1 Advertisement

Post Title: Research Fellow,
School/department: School of Law, Politics and Sociology: Department of Sociology
Hours: Full time or part time hours considered up to a maximum of 1.0 FTE. Requests for flexible working options will be considered (subject to business need).
Contract: Fixed term for 3.5 years (42 months)
Reference: 3333
Salary: Starting at £33,797 to £40,322 per annum, pro rata (if applicable)
Placed on: 17 February 2020
Closing date: 22 March 2020. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.
Expected Interview date: Week commencing 6 April 2020
Expected start date: 1 September 2020

The Department of Sociology is seeking to appoint a Research Fellow to work with Professor Susie Scott on a Leverhulme Trust funded project on "Narratives of Nothing: Stories of the Great Undone".

The project develops Scott’s ‘sociology of nothing’ by exploring how people think, feel, write and talk about experiences that have not happened in their lives. It takes a narrative phenomenological approach to understanding how negative symbolic objects (no-things, no-bodies, non-events) subjectively appear in memory, imagination and reflective consciousness, and how they shape self-identity over time. The project questions how and why people compose biographical stories of unlived experience, and explores the relevance for counselling and psychotherapy.

The Research Fellow will be responsible for the organisation and day-to-day running of the project, especially the practical aspects of research methodology. They will collect qualitative data in two phases: written accounts gathered by a Mass Observation Archive directive, and biographical life-story interviews conducted with twelve individuals around the UK. They must therefore be available to visit Brighton regularly and prepared to travel frequently. The Research Fellow will interpret the findings by conducting thematic and narrative analyses of the qualitative data. They will communicate the research findings through co-authored journal articles and conference presentations.

For full details and how to apply see our vacancies page

*The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds.*
2. The School / Division

The School of Law, Politics and Sociology brings together three top UK research-intensive departments committed to exploring identity, political movements and institutions. This project complements and addresses our strategic aims and priorities by furthering our understanding of the relationship between knowledge and policy; and by using innovative research to have a positive impact on society, with a focus on those less privileged. The School currently has just over a hundred academic staff, carrying out research on a wide range of topics.

The Department of Sociology is research-intensive, its work influencing public debate and policy developments worldwide. We strive to better understand our world by developing a deeper theoretical understanding, and to innovate across sociology, criminology, and related fields. The Department has particular research strengths in social and political theory; gender and sexualities; and health, medicine and care.

Please find further information regarding the school and its constituent departments at www.sussex.ac.uk/lps

3. Job Description

Job Description for the post of: Research Fellow I

**Department:** Sociology  
**Section/Unit/School:** School of Law, Politics and Sociology  
**Location:** Freeman Building, Falmer campus  
**Grade:** 7  
**Responsible to:** Professor Susie Scott

Research Fellow I is an early career-grade research position. Post-holders will be expected to contribute to the work of the research team, and also to develop their research skills with support from more experienced members of staff.

**PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

1. To engage in individual and/or collaborative research activity resulting in high-quality publications

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. **Research, Scholarship & Enterprise**

1.1 Develop research objectives and plans at acceptable levels, with assistance if required.
1.2 Conduct the research project through individual work and collaboration with others.

1.3 Analyse and interpret research findings and draw conclusions on the outcomes.

1.4 Produce high-quality research outputs for publication in recognised high-quality journals, and contribute to the School’s REF submission at acceptable levels of volume and academic excellence.

1.5 Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks and relevant external networks in order to form relationships and collaborations.

1.6 Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in continuous professional development.

2. Contribution to School & University

2.1 Attend and contribute to relevant School and project meetings.

2.2 Undertake additional duties, as required by the Principal Investigator and/or Head of School.

3. Role-specific duties

3.1 Contribute to the design and development of the research project

3.2 Apply for ethical approval from the University of Sussex institutional review board

3.3 Manage the practical organisation, administration and day-to-day running of the project

3.4 Attend training workshops in archival/documentary methods and life history research

3.5 Conduct secondary data collection through Mass Observation Archive searches and literature reviews

3.6 Conduct two phases of primary data collection through a Mass Observation Archive directive (50 written stories) and life-story interviews (12 individuals)

3.7 Travel regularly to Brighton for archive visits, around the UK for interviews, and internationally for conferences

3.8 Carry out thematic and narrative analyses of the two sets of qualitative data, assisted by the Principle Investigator

3.9 Contribute to theoretical and conceptual development of ideas, in collaboration
3.10 Produce high quality research outputs in the form of three co-authored journal articles and four conference presentations

3.11 Support the organisation of relevant workshops and other events

This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility entailed.

4. Person Specification

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. A PhD awarded at least four years ago in a relevant discipline (sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history, psychology)
2. Demonstrated competence in qualitative research project management, organisation and administration
3. Practical knowledge, skills and experience of using narrative, biographical and life-story research methods
4. Practical knowledge, skills and experience of using narrative and thematic techniques of qualitative data analysis
5. Appreciation and understanding of archival and documentary research methods
6. Strong theoretical knowledge of relevant perspectives (phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, narrative psychology, self-identity)
7. Personal qualities of sensitivity, compassion and empathy, together with warm interpersonal skills
8. Excellent writing skills, demonstrated by an emerging track record of high quality publications in peer-reviewed journals
9. Willingness to travel around the UK (regularly) and internationally (occasionally)

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1. Experience of working with archival or documentary data
2. Familiarity with the Mass Observation Archive
3. Methodological expertise in narrative analysis, psychobiography or life history techniques
4. Technical knowledge of qualitative data analysis software programs, e.g. Atlas/ti
5. Interest in community engagement, media and public sociology

INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1. A PhD awarded at least four years ago
2. Evidence of engagement in high quality research activity
3. Ability to work both independently and cooperatively
4. Excellent organisational and administrative skills
5. Excellent writing and presentation skills
6. Reliability in terms of time-keeping, punctuality and meeting deadlines