

OPINION FORMING PROCESSES IN DIGITAL DEMOCRACIES

Application
DEADLINE
April 30

JULY 26 - AUGUST 6, 2021

Mixed format: onsite and online

Capturando..

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 **Santander**
Universitäten

GENERAL INFORMATION

This program takes an exciting turn on digitization and discusses its major implications on opinion forming processes on both individual and societal level. Selection and interpretation of information is a major challenge in nowadays' world which requires new competences and skills.

- ▶ Two-week summer school program
- ▶ Lectures taught entirely in **English**
- ▶ Combination of **academic** program and **cultural** activities
- ▶ Lecturers from the University of Cologne and international partner universities
- ▶ Flexible **hybrid format** with onsite and online option
- ▶ 8 available spots for **onsite** participation
- ▶ 20 available spots for online participation
- ▶ Two types of **scholarships** for onsite and online participation

WHO CAN APPLY AND HOW



- ▶ Advanced **Bachelor** and **Master** students in their first year of partner universities and students of the University of Cologne
- ▶ *Please inquire at your home university whether it is a partner of the UoC*
- ▶ The program is open to students from **all majors** and especially those with an interest in politics, journalism, media law and freedom of speech.
- ▶ Certificate in English (preferably C1)
- ▶ *Not required for native speakers or persons who study entirely in English*
- ▶ CV
- ▶ Transcript of Records
- ▶ Video of Motivation
- ▶ *This is a new requirement. Instead of uploading a letter of motivation you must upload a video in which you introduce yourself and explain your motivation for your application for the summer school.*
- ▶ Application process is designed entirely online (*see next pages*)



IN COLOGNE OR AT HOME



We developed a hybrid format with an onsite and online option. In this way we can guarantee you that the summer school will take place regardless of the unpredictable circumstances caused by the ongoing pandemic. Therefore, you can choose between two options:

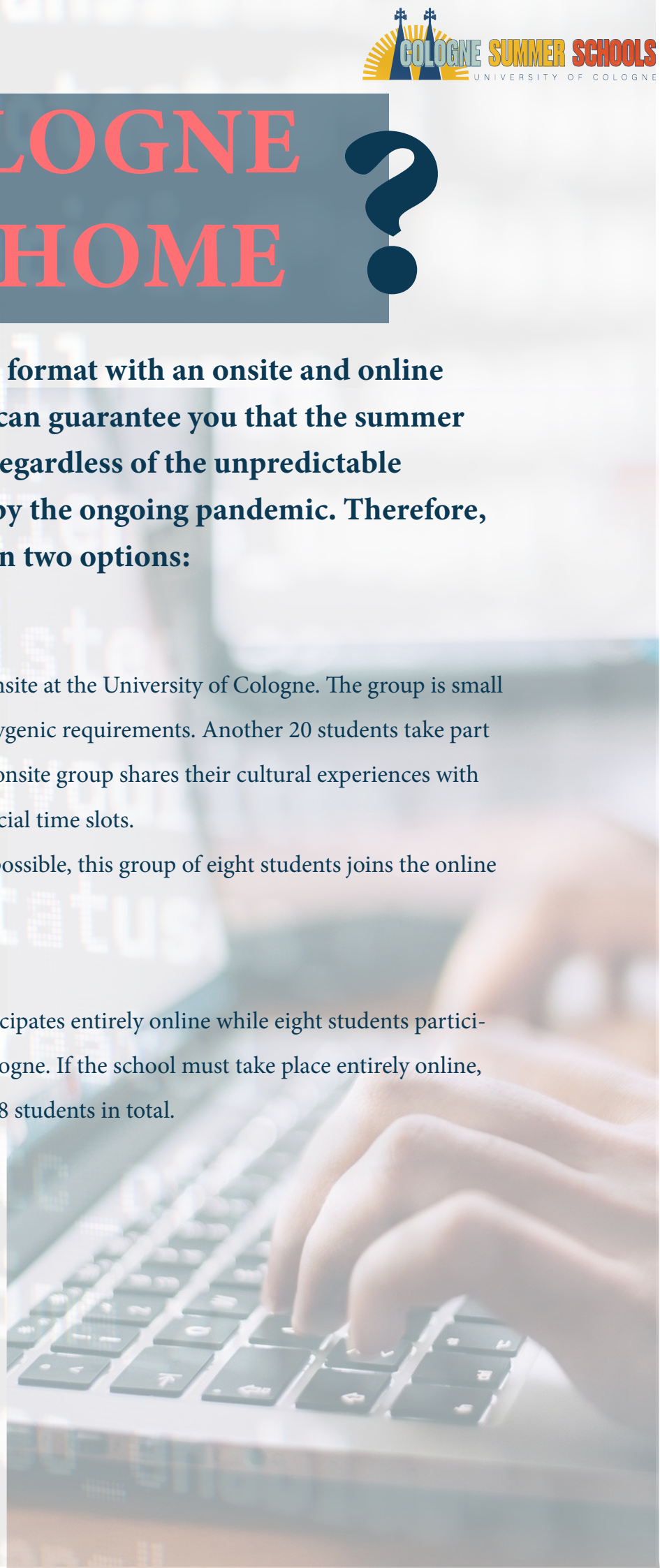
► **ONSITE:**

Eight students participate onsite at the University of Cologne. The group is small in order to apply the local hygienic requirements. Another 20 students take part simultaneously online. The onsite group shares their cultural experiences with the online group during special time slots.

If onsite participation is impossible, this group of eight students joins the online group of 20 students.

► **ONLINE:**

A group of 20 students participates entirely online while eight students participate at the University of Cologne. If the school must take place entirely online, we will build one group of 28 students in total.



WHAT IS THE SCHOOL ABOUT



The questions we will be asking during the summer school are sorted into the following subtopics: Psychology, Mass and Social Media, Journalism, Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Press in Digital Democracies.

PSYCHOLOGY. How do we form our opinion nowadays?
Are there differences in an offline opinion building process and in an online opinion building process?

What can (media) psychology teach us about the way we construct our opinions in the digitized world? To what extent is it still possible to construct our reality ourselves and which strategies can we use to cope with the intransparent influence of algorithms?

SOCIAL MEDIA. How do the mechanisms of mass media change in a digitized world and how does this (re)shape their role in opinion forming processes?

How does social media as a consequence of massive convergence and yet individualization change our access to information and our interpretation of the content we consume? How can we distinguish opinion from valuable information in the internet?

In what regard did the role of personal opinion change in times of digitization? What are the changes in journalism that are caused by a constantly increasing struggle for the user's attention and what are recent techniques to meet the

requirements for search engine optimization (SEO) and social media distribution?

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND FREEDOM OF PRESS.

Does technology change our view on democracy and if yes, how? What is the modern perspective on democracy? Actually everyone is free to express their opinion online, so how can technology be a hurdle for democracy?

Which social media instruments are implemented in political contexts as part of election campaigns?

... IN DIGITAL DEMOCRACIES

Where does social media lead us in a global perspective?

How do technology based instruments like social bots and algorithms change the opinion landscape/s in which we immerse on a daily basis? Should it be allowed that global players delete posts like Facebook and Twitter which they regard false and misleading? What is a proper basis for these decisions to be made? How do investigative journalists cooperate internationally in order to reveal illegal conduct in democracies and other forms of government?

Which one should I apply for?

ONSITE SCHOLARSHIP

VALUE OF SCHOLARSHIP:

- ▶ Coverage of tuition fees
- ▶ Coverage of travel costs for a round trip:
 - ▶ *You will be reimbursed you as soon as you arrive in Cologne which means that you will have to advance your travel costs*
 - ▶ *Please inquire about travel insurance that includes “trip cancellation” and make sure that cancellation fees are minimal*
 - ▶ *If you are not allowed to travel to Cologne due to sudden Covid-19 related regulations by your home country or the German government, Cologne Summer Schools will cover your travel costs. Nevertheless, you should inform yourself about your airline’s reimbursement policy and consider possible options for reducing cancellation costs.*
- ▶ Coverage of all accommodation costs (single room with breakfast)
- ▶ *Please indicate the closest train station/ airport from which you intend to travel from if accepted to the program*
- ▶ Health insurance covering the duration of your stay in Cologne
- ▶ Full coverage of accommodation costs, cultural program costs, evening events and activities

CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION

- ▶ Above average university performance
- ▶ CV
- ▶ Certificate in English (*TOEFL ≥ 90, IELTS ≤ 6.5, TOEIC ≥ 750, Cambridge Certificate C1 Advanced*)
- ▶ Short video, max 1.5 minutes in which candidates introduce themselves and explain their motivation for application (in English language)
 - ▶ *Please upload the video to a website of your choice and insert the link into the box included in the online application form. Video settings can be set on private (or “not listed” for Youtube). If you use a cloud service for the upload, please make sure that the link does not expire! We will use the videos only for the purpose of selection and we will not hand them over to third- parties.*
- ▶ Active involvement (relevant only if the school takes place in Cologne):
At the end of each week there will be a reflection session in which we will summarize and reflect on the content and insights we gained in the lectures and workshops. Your task will be to prepare one of these sessions in a group and also moderate and stimulate the discussion.
- ▶ Experience ambassador (relevant only if the school takes place in Cologne):
Your participation in the onsite format will provide you with the opportunity to benefit from cultural activities and local visits. As an ambassador you will share your impressions and experiences with the online participants during certain sessions and on our online platform for cultural exchange and will be their eyes and hearts in Cologne.

Which one should I apply for?

ONLINE SCHOLARSHIP

VALUE OF SCHOLARSHIP:

- ▶ Coverage of tuition fees
- ▶ Participation in all summer school online classes and workshops
- ▶ Access to exclusive academic content offered by experts from partner universities and University of Cologne
- ▶ New contacts and exchange with international students

CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION

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ARE YOU INTERESTED?

APPLY ONLINE
BY APRIL 30, 2021



A P P L I C A T I O N D E T A I L S

We are looking forward to receiving your application!

<https://portal.uni-koeln.de/cologne-summer-schools>

<https://www.facebook.com/universityofcolognesummerschools>