

**UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP (October 31 – December 20, 2024)
ACADEMIC DEBATES**

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During the Internship organized from October 31 to December 20, 2024, held at the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu”, we took part in the academic debates organized every Wednesday. These meetings represented the ideal environment to develop skills in academic debate and free-argued discussion. The debates provided a theoretical and practical basis and gave rise to questions and potential research topics also for students.

The Referendum and Presidential Elections in the Republic of Moldova

The first meeting took place on November 6, 2024, focusing on the analysis and discussion of the presidential elections in the Republic of Moldova (November 2024). The elections were marked by intense competition between Maia Sandu, a pro-European candidate, and Alexandr Stoianoglo, a pro-Russian candidate. Maia Sandu’s victory symbolized the majority’s desire to build a European future for Moldova despite internal and external challenges.

Maia Sandu secured her second presidential term with 55.33% of the votes, demonstrating broad support for European integration. However, the election campaign was heavily influenced by Russian propaganda, which involved social media manipulation, recruiting young people to promote pro-Russian messages, and associating European integration with risks of military conflict.

Implications of the U.S. Presidential Election Results

During the second meeting on November 13, 2024 the results of the presidential elections in the United States were discussed. There were pointed out details regarding both the electoral campaigns and the consequences that the result of the elections may have in the future, at the level of the United States and at global level.

Opinion polls predicted a closer race than it was. In spite of that, Donald Trump won with a large majority of votes over his opponent, Kamala Harris. There were several reasons for this turn of events. The complex vision of the Democrats and the far too progressive changes adopted by them caused a paradigm shift in the public opinion,

leading people to turn to the Republican party, who had a more attractive offer, closer to the needs of the American citizens.

At the end of the debate, it was concluded that the change in the political paradigm and the efficiency of the new government will be noticed over time and the ideas of the newly elected president related to the United States economy and Elon Musk's involvement in the American Government will confirm or refute current predictions.

Romanian Colonization in Dobrogea: A Successful Modernization Project Considerations on the Philosophical Language of Basarab Nicolescu

On November 20, 2024, two activities took place during the meeting: the presentation of the book "Romanian Colonizations in Dobrogea, A Successful Social Modernization Project" by Enache Tuşa and the presentation by Cristian Andreescu titled "Considerations on the Philosophical Language of Basarab Nicolescu".

The book "Romanian Colonizations in Dobrogea" by Enache Tuşa is the result of over a decade of research, analyzing the social and economic transformations of Dobrogea. This strategic region was lost in 1420 to the Ottoman Empire and retroceded to Romania in 1878. The controversy of that time was discussed, with the government supporting colonization by providing land and financial aid. The cultural diversity of the Turk-Tatar population and the role of areas like Brăila and Galaţi in the region's development were also debated. Leaders such as Kogălniceanu and Brătianu modernized Dobrogea through infrastructure, education, and healthcare. Projects like the Cernavodă Bridge exemplified the success of these efforts. The book highlights Dobrogea as a successful example of modernization.

During the second session on November 20, the personality of Basarab Nicolescu and his significant contributions were presented, emphasizing his role in developing contemporary philosophical language. The presentation covered essential aspects of his life and career. Born in Romania but settled in France, Nicolescu built a multidisciplinary career in fields such as physics, literature, and philosophy, emphasizing transdisciplinarity. His innovative contributions, such as redefining the concepts of reality and the real, were highlighted, along with how they connect seemingly distinct domains, offering a unique perspective on the interdependence between knowledge and existence.

Romanian Presidential Elections

During the fourth meeting (November 27, 2024), we discussed the Romanian presidential elections. They stood out more as a TikTok challenge than a classic electoral campaign. Călin Georgescu launched his candidacy without media support, but attracted attention through a wave of viral videos on social networks. Although initially rated poorly, Georgescu quickly rose to first place, thanks to massive mobilization through TikTok.

Only 57% of young people between 18 and 24 voted, despite targeting them through online messages. Their lack of interest raises questions about information and involvement. The explanatory factors were: the lack of suitable candidates, the lack of voter involvement and the exclusion of Diana Şoşoacă.

He stood out with an atypical rhetoric, centered on spirituality and divinity, which differentiated him from other popular figures online. The diaspora significantly influenced the results. However, confusion regarding withdrawn candidates, such as Ludovic Orban, led to the loss of some votes.

Presidential Elections and Their Aftermath

The fifth meeting took place on December 4, 2024, when the notion of the political impostor was discussed, following the appearance of Călin Georgescu in the 2nd round of the presidential elections. Călin Georgescu appears on the political scene just like in the stories in which a family man, after 30 years of domestic life, disappears and reappears a week later with a different name and a different family. A week before the parliamentary elections, he lived in Austria. He created a false image for himself, he has no coherence in speech, and his statements are equivocal. The consequences of these actions were visible after the first round of the parliamentary elections and was reflected in significant financial losses.

Cancellation of the Second Round of Presidential Elections

The final meeting, held on December 11, 2024, analyzed key aspects of electoral processes and their influence. Unlike Austria, where contested elections led to a rerun of the second round, Romania opted for a complete cancellation, a practice more common in Latin America.

The presidential elections featured 14 candidates, with the campaign dominated by nostalgic, Ceaușescu-era rhetoric. Despite disastrous results for most candidates, political parties are expected to propose new candidates for future elections. Concerns about the possibility of a controversial candidate like Călin Georgescu winning highlighted the current fragility of democracy.

The discussion also emphasized the immense influence of social media, particularly TikTok, in spreading electoral messages and misinformation, including fake news about military conflicts. While voting has historically been viewed as a sacred act, propaganda and manipulation raise serious questions about the transparency of democratic processes. This complex situation underscores the challenges facing Romania today.

Throughout the internship, we had the opportunity to deepen our understanding of topics and concepts learned during university courses.

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