
FEMINISMS IN A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE 2019

Shifting Realities – Media, Communication, Sociability

Programme & Abstracts

13th Postgraduate Course
Dubrovnik, IUC, May 20-24, 2019

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The 2019 IUC course “Shifting Realities – Media, Communication, Sociability” invited paper proposals that interrogate historical and contemporary moments of change that have in the past, and continue to be, notably marked by novel and/or changing forms of mediated communication and social networkings. We invite a conversation with participants on how “shifting realities” inform the production and capacities of new “sociabilities” and “ways of knowing”.

In particular, we seek to shed light on how patriarchal, authoritarian, and resurgent right-wing movements impact the norms and principles of women’s rights and feminist intellectual, activist, and artistic practices. We welcome presentations that engage how the promotion of illiberal democracies, conservative nationalisms, religious-based ideologies, and neoliberal economic rationalities give rise to “new” forms of misogynistic, racist, classist and anti-queer policies and pop/ulist cultures. The global shift in alignments of geopolitical powers, economic alliances, as well as social modes of communication, demand new frameworks of analysis that explore feminist strategies of “opposition” that encompass – but are not limited to – political, activist, artistic and intellectual movements and interventions. We strongly encourage researchers working with digital methods such as social media platforms and devices (examples might include visual, audio media, and network analysis), to engage with us in exploring these developing methods within the context of the long history of resistance by feminists who continue to critique and resist the imposed structures and abuses of patriarchal, heteronormative, and sovereign power. Finally, we encourage an engagement with how the chosen problematics impact and affect the feminist vision of society and the future of the earth, with its emphases on new creative practices of sociability and care for, and among, women.

The following thematic breakdown offer suggestions of what our collaborative discussions might include:

- Feminisms contextualized within the shifting realities both in the history of ideas, and in the pivotal moments of political and social change
 - The role of “old” and “new” forms of media in creating feminist social platforms
 - The politics of personhood in resistance activism
 - Art and artistic practices in (anti)feminist “cultural wars”
 - The silencing of feminists within the academy
 - Recent attacks on gender and women’s studies
 - The role of social media and network analysis in advancing our understanding of connected social movements
 - Social media threats and “mobbing” strategies
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- “New” populisms and the socialization of hate and xenophobia
 - Feminist ecologies/material eco-criticisms/environmental politics
 - Postcolonial feminisms and the communication of new forms of humanism(s)
 - New archives of feminist creativity
 - The intersecting politics of sex, race, and nation
 - Forms of “feminist hacking”.

COURSE PROGRAMME

Monday, May 20

Moderator: **Lada Čale Feldman** (Zagreb, Croatia)

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| 09.15–09.30 | Gathering of the participants at the IUC, Don Frana Bulića 4 |
| 09.30–09.40 | Short self-presentation by all participants |
| 09.40–09.50 | Nadia Jones-Gailani (CEU, Budapest): Introductory remarks |
| 09.50–10.45 | Renata Jambrešić Kirin & Sandra Prlenda (Zagreb, Croatia)
Youth, Hero(ine)s, and the Potentiality for Change in the Age of
Digital Sociability: Challenging Feminist Anxieties |
| 10.45–11.00 | <i>Discussion</i> |
| 11.00–11.30 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 11.30–12.15 | Senka Božić-Vrbančić (Uni Zadar, Croatia) ‘I am tired from all of
these feelings’: The Politics of Sentimentality in Croatia |
| 12.15–12.40 | <i>Discussion</i> |
| 12.40–17.00 | <i>Lunch break</i> |

Afternoon session

Moderator: **Natka Badurina** (Uni Udine, Italy)

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| 17.00–17.45 | Marta Verginella (Uni Ljubljana, Slovenia) Women from National
Margins in the Shadow of the Feminist Studies |
| 17.45–18.00 | <i>Discussion</i> |
| 18.00–18.30 | McKenna Marko (Uni Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA) Towards a
Female Continent: Memory and Resistance in Jewish Women’s
Narratives from Yugoslavia |
| 18.30–18.45 | <i>Discussion</i> |
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Tuesday, May 21

Moderator:.....**Eva D. Bahovec** (Uni Ljubljana, Slovenia)

- 10.00–10.45 **Erzsébet Barát** (CEU, Budapest) Dangerous Liaisons: Radical Conservative and Radical Progressive Discourses of ‘Gender’ in the Contemporary Hungarian Political Discourse
- 10.45–11.00 *Discussion*
- 11.00–11.30 *Coffee break*
- 11.30–12.15 **Maja Gergorić** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia) The Anti-gender Movement in Strategic Interaction: An Analysis of Croatia and Portugal
- 12.15–12.40 *Discussion*
- 12.40–17.00 *Lunch break*

Afternoon session

Moderator:.....**Sandra Prlenda** (Zagreb, Croatia)

- 17.00–17.30 **Mirela Dakić** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia) Our Confrontation with “Gender Ideology”: the Visibility of Feminist Perspective
- 17.30–18.00 **Iva Rogulja Praštalo** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia) Woman and Feminine on the Web – Comparative Analysis of Croatian Web Portals *Žena vrsna*, *Zadovoljna.hr* and *Vox Feminae*
- 18.00–18.30 *Discussion*
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Wednesday, May 22

Moderator:.....**Silvana Carotenuto** (Uni 'L'Orientale', Naples, Italy)

09.15–10.00 **Nataša Govedić** (ADU, Zagreb, Croatia) Maternalism on Screen: Fantasy and/as Real Feminist Motherhood in *Gilmore Girls* and *Game of Thrones*

10.00–10.30 **Tina Šmalcelj** (Uni Zagreb & Uni Sarajevo, BiH) What If God Really Is a Woman? Feminism Faces Religion in *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunija*

10.30–11.00 *Discussion*

11.00–11.30 *Coffee break*

11.30–12.15 **Margareta Đorđić & Andrea Svlarić** (Uni Zagreb, Croatia) Feminism in the Tetralogy *L'amica geniale* and in its TV Adaptation

12.15–12.50 **Isabella Petrone** ("Pezzullo" High School, Cosenza, Italy) The Search for the Self in Feminist Photography

12.50–13.20 *Discussion*

Free afternoon

Thursday, May 23

Moderator: **Erzsébet Barát** (CEU, Budapest)

- 09.15–10.00 **Nadia Jones-Gailani** (CEU, Budapest) Phenomenologies of “Other” Along the Balkan Route: Hungarian Humanitarian Responses in Historical Perspective
- 10.00–10.30 **Aleksandra Reczuch** (PAN, Warsaw, Poland) Women – “the People”. The Role of Women-Centered Politics in the Times of Illiberal Democracy in Poland
- 10.30–11.00 *Discussion*
- 11.00–11.30 *Coffee break*
- 11.30–12.00 **Didem Salgam** (CEU Budapest & Turkey) How to Understand “Sexting” in Neoconservative (Islamic) Authoritarian Regimes: The Context of “New” Turkey
- 12.00–12.30 *Discussion*
- 12.30–17.00 *Lunch break*

Afternoon session

Moderator: **Renata Jambrešić Kirin** (Zagreb, Croatia)

- 17.00–17.30 **Anna Sedysheva** (PAN, Warsaw, Poland) The Russian Language Campaign #ЯнеБоюсьСказать (#IamNotScaredToSpeak) of 2016 and #MeToo: How the Former Was Reinforced by the Latter
- 17.30–18.00 **Siran Hovhannisyan** (Uni Yerevan, Armenia) Feminist Spaces After the Revolution: What Do We Have and How We Fight for It?
- 18.00–18.30 *Discussion*
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Friday, May 24

Moderator:.....**Nadia Jones-Gailani** (CEU, Budapest)

- 09.30–10.15 **Eva D. Bahovec** (Uni Ljubljana, Slovenia) Beauvoir, Benveniste, Balibar and 'We': Feminism between Theory of Enunciation, Pronominal Politics and Fearless Speech
- 10.15–10.30 *Discussion*
- 10.30–11.15 **Silvana Carotenuto** (Uni 'L'Orientale', Naples, Italy) The 'Technè of Nature': The Abyss of Carno-phallo-logo-centrism in *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang
- 11.15–11.30 *Discussion*
- 11.30–11.45 *Break*
- 11.45–12.30 Course evaluation
- Departure*
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ABSTRACTS

(Participants in alphabetical order)

Eva D. Bahovec

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Beauvoir, Benveniste, Balibar and 'We': Feminism between Theory of Enunciation, Pronominal Politics and Fearless Speech

The essay presents a critique of philosophy, history and feminism from the point of view of recent theoretical developments and actual political practices in Europe and in the region. In this context, it proposes Simone de Beauvoir's writing as the one that brings about a new orientation, related to her own position of enunciation at the very beginning of *The Second Sex*. Starting from Beauvoir's emancipatory enunciation strategies, the essay proceeds through Benveniste's elucidation of 'subjectivity in language' to Balibar's reading of Derrida's pronominal politics and Foucault's fearless speech as an extremely important strategy of resistance to power. The conclusion describes new developments that all gravitate around a common blind spot: that of sexual difference as a useful category of historical and philosophical analysis and of emancipatory political engagements. The case studies, presented at the end of the essay, range from cases of the new right in Europe, and the literary war discourses in the former Yugoslavia to the feminist performative pedagogies as developed recently in Slovenia. New theoretical insights and the related practical cases are discussed in the context of a plea for a new feminist politics reaching beyond any kind of identity politics and away from the supposedly feminist thinking of our time.

Erzsébet Barát

Department of Gender Studies, Central European University Budapest, Hungary

**Dangerous Liaisons: Radical Conservative and Radical Progressive Discourses
of 'Gender' in the Contemporary Hungarian Political Discourse**

In my talk I look at the current Hungarian official political discourse in which the rights of women, sexual minorities, and people with non-conforming gender identities as well as feminist academics are sacrificed as part of a radical right-wing populism where hate-speech has become the daily routine of communication. The stigmatization of 'gender' as 'ideology' is a central element of this discourse in Hungary since 2010, the beginning of the current FIDESZ-government. I will demonstrate that 'populism' necessarily must involve differential discourses of stigmatization. The stigma of 'gender-ideology', resulting in the ban of the MA in Gender Studies on October 12, 2018, is intertwined across three junctures of hate around the tropes of the migrant, the intellectual, and the gender-ideologue. Within the progressive left, to challenge this stigmatization, there is a most counter-productive internal debate around the 'undesirable ambiguity' of the meaning of the concept of gender. The self-identifying 'radical feminists' argue for establishing an unequivocal meaning of the category that should function as a critical category addressing 'structural'(economic, i.e. capitalist) and as such real forms of women's domination against and over cultural, 'identity-based' political struggles for (legal) recognition (of transgender people) allegedly legitimized by queer theory. I agree that in the face of the radical right's attack on feminist gender politics we need to revisit our own positions – but not in terms of this dangerous binary. To reclaim gender as the key critical category of analysis for exposing unequal relations of power – within feminist scholarship and activism as well – we must start with facing the charge of 'ideology', a telling silence not only in Hungary but in my opinion in the studies discussing the global spread of the discrediting of gender as 'ideology' (genderism) as well. We should try to re-center our debates on the concept of practice and historical contingency and the place of signification (culture) in it.

Senka Božić-Vrbančić
University of Zadar, Croatia

‘I am tired from all of these feelings’: The Politics of Sentimentality in Croatia

This talk explores ‘the politics of sentimentality’ in Croatia with specific reference to the documentary film *Sick*, which represents the narrative of a young lesbian woman, Ana, who was confined in a psychiatric hospital and ‘treated’ for her homosexuality. I consider the ways our most intimate emotional relationships and states, such as pain and suffering, articulate with a wider context of familial citizenship and critically examine the political limits of compassion within the sentimentalised public sphere. In this analysis, I problematize the film’s emotional logic and examine the role that politics of sentimentality plays in neutralising the film’s political critique of the state apparatuses (psychiatry and family) that enforce violence and heterosexual norms.

Silvana Carotenuto

Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale, Italy

**The 'Technè of Nature': The Abyss of Carno-phallo-logo-centrism
in *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang**

My intervention would like to read the extraordinary novel *The Vegetarian* by South-Korean writer Han Kang (2007; 2015). In its three sections – 'The Vegetarian'; 'Mongolian Mark', and 'Flaming Trees' – the female protagonist exposes her refusal to eat animal meat to the authoritarian trinity of 'man-society and family'; she then proves her vegetal otherness in the relation established with her brother-in-law, the artist who wants to paint her body with his drawings of flowers; she finally escapes her mental-medical imprisonment turning into a 'tree' (and sharing such difference in commonality with her sister). In my view the three sections of the novel propose an abyssal attack on carno-phallo-logo centrism, proving exemplary of some nodal feminist concerns: the critique of the Anthropocene by Donna Haraway, the invention of a new feminist phenomenology in the work of Astrida Neimanis, the recent propositions of écriture feminine offered by Luce Irigaray (in dialogue with Michael Marder). *Staying with the Trouble* (2016); *Bodies of Water* (2017); *Through Vegetal Being* (2016): *The Vegetarian* stays with the trouble of the damaged earth with her refusal of eating the animal other; the fluidity of her body invents a new materiality of desire drawn against the phallic appropriation of her difference; she finally goes through her arboreal being in order to witness (with her sister) the germinality of/ connection with/relationality as Nature, beyond and in dissemination of the patriarchal logos of assimilation and domestication.

Biology in Haraway, thinking in Neimanis, philosophy in Irigaray: in *The Vegetarian* it is the technè of 'writing' that creates the 'event' – of patriarchal critique, sexual difference, and relationality in sisterhood – which is offered to the future of ecological, environmental, post-human feminism. My reading (another form of technè) will focus on the italics of the protagonist's dreams; on the anthropopathic nature of her flowers, and on the arboreal grafting she creates with her other (sister), in order to demonstrate some of the ways in which writing offers a privileged means of translating theory into feminist imagination, art and creation

Mirela Dakić

PhD candidate (Doctoral Study Programme in Literature, Theatre and Performing Arts, Film, Musicology and Culture), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Our Confrontation with “Gender Ideology”: the Visibility of Feminist Perspective

Although the term “gender ideology” is used in the last couple of years in western societies, as a referent formed by conservative and right-wing groups to mark the specific field of thought engaged with gender and sexual equalities and rights, in Croatia its appearance became relatively frequent just recently – regarding the ratification of the Istanbul convention in 2018; the same year Judith Butler, one of the most important contemporary feminist theorists, often recognized as the “author” of “gender ideology” by the mentioned groups, visited Rijeka and gave interviews concerning the subject. Provoked with the number and vagueness of uses of “gender ideology” in the public space, but also aware of the need for further development of women’s and gender studies in our specific context (as one of the institutional targets of the attacks), this paper will offer a critical analysis of uses of the term in the media, focusing on the way in which various daily newspapers and portals transfer statements of different sides included into dissemination of the term, with the accent on the part and visibility of feminist critical approach to the subject. To emphasize critical perspectives, the paper will also provide an insight into contents available on feminist and LGBT portals (such as *Libela*, *Crol*, *Vox feminae* etc.) regarding the topic – from daily news to interviews or literary and theoretical texts, and discuss their role in creating the public opinion and reactions on the conservative attacks on gender and sexual freedoms conducted under the mark of “gender ideology”.

Margareta Dordić and Andrea Svilarić

PhD candidates (Doctoral Study Programme in Literature, Theatre and Performing Arts, Film, Musicology and Culture), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Feminism in the Tetralogy *L'amica geniale* and in its TV Adaptation

In our research we would analyze the tetralogy *L'amica geniale* by the Italian writer Elena Ferrante as well as the first season of the novel's TV adaptation (*My Brilliant Friend*, 2018). The story is set in 1950s Naples, but the richness of the novel's many layers come from exposing the same problems many women face to this day: the right to education, arranged marriages, disregarding man-made rules, the consequences of such disobedience, women's resistance to injustice and inequity, and rape and growing up in a patriarchal society in southern Italy. This harsh reality constrains the childhood and development of the main female characters. The world of adults is seen through the eyes of two girls. In that world, the dominant figure is always male, while it is the duty of the woman to be obedient and subservient. Furthermore, since the novel follows the same protagonists from the 1950s, roughly the time when the issue of women's position in society, that will reach its pinnacle in 1968, slowly begins to formulate. This novel is important because it offers a glimpse into the lives of women trying to overcome the limits conditioned by gender. Ferrante's female characters are modeled according to the rules that enable the creation of the postfeminist woman. This postfeminist woman needs visibility and she tries to achieve it through the deconstruction of patriarchal rules, the creation of female solidarity and female friendship, which stands against stereotypes and imposed behavioral patterns. At the same time, Ferrante's characters attempt to become strong female individuals, and engage in the political arena that is still reserved mostly for men).

We will compare the novel against the political and cultural situation in Italy at that time, considering, for example, the fact that divorce in Italy became legal only in 1970. In addition, since Elena Ferrante is a pseudonym and it is unknown if the real author is a man or a woman, we would try to detect the presence or absence of the female discourse elements.

When it comes to the film analysis of the TV adaptation, we will pay particular attention to the elements taken from the novel that are crucial in the TV series. Furthermore, we would analyze the techniques used in filming (for example, editing, frames, shots) to understand the way in which the female world is represented in this TV series, especially considering the fact the first season was directed by a man.

Even though there are many studies about feminism in various art expressions, we believe that this paper is relevant because it connects film making to literature, it diachronically analyses a contemporary novel and TV series and, at the same time, connects them to our reality where women are still subordinated *vis a vis* male principles.

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Maja Gergorić

MA in Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

Research Assistant at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia

**The Anti-gender Movement in Strategic Interaction:
An Analysis of Croatia and Portugal**

This paper investigates the movement-counter movement dynamics of feminist and anti-gender movements in Croatia and Portugal as part of the wider topic of radical right movement mobilization which has been growing steadily in the last decade. Current analyses of opposing movements' dynamics, especially with regard to feminist movements are scarce. Furthermore, existing literature on anti-gender movements does not study their trajectories or their success in relation to other movements.

Taking this on board, this paper undertakes the analysis of the movement – counter movement dynamic in the contemporary contexts of Croatia and Portugal. This paired comparison assumes that the selected cases share structural conditions and historical legacies which set the parameters for political action. Importantly for this analysis, the two cases differ in regard to anti-gender movement's success. In Portugal the movement has so far not had significant impact on public policy outcomes, and no backsliding in human rights. In contrast to that, in Croatia the movement has achieved an array of legislative and policy success. This paper assumes that the particular evolving dynamic between the anti-gender and feminist movement help explain the success of anti-gender movements - and their lack thereof - between Croatia and Portugal. Relying on protest event data (collected through the project “Disobedient Democracy: A Comparative Analysis of Contentious Politics in the European Semi-periphery”, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation), this paper analyses the dynamics between these movements in Croatia and Portugal in the period between 2000 and 2017. The PEA dataset identifies numerous aspects of protest activity that enable an analysis of movement-counter movement dynamics. Therefore, this comparative analysis of factors explaining anti-gender movement success may substantially advance our understanding of the movement's evolution in strategic interaction with feminist movements in contemporary European context.

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Nataša Govedić

Academy of Dramatic Art, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Maternalism on Screen: Fantasy and/as Real Feminist Motherhood in *Gilmore Girls* and *Game of Thrones*

The fantasy part of acclaimed TV series like “GILMORE GIRLS” or HBO’s globally popular “GAME OF THRONES” does not revolve around supernatural beings who wage wars against humans or around the small utopian community where everyone is a freak. The fantasy innovation in both TV narratives has a lot to do with the way we encounter the *familiar* terrain of contested family relations. For instance, Lorelai Gilmore and Rory Gilmore are not in perpetual psychoanalytical conflict. They are not cold and distanced, and they are certainly not immersed in each other in a way that diminishes their personal autonomy. Although they manage to have their own separate selves and lives, their own friends and partners, they cooperate and learn from each other a lot, especially when they disagree on something. We recognize something liberating in the mere fact that characters in the series – like the very TV format of serialized narration in which mother/daughter relationship is presented – builds continuity of time and trust in the human bond that extends beyond social stereotypes. This dimension is not „fantasy“; it is real for many viewers. In “GAME OF THRONES”, set deep within the patriarchal universe of feudal houses as both submissive and rebellious royal subjects, mothers are very different from the domestic ideal of stay-at-home housewives: they are fierce warriors, capable of abandoning their home and children for strategic reasons (Catelyn Stark) or using the children they conceived through incestuous union to further their political goals (Cersei Lannister). They can be overprotective (Lysa Tully) or consider dragons as their true children (Daenerys Targaryen). Mothering the dragons and mothering the motherless children in “GAME OF THRONES” challenges the conservative ideologies of passive and sacrificial biological mothering, making it fruitful for feminist research.

I will argue that the feminist model for both TV series is in fact very old one, taken from ancient Greek mythology, and also that the mythological truth has many ways to intersect with the real-life experience of contemporary audiences.

Siran Hovhannisyan

Center for Gender and Leadership Studies, Yerevan State University, Armenia

Feminist Spaces After the Revolution: What Do We Have and How We Fight for It?

The Revolution in Armenia in 2018 was meant to be dedicated to “love and solidarity” and inclusion. Unfortunately, some of the participants are still in the margins of the post-revolutionary Armenia: their voices are barely heard and the spaces they have occupied are still to be fought for. One reason for this is the nature of the revolution itself that first used the women-centered and open-minded rhetoric, and which slowly changes into more of a gender-blind one. Another reason is the constant backlash against and rejection of feminist ideas, feminist identity and feminists themselves. How do feminists see themselves in relation to the neo-liberal policies of the new Government? What are the challenges for the feminist movement in Armenia (in terms of shrinking spaces especially)? I argue that there are at least two different sets of feminist realities in terms of change-making and the input in these changes. Some feminists believe that they are actors in these changing processes, and some do not see any way to fight against the new political realities as well. These and other related points will be discussed during the presentation. My presentation will be based on formal and informal interviews with feminists and gender studies researchers in Armenia and on the analysis of these combined reflections. I will also show examples of how specific actors - such as the Church, national initiatives, and the media - maintain an intolerant climate in the Armenian society.

Renata Jambrešić Kirin

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, Croatia

Sandra Prlenda

PhD candidate in Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary
Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb, Croatia

**Youth, hero(ine)s, and the potentiality for change in the age of digital sociability:
challenging feminist anxieties**

The question of how digital media is shaping communication and sociability among young people as 'digital natives' has provoked many academic and popular debates, most of them connected with the issues of identity, body, new literacy, interactivity and participatory culture, critical thinking and communicational skills, isolation and addiction, intergenerational dialogue, political orientation/abstention, cultural consumption and production, subversion and appropriation, the nature of childhood in the Global North and the Global South, etc. From feminist perspective, most attention has been paid to the contested terrain of girlhood, sexuality and 'sexualisation', to the queries whether and how the Internet reinforces and subverts heteronormativity, race and class divisions, as well as amplifies moral panics typical for the Western middle class. Our preliminary feminist inquiry is focused on the cultural models of representing hero(ine)s in the digital age, particularly those who like Chelsea Manning and Greta Thunberg combine transgressive identities with the charisma of true fighters who would challenge the status quo and solve the real problems of the world. Our hypothesis is that sexual transgression, or more precisely the freedom from sex difference, is equally part of the youth cyber-sociability as well as a part of the cultural script constructing the active heroines in (oral) narratives throughout the world.

With the stress on the youth as a key formative moment, we will continue that analysis by reflecting on contemporary digital communicational practices and technology's "uncontrollable opportunities" (R. Williams) that help young people to express their dissatisfaction, rebellion and resistance to social norms and cultural scripts trying to turn them into heteronormative, efficient, obedient citizens and passive consumers. With some critical insight into cultural wars in the context of digital sociability, especially those around gendered cultural models of agency, we will demonstrate that the digital space is both the cultural battlefield, and the empowering place for youth's civic education, where real life politics, creative freedoms, politics of representation, gender/race/class/ability/age hierarchies and privileges, all feminist issues, are daily challenged. Not an easy task for anyone, be it young people or feminist scholars.

Nadia Jones-Gailani

Department of Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

Phenomenologies of “Other” Along the Balkan Route: Hungarian Humanitarian Responses in Historical Perspective

This paper will explore key events in the ‘new migration crisis’ in Hungary such as the clash between border security and refugees at Röszke (2015) that has shifted the dominant discourse in the Hungarian media from a humanitarian to a securitization framework. As Hungary secured its razor-wire fence, refugees in Röszke were trapped without assistance which led to clashes with border guards, and as the turmoil unfolded, images of violent and aggressive refugees were used to discredit the humanitarian narrative. An aggressive government anti-refugee campaign (July 2014 to March 2016) dominated any reports of humanitarian aid and assistance, as was made particularly clear based on the coverage of key events such as the ‘refugee march’ of 2015. The media coverage dismantled a long history and understanding between political actors in the region of a shared role in humanitarian aid. Part of the phenomenological approach to presenting the crisis to Hungarians as an ‘invading’ group has been through the systematic replacing of Hungarian terms such as ‘refugee’ (menekült) with the term ‘migrant’ (migráns) which is a term without any roots in the Hungarian language. The criminalization of bodies through the use of terms like ‘illegal migrant’ or ‘illegal trespasser’ has evolved into a threat to national security of ‘Muslim invasion’. Furthermore, and as the paper will argue, the government campaign has evolved to accommodate the shifting gender, age and socioeconomic breakdown of the migrants themselves, who were increasingly larger groups of women and children from primarily Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

McKenna Marko

PhD candidate in Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor, USA

**Towards a Female Continent: Memory and Resistance in Jewish Women's
Narratives from Yugoslavia**

My paper proposal suggests a reexamination of the relationship between Jewish feminist figures in Yugoslavia and resistance against fear. In particular, I want to look at the role Jewish women had in the dissemination of anti-fascist materials leading up to and during WWII, such as the newspaper "Žena danas" which linked the fight for women's rights to the fight against fascism, as well as the ways in which major figures, like Ženi Lebl, who provided testimony on the Sajmište camp and Goli Otok, contributed to the continued struggles against regimes of fear and persecution in the post-war years. The main goal of this paper and my participation in this course will be to investigate how iterations of truth in the face of power, often from feminist platforms, were linked to transnational feminist resistance to Fascism and other forms of oppression. Their truths circulated in newspapers, memoirs as well as film, and found resonance across borders to form a transnational feminist public in the face of systematic silencing. The reaction of Jewish women in the face of fear has been an under-examined one in the scholarship surrounding women's roles in Yugoslavia thus far. However, my goal will be to inscribe further implications that attach to stories of oppression beyond the Yugoslav case, such as Jewish feminist's challenge to anti-Semitic rhetoric of the contemporary right-wing parties in Europe and acts of violence occurring globally.

Isabella Petrone

“Pezzullo” High School, Cosenza, Italy

The Search for the Self in Feminist Photography

Stereotypical representations of women tend to show them as objects and as dismembered bodies, unable to act and passively accepting their own fate. On the other hand, the purpose of this paper is to show oppositional images in photography that interpret women from a woman's perspective. I shall focus on one particular photographer, Ana Mendieta, whose works deal with two recurring themes: feminine identity and the relation between female body and nature. This artist writes herself in her photographs, thus enacting what Helene Cixous suggests in her essay “The Laugh of the Medusa”: a woman “must write about women and bring women to writing. [...] She must put herself into the text” (p. 347). As a consequence, in her pictures the viewer is faced with the presence (and intent) of two photographers, one as the taker of the image, and the other as the subject. To underscore that her work is radical and political art – that it has the potential to transform notions about femininity – in this paper the feminist theories of subjectivity, essentialism, performativity, and spectatorship will be used. Despite many women's resigned acceptance of their imprisoning condition, this ‘gender warrior’ manages to find ways to beat the system, by showing what a woman can do with a camera. Indeed, Ana Mendieta's long-term goal is to create photographs that cause the viewer to consciously evaluate his/her social and moral parameters. Producing her works has allowed her to engage in a discourse with topics that challenge our cultural ethics. They oppose the schizophrenic effort to identify women at all costs, by underlining that women are human beings rather than passive actresses playing a role that others have assigned to them, thus reaching the conclusion that there is no such thing as a female identity but many identities, all valuable and beautiful in themselves.

Aleksandra Reczuch

PhD candidate, Graduate School for Social Research, Poland

Women – “the People”. The Role of Women-Centered Politics in the Times of Illiberal Democracy in Poland

Poland is currently facing such a tension between the growing role of the participation and deliberation as a process through which policies are discussed (especially on the local level) and authoritarian or anti-democratic backsliding - the rule of the authoritarian, populist party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) that is presenting itself as the voice of “the People”. This autumn Poland have gone through the local electoral campaign, which was a first campaign after several protests organised by different actors (Black Protests, Committee of the Defence of the Democracy, Free Courts, Białowieża Forest etc.), though the overall support for the ruling party did not decreased, a new political trend might be seen – the presence of the local activists (seen also in 2014 elections in a form of urban civic movements) and protest leaders in the local elections. This corresponds with trends observed in other parts of the world: Baldez in her work on women’s movements points out that the emergence of women’s protest relates to the *exclusion within the [political] opposition* (2003: 258); emergence of female based political groups (civic committees during last local elections) might be subsequent step; creating own group representation, resembling the way popular movements resulted as political parties (e.g. Tormey/Feenstra on 15M in Spain, 2015).

The proposed paper aims to explore the narrations used by Marta Lempart, one of the leaders of nationwide women’s strike during the local electoral campaign as an example of new post-political discourse described by Swyngedouw.

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Woman and Feminine on the Web – Comparative Analysis of Croatian Web Portals *Žena vrsna*, *Zadovoljna.hr* and *Vox Feminae*

Ever since its beginning in the late nineteenth century, the feminist movement has always depended on the support of the media, precisely on the mass media's ability to inform, inspire and then empower the large number of women all over the world. Nevertheless, this collaboration has not always been as fruitful as it may seem. While some mass media have been supportive of feminist ideas, the others have used its influence to undermine and demean idea of gender equality, picturing feminists as women who belittle and demonize men and are altogether misandrists. However, the shift from mass media to new media, such as social networks and the Web, has liberated the media space blurring the line between the producer and a consumer of media content. In other words, the power to form public opinion has finally been entrusted to those who have earlier been silenced and marginalised; amongst others – women. This presentation will focus on the three Croatian web portals (and accompanying Facebook pages) primarily aimed at female readers – neoconservative catholic portal *Žena vrsna* (Fine/Capable Woman), consumerist and superficial *Zadovoljna.hr* (in loose translation: Satisfied Woman) and feminist portal *Vox Feminae*. By analysing content of the three web portals, as well as the number of “followers”, “likes” and “shares” of particular articles, we will try to draw conclusions about the prevailing social climate concerning gender equality and female rights in Croatia.

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**How to Understand “Sexting” in Neoconservative (Islamic) Authoritarian Regimes:
The Context of “New” Turkey**

Sexting, a chat-based form of cybersex, has been given an increasing attention by (feminist) scholars of different disciplines in recent years. Scholars from various disciplines have explained the emergence and increasing popularity of sexting through different theoretical/conceptual frameworks and with different ethical and political concerns. A risky behaviour among youth, socio-psychological epidemic threatening the well-being of an individual/society, sexual addiction and liberatory substitute of “actual” sex are among the most common ways of understanding and explaining the practice of sexting.

However, such theorizations of sexting fail to see its complex dynamics because socio-political and theoretical importance of practices such as sexting cannot be read of their surfaces. Therefore, we need to understand them in their complex relations with the (changing) political rationalities and the traditional forms of practices and subjectivities. In this paper, I discuss the practice of sexting within the socio-cultural and political context of “new” Turkey. The significance of this discussion comes from that gender and intimacy politics of the current Turkish government, Justice and Development Party (AKP) is shaped by neoconservative (Islamic) authoritarian, anti-feminist and heteronormative ideologies which, however, do not correspond the lives experiences and lifestyles of the significant group of people, especially, those of educated urbanite youth.

In my presentation, I will first discuss the multiple intentions of educated urbanite youth that practice sexting. Then, I will probe the subversive aspects of practicing sexting in the context of Turkey. By doing so, I will complicate the scholarly discussions on sexting by pointing out its queering aspects in relation to prevailing sexual norms informed by neoconservative, anti-feminist and heteronormative ideologies.

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The Russian Language Campaign #ЯнеБоюсьСказать (#IamNotScaredToSpeak) of 2016 and #MeToo: How the Former was Reinforced by the Latter

Online hashtag movements have proven that Social Media users can affect public discourse and provoke significant discussion offline. The global #MeToo movement is often seen as a starting point for this discussion. However, with regard to the Russian case such discussion was preceded by a similar but unique campaign *#ЯнеБоюсьСказать* (#IamNotScaredToSpeak) that appeared in Ukraine in July 2016 and travelled through borders and continued in Russia. It was Russia's first successful hashtag movement and, in effect, largest feminist mobilization (even though participants did not actually identify themselves as feminists). The subsequent #MeToo movement is often thus referred to as the American version of *#ЯнеБоюсьСказать* in Russian traditional Media. In 2016 the common reaction of such traditional Media was mixed. However, owing to the influence of #MeToo collective identity raising and solidarity among Russian women was reinforced. Such engendered some movement in Russia away from traditional patterns of skepticism and victim blaming, thereby normalizing hashtag activism for further online campaigns. For the proposed report I will examine the specificity of the #IamNotScaredToSpeak campaign and argue that it was predominantly of a grass-roots nature with the self-organization and participation of ordinary people being crucial to the movement. By way of comparison, the #MeToo campaign, operating in the western context, was largely initiated and led by celebrities. I will also analyze the paradigm of the development of *#ЯнеБоюсьСказать*: what impact it had on Russian public debate in 2016; and how it was then influenced by the #MeToo movement in the following years (2017-2018) as both hashtags were used in Russian Media sources.

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What if God Really Is a Woman? Feminism Faces Religion in *God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunija*

Teona Strugar Mitevska's *God exists, her name is Petrunija*, had a very successful premiere in the Competition Program of this year's Berlinale, winning both Ecumenical Jury Award and the German Film Guild Award.

It is a story of 31-year-old Petrunija who, desperate at not getting a job once again, joins the men in swimming for a Holy Cross on the Epiphany. She wins the cross, but for the biggest part of the film it seems it will not bring her the luck that is promised to the man.

The story questions openly relationship between religion and feminism, showing that they can co-exist as long as women stay out of religious events and restrain from asking too many question – or, to be exact, as long as they are feminists in their own four walls. Mitevska plays with religious imagery putting in co-relation sexuality and religious objects. Image of Petrunija putting the cross on her bear chest, that would be considered highly religious if man was in it, is seen as perverse and further accentuates Mitevska's idea.

At the same time the film raises the question of relationship between female feminists. Petrunija doesn't oppose the system, church or men because she is fighting for her rights, but because she feels she is equal. At the same time, the journalist covering the scandal feels the need to make this event into the fight.

In the real world surrounding the film, one more interesting thing happened – under the news of films success, people started attacking the scriptwriter Elma Tataragić for disgracing her people by giving this title to the film.

Is it possible that the idea of God as female is so shameful? Can women fight both by just being themselves and by really fighting the fight? Is there a way to incorporate women in religious system and imagery and what happens if you try?

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Women from National Margins in the Shadow of the Feminist Studies

Slovene women's organizations within the boundaries of the newly founded Julian March (Kingdom of Italy) flourished after the end of World War I. Women were active in national defence organizations, charities, cultural and professional societies, some also in the ranks of the social democrats. Particularly the latter were active in Slovene women's and feminist's networks. The end of the war, the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy, the introduction of the new Italian authorities prompted them to be more active, which is attested, *inter alia*, by the abundance of Slovene-language periodicals published in Trieste and Gorizia after 1918. *Ženski svet*, whose editorial office had to be transferred to Ljubljana (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) in 1929 on account of the pressure exerted by the Italian fascist authorities, deserves particular mention. The periodical was published in Ljubljana up to 1941. Women's activities in organizations after the war are yet to be properly examined. The same holds true also for anti-fascist activities of individual women, particularly educated ones, also when subjected to the repressive fascist policy.

The article will focus on Slovene women antifascists in the Julian March whom the fascist authorities identified as dangerous enemies of Mussolini's Italy. They were arrested, sent to the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State, confined or interned and paid with their lives for their political and national activities, just as did their peers, brothers and husbands. However, despite their efforts they remained in the shadow of history, not due to lacking court records and other official documents, but rather on account of the androcentrically oriented memoirs, which were occasionally shaped also by women themselves.

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