



# COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND DISCOURSES OF THE FAR-RIGHT IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

O plano de ensino poderá sofrer alterações por parte do professor.

INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO  
DE ENSINO,  
DESENVOLVIMENTO E  
PESQUISA

PROGRAMA DE  
MESTRADO EM  
COMUNICAÇÃO  
DIGITAL

Carga Horária: 36h  
Créditos: 02  
Categoria: Optativa

## Ementa

This postgraduate course explores the intersections of political aesthetics and propaganda in digital spaces from an interdisciplinary perspective bringing together humanities, social sciences, and digital communication studies. It critically investigates the social, cultural, and political dynamics that fostered the (re)legitimation of far-right movements and ideologies in the international public discourse since the early 2010s. The discussions will consider the role played by social media and tech corporations in amplifying political narratives and ideologies, fostering the electoral goals of reactionary groups in a globalised context.

Privileging an interactive teaching approach, lectures will investigate the contents, strategies, and methods at the heart of far-right online communication through the discussion of case studies and group activities in class. Together, we will look at the main aesthetic strategies and communication methods informing the digital contents of leaders and activists across Europe, the US, and Latin America, mainstream and not. We will dissect various forms of textual and visual communication, examining the use of language, images, emojis, memes, videos, audio, and gestures employed by far-right leaders to disseminate their narratives on social media and make reactionary ideologies palatable to broader audiences.

The main aim of the course is to equip students with innovative critical tools and methods to advance interdisciplinary investigations of the multi-faceted and pressing issues affecting contemporary society. Students will explore methods of digital ethnography, comparative historiographic and visual analysis, critical discourse, memory studies, social-semiotics, and sociology. At the end of the course, they will be able to apply the methods learned to tackle and interpret the challenges of a fast-evolving scenario from a holistic perspective, applicable to global movements and campaigning beyond the study of the far right.

## Objetivos de aprendizagem

- Develop an understanding of political aesthetics and in the digital age and how this influences public perception and engagement, considering the relationship between online and offline, extreme and mainstream, as well as local and global dimensions of political action and influence.
- Advance independent and interdisciplinary analysis of far-right aesthetics and propaganda online, identifying the main contents, strategies, and methods employed by leaders and activists for their digital communication.

- Critically examine the role of mainstream social media platforms and tech corporations in amplifying the visibility of far-right movements and ideologies in the public debate since the early 2010s.
- Apply the methods learned in class to the study of global movements and campaigning beyond the far right.

## Módulo I – Composto por um encontro remote e três presenciais

### Tópicos

- POLITICAL AESTHETICS IN THE DIGITAL AGE
  - Introduction to Political Aesthetics in the Digital Age.
  - Understanding the rise of the ‘new’ far-right as a global social and cultural movement.
- SOCIAL MEDIA, DIGITAL CAPITALISM, AND THE SPREAD OF FAR-RIGHT NARRATIVES ONLINE
  - Digital capitalism and the role of emotions in far-right online communication.
  - How do social media platforms amplify the spread (and visibility) of far-right narratives online?
  - Workshop: AI uses in online communication and propaganda: concerns and possibilities (TBC)
- CULTURAL CONNECTIONS, PERFORMATIVE VIRILITIES, AND SELF-REPRESENTATION STRATEGIES OF THE FAR-RIGHT ON SOCIAL MEDIA
  - Strongmen in the far right: performative virilities and strategies of self-promotion on social media.
  - Exploring cultural and ideological connections in the digital aesthetics and propaganda of far-right leaders globally.
  - Q&A and group discussion.
  - Workshop: Applied methods of Digital Aesthetic Analysis.

### Leitura obrigatória

Castelli Gattinara, P., and Pirro, A. L. P. (2019) **The Far Right as Social Movement**. *European Societies*, 21(4), 447-462, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2018.1494301>

Fuller, M., and Weizman, E. (2021), **Investigative Aesthetics: Conflict and Commons in the Politics of Truth**. London: Verso. (Ch. 1, Aesthetics beyond Perception and Ch. 2, Aesthetics).

Nagle, Angela (2017), **Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4Chan to Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right**. London: Zero Books, 5-21.

Ranciere, J. (2013), **The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible**, ed. and translated by G. Rockhill. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 7-14 and 31-38.

Hannan, J. (2018). **Trolling Ourselves to Death? Social Media and Post-Truth Politics**. *European Journal of Communication*, 33(2), 214-226.

Humprecht, E., Amsler, M., Esser, F., and Van Aelst, P. (2024). **Emotionalized Social Media Environments: How Alternative News Media and Populist Actors Drive Angry Reactions**. *Political Communication*, 1-29.

Zuboff, S. (2019). **The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the Frontier of New Power**. New York: Public Affairs, 221-240.

Ambedkar, M. (2017). **The Aesthetics of the Alt-Right**. *Post-Office Arts Journal*, Baltimore. <https://baltimore-art.com/2017/02/11/the-aesthetics-of-the-alt-right/>

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### Leituras recomendadas

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Bennett, W. L., & Pfetsch, B. (2018). **Rethinking Political Communication in a Time of Disrupted Public Spheres**. *Journal of communication*, 68(2), 243-253.

Di Stefano, E., Friberg, C., Ryyänänen, M., eds. (2022). **Aesthetic Perspectives on Culture, Politics, and Landscape**. Cham: Springer.

Fortner, R. S., and Fackler, M. P., eds. (2014). **The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory** (Vol. 1). Hoboken (NJ): Wiley Blackwell.

Frost, L. (2010). **Aesthetics and Politics**. *Global Society*, 24(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2010.485560>

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Monaco, D. (2023). **The Rise of Anti-Establishment and Far-Right Forces in Italy: Neoliberalisation in a New Guise?** *Competition & Change*, 27(1), 224-243.

Mondon, A., and Winter, A. (2020). **Reactionary Democracy: How Racism and the Far Right Became Mainstream**. London: Verso.

Nanay, B. (2016). **Aesthetics as Philosophy of Perception**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nanay, B. (2019). **Aesthetics: A Very Short Introduction**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rancière, J. (2009). **Aesthetics and Its Discontents**, ed. and translated by Steven Cocoran. London: Polity.

Rancière, J. (2020). **The Emancipated Spectator**. London: Verso.

Winter, A. (2019). **Online Hate: From the Far-Right to the 'Alt-Right' and from the Margins to the Mainstream**. In *Online Othering: Exploring Digital Violence and Discrimination on the Web*, ed. by Karen Lumsden and Emily Harmer. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 39-64.



- Boulianne, S., Hoffmann, C. P., & Bossetta, M. (2024). **Social Media Platforms for Politics: A comparison of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Reddit, Snapchat, and WhatsApp**. *New Media & Society*, 0(0), 1-32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241262415>
- Brown, K., Mondon, A., and Winter, A. (2021). **The Far Right, the Mainstream and Mainstreaming: Towards a Heuristic Framework**. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 28(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2021.1949829>
- Chatzakou, D., Kourtellis, N., Blackburn, J., et al. (2017). **Measuring #GamerGate: A Tale of Hate, Sexism, and Bullying**. *WWW 2017 Companion*, April 3-7 2017, 1285-1290. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3041021.3053890>
- Diez-Gutierrez, E. J., Verdeia, M., Sarrion-Andaluz, J., et al. (2022). **Political Hate Speech of the Far Right on Twitter in Latin America**. *Comunicar*, 72(XXX), 97-109. <https://doi.org/10.3916/C72-2022-08>
- Gilardi, F., Gessler, T., Kubli, M., and Müller, S. (2022). **Social Media and Political Agenda Setting**. *Political Communication*, 39(1), 39-60.
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- Van der Pas, D. J., Van der Brug, W., and Vliegenthart, R. (2017). **Political Parallelism in Media and Political Agenda-Setting**. *Political Communication*, 34(4), 491-510.
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- Emig, R. (2018). **Terrorist Masculinities: Political Masculinity between Fiction, Facts, and Their Mediation**. *Men and Masculinities*, 22(3), 516-528. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X18768392>
- Forchtner, B., and Kolvraa, C. (2017). **Extreme Right Images of Radical Authenticity: Multimodal Aesthetics of History, Nature, and Gender Roles in Social Media**. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*, 4(3).
- Langer, A. I., and Gruber, J. B. (2021). **Political Agenda Setting in the Hybrid Media System: Why Legacy Media Still Matter a Great Deal**. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161220925023>
- Lawson, R. (2023). **Language and Mediated Masculinities**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 85-116.

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Vandiver, J. (2020). **Alt-Virilities: Masculinism, Rhizomatics, and the Contradictions of the American Alt-Right.** Politics, Religion & Ideology, 21(2), 153–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2020.1763319>

Wodak, R. (2015). **The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean.** London: Sage.

## Módulo II – Composto por um encontro remote e três presenciais

### Tópicos

- UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND THE REPRESENTATION OF FEMININITY IN FAR-RIGHT NARRATIVES ONLINE
  - Femininity and anti-feminism in far-right digital narratives
  - ‘Tradwives’ and ‘benevolent sexism’
  - Giorgia Meloni: Woman, Mother, and Christian
  - Group discussion and check-in with students: feedback, questions, clarification on assessments.
- FAR-RIGHT CONSPIRACY AESTHETICS AND DISCOURSE ONLINE
  - The rise of far-right conspiracy aesthetics and discourse online: from extreme to mainstream.
  - Convergence of racism, misogyny, and anti-elitism in far-right conspiracy discourse online: demographic decline and ‘Great Replacement’ theory
  - Group presentation assessment.
- DIGITAL MEMES AND FAR-RIGHT HUMOROUS AESTHETICS
  - Uses of humour and sarcasm in far-right aesthetics and propaganda.
  - A culture of transgression.
  - The meme-ification of political discourse online, from the extreme to the mainstream.
  - Workshop: Academic essay writing.

### Leitura obrigatória

De Giorgi, E., Cavalieri, A., and Feo, F. (2023). **From Opposition to Prime Minister: Giorgia Meloni and Women’s Issues in the Italian Radical Right.** Politics and Governance, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v11i1.6042>

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Thorleifsson, C. (2019). **In Pursuit of Purity: Populist Nationalism and the Racialization of Difference**. *Identities*, 28(2), 186–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2019.1635767>

Fernández Villanueva, C. (2021). **Legitimation of Hate and Political Violence through Memetic Images: the Bolsonaro Campaign**. *Communication & Society*, 34(2), 449-468.

Greene, V. (2019). **“Deplorable” Satire: Alt-Right Memes, White Genocide Tweets, and Redpilling Normies**. *Studies in American Humor*, 5(1), 31-69. <https://doi.org/10.5325/studamerhumor.5.1.0031>

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Schmid, U. K., Schulze, H., Drexel, A. (2025) **Memes, Humor, and the Far Right’s Strategic Mainstreaming**. *Information, Communication & Society*, 28(4), 537-556. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2024.2329610>

### Leituras recomendadas

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Blee, K. B. (2012). **Does Gender Matter in the United States Far-Right?** *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 13(2), 253-265, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2012.675705>

Bock, G. (1983). **Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State**. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 8(3), 400-421.

Fangen, K., and Lichtenberg L. (2021). **Gender and Family Rhetoric on the German Far Right**. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 55(1), 71-93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2021.1898815>

Gottlieb, J. (2021). **Feminine Fascism: Women in Britain’s Fascist Movement 1923-1945** (2nd edition). London and New York: I. B. Tauris.

Lewis, R., Rowe, M., and Wiper, C. (2019). **Online/Offline Communities: Exploring Misogyny and Hate in Online Abuse of Feminists**. In *Online Othering: Exploring Digital Violence and Discrimination on the Web*, ed. by Karen Lumsden and Emily Harmer. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 121-144.

Lodders, V., and Weldon, S. (2019). **Why Do Women Vote Radical Right? Benevolent Sexism, Representation and Inclusion in Four Countries**. *Representation*, 55(4). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2019.1652202>

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Trabert, A. (2017). **At the Mercy of Femocracy? Networks and Ideological Links Between Far-Right Movements and the Antifeminist Men’s Rights Movement**. In *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*, ed. by Michaela Kottig, Renate Bitzan, and Andrea Peto. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 273-288.



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Crawford, B., Keen, F., and Suarez de-Tangil, G. (2020). **Memetic Irony and the Promotion of Violence within Chan Cultures**. *Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST)*.

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Goldenberg, A., and Finkelstein, J. (2020). **Cyber Swarming, Memetic Warfare and Viral Insurgency: How Domestic Militants Organize on Memes to Incite Violent Insurrection and Terror Against Government and Law Enforcement**. *Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI)*.

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