



CALL FOR PAPERS AND PARTICIPATION  
NORDIC SUMMER UNIVERSITY'S SUMMER SESSION 2023

## POLITICAL MYTHS AND CRITIQUE IN THE AGE OF POST-TRUTH

27 July – 3 August, 2023, Palanga, Lithuania

### Theme and invitation

Recent events have once again made visible the extensive influence of non-rational and affective elements within the sphere of politics. To theorize this experience, numerous scholars have turned to the concept of *political myth*. Yet, there is no consensus on what political myths are or what function they fulfil. While some commentators argue that the power of myth over politics has come to increase at the expense of truth, others hold that our current predicament follows in part from an absence of productive, political myths. By contrast, a third camp claims that myth constitutes a political constant (the continued importance of which has, however, been severely overlooked). This summer we look forward to discussing this and related issues, with a particular focus on the relationship between political myth and *critique*.

Historically, it has often been argued that myth constitutes a particularly dangerous (but also particularly effective) political tool, precisely because it tends to resist critical scrutiny. Yet, in her seminal *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, philosopher Chiara Bottici states that political myths “can and should be a means for critique and thus for autonomy.” We invite paper presentations that address this tension, broadly conceived. Relevant questions include, but are not limited to:

- How must political myth and/or critique be defined to appear compatible?
- What kind of political myths can serve as a means for critique? Under what circumstances?
- What kind of critique can tackle the problem that political myths and similar phenomena may pose?
- How can political myth theory benefit from critical theory and vice versa? What possible tensions may be identified between these theoretical traditions?
- If political myths are indeed immune to critique, what does this mean? Does myth-making still represent a legitimate political strategy?
- How might one understand the relationship between theories of political myth and contemporary fields of inquiry that aim to problematize the role of critique, such as post-critique and affect theory?

- To what extent does political myth-making represent a (“positive” or “affirmative” alternative to (“suspicious” “negative” or “deconstructive”) critique?

Participants may examine how these and similar questions have been dealt with historically or are dealt with today, either by individual theorists/artists/activists, or within wider contexts. Or, they may seek to provide new answers, in whatever form they see fit.

### **Submission**

If you wish to give a presentation, please send your abstract (max. 350 words) and a short CV to [adam.kjellgren@idehist.su.se](mailto:adam.kjellgren@idehist.su.se) and [johanna.sjostedt@gmail.com](mailto:johanna.sjostedt@gmail.com) by the 15th of May 2023. It is also possible to attend the symposium without presenting. In this case, please just send an email with your CV.

We welcome paper presentation, but also non-traditional modes of academic presentations, as well as suggestions for texts and topics for roundtable discussions.

We will send you an acknowledgment that your abstract has been received. Within a week after the deadline, you will hear whether it has been accepted. At that point you will be asked to proceed with the payment. The preliminary program will be announced as soon as payments have been processed.

### **About NSU's Summer Sessions**

Since 1950 the Nordic Summer University (NSU) has been an independent, academic institution, which organizes symposia that draws international participants across disciplines in the Nordic and Baltic regions. Activities in NSU revolve around thematic study circles that meet twice-yearly over a three-year cycle. NSU study circles explore widely diverse topics within the arts and humanities, natural and social sciences.

The week-long Summer Session is the yearly culmination of NSU's activities where all circles hold their symposia at a shared location. The Summer Session 2023 will take place from July 27<sup>th</sup> until August 3<sup>rd</sup> at Palanga, Lithuania. The venue is located near the beach.

### **Costs and scholarships**

The price range for the full week including lodging, meals and the program will be from 175 EUR to 575 EUR. Scholarship receivers would pay 175 EUR and be accommodated in twin or triple rooms. Other participants can choose between single rooms (575 EUR), a bed in a twin room if travelling alone (425 EUR), a double room or a family room if travelling with children (950 EUR for a family of three/four). The rooms are all equipped with their own private bathroom (shared only with the people in the room). The webshop to register and reserve a room will be open until June 1st, where you can book your accommodation once you're accepted by one of the study circles.

If you have institutional support or another type of funding, we ask you that you use it to attend our week-long summer university. If you do not, NSU offers a scholarship and grant options for which the participants at the Summer Session can apply. The application period for scholarships/grants opens on the same date as the calls: April 15th. Deadline is June 1, 2023. You submit your scholarship/grant application at the same time as your proposal for the summer session to the study circle coordinator(s). Scholarship/grant recipients pay 150 euros for the whole week, including room and board. They are hosted in twin or triple rooms and generally have to dedicate a couple of hours during the week to help with various tasks.

**More information**

<https://www.nsuweb.org/>

<https://www.nsuweb.org/activities/summer-session/>

**Coordinators**

Adam Kjellgren, PhD student in the History of Ideas, Stockholm University

Johanna Sjöstedt holds MA-degrees in intellectual history and gender studies from the University of Gothenburg.