



Universiteit Leiden

Call for Applications

Three PhD positions (38hrs/week)

Within the research project

'Beyond Utopia: New Politics, the Politics of Knowledge, and the Science Fictional Field of Japan'

The Modern East Asia Research Centre (MEARC) at Leiden University, the Netherlands, invites applications for three 4-year PhD positions within the NWO VICI research project *'Beyond Utopia: New Politics, the Politics of Knowledge, and the Science Fictional Field of Japan'*. Principle researcher is Prof. dr. Chris Goto-Jones, Professor of Comparative Philosophy & Political Thought, Leiden University. Successful candidates will begin their position no later than September 2010 and are expected to complete their theses within four years.

Project description

Recognizing that, since the end of the Cold War, political theorists around the world have embarked upon a deliberate quest for difference and innovation in their discipline, triggered by the apparently 'world historic' victory of liberal capitalism, this project aims to uncover a series of sites of difference and innovation. In particular, it locates itself in two kinds of distancing: geo-cultural (ie. in the non-European space of Japan) and medial (ie. in innovative expressive media). Utilizing the 'techno-media' of anime, manga and video games, and focusing on the radical potentials of the genre of speculative science fiction, this project aims to analyze and model a series of political visions as potential alternatives to liberal capitalism, hence contributing to the field of political thought.

Furthermore, acknowledging that these widely popular techno-medial products utilize different grammars of expression from conventional, text-based media, this project seeks to formulate a research methodology for scholars to employ for critical interventions into these fields. Accepting that the dimensions of the public sphere change with time and technological developments, and hypothesizing that the public sphere in many contemporary societies is now informed by this techno-politics, at stake is the ability of scholars to remain in touch with (and persuasive in) political realities: new forms of literacy are required if scholars seek to remain involved in the new public sphere. This project attempts to outline those forms of literacy, as implied by the rapidly globalizing force of Japanese anime, manga and video games.



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PhD subprojects

Each PhD project will focus primarily on investigating political expression in one of the three aforementioned key media: 1. anime; 2. manga; or 3. video games.

The goals of each PhD project are:

- An analysis of the ways in which techno-cultural media (anime, manga or video games) express political meanings and their impacts on the public sphere (in Japan and elsewhere), and hence the development of a sense of what it means to be politically literate in these media;
- An analysis of the political positions/theories that are explained or explored in these media, relative to existing ideas in the canon of political thought.

The deliverables of each PhD project are:

- a PhD thesis;
- a conference paper.

Teamwork with the other researchers on this project (PhD candidates, a PostDoc and the principal researcher) is essential.

PhD candidates may also be asked to contribute to associated teaching programmes in the latter stages of their projects.

Requirements

Candidates should hold an MA degree or equivalent. Preference will be given to candidates with:

- an MA in Political Science/Thought or Philosophy and a demonstrable knowledge of modern Japanese;
- an MA in Japanese Studies and a demonstrable specialization in Political Thought, or Philosophy;
- an MA in Media Studies, with demonstrable expertise in Political Thought or Philosophy and in Japanese language.
- Outstanding research qualities manifest in a high-quality MA thesis or equivalent;
- Excellent command of English

Offer

MEARC offers three fulltime (38hrs/week) PhD positions for a limited period of 4 years. The salary of the PhD candidate is € 2.042,- gross per month in the first



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year, increasing to € 2.612,- gross per month in the fourth year, based on fulltime employment (in accordance with current salary scales as set out in the collective labour agreement for Dutch Universities).

How to apply

Applications can be emailed in PDF format to the following email address:

info@mearc.eu.

Applications can also be send via registered mail:

Modern East Asia Research Centre

Leiden University

Attn. Esther Truijen

PO Box 9515

2300 RA LEIDEN

The Netherlands

Deadline: Ongoing until all positions are filled

In order to apply, the applicant must submit the following:

- a curriculum vitae;
- the MA thesis or other major writing sample;
- an academic transcript;
- name and contact details of two referees;
- a short research proposal of up to three pages, including a letter of motivation.

NB Each document should contain the applicant's name and state the PhD position he/she is applying for (1. anime, 2. manga or 3. videogame).

When applying via email, each of the above mentioned documents should be a separate pdf file.

Further inquiries

For further inquiries, please contact Ms Esther TRUIJEN, info@mearc.eu

For information about MEARC, please visit www.mearc.eu

For more information about the project, please visit www.asiascape.net