratives, |

disinformation and epistemic authority; 8) Doctoral research design, methodological integration and communication.

**Assessment:**

- **Conceptual framework 40% (approximately 1,500 to 2,000 words).** The submission should contain a clearly formulated research problem; focused research questions; critical synthesis of the selected theoretical approaches; definitions of the principal concepts and an explanation of the relationships among them; conceptual-framework diagram;
- **Methodological framework and defence 60% (approximately 3,000 to 4,000 words).** The submission should contain a transparent dataset and methodology; an original pilot analysis; textual or multimodal evidence; contextual explanation; critical discussion of explanatory reach and limitations; implications for the participant's dissertation or future publication. The research paper is presented and defended in a doctoral seminar.

Reading


Aslanidis, P. (2016). Is populism an ideology? A refutation and a new perspective. Political Studies, 64(1_suppl), 88–104.

Billig, M. (2003). Critical discourse analysis and the rhetoric of critique. In G. Weiss and R. Wodak (Eds.), *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity* (pp. 35–46). Palgrave Macmillan.

Caple, H., & Bednarek, M. (2016). Rethinking news values: What a discursive approach can tell us about the construction of news discourse and news photography. Journalism, 17(4), 435–455.

Chlup, R. (2023). Conspiracy narratives as a type of social myth. International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society.

Deschrijver, C. (2020). Mediatized communication and linguistic reflexivity in contemporary public and political life. In A. De Fina & A. Georgakopoulou (Eds.), The Cambridge Handbook of Discourse Studies (pp. 687–707). Cambridge University Press.

Douglas, K. M., et al. (2019). Understanding conspiracy theories. Political Psychology, 40, 3–35.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman.

Forchtner, B., & Zappettini, F. (2026). Introducing the *Handbook on Critical Discourse Studies*. In B. Forchtner & F. Zappettini (Eds.), *Handbook on Critical Discourse Studies*. Edward Elgar.

Foucault, M. (1972). The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language. Pantheon Books.

Hameleers, M. (2021). They are selling themselves out to the enemy! The content and effects of populist conspiracy theories. International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 33(1), 38–56.

Higgins, M. (2017). Mediatisation and political language. In R. Wodak & B. Forchtner (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Politics* (pp. 383–397). Routledge.

KhosraviNik, M. (Ed.). (2023). Social Media Critical Discourse Studies. Routledge.

Krzyżanowski, M., et al. (2023). Discourses and practices of the "New Normal": Towards an interdisciplinary research agenda on crisis and the normalization of anti- and post-democratic action. Journal of Language and Politics.

Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (2001). Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics (2nd ed.). Verso.

Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2023). How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Mazzoleni, G., & Schulz, W. (1999). "Mediatization" of politics: A challenge for democracy? *Political Communication, 16*(3), 247–261.

Mudde, C., & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2017). Populism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press.

Musolff, A. (2018). Nations as persons. In Bös et al. (Eds.), The Discursive Construction of Identities On- and Offline (pp. 249–266). John Benjamins.

Reyes, A. (2011). Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions. *Discourse & Society, 22*(6), 781–807.

Strömbäck, J. (2008). Four phases of mediatization: An analysis of the mediatization of politics. *The International Journal of Press/Politics, 13*(3), 228–246.

van Dijk, T. A. (1997). What is political discourse analysis? *Belgian Journal of Linguistics, 11*(1), 11–52.

van Dijk, T. A. (2011). Discourse and ideology. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (2nd ed., pp. 379–407). SAGE.

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| Van Hout, T., & Burger, P. (2017). Mediatization and the language of journalism. In O. García, N. Flores, & M. Spotti (Eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Language and Society (pp. 489–504). Oxford University Press. |
| van Leeuwen, T. (1996). The representation of social actors. In C. R. Caldas-Coulthard & M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 32–70). Routledge. |
| van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. Oxford University Press. |
| Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies* (3rd ed.). SAGE. |


| Lecturer | Degree | Main works in the research field published during the last five years |
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| Assoc. Prof. Dr Liudmila Arcimavičienė | Doctor of the Humanities | Arcimavičienė, L. (2027, in press). Geopolitical imaginaries in UN Security Council diplomatic discourse: Emotion, trauma and identity construction. In T. Jacobs and J. Zienkowski (Eds.), Discourse and Imaginaries: Analyzing Contingent Trajectories of Past, Present and Future Societies. Palgrave Macmillan. |
| | | Arcimavičienė, L. (2026, in press). Discourse strategies of social actor representation in U.S. media coverage of the post-Roe v. Wade abortion debate. Journal of Discourse Studies. |
| | | Arcimavičienė, L. (2025). Collective identity. In C. Gianolla, L. Mónico, M. M. Lopes and M. E. Indelicato (Eds.), Populisms and emotions glossary. https://unpop.ces.uc.pt/en/glossário |
| | | Arcimavičienė, L. (2025). Legitimisation. In C. Gianolla, L. Mónico, M. M. Lopes and M. E. Indelicato (Eds.), Populisms and emotions glossary. https://unpop.ces.uc.pt/en/glossário |
| | | Arcimavičienė, L. (2023). Leadership style by metaphor in crisis political discourse. Open Linguistics, 9(1), Article 20220251. https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2022-0251 |
| | | Arcimavičienė, L. (2022). Political leadership and gender during the COVID-19 pandemic: On the populist features of metaphor use. Journal of Contemporary Philology, 5(2), 23–44. https://doi.org/10.37834/JCP2252023a |

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| Approved by decision of Doctoral Committee (date, record No) October 9, 2026. Minutes of meeting No. 5.2.2 E-15600-KT-4122 |
| Chair of Doctoral Committee Prof. Dr Daiva Aliūkaitė |