
Second circular letter.

Call for papers

From radical democracy to populism

Validity, perspectives and challenges of the work of Ernesto Laclau. 40 years after the publication of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. Towards a radicalisation of democracy and 20 years after the publication of *On Populist Reason*.

24, 25 and 26 September 2025

Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, University of Buenos Aires

2025 marks the anniversary of the publication of two fundamental texts by Ernesto Laclau that have marked the academic-political debate of recent decades on a global scale. *Hegemony and socialist strategy. Towards a radicalisation of democracy*, originally published in 1985 in co-authorship with Chantal Mouffe, was a foundational text that kick-started the constitution of the field of knowledge that was to be called post-Marxism. In a context of the overwhelming rise of neoliberalism, facilitated by the fall of real socialisms and the disorientation of the left, Laclau and Mouffe began their theoretical journey of repositioning politics in a fundamental place to continue thinking about emancipation, but no longer in a univocal or eschatological sense. This was a profound deconstructive gesture towards the Marxist tradition that reached its fundamental assumptions; however, it was not a critique from a position that sought to discredit and discard that tradition (as many in the academic world were eagerly advocating), but from a place that opened the doors to theoretically and politically reclaim the now heterogeneous political struggles to relaunch the left field towards the project of radical democracy. In the construction of radical democracy, Laclau and Mouffe drew on tools from various theoretical traditions, such as psychoanalysis (Freudian and Lacanian) and also Foucault. Deconstruction and construction were the key to the theoretical and political project inaugurated by Laclau and Mouffe. In *On Populist Reason*, originally published in 2005, Laclau took on the task of giving populism the dignity of a theoretical category. A term that had been reviled and often reduced to a defect specific to Latin America was rescued from its marginal place, which also meant returning to the place of politics, since contempt for the former necessarily involved a biased and reductionist reading of the latter. Laclau managed to establish that this 'failed form of Latin American politics' was nothing more than a way of working the social by means of an articulatory logic that knows how to deal with the constitutive indeterminacy of social antagonism.

These anniversaries come in an adverse context for democratic, popular, left-wing and emancipatory discourses. The closing of the cycle of populisms that marked the first quarter of the 21st century and the renewed advance of extreme right-wing, reactionary and fascist discourses in various latitudes pushes us to update the debate on Laclau's theoretical and political legacy. We therefore call for papers on the following thematic axes:

- Post-Marxism, theory and political philosophy.
- Post-Marxism and psychoanalysis.
- Left-wing populism, right-wing populism, authoritarianism, fascism, democracy.
- Populism, radical democracy, human rights and feminism.
- Populisms in comparative perspective.

Abstracts of no more than 200 words are required to be selected for the conference, and you will be asked to indicate in which axis you wish to register your proposal. The deadline for submission of proposals is 1 August 2025. The decision on accepted proposals will be taken on 15 August 2025.

Abstract submission form: <https://forms.gle/o3AMgyn854sugcF27>

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