

European Society for the History of Political Thought

8th Biennial Conference

“Truth and Un-Truth in the History of Political Thought”

University of Naples “Federico II,” Naples, Italy

5-7 October 2026



**European Society for the History of Political Thought
Eighth Biennial Conference
Department of Humanities (Studi Umanistici),
University of Naples Federico II
Via Porta di Massa 1, 80133, Naples, Italy
5-7 October 2026**



“Truth and Un-Truth in the History of Political Thought”

Day 1: Monday, October 5

9:00 – 9:30 – Welcome (Peter Schroeder, UCL, President of the ESHPT & Alessandro Arienzo, University of Naples, Federico II)

9:30 – 10:45 – Keynote 1 ~ Alessandra Petrina (University of Padua) “Shakespeare’s fools: method (and truth) in political madness”

11:00 – 12:30 – Session 1

Panel 1a: Truth and Untruth in Rhetoric and Politics from the 16th to 17th century

Kaarlo Havu (University of Helsinki), “Rhetoric, Imagination and Politics at the turn of the C17”

Annalisa Ceron (University of Milan), “Telling the Truth to the Prince: Parrhesia in Erasmus, Castiglione and Machiavelli”

Alberto Clerici (Università Nocolò Cusano, Rome), “Hugo Grotius’ Ways of Lying”

Panel 1b: Beyond Truth and Untruth

Adrian Blau (King’s College London), “Bentham on Nonsense and Post-Truth Politics”

Vittorio Bufacchi (University College Cork), “Arendt on Truth, Untruth and Post-Truth”

Valentina Gentile (Luiss, Università di Roma), “‘Political Sincerity’: Political, Not Metaphysical. Rawls and the Ethics of Political Truthfulness”

Panel 1c: The Masks of Truth: Secret Societies, Caricature, and Literature

Katherine Connelly (NYU London), “Marx and the ‘real truth’ about the Society of 10 December”

M.F.N. Giglioli (NYU Florence), “Philippe Buonarroti’s Entrist Tactics : Layers of Truth in Restoration-Era Conspiracies”

David Uhrig (NYU Paris), “Absolute Truth and Political Fiction: Maurice Blanchot in the Wake of Lamennais”

Panel 1d: Historiographical perspectives on truth and politics

Tamás Nyirkos (Ludovika University of Public Service), “Joseph de Maistre and the Conspiracy of History”

Marianne Sandelin (University of Helsinki), “Joseph de Maistre on Truth, Untruth and the Dangers of Applying Theoretical ‘Truths’ to Politics”

Marián Sekerák (Ambis University), “Truth, Interpretation, and Pedagogical Authority: The Historiography and Didactics of the History of Political Thought in the Czech and Slovak Context”

12:30 – 13:30 – Lunch

13:30 – 15:00 – Session 2

Panel 2a: The Power of “Hidden Truths”: Claiming Authority Through the Esoteric in Early Modern Societies

Mohammad Azeem Khan (University of California, Berkeley), “Secrets of Self or of Society? The Concept of *Sirr* in Early Modern Southwest Asia”

Caleb Longacre (University of California, Berkeley), “Myth inscribed in Stone: Hermeticism and Secrecy in Habsburg Absolutism”

Yasyn Abdullaev (University of California, Berkeley), “Political Denunciations and the Enigma of Illuminati Conspiracy in Imperial Russia”

Panel 2b: The One and the Many: Private Conscience, Knowledge, and Public Practices

Luca Casilli (University of Pisa), “The Secret of the Heart: Dissimulation and Inner Secrecy in Giovanni Botero”

Lorenzo Fancello (University of Pisa), “Truth and Untruth in the Relationship between Sages and the Mob”

Giacomo Brioni (University of Pisa), “Leo Strauss on Truth and Political Philosophy”

Panel 2c: Truth and the problem of skepticism in Democratic Politics

Pamela Edwards (University College London), “Attacking the Foundations of Knowledge: Coleridge, Hume, and the Politics of Skepticism”

Adriana Luna-Fabritius (University of Helsinki), “Veritas Realis and Finite Minds: Truth, Natural Law and Civil Order in Antonio Genovesi”

Adrian O’Connor (University of South Florida), “Truth, Trust, and Democratic Well-Being: Condorcet on the Sociability of Collective Decision-Making”

Panel 2d: Machiavelli, Harrington, and the politics of truth

Marta Baranowska (Nicolaus Copernicus University), “Beyond Truth and Lies: The Political Realism of Niccolò Machiavelli”

Tibor Bodnár-Király (Ludovica University of Public Service), “Machiavelli Meets Moral Politics: The True Morality of Political Science in Nineteenth-Century Austria-Hungary”

Wen Yuxin (Yohoku University), “How is Right Political Judgment Possible: Harrington and the Principle of Natural Aristocracy in the Republican Tradition”

15:00 – 15:15 - Coffee

15:15 - 17:15 – Session 3

Panel 3a: Seeking the Truth, Negotiating Conciliation, and Denouncing Falsehood: Reason of State in Early Modern Italian and Iberian Texts and Iconographies

Simone Testa (International Studies Institute, Firenze), “Truth and Un-truth Between Theory and Practice in the *Thesoro politico* (1589)”

Marcella Miranda (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas), “The True Reason of State in Pedro Barbosa Homem’s *Discursos de la juridica y verdadera razón de Estado* (1629)”

Maria Concepción Gutierrez Redondo (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia), “Staging Political Truth, Figuring Disorder in Early Seventeenth-Century Europe: Frontispieces to Juan Antonio de Vera’s Texts”

André Sekkel Cerquerira (Universidade Federal de São Paulo, Brazil), “Emblems of Prudence and Dissimulation: Tools of the Raison d’état”

Panel 3b: Narrating Europe: Truth, Un-Truth, and Political Order

Matteo Manca (University of Bari), “Truth, Un-truth and Anti-Geopolitics: Anti-Fascist Critiques of Imperialist Geopolitics”

Ulrich Tiedau (University College London), “Jacques Novicow’s critique of war and federalist imagination of Europe”

Christina Blanco Sio-Lopez (University of La Coruna), “Disputing Free Movement Rights via Securitization: Misinformation in the EU’s Schengen Information System (SIS)”

Matthew D’Auria (University of East Anglia) - Discussant

Panel 3c: Propaganda, Media, and Truth in the Age of Mass Politics

Arthur Ghins (Université Libre de Bruxelles), “Propaganda with Agitation: Socialist Theories of Mass Mobilization (1880s-1900s)”

Carla Larouco Gomes (University of Lisbon), “Whose Truth? ‘Yellow Journalism’ and Political Propaganda in the Context of Britain’s Imperial Expansion at the turn of the 20th Century”

Caroline Ashcroft (Oxford), “Everything is Possible: Technique, Reason and Propaganda in the Work of Arendt, Ellul, and Horkheimer”

Daniel Zamora Vargas (Université Libre de Bruxelles), “Truth without Trust”

Panel 3d: Facts and Fiction in 20th-century political thought

Felix Steilen (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), “Strauss, Weimar and Maimonides”

Niels Werber (University of Siegen), “Fact, Fiction, and the Work of Political Analysis”

Pietro Sebastianelli (University of Naples Federico II), “From Regimes of Truth to Parrhesia: Two Trajectories in Foucault's Thought”

Gerald Posselt (University of Vienna), “Government by the Truth: Reflections on a Political Theory of Truth”

17:30 – 18:15 – ESHPT ~ Brill First Book Manuscript Prize

Mark Fisher, *Heroic Democracy: Thucydides, Athens, and the Origins of Classical Democratic Theory*

Chair: Peter Schroeder (UCL, ESHPT President)

Discussant: Andrea Catanzaro (University of Genova)

Day 2: Tuesday, October 6

9:15 – 9:30 – coffee

9:30 – 11:30 – Session 4

Panel 4a: Secrets, lies, and international affairs

Giovan Giuseppe Monti (University of Naples, Federico II), “The Italian Early Modern Secretary: Between Secrecy, Dissimulation, and Reason of State”

Gustavo Adolfo Nobile Mattei (University of Bologna), “‘Veritas supprimitur fere absque periculo’: The problem of lying in international relations (17th century)”

Joseph Crozier (Aberystwyth University), “A Code of Honour? Truth-Telling in the Secret Service of William III”

Paolo Pissavino (Independent scholar), “Politics and Secrecy in Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz (Madrid 1606-Vigevano 1682)”

Panel 4b: Rituals and Strategies of Persuasion from Plato to the Present

Paulo Butti de Lima (University of San Marino), “Ritual, Factual, and Existential Truths: A Reappraisal of Plato's Noble Lie”

Rana Connelly (Marmara University), “Persuading or Discoursing? Misgivings in Turkish Politics through Public Lenses”

Dominik Pietzcker (Shanghai International Studies University), “The Cultural Dialectics of Propaganda”

James Connelly (University of Hull), “Some Reflections on Truth, Expertise, and Politics”

Panel 4c: Managing Truth in contemporary political thought

Iwona Barwicka-Tylek (Jagiellonian University) & Anna Ceglarska (Jagiellonian University), “Meaningful Fictions and the Credibility of Political Speech”

Elżbieta Ciżewska-Martyńska (University of Warsaw), “Wandering in Truth” Józef Tischner's Reading of Ideological Seduction”

Inês Pinheiro (NOVA University, Lisbon), “The Hypocrisy of Sincerity: Mandeville and Shklar on the Political Management of Truth”

Panel 4d: Ideologies, invented traditions, and international relations

Tuba Eldem (Fenerbahçe University), “Post-Truth Populism and Authoritarian Resilience: The Case of Turkey”

Jean-François Drolet (Queen Mary University of London), “Of Populist Realisms and Civilisational Suicides: Paleoconservatism and the Ideological Origins of the Trumpian Revolution in US Foreign Policy”

Carlo Morganti (University of Pisa), “Truth and Plausibility as Tools for Analyzing the Present: A Political Perspective Applied to International Law”

Ian Klinke (Oxford), “Timeless Truth and Earthly Origins: Geopolitics before Geopolitics”

11:30 – 12:30 – Lifetime achievement award ~ Lea Campos Boralevi

12:30 – 13:30 – Lunch

13:30 – 15:30 - Session 5

Panel 5a: Reason of State from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment

Esben Korsgaard Rasmussen (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), “Reason of State, Publication, and ‘Effective Truth’”

Antonina Januszkiewicz (European University Institute), “No Disclosure affects Secrecy: Strategic Publication of State Secrets during the Fronde”

Silvio Antonio Pellico (“Aldo Cecchi” Institute), “The Truth Revealed: Antonio Pérez's 'Las Relaciones' as a Tool for the Construction of the Black Legend and White Legend of Philip II of Spain”

Giorgio Volpe (University of Naples, Federico II), “Secrecy and Transparency between the Enlightenment and the Revolution: Freemasonry and Secret Societies”

Panel 5b: Politics and deceit in Ancient political thought

Jaroslav Daneš (University of Hradec Králové), “Deceit, Education and the Military in Xenophon and Sophocles”

Mark Fisher (Georgetown), “When Speech Becomes Specious: Thucydides on *Euprepeia* and the Collapse of Political Authority”

Andrea Catanzaro (University of Genova), “‘A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes’: Untrue Dream, but True Political Consequences in the Second Book of the *Iliad*”

Ondřej Vinař (University of Hradec Králové), “Aristophanes on Conspiracy Theories and Conspirators”

Panel 5c: Claims to truth and the narrative construction of political communities

Nicola Bassoni (University of Genoa), “Inventing 'Real Japan,': Authenticity Narratives in Modern Japanese Political Thought from a Global Perspective, 1910s-1940s”

Seungeun Lee (University of St Andrews), “Fabrication and Reflection: Commerce, Despotism and Modernity in Chantreau's *Voyage fait en Russie* (1794)”

Csaba Levai (University of Debrecen), “The US Declaration of Independence, Authorship, and Competing Claims to Political Truth”

Colin Tyler (University of Hull), “Truths, Worlds, and Politics in the British Idealists”

Panel 5d: Truth and untruth in religion and politics

Francesco Malaguti (Independent Scholar), “Religion as an Instrument of Social Order in the Thought of Giordano Bruno”

Stefano Visentin (University of Urbino Carlo Bo), “Theoretical Untruth and Political Truth of Prophecy in Spinoza's Theological-political treatise”

Martin Pjecha (University of Vienna), “The Politics of Truth in the Thought of Jan Comenius”

Laszlo Kontler (Central European University), “True and False Glory: Enlightened Monarchy in Fenelon's *Télémaque*”

15:30 – 15:45 – coffee

15:45 – 17:15 – Session 6

Panel 6a: Propaganda and mass politics in the 20th century

Michele Basso (University of Padova), “‘Propaganda is essentially Not Science’: The Role of Propaganda in Emil Lederer's *State of the Masses*”

Maria Pia Paternò (University of Naples, Federico II), “True Lies: counter-falsification and disillusionment in the literary production of G. Anders”

Moritz Pitscheider (Chemnitz University of Technology), “The State as Truth: Revolt against reason and the Fascist Myth”

Panel 6b: Truth and untruth in political economy and the law

Annalisa Furia (University of Bologna), “Against the Untruths of Political Economy: Pierre Leroux, the Trial of Classical Political Economy and the Truth of Solidarity”

Eleonora Buono (University of Manchester), “‘Instructions in Social Economy’: Truth, Political Economy and Authority in William Stanley Jevons' Thought

Andrea Di Carlo (University of Pisa), “Supreme Lies: Reading *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* (2022) through Hannah Arendt”

Panel 6c: The role of truth in the ‘new science’ of politics

Andrew Byrne (University of York), “Beyond True and False: Hobbes, new science, and new knowing”

Melike Çakan (University of Helsinki), “The Garment of the Mind: Dissimulation in Late Renaissance Conversation and Politics”

Ferenc Hörcher (Ludovika University of Public Service), “The Peculiar Badge of our Truth Should be Vertue”

17:30 – 18:45 – Keynote 2 ~ Lisa Kattenberg (University of Amsterdam): “‘True Enough’? Truth, Necessity, and Negotiating Peace in the Early Modern Spanish World”

20:30 – Conference Dinner – Ristorante La Bersagliera

Address: Borgo Marinari, 10/11 – Banchina Santa Lucia
80132 Naples, Italy
<https://www.labersagliera.it/>

* 50 Euro dinner payment due no later than September 6

Day 3: Wednesday, October 7

9:00 – 11:00 – Session 7

Panel 7a: Truth and the state apparatus

Niall Bond (Université Lumière Lyon 2), “Will, Choice, and Truth in the Polis: Reason and Volition in Political Thought”

Anna Rita Gabellone (University of Salento), “Sidney Webb and ‘propaganda’ during the First World War”

Alessandro Laganà (Université Paris 8 / Università degli Studi di Perugia), “Can the ruler speak (the truth)? Governmental parrhesia and reformism in Pierre Mendès France and Michel Rocard”

Gabriel Vernacchia (University of Naples Federico II), “Secrecy and Transparency: The Democratization of the International System in Norberto Bobbio”

Panel 7b: Anachronism and Truth: The Cast Study of Merit

Pasquale Terracciano (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata) “Challenging Anachronism: the history of merit”

Salvatore Cingari (Università per Stranieri di Perugia), “Meritocracy as an Ideology”

Zaccarias Gigli (Università per Stranieri di Perugia), “The Untruth of Meritocracy and the Truth of Ignorance: Hayek between Dispersed Knowledge and Spontaneous Order”

Damiano Lembo (Università degli Studi di Linköping), “Truth and Untruth in Kurt Vonnegut’s conception and work”

Panel 7c: Alternative Truth: Beyond Truth and Untruth in American politics and political thought

Maria Teresa Pacilè (University of Messina), “‘Lying in Politics’: Truth, Post-Truth and New Styles of Political Thinking

Luisa Borghesi (Tor Vergata University of Rome), “‘Noble lies’ and Political Regimes: Leo Strauss’ Legacy on Neoconservatism from the Perspective of Francis Fukuyama”

Andrea Cannizzo (University of Messina), “Mystification, Abstraction, and Moral Hypocrisy: Edward W. Said on the 2003 Iraq War”

Maria Giorgia Caraceni (Guglielmo Marconi University) & Manuel Arias-Maldonado (University of Málaga), “Populism and its Epistemic Fallacies: On Democratic Decision-Making and Truth in the Post-Truth Era”

Franco M. Di Sciullo (University of Messina), “Alternative Truth: Crossing the Boundaries, Reassessing Reality”

11:00 – 12:00: ESHPT executive committee meeting – election of new officers

12:00 – 13:15 - Keynote 3 ~ Nicolas Guilhot (European University Institute): “Populism, Conspiracism, and the End-time: on the Legacy of Norman Cohn’s ‘Pursuit of the Millennium’”

13:15 – 13:30 – Concluding remarks – (Peter Schroeder, UCL)