

The Myth of Communism and the Myth of the Jew - the Old/New Trope of the Polish “New” Right

Kate Korycki
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Thursday, November 8, 2018
2:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room D216



About the Speaker: Kate Korycki obtained her doctorate at the University of Toronto and is now the Peacock Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Political Studies at Queen’s University. She is a comparative political scientist interested in the articulation of identities, collective memories, and group imaginaries. In her dissertation, she developed a politicized collective memory framework to help her analyze how political elites engage the past to constitute and maintain social divisions. She has published on politics of memory and populism, race and transitional justice, and queer identity and statecraft.

About the Lecture: In January of this year, the Polish ruling elites passed its now infamous anti-defamation law. The law criminalized any statements that make Poles co-responsible for the Holocaust; it sparked multi-vocal international condemnation and ensuing partial retrenchment. In this talk, Kate Korycki will use recent events to theorize how the past is politicized in post-transition spaces, how it enters the political language, and what effects it produces. Adapting and expanding the framework of collective memory for the use in political science and anchoring the story in post-transition Poland, Korycki argues that a) the narratives of the past structure political competition, and b) affect the present-day imaginary of common belonging - that is, they determine political positions of players and they reveal who is included in and excluded from the conception of the ‘we.’ She develops the concept of mnemonic capital - a politically productive symbolic resource that accrues to political players based on their turn to, and judgment of, the past - and demonstrate how the distribution of that capital results in sharply differentiated political identities.