

The Politics of Emotions, 2025.

Discourse - Media - Digital Spaces.

International conference organised by the Centre d'Études Linguistiques - Corpus, Discours et Sociétés (CEL) of Jean Moulin Lyon 3 Université and the Centre Interlangues: Texte, Image, Langage (TIL) of the Université de Bourgogne, as part of an annual research project entitled "La politique au prisme des émotions" (The Politics of Emotions).

9 and 10 October 2025 Lyon, France

Emotional dynamics are omnipresent in today's political and social processes—from the rise of populism to the crisis of representativeness, but also within many questionable democratic innovations and the uncertain renewal of civic engagement. These dynamics underpin the crystallisation of identity building in our ever-changing societies (Cilia & Wodak, 2021). The analysis of emotional drivers is therefore necessary to explain the political phenomena that characterise the contemporary public sphere. It also represents a fruitful field of study for understanding the changes associated with the widespread use of social media platforms. Digital tools have an impact on the *publicité* (publicness and publicity) of political discourse and on the new repertoires of action put in place by engaged citizen groups through the creation of digital platforms, the broadcasting of videos, etc.

This interdisciplinary conference aims to reflect on the use of emotions in political discourse, be it in actual legislative assemblies, among the "chattering classes" on conventional media, or on digital platforms. The objective is to explore the discursive and visual dimensions of emotional levers that drive political dynamics and the practice of citizenship in today's world. The ambition is to compare methodologies and corpora from different linguistic and cultural areas in order to understand, for example, the role of emotions in the emergence of new forms of protest and in the communication strategies of current forms of populism. How do emotional structures inform group identities? To what extent do they shape collective representations? What discursive and rhetorical devices are used to convey emotions in politics, and is it possible to measure their influence? These avenues for reflection invite us to also analyse the interactions between institutional and non-institutional players.

Academic studies of emotions have long emphasised the pivotal role of language, which is considered a key factor in explaining human behaviour (Coppin & Sanders, 2010). The theoretical and methodological tools of linguistics and discourse analysis, together with the contributions of political science and the sociology of social movements, provide fertile ground for studying the role of emotions in the contemporary public sphere and their impact on the construction of political ideologies. Focusing on the 21st century, several research topics can be envisaged. A non-exhaustive list would include the following:

- **The role of emotions in political discourse**, against the backdrop of a crisis of representativeness. What are the emotional drivers used by institutional players to persuade citizens? How are conflicting emotions incorporated into the communication strategies of populist and extremist parties? Applied linguistics is particularly relevant for highlighting the importance of certain markers, lexemes and morphemes traditionally associated with emotions in political communication. Proposals can also focus on rhetoric in general – and the fundamental contribution of pathos (Amossy 2016) – but also on certain emotionally-loaded research fields, such as metaphor studies or the narrative analysis of political storytelling. Also relevant would be a critical approach to discourse aimed at deciphering the way language is used for purposes of domination and manipulation by certain political actors.

- **The emotional strategies of citizen protest or disobedience movements in contemporary public spaces**. To what extent do collective emotions help build the identity of protest movements and establish new collaborative practices and forms of political engagement? Proposals could also focus on the study of the semiology of demonstrations, including the choice of slogans, symbols and set designs, as well as the demonstrators' physical postures, which might convey emotions. One leading interrogation could be: if anger is a driver of protest, how is that anger staged?

- **The role of emotions in traditional media and digital media discourse**. The aim is to explore the link between emotional dynamics and the construction of identity through the analysis of the digital and visual strategies implemented by political actors and/or protest movements. What are the new emotional markers in the digital sphere - hashtags, emoticons, short messages, videos, etc.? How do they contribute to the formation of emotional communities? How can digital tools reinforce or reduce emotional polarisation? The contribution of multimodality seems fundamental, and semiotic studies - as well as studies of images and other visual representations - will be more than welcome.

Submissions should include an abstract (up to 500 words, excluding references) as well as a short biography and should be sent to:

- Alexandra Palau Alexandra.Palau@u-bourgogne.fr
- Denis Jamet Coupé denis.jamet-coupe@univ-lyon3.fr
- Alma-Pierre Bonnet alma-pierre.bonnet@univ-lyon3.fr

Keywords: emotions; digital media; critical discourse analysis; political communication; speech; metaphors

Key dates:

Submission: 20 October 2024 to 15 March 2025

Notification of acceptance: 15 May 2025

Registration: June 2025

Conference: 9 and 10 October 2025

Selected Bibliography

Amossy, R. (2016). *L'argumentation dans le discours*. Paris: Armand Collin.

Arias Maldonado, M. (2016). *La democracia sentimental. Política y emociones en el siglo XXI*. Barcelona: Página Indómita.

Blondiaux, L., & Traïni, C. (Eds.). (2018). *La Démocratie des émotions*. SciencesPo Les Presses, Paris.

Boquet, D., Nagy, P., & Zanetti Domingues, L. (Eds.). (2022). *Histoire des émotions collectives. Epistémologie, émergences, expériences*. Paris: Classiques Garnier.

Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor* (1st ed.). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Charteris-Black, J. (2014). *Analysing Political Speeches: Rhetoric, Discourse and Metaphor*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cillia, R., & Wodak, R. (2021). La construction discursive de l'identité nationale. *Mots. Les langages du politique*, 127, 99-119. <https://doi.org/10.7202/040037ar>

Collins, L., & Koller, V. (2023). *Viral Language: Analysing the Covid-19 Pandemic in Public Discourse*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Conoscenti, M. (2018). Big Data, Small Data, Broken Windows and Fear Discourse: Brexit, the EU and the Majority Illusion, in *Discourses and fears: inclusion and exclusion in Europe. De Europa*, 1(2), 59-78. <https://doi.org/10.13135/2611-853X/2914>

Coppin, G., & Sander, D. (2010). Théories et concepts contemporains en psychologie de l'émotion. In: *Systèmes d'interaction émotionnelle*. Paris: Hermès Science publications-Lavoisier, 25–56.

- Demata, M. (2017). The Language of Fear: Cybercrime and “the borderless realms of cyberspace” in British news. *I-Land Journal*, 1, 126-144. DOI: [10.26379/1008](https://doi.org/10.26379/1008)
- Demata, M., Conoscenti, M., & Stavrakakis, Y. (2020). Riding the Populist Wave. Metaphors of Populism and Anti-Populism in the *Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*. *Iperstoria*, 15, 8-35. DOI: [10.13136/2281-4582/2020.i15.686](https://doi.org/10.13136/2281-4582/2020.i15.686)
- Demata, M., Knoblock, N., & Zummo, M. (2022). The Languages and Anti-Languages of Health Communication in the Age of Conspiracy Theories, Mis/Disinformation and Hate Speech. *Lingue e Linguaggi*, 47. ISSN 2239-0367, e-ISSN 2239-0359.
- Funes, M. J., Ganuza, E., & García-Espín, P. (Eds.). (2020). *El descontento movilizador*. Madrid: CSIC.
- Marcus, G. E. (2008). *Le citoyen sentimental. Emotions et politique en démocratie*. Paris: SciencesPo Les Presses.
- Koller, V. (2022). Words and Worlds of Desire: The Power of Metaphor in Framing Sexuality. In: *Metaphors and Analogies in Sciences and Humanities*. Cham: Springer, 363-382.
- Koller, V., Borza, N., Demata, M., et al. (2023). *Voices of Supporters: Populist parties, social media and the 2019 European elections*. Benjamins.
- Koller, V., Kopf, S., & Miglbauer, M. (2019). *Discourses of Brexit*. London: Routledge.
- Kövecses, Z. (2000). *Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mudde, C. (2021). *La ultraderecha hoy*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- Mudde, C. (2004). The Populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, 39(4), 541–563.
- Musolff, A. (2016). *Political metaphor analysis: discourse and scenarios*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Nez, H. (2022). *Démocratie réelle. L’héritage des Indignés espagnols*. Vulaines sur Seine: Editions du Croquant.
- Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2019). *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sobolewska, M., & Ford, R. (2020). *Brexitland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*. London: Sage.
- Wodak, R., De Cillia, R., Reisigl, M., et al. (2009). *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.