

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

GLOBAL HUMANITIES CAMPUS 2018 (WORKSHOP AND SUMMER SCHOOL) July 23 – August 4, 2018

To enable participation in the 2018 *Global Humanities Campus* to be held at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, from July 23 – August 4, 2018, we are pleased to invite applications for:

- 2 travel grants for PhD or advanced M.A. students**
- 1 travel grant for a professor**
per partner institution (see the list below).

The annual *Global Humanities Campus* (GHC) is part of the activities of the international **Thematic Network *Principles of Cultural Dynamics* (PCD)**¹. It consists of a two-day **workshop** and a **summer school**, with the duration of the entire event being the above mentioned two weeks.

The 2018 GHC's topics are the following:

- ***Causality or Contingency: What Keeps Culture Going?*** (Workshop)
- ***Causality in Culture: Empirically Verifiable or Modelling Category?*** (Summer School)

Student participants and instructors will come from the following institutions:

- **Harvard University, Mahindra Humanities Center**
- **The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Faculty of Humanities**
- **The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Research Institute for the Humanities**
- **The Johns Hopkins University, Humanities Center**
- **The École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris**
- **Freie Universität Berlin, Department of Humanities**

Since its establishment in 2013, the following three associated partner institutions have joined the network:

- **The University of California at Davis**
- **The National Research University / HSE, Moscow**
- **The Australian National University**

For further general information concerning the network's activities, interested students and professors may contact the program coordinators at their home institutions (for contact details, please refer to the PCD website: <http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/principles-cultural-dynamics/index.html>), or the network's Berlin-based general administrator, **Lisa Münzer**

¹ For detailed information regarding the network (research agenda, past activities) see [<http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/principles-cultural-dynamics/index.html>]

(pcd@fu-berlin.de).

Funding Details

Participation in the *Global Humanities Campus* is free. Travel grants for PhD students are bound to a full participation over the course of the two-week GHC; as to professors, more flexible rules apply, which will be negotiated on an individual basis.

Recipients of grants, including professors, will be granted a **lump sum** for traveling expenses; the exact amount varies according to the respective home institution.

In addition, participating PhD and M.A. students will receive a lump sum of **€300** as a subsidy towards the expenses for accommodation and public transportation; accordingly, they are required to organize their accommodation independently. Professors will be accommodated in a hotel near campus at the network's expense; alternative accommodation may be negotiated individually.

All participants will be invited to an opening dinner (July 23), a closing lunch (August 4), and to meals (lunch and dinner) served during the workshop (July 24 and 25). Refreshments will be provided throughout.

The host institution will not cover any further expenses during the participants' stay in Berlin.

Program

The first day of the GHC (**July 23, 2018, 3 p.m.**) is reserved for administrative aspects and an **introduction of all participants**. Participants are expected to present a short (approx. five minute) synopsis of their respective research projects; this will help them to establish contacts with participants working in similar fields and on related topics.

Students' participation is mandatory; professors are welcome to attend. This first get-together will conclude with a welcome dinner.

After this first day, the *Global Humanities Campus* will officially commence with a two-day **workshop (July 24 and 25, 2018, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)**.

The workshop will be followed by a **summer school**, taking place from **July 26 to August 4** in the mornings and the early afternoons. Within the summer school, there will be two sessions per day, starting at 10:00 a.m. and ending at 3 p.m. (lunch break from 12 a.m. – 1 p.m.).

The summer school sessions will be complemented by a **cultural program** linked to their topic; the latter will take advantage of Berlin's museums and other places of cultural interest, so as to provide a meaningful contribution to the scholarly discussions. The events of the cultural program will take place during some of the afternoons, and typically begin around 4 p.m.

Furthermore, there will be two **additional components**, which are designed to encourage the initiative of student participants, and to allow them to take advantage of the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the wide range of disciplines and institutions represented at the GHC. During several afternoons **without** a cultural program event—beginning at 3:15 p.m. and finishing around 5/6 p.m.—student participants will have the chance to give short presentations of approximately 20 minutes on their current work. Instructors will not be

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present during these time slots of 20 minutes each, including the discussion.

The second additional component will take place on Friday afternoons, from 1:15 p.m. to 3 p.m. These Friday sessions shall be dedicated to an open discussion of the summer school's topics among student participants; instructors will not be present. The respective discussions may be organized either as plenary sessions, or by way of forming several groups, or by any combination of these two methods. Student participants are invited to define the specific topics of these meetings according to their own preferences; proposals for possible topics should be circulated by Wednesday evening of the week in question.

GHC sessions take place from Mondays through Saturdays. Sundays are free.

Concept of the GHC

In keeping with the broad areas of interest and fields of research on the part of the various participating instructors—representing nine different institutions, seven different countries, and diverse humanistic disciplines—the PCD workshops and summer schools are, in effect, conceptual laboratories, providing an open forum for the exchange of ideas and a source of scholarly inspiration, rather than a school in a pedagogical sense. The topics and proposals for discussion are linked to the PCD's research agenda, which focus on describing principles of cultural dynamics in a very broad and comprehensive sense. (For more information regarding the diversity of this research agenda, including the topics of the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 workshop and summer school, see the network's website.)

The thematic “openness” of the workshops and summer schools is intentional. Participants should be disposed to experience (very) diverse styles of academic teaching and scholarly discussion; this variety, the same as the readiness on the part of the students to adapt to such diverse lecture styles, is a unique characteristic of the *Global Humanities Campus*, seeing that it introduces students and researchers in the early stages of their career to diverse and multifaceted traditions within the humanities around the globe.

Thematic Outline

I. Workshop

Causality or Contingency: What Keeps Culture Going?

In contrast to the natural world, the cultural world is characterized by rapid change. In terms of genetics, our species seems to be more or less identical to what it has been during the last 100.000 or even 150.000 years. In terms of culture, there has not only been a tremendous evolution during this period; the evolution has also produced a fascinating differentiation of cultural phenomena. The one language of the primordial tribe whose matriarch was named “Lucy” by 20th century natural sciences, e.g., has evolved in a myriad variety of vernaculars; the same applies for other fields of cultural production: regardless of the fact that the “hardware” (the human body and its basic capacities) is more or less the same everywhere and in any time, the items produced by this identical hardware differ in an amazing fashion. Modern anthropology has taught us to be cautious regarding the category of “anthropological constants”. Even if we elevate the level of abstraction in order to level “superficial”

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differences, there are uncontested differences between dissimilar cultures.

Since the eighteenth century (Montesquieu, Herder), there have been attempts at accommodating the basic diversity of human culture to the ruling pattern of causal explanation. But linking diversity to items like climate or topography does not answer the question for why it is that a cultural community evolving in a hot maritime climate, e.g. in southern China, is visibly different from other cultural communities living under the condition of a hot maritime climate, as, e.g., in present-day Brazil or in coastal sub-Saharan Africa. The category of “race” created in the late eighteenth century in order to cope with this problem has proven its unsuitability. In principle, humans belonging to different “races” are fully able to produce comparable or even identical cultural items in case they are exposed to a cultural environment differing from the one where most of the members of their “tribe” are living.

Is it, therefore, indicated to abandon the category of causality if talking about culture and cultural developments? Do the items of the cultural sphere mainly consist of random agglomerations of previously existing cultural material? Or is the reference to the category of contingency nothing else than the attempt at avoiding the hard labor possibly going along with a fresh reflection on the relation between causality and contingency in the cultural sphere? May it be worth the effort to try devising new logical categories integrating the basic features of causality and contingency (evolutions accessible to human reasons and evolutions not accessible to our reason)?

The methodological questions outlined above are of interest for the entire range of humanistic disciplines. In addition, one might also raise the question to what extent the preoccupation with causal explanations is a culturally specific attitude; is it a “western” obsession? And if so, what are the logical categories non-western traditions may offer in order to engage in a meaningful conversation regarding our common cultural past and present?

The two-day workshop will comprise between six and seven sessions. Each session will be held by a different professor. Professors will read a paper no longer than 45 minutes, which is followed by a discussion of 45 minutes.

The workshop adheres to the format of a conference, and will be open to the academic public. The papers’ titles to be presented, short abstracts, as well as the respective presenters’ names, mini-bios, and institutional affiliations will be available on the network’s website (see above) by June 22, 2018.

II. Summer School

Causality in Culture: Empirically Verifiable or Modelling Category?

It is a frequently forgotten fact, but a fact indeed, that the humanities emerged as disciplines taught at universities only at the beginning of the nineteenth century; that is, a period in which the natural sciences had already attained a high level of methodological reflection. Hence, it is ultimately not astonishing that these “new” disciplines adopted their methodological frames from the sciences. Humanities research believed and still seems to believe that its dignity as discipline is at least in some way contingent on whether or not it is able to present convincing causal explanations for the events and phenomena of the cultural world.

It is well known, though, that there is one major obstacle involved when one tries to implement the category of cause and effect into a description of cultural phenomena and events: humanities research does not have the fundamental methodological device at its

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disposal, developed by the natural sciences as early as in the seventeenth century, to prove the veracity of its causal hypotheses, that is, the instrument of the test.

A scientific test is based on submitting one singular item from within a complex configuration to varying “external” impulses while keeping the rest of the entire configuration unchanged. Only in case this latter qualification can be met is it possible to reasonably hold that the various “reactions” of the one singular item in question to the various external impulses are “caused” by these external impulses. Within humanities research, the imperative of an identical context being submitted to changing external impulses cannot be fulfilled in any case. If a humanist claims that this or that “reason” caused the outbreak of this or that war, he or she will never be able to scientifically prove the claim, since he or she will be incapable of “re-creating” the historical constellation before the war in question, in order to then submit this scenario to external impulses differing from those one may observe in historical reality.

At first sight, this observation may lead to the conclusion that the humanities disciplines are restricted to produce panoramas of things past that obey to nothing else than to the logic of the “interesting” and the “fascinating”. But one may call into question whether such endeavors should not better be committed to journalists working within the “culture” section of quality papers.

A second alternative would be to reduce, as it were, the claim to quasi-“scientific” objectivity and to no longer have recourse to the category of causality, but, rather, to foreground the category of probability or - to “lower” the claim implied once again - of acceptability.

Finally, one might discuss the question of whether or not humanities research can regain a certain amount of respectability by making explicit the assumptions about the “world” and its course implied in any attempt of presenting things past as due to “probable” developments. Such an explicit reflection on the, in most cases, non-conscious implications of one’s own narratives concerning cultural history may even become a necessity in an age that sees the emergence of “global” humanities, that is, of the systematic exploration of our species’ cultural past which is conducted from the perspective of very diverse cultural traditions.

The topic of the summer school of 2018 concerns the humanities in their entire disciplinary width. It therefore allows to also address more specific questions, as, e.g., the one whether or not there are humanities disciplines “closer” to the natural sciences than other ones; one might think of archeology, or of codicology, or of linguistics, finally of all disciplines dedicated mainly to “reconstructing” the past rather than conferring sense upon it by way of “interpreting” it.

Each summer school session will have a duration of 120 minutes. As in case of the workshop, instructors will come from all the various institutions involved. At the beginning of a session, the respective instructor will present case studies and concrete materials from her or his field of research. According to their preference, instructors may pre-circulate reading material. The topics of these sessions, including short abstracts, as well as the names of the instructors, mini-bios, and their institutional affiliation, will be circulated via email by June 22, 2018.

In addition to addressing the topic of the respective session, the Q&A section should also deal with problems of methodology, so as to give participants not working in the instructor’s field an opportunity to engage in the discussion in a meaningful way. Accordingly, instructors are encouraged to include a brief outline of their research approaches and methods in their presentations, to comment on the types of source material they utilize, as well as on their

manner of doing so.

The presentations on the instructors' part are expected not to exceed 60 minutes, the standard length being 45 minutes. The second hour of each session is reserved for questions, clarification, discussion, and debate. Student participants are invited to volunteer as moderators of this second part of the sessions; interested students should inform Lisa Münzer at least two weeks before the GHC's start about the session they would like to chair.