**Youth: Interdisciplinary perspectives on youth identities and political- social participation (Blended Intensive Program)**

Program presentation and syllabus

28.02.2024 (version)

Youth has been a contested life stage in biographical, as well as cultural, social, economic and political terms at least since the onset of modernities. Studies of youth bring into focus both the participatory and creative potential of young people, as well as the systematic processes of their exclusion and marginalization. Youth is constructed as the age of the future which in the contemporary world is associated with uncertainties regarding environment and social crises. This implies a political and social responsibility placed on youth in relation to conditions of possibility built up by previous generations that now need to be rethought and acted upon. At the same time, in biographical terms the age of youth seems to have been gradually expanding from a relatively brief period of adolescence at the onset of the 20th century to contemporary perspectives on emerging adulthood as a relatively open-ended life stage.

In this Blended Intensive Program (responding to the Erasmus+ call), we seek to co-investigate what youth means today and what it means to be young in the contemporary world. We aim at taking stalk of interdisciplinary perspectives to these questions so as to maximize dialogue between understandings that favor a focus on contextualized lived experience and those that engage in studying the practices and systems that shape the social, economic and political infrastructures that shape these experiences. As such, students participating in the program will gain an in-depth understanding of recent research and research methodologies in youth studies from an interdisciplinary perspective, as well as in youth work practices from an international and local perspective. The program entails both virtual and face-to-face training and mentoring activities. Face-to-face activities will be conducted at UVT, in Timișoara, Romania.

The Interdisciplinary perspectives on youth identities and political-social participation Blended Intensive Program seeks to create a learning context for students that will enhance their awareness of challenges and opportunities of social and political participation of youth with a special focus on marginalized youth and processes of identity building. As a byproduct of the program, we expect to create a network of interested researchers, practitioners, students and young people focusing on youth related issues within or connected to the UNITA European consortium, as well as beyond.

The target group for the program is advanced BA, as well as MA and PhD students interested in conducting research with and about young people, as well as in engaging professionally in youth work. The program is open to students of any specialty or discipline, but the program may be especially interesting for students of social sciences, education, social work and psychology. While BA and MA students are encouraged to take stalk of both practical and research oriented activities, PhD students will be actively involved in working with the international program faculty to mentor BA and MA students on research related questions.

Interested students will apply through their own institution – as different institutional practices for short term Erasmus mobilities do not allow for a unitary approach. A committee from each participating institution will review the applications and select participants according to a set of own criteria, as well as (1) motivation to participate, (2) ways in which the student aims to use with experience of participating in the program in the future, (3) previous relevant experience, (4) overall balance between disciplines and (5) self-assessed or certified level of English. PhD students interested in participating will be given priority if working on a topic or with a methodology broadly relevant to the program aims and/or one particular thematic cluster and if they are interested in participating in the program related mentoring activities.

We will select 25 mobile students + 5 students from UVT. If more students are interested, if possible, numbers will be increased to up to 35 total participants and certain students may be waitlisted and will be notified on a short term basis of the possibility to participate if other students withdraw.

International participating students will be awarded 6 ECTS for completing the course. This involves active participation in both the online and face-to-face activities in the course with a short term Erasmus mobility and delivering a short project presentation of a collective youth campaign project as part of the final project webinar. UVT based students will be awarded a participation certificate and may be awarded 2 ECTS for volunteering during the face to face component.

International students should attend via an Erasmus short term student mobility. They will receive accommodation in double rooms in the UVT university dorms, as well as lunch during project days free of charge. UVT students participating will receive lunch during project days, free of charge.

Learning outcomes:

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* Participants will gain an overview over the interdisciplinary field of youth studies, on the political and social participation of youth in the European Union today with a special focus on marginalized youth, as well as identity building in relation to cultural diversity and cultural heritage.
* Participants will learn how to work with young people to foster active, dialogic learning and youth social and political participation.
* Participants will gain an overview over contexts of youth participation (NGOs, youth centers, social centers) and the present challenges and opportunities these contexts face.

Methods:

* The BIP seeks to create an active learning context that will embed experiential, exploratory, collaborative and reflective learning activities with ‘classic’ lectures.
* Field visits to local NGOs and other social actors (socio-educational centers, etc) will be a key part of activities. These will be complemented with informative lectures that will seek to give an overview of the situation of youth in Europe and globally.

Students will engage in project based learning through working collaboratively in mixed teams on a common message encouraging/about young people’s social and political participation. They will create a common product (podcast, poster, video) that will be used to voice their message.

Summary of key administrative questions

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| **Target audience / Participants profile:**   * The program is open to BA, MA and PhD level students with an interest in youth studies. |
| **No of ECTS issued:** 6 ECTS |
| **Language of instruction and requirements:**   * Good command of the English language * Interest in youth studies * Media editing skills are an advantage but not a prerequisite |
| **Dates for physical activity:** 10-15.07.2024 (activity days); 8/9.07-16.06 (travel dates) |
| **Location of physical activity:** Timișoara, Romania |
| **Dates for virtual component:** May- July 2024 |

Thematic clusters

1. **Youth: social, political and civic participation**
2. **Youth Identities, Cultural Diversity and Cultural Heritage**
3. **Youth, marginalization and the contemporary perma-crisis**
4. **Research methodologies in youth studies**

Each thematic cluster will bring together relevant program faculty teaching the associated modules during the face to face mobility and students that want to design their collaborative or individual campaign project within the thematic cluster. Thematic clusters should meet for mentoring sessions during the face to face program. Thematic clusters will also involve field visits and guest lectures from youth work practitioners working outside university settings.

**Program faculty**

Cluster 1: Youth: social, political and civic participation (Marius Matichescu, UVT; Bruno Ferreira da Costa UBI + 1, Sotiris Petropoulus, UoP, Asteris Huliaras UoP)

Cluster 2: Youth Identities, cultural diversity and cultural heritage (Roberta Ricucci, Unito, Stella Pina Pintor, Anna Miglietta Unito, Viviana Premazzi GMT, Pilar Rivero Unizar)

Cluster 3: Youth, marginalization and the contemporary perma-crisis (Viviana Patti, Unito, Leyla Safta-Zecheria UVT; Mugur Ciumăgeanu UVT))

Cluster 4: Research methodologies in youth studies (Leyla Safta-Zecheria, UVT)

**Timeline of project activities**

March 2024 – Call for Participants opens in all partner universities

Until 1st of May – Participating Universities organize the selection process of participating students via Erasmus offices

May 2024 – First 120 minutes online webinar: **Introductions and collaborative work**. General presentation of the blended intensive program, faculty and students, socialization activities. Outcome: students will explore working in teams discussing the challenges for youth in their particular social contexts with a view of co-creating a campaign (as final output) – a design sketch will be prepared until the next webinar in the random online team. Readings and preparatory materials will be distributed to prepare for the face to face meeting.

June 2024 – Second 120 minutes online webinar: update on the program of the face to face activities. **Presentations of the campaign sketches.** Discussion of the campaign sketches in new random international small groups – around the theme of relevance of the campaigns and how they could be improved. Young are motivated to think about which type of campaign sketch they would like to work with during the program.

**10th – 15th July 2024 –** **Physical mobility phase in Timișoara, Romania**. Intense research and practice oriented training activities.

16th-31st July – **Upload of final projects via googleforms and** **final project webinar –** presentations of youth campaign sketches and final project evaluation.

**Thematic and practical clusters**

1. **Social and political participation of young people**
2. **Youth Identities, Cultural Diversity and Cultural Heritage**
3. **Youth, marginalization and the contemporary perma-crisis**
4. **Research methodologies in youth studies**

**Program coordinator**

Leyla Safta-Zecheria is an anthropologist and a pedagogist. She holds a PhD in Political Science/ Public Policy from Central European University Budapest and an MA in European Ethnology from Humboldt University Berlin. She is a lecturer at the Educational Sciences Department, an affiliate of the University Clinic for Psychopedagogical Therapies and Counselling, West University of Timișoara , a postdoctoral research with the project "Philosophy in Late Socialist Europe: Theoretical Practices in the Face of Polycrisis" at the Babeș-Bolyai University and a Research Affiliate at the Democracy Institute at Central European University Budapest. Her research interests include youth, critical policy studies, disability, care, memory, as well as participatory and visual research methods.

**Program contacts**

UVT (host institution):

Academic coordinator: Leyla Safta-Zecheria ([leyla.safta@e-uvt.ro](mailto:leyla.safta@e-uvt.ro))

Institutional contact for Erasmus partnerships: Cristina Cojocaru ([cristina.cojocaru@e-uvt.ro](mailto:cristina.cojocaru@e-uvt.ro))

Institutional contact for short-term Erasmus mobilities: Bianca Bekir ([bianca.moldovan@e-uvt.ro](mailto:bianca.moldovan@e-uvt.ro))

Faculty contacts by institution + institutional contacts by institution:

Program of the face to face component (10-15.July.2024)

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|  | 10.07 | 11.07 | 12.07 | 13.07 | 14.07 | 15.07. |
| 09.00 – 10.30 |  | Expectations, Getting to know each other.  Presentation of clusters and modules. (Vasile Parvan blvd. Nr 4, 335) | Cluster 2 (II): Youth Identities, Cultural Diversity and Cultural Heritage (335) | Cluster 1 (II): Social, political and civic participation of young people (335) | Cluster 3 (II): Youth, marginalization and the contemporary perma-crisis (335) | Workshopping project ideas in thematic clusters (335) |
| 10.30 – 11.00 |  | Coffee break | Coffee break | Coffee break | Coffee break | Coffee break |
| 11.00 – 12.30 |  | Cluster 2 (I): Youth Identities, Cultural Diversity and Cultural Heritage (335) | Cluster 1 (I): Social, political and civic participation of young people (335) | Cluster 3 (I): Youth, marginalization and the contemporary perma-crisis (335) | Cluster 4: Research Methodologies in Youth Studies (335) | Mentoring session: thematic clusters convene, student groups receive feedback from mentors (335) |
| 12.30 – 14.30 |  | Lunch break | Lunch break | Lunch break | Lunch break | Lunch break |
| 14.30 – 16.00 | Official opening of the BIP (tbd) | Field visit Cluster 2 | Field visit Cluster 1 | Field visit Cluster 3 | Application in cluster 4 + city tour | Final feedback from participants (335) |