



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

DIPARTIMENTO  
DI PSICOLOGIA  
"RENZO CANESTRARI"

## PhD Program in Psychology

### Seminar "Populism in Youth: Understanding and Addressing a Growing Challenge"

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Aula D, Piazza Aldo Moro, Cesena

#### Abstract

Across many established liberal democracies there are reports about growing levels of distrust in political institutions and dissatisfaction with the functioning of democratic processes. At the same time, many countries experience an increasing societal polarization and a public discourse that is characterized by populist rhetoric. Populism is a phenomenon that affects not only adults but also resonates with and influences young people. Particularly on social media, youth are increasingly exposed to populist messages that offer simple solutions to complex problems. This seminar examines the mechanisms and dynamics of populism and explores why adolescents may be especially vulnerable to its appeal.

Together, we will address the following questions:

- What do we know about populism (in youth)?
- What influences the development of populist thinking in youth?
- What can be done to effectively counteract populist tendencies?

The seminar combines concise expert inputs with interactive elements. The goal is to provide participants with a deeper understanding of the topic and practical approaches that can be drawn from recent empirical findings.

#### Suggested reading:

Noack, P. & Eckstein, K. (2023). Populism in youth: Do experiences in school matter? *Child Development Perspectives*, 17(2), 90–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12481>