

Call for contributions to the authors' workshop and special issue on # Covid crisis discourse (online)



An initiative of the DVPW Discourse Group and Crisis Discourse Blog, hosted by the Viadrina Institute of European Studies

Institut für Europastudien
der Europa-Universität
Viadrina

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When the Covid-19 virus started spreading globally, heralding a pandemic, we faced a crisis in its initial medical meaning: a moment deciding about the lives and deaths of a growing group of people, while adequate intervention was unknown and highly uncertain. Debates focussed on epidemiology, measures of containment and the facts and figures, on which they could be based. In the meantime, efforts at understanding the medical crisis have transformed into struggles over the management of social, economic, ecological and political-representational crisis surfacing with the pandemic. We witness recurring features of crisis discourse, be that the construction of extraordinary authority and power, scapegoating, or the celebration of heroes, movers and shakers. At the same time, debates about Covid-19 appear to be specific in that they renegotiate, more radically than did the crises debates before, what is admissible and acceptable between facts and fiction, freedom and repression, solidarity and social exclusion.

This call invites blog posts that investigate such phenomena of recent crisis debate from a discourse-analytical angle. The call addresses discourse scholars and students of discourse studies, who currently research discourses of the Covid-19 pandemic and related aspects of multiple crisis and who specialise in a specific discourse approach. We invite researchers to share initial or consolidated insights of their ongoing work with the specialist community and the wider audience, preparing blog posts for the Crisis Discourse Blog, using one of the following formats: snapshot analysis, slippery concept, heuristic tool, or review (for details on these formats see below).

The Crisis Discourse Blog, founded by Amelie Kutter and supported by an editorial board of discourse scholars from various backgrounds, seeks to engage with aspects of current crisis discourse, its problematic language use, selective and politically performative power and symbolic violence. It presents to the discourse research community and the interested audience interim results of research and provides vantage points for discussing about how we think and talk about crisis and how we can intervene in local debates employing our discourse-analytical expertise (for more details see https://www.amelie-kutter.net/en/2020/12/impact-project_the-crisis-discourse-blog/, re-launch in December 2021). Contributions can be made in both English and German.

At the authors' workshop # Covid crisis discourse, we will discuss both substantive and editorial issues of the submitted contributions in order to boost their quality and prepare them for publication on the blog. We will also exchange views on discourse analytical expertise and discourse research on crisis.

Even if your discourse research does not focus on the Covid-19 pandemic and if you are not intrigued by the current # Covid crisis discourse call, you might find Crisis Discourse Blog is a useful platform for spreading the word about your work. Future calls will relate to the normalisation of right-wing

discourses, to discursive struggles over feminist and gender activism, or the justification of the self-regulating market after recent financial crises. Contributions submitted off these calls for special editions cannot currently be processed. You are always welcome to get in contact, though, if you think your blog post adds to an existing call or issue.

How to participate in the authors' workshop # Covid crisis discourse

Abstracts of **100 words** in English should be submitted to kutter@europa-uni.de **no later than 17 October, 2021**. Abstracts that present a piece of research should point out what aspect or case of crisis discourse they will explore, what discourse approach is used and what format they envisage ('snapshot analysis' or 'slippery concept') and, if applicable, in what (institutional or project) frames the study was conducted. Abstracts that present a middle range concept or heuristic-analytical tool for crisis discourse research should point out what this concept is and why it is revelatory for the analysis of crisis discourse and where its limits lie ('heuristic tool'). Abstracts of 'reviews' should indicate what piece(s) of work on crisis discourse they review, why these are relevant and what general frame/argument is adopted to review the work(s). Submitters will be notified a good week later and learn whether or not their submissions can be considered for the authors' workshop. Drafts of the blog post need then to be submitted by 21 November, 2021, to allow editors and other participants to read them in advance.

What formats and editorial requirements the blogposts need to conform with

Crisis Discourse Blog offers a range of rubrics that can be used for presenting your analysis and reflection of crisis discourse. They put research or reflections on crisis discourse in more accessible format and language compared to academic text genres, while at the same time keeping to rigour in argumentation and scientific analysis. As snapshot analysis, for instance, can start with a personal reflection, puzzling discovery or current event, but will still make transparent how the ensuing analysis was conducted and how it is informed by a discourse approach. References to literature should be scarce and given in endnotes, printing in the full reference following the APSA style, links to sources should also be given in endnotes, printing in the source, the link and the data of access. In all formats, contributions have to come with a 100 words abstract in English and (if applicable) German. Contributors need to provide for language editing and proof reading themselves.

The rubric **Slippery Concepts** highlights ambiguous terms that have become widespread or backgrounded in the course of recent crises, and whose use or non-use has been instrumental in defining current crises in specific and potentially dubious ways. The objective of this rubric is to draw attention to the (non-)uses of these terms and the origins of their different meanings. The aim is to incite reflection upon the contribution of these terms to our contemporary crisis debate. Slippery concepts can be commented on in form of an extended entry to an (imagined) encyclopedia of contemporary political and crisis debate, which emphasizes the etymology and historical semantics of the term and explicates the theoretical perspective from which the term is approached. Slippery concepts can also be commented on in form of a witty column on a specific situation in which the term was used, which highlights the author's puzzlement with the term and her or his further explorations in its uses and misuses. Length: two to five pages or 1000 to 2500 words max.

The rubric **Snapshot Analyses** gathers contributions that provide a brief and pinpointed scientific discourse analysis of a specific substantive feature of current or historic crisis debate, be that the construction of a specific situation as a particular crisis, of a crisis management scenario, of scapegoats or 'fixers' endowed with extraordinary authority. Snapshot analyses usually draw on running discourse-analytical research projects and offer a pre-view on the material under investigation. At the same time, contributors of snapshot analyses use their expert's insight to intervene in current debate and disentangle problematic language use or discourse practice, highlighting the construction of social hierarchies involved. A snapshot analysis is structured along the following elements: a peg that

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highlights the currency or puzzlement associated with the issue investigated and a brief introduction; a paragraph situating the issue in its broader social-political context; a brief explication of how, by which discourse-analytical concepts or categories the isolated issue of crisis discourse is being investigated; and the summary and discussion of that insights generated by that approach. While the style may be essayistic, academic and non-academic references are used and made explicit in footnotes. Length: about eight pages or 4000 words max.

In **Heuristic Tools**, contributors can share their knowledge on a specific discourse-analytical concept that facilitates the exploration of selected aspects of crisis discourse. Posts usually explicate how this concept is understood in some approach of discourse study and point out from which theoretical-epistemological tradition it is derived and how it has been applied so far, drawing on references from academic literature (given in footnotes). They explain why it is particularly suited to get a better understanding of a specific aspect of crisis debate, illustrate this claim drawing on a recent example, and reflect upon limitations of the concept. Concepts and categories are here understood as heuristic tools that help us to grasp specific aspects of a problem investigated, not as artifacts whose relevance we aim to prove. Length: about two pages or 1000 words max.

In **Reviews**, contributors give a brief discussion of recent academic or popular publications on crisis discourse or of works of art that relate to current crisis debate. There ought to be a common theme or leitmotif that guides through the discussion of different works and highlights the reasons why these works deserve attention. Length: about two pages or 1000 words max.

	What is it?	Objectives	Length
Snapshot Analyses	a pinpointed scientific discourse analysis of a specific substantive feature of crisis debate	provide on-the-spot discourse-analytical case studies of crisis construction, crisis management scenario promotion, scapegoating etc.	8 pages or 4000 words max
Slippery Concepts	an investigation of ambiguous terms that have become widespread buzzwords or background in the course of recent crises	discuss origins and current uses of central terms in crisis discourse; raise awareness for manipulative use of ambiguous language	2-5 pages or 1000-2500 words max
Heuristic Tools	a presentation of a specific discourse-analytical concept that facilitates the exploration of crisis discourse	share knowledge on analytical concepts and categories that help grasp specific aspects of crisis debate; situate concepts in their theoretical-epistemological contexts	2 pages or 1000 words max
Reviews	a critique of current discourse-analytical publications on crisis debate	suggest readings on the subject of crisis discourse; critically discuss recent publications in the field	2 pages or 1000 words max