

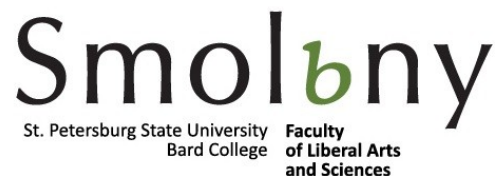


Nordic Summer University



**Study Circle 5:
Patterns of Dysfunction in Contemporary Democracies
Impact on Human Rights and Governance
Joint Venture Between NSU and EHU.**

**IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SAINT
PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF
LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, AND THE GAGARIN
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY**



CALL FOR PAPERS WINTER SESSION 2019

**THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION AND
DEMOCRACY**

The winter session will take place from the **1st to the 3rd of March 2019 at the Saint Petersburg State University, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences, in Saint Petersburg, The Russian Federation.**

Contact Information for Coordinators:

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The deadline to submit proposals is 15 October 2018. Please send title and abstract to ALL coordinators. NB. FOR NON-RUSSIAN PARTICIPANTS THIS DATE LIMIT IS THE FINAL LIMIT. DUE TO THE GREATER ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES OF HAVING THE WINTER SESSION IN A NON-SCHENGEN COUNTRY WE KINDLY ASK YOU TO RESPECT THE DATE LIMITS AND WE EXPECT YOU TO MAKE A FIRM COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATE. IT WILL NOT AFTERWARDS BE POSSIBLE TO GIVE YOUR PLACE TO SOMEONE ELSE. FEES SHOULD BE PAID IMMEDIATELY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING.

Preliminary program to be announced: 15 December 2018 on www.nordic.university where you can also find more information about NSU. (See <http://www.nordic.university>)

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For the winter session 2019 we would propose a special opening focus on:

THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY

Since Matthew Hindman's book, "The Myth of Digital Democracy", (Hindman 2009) 9 years have passed. The technologies are developed, the internet is now part of ordinary life, the numerous revolutions in mobile connections are now a fact. Mankind made some steps forward towards AI, discovered new horizons of mysterious and enigmatic facts, introduced robotization in new spheres of life. Such changes have both good and bad effects. The warnings of Hindman are still pertinent. We became witnesses to this through the ongoing investigation of foreign meddling into the presidential election in the USA, through information wars, storms of fake news, new forms of inequality in the informational sphere and new forms of alienation, stigmatization and manipulation. New anti-utopian stories emerged, millions of people look at the "Black Mirror" recognizing the features of everyday reality.

The winter session of NSU Circle 5 will concentrate on how these issues of the/these digital revolution(s) influence democracy. Which effects do digitalization have on civic engagement in the public sphere in both democratic and non-democratic states? Will digital, AI, robotic and other technologies maintain or advance democracy, or will they constitute an indispensable tool for emerging autocracies or totalitarian ideologies? The digital revolution enables global gossip, plebiscites, polls and populism which challenge representative democracy. Another issue is the sphere of the regulatory state. The main question regards the manner and forms of the political usage of social media and the involvement of online people in the public sphere. How do states, politicians and citizens manage the new digital media and devices? What effects do digitalization have on the relations between political institutions and citizens in contemporary societies and how will this impact the future of democracy?

One important point concerns the careful scrutiny of proposals for new legislation and its consequences, which at least ideally is part of representative democracy, and how it is run over by various direct expressions of popular sentiment. Can these expressions no longer be channelled through these representative processes? Is the speed of the information flow simply too fast and reactions too immediate for representative democracy to connect with people? (See Andrew Sullivan <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/04/america-tyranny-donald->

[trump.html](#)) Is the huge importance of the media fuelling this process, and what kind of manipulation does control of media allow within these processes to the detriment of democracy. Enormous amounts of money and investments are involved in the news and information services so crucial for the good functioning of democracy. In the early times of European democracy the press was generally motivated by political interests in this or that party or part of the population. Today the media might have a stand, but they are often more preoccupied with the audience. To this it will be said that media has to be independent and private ownership secures this independence. This independence should secure pluralistic sources of information, but if all are running after some statistical idea of the audience, information delivery could become rather monotone. The drastic changes in this sphere are visible today together with new threats of monopolization of information.

An opening focus will head the program of the session sincerely welcoming other subjects related to our six themes in the program to follow.

See below for bibliographical information.

Other themes are:

1. Populism and Democracy

The reason for populist movements are many and we have probably not understood these movements properly yet. Reasons vary from country to country, but there seems to be some standards such as hostility to globalization and distrust of the so-called establishment. There is a strong wish to be heard, that one's vote count, and a feeling that they have been forgotten. In many countries populism has been fuelled by fear of immigration and social instability. It is often seen as a challenge to representative democracy. This was clearly illustrated by the Brexit referendum, where a parliamentary majority to remain was defeated by a popular vote to leave.

Rosanvallon argues that bureaucracy together with the judiciary, the regulatory bodies and electoral representation have its own kind of legitimacy which is part of our general notion of democratic legitimacy. (Rosanvallon 2008) Populism, on the other hand, pretends to appeal directly to the people against politicians and technocrats, and research does confirm a gap between citizens and leaders. (Startin & Krouwel 2013) It has been argued that populism and technocracy actually reinforce each other by a common critique of party politics. (Bickerton & Accetti 2015, Leonard 2011) From a left-wing perspective Laclau proposes to short-circuiting party politics by constructing a political subject from a large range of social demands which is construed as the people and supposed to subvert and reconstruct society. (Laclau 2005) In its turn, this view has been criticized as the construction of an imaginary people without any fixed contours. (Zarka 2016)

Lately populism has surged as a consequence of the migration crisis. Elections in Austria and Germany have given very high scores to populist anti-immigration parties. Support for these parties is also high in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland and France. What are the ideological suppositions of these parties? How should we understand them? It is puzzling that Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which receives so few refugees and experience an economic upturn (though still one of the poorer parts of Germany), is so anti-immigration? Are the Media responsible or should we look for some other reason?

2. Globalization and democracy

Economic globalization is made responsible for the loss of jobs; critics claim that benefits have been taken away by the elite. Who profited from globalization and where certain stretches of society abandoned along the road? What would the European societies have looked like without globalization? Politically, free trade and liberalization of capital movements have prompted

some to ask whether democratic decision-making decides anything any more. Are politicians only adapting to circumstances they do not control. This reproach has been directed against globalization as such and the EU in particular. The EU treaties have established free trade and movements of goods, services and persons as a basic principle. The WTO imposes rules of free trade on all its members. Does this engage the member countries in fierce competition leading to lower levels of pay and working conditions? Are democratic institutions no longer able to decide about the kind of society which should be instituted? How should we cope with this in terms of justice? (<http://opendemocracy.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9c663f765f28cdb71116aa9ac&id=1b0a762d04&e=20c21a5d20>) Are governments powerless faced with multinational corporations such as Google? The latest EU tax complaint against Google will say something about the balance of power between government and corporations.

This problem also concerns labour law and collective bargaining. Existing structures are challenged by competition from the outside and it is difficult to maintain higher standards, if products, services and persons from the outside can propose cheaper solutions. This was poignantly illustrated by the Polish plumber during the French referendum on the EU Constitution Treaty. The fear of the Polish plumber probably decided for a no to the treaty. Should democracies then be autarchic republics as Plato recommends in the Republic? They have, of course, never been like that, but support for democracy, political participation and interest in politics can wane if democratic decision-making is no longer seen as pertinent.

4. Security and democracy

Terrorism, social instability and other threats have considerably augmented measures of control and surveillance leading to growing interference in the private life of citizens. The scandal surrounding the NSA monitoring of internet activity and collection of big data concerning telephone conversations did attract much attention, but other measures such as increasing video surveillance, checking of credit card data and the like has considerably enhanced the monitoring of the individual as well. Will such measures fragilize the citizen in relation to the control the very same citizen should exercise on its own democratic institutions and politicians? Are we about to construct the infrastructure for authoritarianism ready for take over when the political situation is ripe or have we found a reasonable compromise between security concerns and democracy? (Priest & Arkin, 2011; Andersen, 2016)

5. Democratic Deficit in the EU and Global Governance

Several Nordic countries and all the Baltic countries are members of the EU. Questions of democracy in these countries are therefore linked to the EU. Is the EU undermining national democracies? How does the EU participate in the regional and local levels? Many authors have argued that the European Institutions have a democratic deficit (for example Føllesdal & Hix 2005), but others like Moravcsik (2002) and Majone (1998) have maintained that Europe is sufficiently democratic and compares reasonably well with democratic institutions elsewhere like those in the US. (Cf. Kreppel 2006) Arguing that the EU is legitimate or could become legitimate by some odd reform will not necessarily be sufficient to make people believe that it is legitimate. Normative ideas about legitimacy like the one's espoused by Simmons (1999) and Buchanan (2002) are, of course, interesting in their own right, but they will not necessarily tell us very much about the challenges facing the EU. One might very well wonder whether a more democratic Europe or other institutional changes would silence Eurosceptics or make them enthusiastic followers. It seems like their real grievances lies elsewhere even though any argument ready at hand will be brought to use. The real problem might not be that there is any particular fault with the EU institutions, but rather that some other source of legitimacy is more appealing to many people. Many Eurosceptics to the right or the left sees the EU as an obstacle

to their own project whether it is socialist one hammering into the single market and globalization in general, or Catholic conservative blaming EU for upholding a secular society protecting abortion and equal rights, or a nationalist one protecting home grown culture and community through sovereign rights.

One way to get around difficulties concerning unity and cultural diversity is through the implementation of the subsidiarity principle which has potential for a better understanding of the evolution of democracy. Subsidiarity creates an area of public action for the individuals giving them both responsibility and a definite personality. This important principle of EU law should be implemented creatively. It is an important fact that the subsidiarity principle is uncommon in Eastern Europe, something which merits further investigation.

Global governance as it is today is not democratic. The UN has, of course, a general assembly, but the Security Council has the last word. Should we try to democratize this institution or heed Kant's words that a universal republic would be the worst tyranny? (Kant, 1917) Could global governance be democratized in other ways, through social movements, ONG's or other? Should we rather count on some kind of global constitutionalism? (Peters, 2015) Others like Thomas Pogge and Allen Buchanan would consider global governance in terms of justice rather than democracy. (Pogge, 2002; Buchanan, 2004) Are there limits to democracy and how should democracy fit into global governance? It seems that some people feel estranged from a complex and opaque global system, which impacts their daily life in ways which are difficult to discern. Are there limits to how global we can get, or should we accept that democracy has a limited applicability?

There are important difficulties in the system of representation on the global level. What kind of representation should one use in the global system of governance? What is the connection between social complexity and global governance? How can global actors participate in global governance? How should religious communities and churches participate in global governance?

6. The Elite-People Gap

To conclude we should consider the elite-people gap. Does it really exist? Who are the elite? Is this just a manipulating term? Do we rather have split societies, where some parts have profited while others were left behind? Is this phenomenon generational? Is it rather due to new yearnings of democracy, which the traditional model cannot fulfil? Should we consider new forms of democracy or political participation? Do illiberal democracies manage to fill the gap trading security (social, internal, external) against obedience? Is the elite-people gap somehow inherent in liberal democracies?

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Practical Information

Location: Saint Petersburg, The Russian Federation

Hotel/accommodation (2 nights / double rooms – extra charge for single rooms if available) and dinner Saturday evening is covered by the seminar.

We expect to accommodate participants in the Happy Pushkin Hotel: <http://happy-pushkin.hotels-of-saint-petersburg.com/en/>

Please indicate whether you need a hotel room/accommodation.

There will be a double fee to be paid to the organizers.

The fee for NSU will be 5 € (370 RUB, 40 DKK, 50 SEK, 50 NOK, 620 ISK) to be paid in cash at arrival to the seminar by all participants.

The fee for the Saint Petersburg State University will be MAX, 30 \$ to be paid directly to Saint Petersburg University. More information later on.

The fees cover expenses for lunch twice and dinner Friday evening

The fee should be paid immediately after notification of payment (transfer fees are at the charge of the participants):

Please notice that fee or other costs will not be reimbursed if the participant cancels.

VISA

The Saint Petersburg State University will issue formal invitations to the non-Russian participants in order for them to obtain a humanitarian visa (other kinds of visas are not suitable). EXPENSES FOR VISAS REMAIN WITH THE PARTICIPANTS AND IT RELIES ON THE PARTICIPANTS TO START PROCEEDINGS IMMEDIATELY AFTER RECEIVING THE FORMAL INVITATION IN ORDER FOR THEM TO HAVE THEIR VISA IN TIME FOR THE SEMINAR.

Please indicate your name on the transfer to identify payment.

Travel expenses are reimbursed partly on the basis of an economy ticket. We will try to reimburse all with the same percentage. Please keep your receipts, boarding cards, etc. Please book your tickets in good time in order to keep expenses low. Please take out a cancellation insurance. We cannot reimburse transport if you have to cancel.

Please indicate a preliminary paper title and a short abstract.

Please register to these email addresses: denis.skopin@mail.ru, chrom@cegetel.net, oleg.bresky@ehu.lt

Saint-Petersburg State University is one of the leading Russian Universities. Created in 1998 in collaboration with Bard College (<http://www.bard.edu/>), **the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences** (http://artesliberales.spbu.ru/?cl=en&set_language=en) was the first institution to introduce liberal arts education into Russia. At the moment about six hundred students are enrolled in 14 BA and MA programs – art history, economy, philosophy, cognitive sciences, literature, sociology, anthropology, etc.

European Humanities University (<http://www.ehu.lt/en>) is a private non-profit liberal arts Lithuanian University with unique origin and history. Founded in 1992, the university has been headquartered in Vilnius, Lithuania since authorities expelled it from Belarus in 2004. EHU is the only Belarusian University that has succeeded in maintaining its independence and commitment to academic freedom. EHU offers both high residence and low residence (distance learning) degree programs in the humanities and social sciences that fully accord with European standards and norms.

Approximately 1800 students are enrolled in European Humanities University (1/3 high residence students and 2/3 low residence), 249 (99 full-time and 150 part-time) faculty members conduct teaching and research activities in EHU within Historical, Socio-political, Law and Media academic departments and 10 research centers (see: <http://www.ehu.lt/en/research/centers-laboratories-and-institutes>).

The EHU provides students from Belarus and the region with an education in the European liberal arts tradition in a free and democratic environment - an opportunity, unfortunately, not available in Belarus today. At EHU, students can learn media and communications skills in a state-of-the-art [media lab](#), become election observers through a hands on program conducted together with [Belarusian Human Rights House](#) and [Belarus Watch](#) called [Election Observation: Theory and Practice](#) (EOTP), study European politics and policy as part of the political science and European studies program, and many other opportunities. Law students learn about human rights law from Western experts and practice their courtroom skills and meet students from around the world at the Philip C. Jessup International Moot Court Competition. New center for Constitutionalism and Human rights was established in 2012 <http://www.ehu.lt/en/research/research-centers/center-for-constitutionalism-and-human-rights/activities> along with announcement of new academic journal with the same title <http://chr-centre.org/>

These and other opportunities make EHU a unique place for young people from Belarus and the region. The commitment of EHU's faculty, students, staff, and donors is an important signal to Belarusian authorities and society that there is an alternative to state ideological control. For Belarusians who seek the freedom to think creatively and critically—to study, learn, teach, and conduct research without ideological restrictions—EHU provides a home away from home.

The **J. Althusius Institute** (<http://althusius-institute.org/>) is an international research entity. Its main focuses lie on the processes of EU integration and the social process in Eastern European countries. The Institute assists, furthermore, academic structures within partner Universities with training of professionals inside the field of law, human rights and public administration. The Institute conducts research on Higher Education, in particular law studies. The J. Althusius Institute creates a bridge between the EU and Belarus, Ukraine and other Eastern European countries. The Institute is equally a platform for expertise and consulting.

The Institute promotes legal culture and the construction of the rule of law in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and other CIS countries through the implementation of activities within the following areas:

1. Conducts research, methodological, practical and academic work within the fields of constitutionalism, EU integration and human rights;
2. Facilitates cooperation between researchers, experts, volunteers and partner organizations;

3. Collects, studies, preserves and publishes both research work and practical materials as well as bulletins within the legal profession;
- 4 Prepares and coordinates research and practical projects.

The Institute publishes the **Journal of Constitutionalism and Human Rights** (<http://chr-centre.org>). The Journal of Constitutionalism and Human Rights was created in order to present comparative analysis of topical issues of constitutionalism and human rights, as well as legal transformations in Eastern Europe and the CIS. The Journal has a grant from the Council of Europe. The journal is designed to fill a gap in the area of constitutional and legal theory and practice, as well as to reconcile different areas of knowledge and practice in the fields of constitutionalism, international law and human rights with each other. For this reason, the editors are focused on the correlation between four issues: the subjects of these relationships, the content of both the relationship and the procedures, as well as the regulatory and value-laden component that allows the combination of both the theoretical and practical aspects regarding contemporary constitutional issues.

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is an independent and open academic institution, which organizes seminars crossing academic and national borders. NSU is a democratic institution organized and run by its participants through different study circles.

Through two yearly seminars the cross-disciplinary study circles fertilize collaboration between academics, build up networks and contribute to create research agendas throughout the Nordic/Baltic countries as well as establishing contacts "abroad". The research in the study circles is documented in publications link: [NSU-Press](#)

The two yearly seminars take place in the Nordic/Baltic countries. In the winter each study circle organize their own seminar; in the summer all circles are brought together for also enhancing further cross-disciplinary collaboration. Furthermore, the summer meeting is also the political organ of NSU inviting all participants to exercise their influence on the activities of NSU.

It is the policy of NSU to maintain an environment that encourages and fosters appropriate conduct among all persons and respect for individual values. NSU opposes any policy or practice, which discriminates against any individual or group on grounds of race, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, class, age, disability, creed, and ethnic/national origins. NSU aims at being an open and inclusive organization.

NSU receives financial support from the [Nordic Council of Ministers](#) and operates in cooperation with [Foreningerne Nordens Forbund](#) (FNF).