

## **Seminar IRH-ICUB**

### **Consciousness and Cognition: An Interdisciplinary Approach**

<https://irhunibuc.wordpress.com/2016/04/05/new-seminar-consciousness-in-philosophy-and-neuroscience/>

**convenor Dr. Diana Stanciu**

<https://irhunibuc.wordpress.com/associated-members/>

**Date: Tuesday, 4 December 2018, 17h**

**Place: IRH-ICUB (1 D. Brandza Str.), conference room**

## **Dr. Mihai Popa**

**Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/ Saale/  
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**Mihai Popa** has studied Sociology and Social Anthropology at the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration in Bucharest. In 2016 he obtained his doctoral degree in Social Anthropology from the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg (Halle/ Saale, Germany). At present he is a Young Research Fellow in the Social Sciences Division of The Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (ICUB). Mihai Popa is also an associate researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/ Saale, where he conducted his doctoral work, as well as at the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) in Athens. In the past years, his research has focused on the ways in which the place of religion in Romanian society is defined by social actors in relation to the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (see [www.grassrootsmobilise.eu](http://www.grassrootsmobilise.eu)), as well as in relation to the norms and institutional framework of the European Union.

### ***European Integration, Secularism and the Legal Defense of Religion in Romania***

In this presentation I look at the gradual development of the interest in legal arguments and mechanisms for the defense of religion in Romania. By standard measures, religion occupies an important place in this majority Christian Orthodox country. But the process of accession to the European Union, through the norms adopted and the institutions created therein by the Romanian state, has opened up avenues for pushing religion away from the public space and from state policy. The contestations of the presence of Orthodox icons in schools and of the system of enrollment in religious education illustrate this situation. The legal defense of religion comes as a reaction to counter the trend of secularist activist mobilization. Drawing on data gathered from interviews and textual sources, a history of counter-secularist activists' engagement with legal arguments and procedures in Romania will be presented, as well as an analysis of the recent initiative to constitutionalize the definition of "marriage" as "the union between one man and one woman". Both national-level processes and transnational dynamics are shown to have shaped the development of the legal defense of religion in Romania in the face of advancing European secularism.