STS Summer Studentships

UCL Department of Science and Technology Studies is delighted to offer paid research studentships for work experience associated with staff and alumni research within and beyond STS. Up to six studentships are available this Academic Year

Each studentship involves 80 hours in total, envisioned as approximately ten hours work per week for eight weeks. The work must commence in June 2022 and it must be completed by the end of August 2022. The precise distribution of hours will be agreed between the post holder and the project manager.

Pay will be £1,000 for a total of 80 hours over the course of the studentship. (London living wage currently is £11.05 per hour).

To be eligible for consideration, applicants must demonstrate general knowledge and understanding of the subject area and must be a UCL student – some relevant experience in STS is essential (e.g. students should have taken at least a couple of modules in STS at BSc or MSc level). General skills for the post include: excellent time management, ability to work independently and to multi-task, excellent communication skills, and ability to take initiative. UCL student status is required for this position.

These studentships are intended for both undergraduate and postgraduate students to offer paid work experience in research. Research postgraduate students are not eligible to apply. Employment requires a right-to-work in the UK.

Application procedure

Those wishing to apply must submit a one-page CV plus a one-page personal statement describing why they are a good fit for the project. In addition, please provide the name of one academic referee who can be asked to advise during the selection process. Applicants must submit a customised personal statement for each project they wish to be considered for.

Letters of application, CV and personal statements must be received no later than **Tuesday, 19 April 2022 at 17:00 PM (UK Time)**. These must be sent by email to Victoria Mounsey: v.mounsey@ucl.ac.uk. Please include the word "studentship" in the subject line of your email.

Project 1 – A study of progressive think tanks in the USA

Supervisor: Dr Tiago Mata

Area: History of the social sciences; political sociology; public policy.

Project description

The context. Think tanks are a key component of the infrastructure of US public policy. Independent and funded by private actors or philanthropies, think tanks fill a gap left by the absence of a strong civil service or equivalent mechanisms that provide policy makers with intelligence and expert advice. Think tanks guide public policy by competing for the attention of the mass public and policy makers and since at least the second World War, they have been overwhelmingly conservative or libertarian in orientation. The Institute of Policy Studies created in 1963 was an early attempt by the New Left to play the game of the right. But it was only in the 1980s that left leaning think tanks began to take root and fruitfully shape the agenda and direction of public policy. Some of these institutions provided the blueprints for Democratic Party administrations, and progressive policy institutes are arguably at the peak of their influence in the current Joe Biden administration.

The research project. The work is part of a broader study on leftwing perspectives on political economy in the USA. That study has concluded inquiries into the origins of radical ideas in the 1960s, how radical social scientists engaged with mass movements in the long 1970s and how conventional social scientists assessed the work of radicals. The present study on think tanks complements and concludes this broader study by asking: how scholars and their allies created an expert identity for radical social science from the mid 1980s to the early 2000s?

The research work. The research is exploratory, mapping the actors, events and resources to better understand the phenomena of progressive economic expertise. You create a list and develop a ranking of key institutions in terms of their political position and influence. You will support the creation of a database of key actors and a classification system for their roles. You will help create a bibliography of key reports by these organisations that captures the range of issues and approaches they have championed.

Some literature. Thomas Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America*, University of Chicago Press, 2012. Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*, Bloomsbury Press, 2010. Craufurd Goodwin, "The Patrons of Economics in a Time of Transformation" *History of Political Economy*, 30(supplement), 2012, 53-81.

Skills required:
- Independence in searching for online resources and on online databases;
- Good record keeping;
- Ability to sort and classify written material;
- Familiarity with some database software (broadly understood);
- Communication skills;
- Ability to work to a deadline.

For further details about the project please contact Tiago Mata, t.mata@ucl.ac.uk.

Project 2 - Coding Humphry Davy's notebooks (2x internships)

Supervisor: Prof Frank James

Project description

Following a successful AHRC funded pilot, early last year the AHRC awarded a three-year grant of £1,000,000 to a project to image, transcribe and place on the web the notebooks of Humphry Davy (1778-1829). Davy, the foremost chemist and scientific lecturer of early nineteenth-century England, was also a scientific administrator who provided, not always successfully, practical scientific advice, including inventing a form of the miners' safety lamp. He also wrote poetry which was praised by, among others, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and is very much seen by historians today as one of the key figures of early English 'Romanticism.' His seventy-five surviving notebooks, covering the entire range of his interests, are held in the Royal Institution and in Kresen Kernow, the Cornish archives centre in Redruth. Further details can be found at https://wp.lancs.ac.uk/davynotebooks/.

The project is led by Professor Sharon Ruston of the Department of English Literature, Lancaster University. There are a number of Co-Is, including Frank James of this department, an acknowledged expert on Davy. The other Co-Is are Dr Joanna Taylor (University of Manchester, a specialist in literary digital mapping) and Dr Samantha Blickhan (Humanities Lead for Zooniverse). In addition, there is a Senior PDRA, Dr Andrew Lacey, who has overall management of the project. Also working on the project as a PDRA is Dr Eleanor Bird who will be joined in August by Dr Alexis Wolf. The successful applicants for the STS Summer Studentship will work mostly with Professor James, but will need to interact with other members of the project team.

Each line of text in each notebook is transcribed independently three times by Zooniverse volunteers of which there are currently around 1900. The transcriptions are aggregated, checked, and edited by a member of the project team to establish a base text. The next step is to enrich these base transcriptions, in XML format, in line with TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) editorial guidelines. It is on this stage that the students will work. They will be given specific notebooks to encode, allowing them to include their training and their work on individual notebooks on their CV. They will also be credited for this work in the final project documentation.

Ideally the applicants would have an interest in encoding, whilst an interest in early nineteenth century chemistry and its cultural role would be desirable. Training in XML/TEI encoding for the project will be provided.

Project 3 - COVID Vaccine Equity: African Views and Views of Africa

Supervisor: Dr Noémi Tousignant

Area: Science and Technology Studies; Medical Anthropology; Inequalities in Health; African Studies

Project description:

Many actors have issued urgent warnings in recent times about the ethical, economic, and epidemiological consequences of failing to distribute COVID vaccines equitably around the world. In such warnings, Sub-Saharan Africa's low vaccination rate and lack of access to vaccine supplies are often cited as striking indicators of global inequity, and as a major threat to ending the pandemic for 'all'. What views of Africa and Africans are communicated in these varied representations of vaccine (in)equity, its consequences, and its solutions? Are the stakes of vaccine production, distribution and access being described differently by African experts, institutions, journalists, and publics?

You will work with Noémi Tousignant to collect and analyse online documents pertaining to the topic. In particular, you will help select African news, social and institutional media sources, systematically review their coverage of COVID vaccination and vaccine supply, production, and distribution, and analyse the collected corpus of items. You will be involved in each step of the research process, from designing case studies to identifying themes and writing up the results. The final output will be a co-authored blog post.

Skills required:
- Well organised and able to work independently;
- Able to work systematically and to keep a record of actions;
- Familiarity with online research tools and practices;
- Able to write clearly and effectively;
- Knowledge of Sub-Saharan Africa and fluency in a language other than English used in Africa (including French and Portuguese) will be considered assets.

Project 4 – What is Chinese STS?

Supervisor: Prof Charlotte Sleigh

Project description
The student will scope syllabi in STS and HPS from Chinese universities, either via the web and/or by contacting teachers directly. The latter may be supplemented (if time allows) with structured interviews asking what the pedagogical intentions and desired learning outcomes are. They will translate brief syllabus information and bibliographic lists, and produce a short report indicating the quantity, type(s) and outlook of STS pedagogy in China.

For further information about this internship, please email sts@ucl.ac.uk.