

[Puzzling Europe: Literary, Political and Linguistic Perspectives on a Fragmented Continent](#)

Announcement published by Lars Rensmann on Wednesday, March 9, 2016

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

March 7, 2016 to March 31, 2016

Location:

Netherlands

Subject Fields:

European History / Studies, Human Rights, Humanities, Modern European History / Studies, Political Science

- Call for Papers -

Puzzling Europe

Literary, Political and Linguistic Perspectives on a Fragmented Continent

Interdisciplinary Conference at the Department for European Languages and Cultures, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

27 to 28 October 2016

Europe is a puzzle, in more than one sense.

Currently, public discourse in Europe is dominated by crises: conflicts over migration politics and refugee quotas, financial meltdowns, member states' threats to exit the EU. This discourse of crisis seems to corroborate the complaints of sceptics who consider Europe a loosely stitched patchwork on the brink of disintegration. On the other hand, the story of Europe can be told as a transnational success story. From this perspective, the continent is best described as the site of a peaceful and pervasive quest for unifying ideas, common ideals, and shared cultural values.

Previous and ongoing crises have generated a new sense of 'Europeanness' marked by international co-operation, transcultural solidarity, and political alliances across traditional divides. The search for a 'New Narrative for Europe' has not only inspired the European Commission's cultural research project of the same name, it is also a key topic for authors, artists, and intellectuals who strive to revise, reinterpret and redefine Europeanness in response to contemporary challenges.

A puzzle consists of many parts. The task of successfully assembling it involves many hands and an appreciation of both shared political norms and diversity as a positive and enabling value. This conference proposes an innovative approach to the Europe of Crisis depicted in public discourse. We aim to address the implications of political, socio-economic and cultural fragmentation in present-day Europe through an interdisciplinary combination of perspectives from the humanities and social sciences. Puzzling Europe proposes collaborative ways of understanding and teaching Europe. The conference aims to provide a platform for exchanges on topical questions across political, linguistic and cultural divides. We invite scholars from Literature, Political Science, Sociology, Linguistics,

Citation: Lars Rensmann. *Puzzling Europe: Literary, Political and Linguistic Perspectives on a Fragmented Continent*. H-Announce. 03-09-2016.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/114644/puzzling-europe-literary-political-and-linguistic-perspectives>

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Arts, Philosophy, History and related fields to rethink the European mosaic, discuss its ramifications, dilemmas, and challenges, and propose methods of understanding the continent's wealth of cultural relations, political frameworks, and global entanglements.

The new Department for European Languages and Cultures at Rijksuniversiteit Groningen is made up of three interrelated profiles: Language and Society, Literature and Culture and Politics and Society. Working on and across the fault-lines between these disciplines, we balance European knowledges as articulated in seven different languages. Our research and teaching methods pioneer new ways of coming to terms with the multi-faceted challenges of studying Europe.

We invite proposals of approximately 250 words for 20-minute presentations under one of the following headings (detailed panel descriptions below). Please indicate in the subject heading of your email which panel(s) you would like to join.

Thresholds. Outside, Inside, In Between
Peripheries. Otherness within Europe
Multiple Identities. Regions, Nations, Europe(s)
Visions of Unity. Pragmatics and Paradoxes
Historical Perspectives. Negotiating Europe's Past

Please email your proposals accompanied by a 50-word biographical note by 31 March 2016 to puzzlingeurope@rug.nl

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