

Research Training Program 2279 “Configurations of Film” Information for Applicants for PhD Scholarships

The German Research Foundation has awarded funding to the Research Training Program “Configurations of Film,” housed at the Institute of Theater, Film and Media Studies, part of Division 10, at the Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main. Twelve PhD positions will be financed (TV-L 13, 65% / salary range: 28,850.18€ – 33,756.72€ EBT).

Program Focus

Critics like to describe contemporary film culture as “post-cinematic”: In a process of “relocation,” film has migrated to sites that cannot be fully understood through the *dispositif* of cinema alone, circulating instead in a variety of social and cultural arenas. New forms of moving image production beyond the standard feature film are (and have long been) emerging – from ‘amateur’ video clips on YouTube to long-form ‘quality’ television shows. Film, especially in these new configurations, functions as an important reference for theater, the visual arts and literature. The term “post-cinema” designates the stakes for film theory: It opens up a perspective beyond the narrative of loss and mourning for a specificity of the medium, which is tied to the *dispositif* of cinema, the indexical nature of the photographic image, and a canon that has also been called into question.

Rather than merely retelling this narrative of supposed loss, the loss of medium specificity, the program “Configurations of Film” will address the question of what comes after the “post-cinematic condition.” How can we move beyond the aesthetic and ontological primacy of the triad of *dispositif*, index and canon in our thinking about film? What are the alternatives to the established dichotomies of film study, from theatrical vs. non-theatrical and artistic vs. non-artistic to canonical vs. non-canonical and center vs. periphery?

To answer these questions, the program focuses on a variety of configurations of film and proposes to study film in terms of its various generative principles and as a medium in permanent transformation. The program encompasses three main research areas: Formation, Usage and Localization.

- “Formation” refers to the twin aspects of form and format. The existing scholarship has tended to privilege the study of film types: fiction, documentary and experimental. Questions of format has played a rather peripheral role and has been discussed primarily in terms of material support or aspect ratio. Among other things, the process of relocation raises the question of how, or under what conditions, moving images move, more specifically the material conditions that enable a certain degree of mobility, such as a moving image’s stability and scalability in different storage media. Along with infrastructure, format emerges as a key condition of possibility for the global circulation and flow of moving images. Accordingly, under the rubric of “formation,” the program proposes to study the complex interaction of format and form and of technology and aesthetics as they play out across a variety of configurations of film.

- “Usage” designates the modes of presentation, institutional frameworks and the utilization of film. Films can enable an aesthetic experience, whether in the cinema, in public space or on a smartphone, but they can also result in a productive corporate culture in industrial organizations or they can be used for pedagogical purposes in educational institutions. The use of film in these contexts cannot be understood through ideological or instrumental arguments alone, as the aesthetic dimension remains integral to film presentation. Even in those situations in which the aesthetic dimension of film is relegated to a rather marginal role, this program is interested in exploring the underlying interaction between aesthetic and other social, political and economic motivations.

- “Localization” concerns the spatial dimension of a given configuration of film. In particular, the program proposes to study the processes through which the moving image transforms spaces into concrete places and affects institutional frameworks, whether in the cinema, museum or on online platforms. As Gaston Bachelard argues, spatial ordering is the first step in every form of scientific inquiry. Taking stock of the locations of film thus marks an important step not only in the study of a given configuration of film, but in terms of the development of a new set of categories through which we can understand configurations of film both in their multiplicity and their commonalities.

The aim of the program is to train excellent PhD students who will ultimately contribute toward the development of new, productive research paradigms for the next generation of film and media scholars. The program combines approaches from American Studies, Film Studies, Media Studies, Musicology, Philosophy and Theater Studies at the Goethe University, Frankfurt, and brings the neighboring universities of Mainz, Marburg and Mannheim as well as the University of Art and Design in Offenbach am Main into the scholarly network. It builds on three master programs at Goethe University as well as on long-standing collaborative projects and efforts among the participating senior researchers. PhD students in the program will benefit from world-class library holdings at the Goethe University and the German National Library, as well as from affiliations with the German Film Institute and the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation in Wiesbaden. In addition, the program collaborates with the film studies departments at Yale University and Concordia University.

Admission Requirements

Applicants for Ph.D. scholarships must hold a master’s degree in film studies, media studies or one of the other participating or related fields and disciplines (above all American Studies, Musicology, Philosophy and/or Theater Studies). Applicants should have the master’s degree in hand by the start date of the contract (July 1, 2017).

Excellent written and spoken command of English is required. Applicants whose first language is not German must demonstrate proficiency in German ([CEF C1](#)), plus a basic knowledge ([CEF B1](#)) of one other language to be admitted to the program.

Applicants should be capable of developing an original research question that contributes to the overall topic and concerns of the program. They should be self-motivated scholars who can conduct productive research and successfully complete a dissertation project based on their chosen topic within the three-year time frame of the contract. They should have a strong interest in collaborating with other Ph.D. candidates in the program and in coordinating their research with the post-doctoral scholars and the participating senior researchers. They should

also demonstrate a commitment to helping develop and organize workshops, lectures and other elements of the program.

We are committed to promoting the careers of underrepresented applicants. Women, individuals with disabilities, as well as applicants of underrepresented sexual orientations, minority groups and socioeconomic classes are especially encouraged to apply.

Application Materials

- *Curriculum Vitae*.

- *Diplomas and Transcripts*. Copies of undergraduate and graduate transcripts as well as of all relevant diplomas (bachelor's degree and master's degree).

- *Letter of Motivation*. The Letter of Motivation explains why the applicant wants to pursue her/his proposed dissertation project in this particular program. Applicants should illustrate how their previous scholarship, related university work and outside relevant projects have helped shape their current research interests and choice of dissertation topic.

- *Abstract of the Ph.D. Project*. The abstract should be two to three pages long (1.5 spacing), plus bibliography. It should clearly describe the topic, research question, methodology and primary materials of the project. The abstract should indicate the ways in which the proposed project constitutes an original contribution to the program's field of study by situating the project in the existing literature and by demonstrating that the research question has either not yet been addressed or that it has been inadequately addressed in the existing scholarship. The abstract should also indicate how the project will contribute to the overall goals of the program. After exploring the scholarly interests of the participating senior researchers, applicants should, if possible, indicate researchers with whom they would like to collaborate and whom they could envision as potential advisors of the dissertation. Note for international applicants: The program allows for *cotutelle* and co-supervision arrangements with international partner universities.

Admission Procedure

Applications should be submitted in PDF format by March 31, 2017 to the following e-mail address: applications-configurations@tfm.uni-frankfurt.de

Applicants will be notified once the application has been received.

The participating senior researchers will make a first selection of candidates and interviews will be conducted in Frankfurt or via Skype at the end of April/beginning of May 2017.

Participating Senior Researchers

[Prof. Dr. Vinzenz Hediger](#) (Director; Film Studies)

[Prof. Dr. Rembert Hüser](#) (Co-Director; Media Studies)

[Junior-Prof. Dr. Sonia Campanini](#) (Film Studies)

[Prof. Dr. Malte Hagener](#) (Philipps University Marburg; Film and Media Studies)

[Prof. Dr. Bernd Herzogenrath](#) (American Literature)

[Prof. Dr. Angela Keppler](#) (University of Mannheim; Sociology/Media and Communication Studies)

[Prof. Dr. Nikolaus Müller-Schöll](#) (Theater Studies)

[Prof. Dr. Juliane Rebentisch](#) (University of Art and Design in Offenbach am Main; Philosophy)

[Prof. Dr. Marion Saxer](#) (Musicology)

[Prof. Dr. Alexandra Schneider](#) (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz; Film and Media Studies))

[Prof. Dr. Martin Seel](#) (Philosophy)

[Dr. Marc Siegel](#) (Film Studies)

[Junior-Prof. Dr. Florian Sprenger](#) (Media Studies)

[PD Wanda Strauven, Ph.D.](#) (Media Studies)

[Prof. Dr. Yvonne Zimmermann](#) (Philipps University Marburg; Film Studies)

Call for applications

Two Post-Doc Positions
Research Training Group “Configurations of Film” (GRK 2279)

Location: Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, Institute of Theater, Film and Media Studies, part of Division 10.

Contract type: Temporary (July 1, 2017–December 31, 2021).

Application deadline: March 31, 2017.

The German Research Foundation has awarded funding to the Research Training Program “Configurations of Film,” housed at the Institute of Theater, Film and Media Studies at the Goethe University. Two post-doc positions will be financed for four and a half years (TV-L 13, 100% / salary range: 44,384.89€–51,933.42€ EBT).

The Research Training Group “Configurations of Film” studies the current transformations of media culture with a focus on the circulation of film. The program combines historical and theoretical perspectives and analyzes a wide variety of different configurations of films outside and beyond the classical *dispositif* of cinema.

The post-doc scholars will pursue their own research related to the program’s three research areas: “Formation,” “Usage” and “Localization.” They will oversee working groups with the Ph.D. candidates and will be involved in the planning and realization of conferences and workshops.

A detailed description of the program can be found here: www.configurations-of-film.org

Applications should include a letter of motivation, curriculum vitae, copies of degrees and diplomas, a two- to three-pages abstract of the proposed research project and a bibliography. The abstract should identify the applicant's area of research, describe her/his research question and include a discussion of methodology. It should also include information about the current status of the project and a time frame.

Excellent written and spoken command of English is required. Applicants whose first language is not German must demonstrate proficiency in German ([CEF C1](#)), plus a basic knowledge ([CEF B1](#)) of one other language. International scholars are strongly encouraged to apply.

We are committed to promoting the careers of underrepresented applicants. Women, individuals with disabilities, as well as applicants of underrepresented sexual orientations, minority groups and socioeconomic classes are especially encouraged to apply.

Applications should be submitted electronically (PDF format) to applications-configurations@tfm.uni-frankfurt.de. They should be addressed to the director of the program, Prof. Dr. Vinzenz Hediger, Institute of Theater, Film und Media Studies, Goethe University.

Call for applications

**Twelve PhD Positions,
Research Training Group “Configurations of Film” (GRK 2279)**

Location: Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Institute of Theater, Film and Media Studies, part of Division 10.

Contract type: Temporal (July 1, 2017–June, 30, 2020).

Application deadline: March 31, 2017.

The German Research Foundation has awarded funding to the Research Training Group “Configurations of Film” (GRK 2279) housed at the Institute of Theater, Film and Media Studies. at the Goethe University Twelve PhD positions will be financed for three years (TV-L 13, 65% / salary range: 28,850.18€ – 33,756.72€ EBT).

The Research Training Group “Configurations of Film” studies the current transformations of media culture with a focus on the circulation of film. The project combines historical with theoretical perspectives and analyzes a wide variety of different configurations of films outside and beyond the classical *dispositif* of cinema. The applicants’ projects should address topics related to the program’s three research areas “Formation”, “Usage” and “Localization.”

More information on the program and the application requirements can be found here: www.configurations-of-film.org

We invite applications from prospective PhD candidates with master degrees in film studies or media studies or in related fields like American studies, musicology, philosophy, and theater studies.

Applications should include a curriculum vitae, copies of degrees and diplomas, a two- to three-page abstract of the proposed PhD project, and a bibliography. The abstract should identify the area of research in relation to the program's focus, describe her/his research question and include a discussion of methodology. The abstract should also include information about the current status of the project and a time frame.

Excellent written and spoken command of English is required. Applicants whose first language is not German must demonstrate proficiency in German ([CEF C1](#)), plus a basic knowledge ([CEF B1](#)) of one other language. International students are strongly encouraged to apply.

We are committed to promoting the careers of underrepresented applicants. Women, individuals with disabilities, as well as applicants of underrepresented sexual orientations, minority groups and socioeconomic classes are especially encouraged to apply.

Applications should be submitted electronically (in PDF format) to applications-configurations@tfm.uni-frankfurt.de by March 31, 2017. They should be addressed to the director of the program, Prof. Dr. Vinzenz Hediger, Institute of Theater, Film und Media Studies, Goethe University.