

Pursue your PhD at Maastricht University

The Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences of Maastricht University opens five fully funded PhD positions in the field of arts and social sciences. The programme is characterized by its interdisciplinary approach and its international character, focused on three topics:

1. European Administrative Governance;
2. Science, Technology and Society, including Globalization and Development;
3. Cultural Memory and Diversity (see below)

You will receive a coherent programme of introductory courses and intensive supervision, complemented by additional courses organized by a national graduate school. PhD candidates are offered a 3 or 4 year contract, a competitive salary and a bench fee to cover research-related costs. The condition of a 4 year contract is to undertake a limited amount of teaching duties.

Please check our website http://www.fdcw.org/phdprogram/2007/06/cultural_memory.html for more information and details on the application procedure. More information on the stimulating and international environment of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences can be found at <http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Faculties/FASoS.htm>. The deadline for submitting statements of interest is Friday 5 March. Full applications are due by Friday 7 May 2010. Contracts usually start on 1 September.

If you are curious and talented and if you have the ambition to become an excellent researcher, we would be delighted to hear from you!

Below you can find more information on the specific topic Cultural Memory and Diversity:

Cultural Memory and Diversity

We would like to involve PhD students in our explorations of the tensions between cultural memory and diversity. Commemorative institutions such as memorials, monuments, museums and cultural canons are necessarily selective. They are contested sites, or provisional solutions of the struggle over the question of who gets to define what is really worthy of preservation, whose perspectives count, and whose voices may just as well be silenced. Every re-appropriation of the past strongly impacts on contemporary organizations of social diversity. Now that Western societies are becoming increasingly multicultural, the selective nature of cultural memory becomes all the more pressing and complex, as the recent 'culture wars' over the canons of Western culture demonstrate. We study the impact of cultural memory on social in- and exclusion in the commemorative practices of the sciences, politics and the arts.

The media, genres and aesthetic conventions that are employed in the representation of the past co-determine our selections of stories and perspectives worthy of remembrance as tacit selection mechanisms. Hence, cultural remembrance is not just a deliberate, fully intentional process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, but also a largely 'unconscious' reiteration of conventional literary and aesthetic repertoires for representing historical actors within the parameters of nationality, gender, ethnicity, age, ability and religion. We aim to study the intentional and unintentional aspects of cultural remembrance in their mutual interaction.

Within the context of this overall frame of reference, we concern ourselves with the following three fields of interest, carried out in a number of specific projects that often interrelate:

I. MEMORIAL POLITICS

Politicians often attempt to muster the support of historians, journalists, writers and artists in their attempts to come to terms with the pressures of public opinion over painful episodes from the collective past. Intellectuals, scholars and artists are frequently commissioned by political institutions to 'repair'

blemishes on collective identities and national pride, which raises serious issues of scholarly and artistic integrity and autonomy. At the same time, scholars, intellectuals and artists may also take the initiative in critically exposing taboo zones from the past, often touching upon the limits of freedom of speech. This field of interest explores the stressful 'marriage' between political institutions on the one hand and scholarly and artistic discourse on the other.

Project 1: History and Politics. Dealing with the Past in Times of Political Change Contact person: prof. dr. Georgi Verbeeck

Project 2: Democracy Contested: The Political Essay in the Twentieth Century Contact person: dr. Sjaak Koenis

Project 3: Biography and Diversity: the Dutch Case Contact person: prof. dr. Maaïke Meijer

Project 4: Writing a Biography, Otherwise: reflexive biography Contact person: prof. dr. Maaïke Meijer

Project 5: Imagining (un)intelligible lives Contact person: prof. dr. Maaïke Meijer

Project 6: Mining as a past experience in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine: a comparative study of heritage and memory culture in four mining districts Contact person: prof. dr. Ad Knotter

II. MEDIA AND AESTHETICS

This field of interest pertains to the *Nachwirkung* of established aesthetic and poetical conventions in the new digital media and vice versa: it also relates to the ways in which the new digital media might possibly open up new points of exit from deeply ingrained narrative scenarios and pictorial clichés. To what extent and in which ways do new media technologies remediate older media and genres, and to what extent do they facilitate the construction of new representational spaces? What are the effects of the democratization of new technologies - such as digital photography and film-devices, webcams, and digital social networks such as Hyves and Facebook? New objects for the study of culture arise as the arts themselves evolve. Choreographers and theater-makers increasingly use new media in performances, thereby increasingly addressing all the audience's senses. Museums are developing other than the conventional visual forms of exhibiting. The division between producers and consumers is eroding, not only in the commercial sphere but also in the arts. Contemporary art has become an international and global affair: the national framework is of limited relevance in that field nowadays.

Intercultural perspectives on contemporary art are necessary. Art is also not only produced in the form of objects - such as paintings - that can be easily exhibited and stored for eternity. New art-forms pose new challenges to museums, even call into question the institution of the museum as such.

Project 7: Music Fans - New Cultural Citizens? Contact person: dr. K. Wenz

Project 8: New Media, Established Arts. Contact persons. prof. dr. Renée van de Vall and dr. Lies Wesseling

Project 9: New Strategies in the Conservation of Contemporary Art Contact person. prof. dr. Renée van de Vall

Project 10: Unofficial archives and collections of documented artistic practices Contact person. prof. dr. Renée van de Vall

Project 11: Convergence, flow and the changing dispositif of television Contact person. dr. Jack Post

Project 12: Narratives of Ageing. Personal blogs as virtual spaces where subversive narratives of ageing can be articulated Contact person. dr. Aagje Swinnen

III CULTURAL DYNAMICS: THE RETURN OF THE REPRESSED

Cultures are in flux, permanently. Paradoxically change often happens by the continued effects, by rediscovery or re-introduction of cultural repertoires from the past. Antiquity still is present in many ways in contemporary culture. Literary genres - poetry, fairy tales - stay alive in ever changing forms and acquire new significance, are put to new uses, time and again. Romanticism is not bound to the historical time-frame in which it came into being. 'The romantic order' is still present in many corners, if not in the very centre, of western culture. Thus, the notion of romanticism can also be set at work as an interpretative tool. The same applies to the notion of 'baroque' - a term that was used since the eighteenth century to characterize the 'bad, excessive' art of the preceding period. Striking instances of the return of the repressed are the discourses that construct gender, sexuality and 'race'. Notions of masculinity and femininity are permanently changing, yet also seem to re-integrate older configurations of gender constantly. Since the 'invention' of homosexuality in the mid-nineteenth century lesbians, gays, transsexual and inter-sexual people have been subject to many different categorizations, which always tacitly implied the reconfiguration of normative sexuality. Discourses of 'race' continue to (re) create cultural hierarchies and divisions on a global scale. The question of whether there can be 'points of exit' out of these deeply engrained discourses is a guiding one.

Project 13: Neobaroque tendencies in contemporary culture Contact person. dr. Karel Vanhaesebrouck

Project 14: Narrative models for configuring the Adoptable Child, 1980-2010 Contact person. dr. Lies Wesseling

Project 15: Re-inventing Contemporary Masculinities Contact person: prof. dr. Maaike Meijer

Project 16: Masculinities as Battleground of Identity Politics.
Colonial transfers, Homophobia and Anti-Semitism in Germany around
1900 Contact person: dr. Ulrike Brunotte