

UL Summer School: Standing for the West on Its Borderlands: Soft and Hard Security Dilemmas and Opportunities of the Baltic States

This Summer School will provide an overview of one of the key trends in soft and hard security dilemmas and opportunities of the Baltic states.

The objective will be to expose students to the latest trends in soft and hard security dilemmas (with more practical examples), including, countering disinformation, critical thinking, media literacy, propaganda and emotions and their impacts on large scale groups.

This Summer school will be divided into 2 parts:

1. Introduction part – this part will cover historical background of the Baltics experience of systematic Russian gaslighting designed to make people doubt their national history, culture and economic development;
2. Hard and Soft Security Dilemmas with practical examples – this part will cover brief introduction in Latvia – Russia relations and how deterring Russia in Baltic region from EU perspective, also, this part will cover Baltics experience in countering with disinformation, propaganda, fake news and media literacy

In covering these concepts during the course, the focus will be on practical aspects of hard and soft security dilemmas from practical aspects. Based on summer school description, organizers will provide some practical fieldtrips to LATO (Latvian Transatlantic Organization), STRATCOM (NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence) and parliament (Saeima) of Republic of Latvia.

What you will learn: basic knowledge of hard and soft security dilemmas concept and how small countries can deter big neighbours. Students will also improve knowledge of countering disinformation, propaganda and fake news.

Target group: open to all students on the level of BA and MA.

The programme is designed to familiarize the building blocks of hard and soft security dilemmas. The course focuses on main key trends in security dilemmas.

Study load: lectures, seminars, self-study and study field trips. All events will be organized on-site (if COVID-19 pandemic will not affect it).

Credits: 6 ECTS

Language: English

Course director: lect. S.Struberga

Location: Riga, University of Latvia

Time: July 17 till July 28, 2023

Course fee: 750 EUR

Housing fee: from 300 EUR (the approx. price for 14 days in the city; not included in course fee)

Minimum number of students: 10

The structure of Summer programme:

1. I part includes:

Lecture “Historical formation of the Baltic area of Western borderlands” *Lect. E.Engizīrs*

Description: Students will gain knowledge and understanding of cultural processes in Latvia in 20th century, learn cultural facts, ideas and detect the most famous Latvian intellectuals.

Fieldtrip *Latvian War museum*

Lect. E.Engizīrs

Description: <https://www.karamuzejs.lv/lkm/about-museum>

Lecture “Baltics societies in 21st centuries: ethics and linguistics perspectives.” *Lect.S.Struberga*

Description: Overview of ethnics and linguistics composition of Baltic societies (*will be updated*)

Lecture “Baltic history as a battlefield for minds in Russia’s self-proclaimed hybrid war with the West”

E.Engizīrs

Description: (will be updated)

Lecture “Latvian-Russian relations”

Assoc.prof. T.Rostoks

Description: Russia looms large in Latvia’s foreign policy, but Latvian-Russian relations have been mostly dormant since 2014. There have only been a few high-level official visits of Latvian political leaders to Russia, and no sitting Russian prime minister or president has visited Latvia. The lecture seeks to unpack Latvia’s complicated relationship with Russia. It covers the 30 years since Latvia regained independence from the Soviet Union. The lecture looks at military, economic, historical, and political aspects of Latvia’s relations with Russia, while also paying attention on Russia’s potential to mobilize its so-called compatriots in Latvia.

2. II part includes:

Lecture “Public Diplomacy in 21st Century: what have Great Powers to say and what does it mean for their Neighbours?”

Lect. S.Struberga

Description: The set of the lecture and seminar will cover such issues as contemporary theoretical debates about public diplomacy as part of foreign policy realized by the state, different interpretations of this phenomenon as well as the most prominent instruments used by countries within their PD strategies. PD of Russia, EU, France, Germany, and the US will be analysed. Particular attention will be paid to the structure, means, and messages of Russian Public Diplomacy in the Baltic States in order to describe the ways how public diplomacy further Russian foreign policy goals in the Baltics and the potential consequences of such policies. Lecturer will address the issue of Chinese informative presence in the Baltics as well. No less important attention will be paid to the strategic communication as part of public diplomacy and wider foreign policy approach.

Lecture “Deterring Russia in the Baltic region”

Assoc.prof. T. Rostoks

Description: The annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the onset of the military conflict in East Ukraine have fundamentally altered NATO’s relations with Russia. Since then, NATO has tried to deter Russia from initiating military aggression against the Baltic states, also known as the most vulnerable members of the Alliance. NATO’s efforts to deter Russia have included clearly communicating resolve to defend the Baltics against potential Russia’s aggression, more and more focused military exercises, and placing NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battlegroups in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The lecture evaluates the main components of NATO’s deterrence posture in the Baltic states, including Lithuania’s, Latvia’s, and Estonia’s own military capabilities, the effects of NATO eFP tripwire forces, military mobility, and the combined military and economic power of the Alliance. Although deterrence has seemingly succeeded, deterrence successes are notoriously difficult to identify. The lecture also examines gaps in NATO’s deterrence posture in the Baltic region.

Lecture “Narratives and events and manipulation with social groups”

Prof. J.Škilters

Description: Humans are segmenting their perceptual and cognitive environment into objects -- in case of space, these are topologically constrained and extended parts of the world; in case of time these objects are events. Events consist of objects and their configurations that are modified according to certain principles that normally fit into a narrative structure. Event borders are sensitive to human perceptual and cognitive processing. In my talk I will briefly explain the experimental evidence and theoretical background of the work on event perception and will show that individuals and social groups are sensitive to events both as containing shared past (and therefore generating common ground) but also as units linking attention. In the latter case humans might be attentionally blind and therefore get manipulated if their attention is guided by one event

sequence (one narrative structure) while there is a parallel one that is outside of the attention. Several demonstrations and results of experiments will be provided. Human sensitivity to events can be used to impact or manipulate also for political purposes.

Lecture "Emotions (individual and social) and their impacts on large-scale groups"

Prof. J.Škilters

Description: In my presentation I will (a) show the complexity of the definitions that are applied to emotions within different theoretical frameworks in the 21st century, (b) explore differences between individual and collective (community level) emotional reactions, and (c) show some evidence that large-scale social groups can be strategically manipulated by coordinating their emotions (examples from recent cases in social network communication will be provided). Finally, some generalisations will be formulated emphasising the costs and benefits of emotional reactions in large-scale social groups but also the danger of emotional impacts in respect to political contexts will be highlighted.

Lecture "Civil society: perspective of Baltic states"

Asoc.prof. I.Ijabs

Description: will be updated.

Lecture "Humour as a communication tool: the case of New Year's Eve television in Russia"

Prof. Žaneta Ozoliņa

Description: Humour entertains, but can also be used for propaganda purposes if it reaches a large audience and influences their emotional response to specific topics. Prof. Ž.Ozoliņa will present results of case study which focuses on humour as a comprehensive concept: elements of humour that serve a propagandistic function, including shared knowledge, the target audience, the perception of humour, the functions of humour, and the communication process, are identified and analysed in New Year's Eve programming on Russian television.

Lecture "Propaganda, disinformation, misinformation and other communication instruments as a part of communications for information power projections"

Lect. S. Struberga

Description: The aim of this set of lecture and seminar is to inform students about the meaning of such fashionable and increasingly important concepts as propaganda, information campaigns, misinformation, and disinformation, as well as many others related to the toolbox of political communication of different state and non-state actors for gaining power in the 21st century. With a help of practical tasks and the use of interactive learning methods during seminars, the lecturer will promote the development of the skills to realize a practical analysis of political information campaigns. Emphasis will be put on specific case studies and experiences of the Baltic States as the borderlands of EU and Transatlantic community, and the Western hemisphere in general. Analytical tasks will help to apply the accumulated knowledge accumulated in practice.

Lecture “(In)effective intercultural communication?”

Lect.L.Ločmele

Description: In today’s world intercultural literacy is highly regarded as essential component for reaching economically and politically motivated aims when working, for instance, in multicultural organizations, developing campaigns for diverse international and local audiences etc. While practically useful, such an approach is rather narrow and, in fact, often prefers manipulation and oversimplification over engagement in essential mutual learning and respect.

During the lecture we will touch upon popular ideas of intercultural communication skills, effectiveness, and competence while critically assessing their relevance and applicability in various professional and personal contexts. During the workshop participants will engage in simulation game that will expose them to cultural difference allowing to become more aware of own intercultural learning process.