

4 PhD positions and 1 postdoctoral position in the ITN “Knowing Vaccines: Policies, Practices, People”

Innovative Training Network (ITN) at the Faculty of Humanities at the UHH

Short programme description

Vaccines and vaccination raise complex questions around policies, practices, and people. Protecting and promoting health through vaccination always also involves areas of tensions, contention and intense negotiation: interests of the elderly vs. young; individual life/health vs. notions of a “healthy” society; societal engagement with well-being vs. death and dying; vaccine production and use for individuals vs. public health; body vs. biopolitics; tension between knowledge production in the laboratory vs. implementation; tension between scientificity (*Wissenschaftlichkeit*) and the personal assessment of scientists.

This *Innovative Training Network* aims to explore past, present and emerging “Regimes of Remembering”, “Regimes of Knowing”, “Regimes of Doing” and “Regimes of Living” by focusing on historical, scientific, cultural, and political negotiating processes. “How should one live” is taken as a starting point for an investigation into global and societal negotiations of different actors and agencies. It takes a multi-disciplinary approach to the subject of vaccines to ensure meaningful dialogue between humanities, social, medical and natural sciences. The integrated research fields offer important perspectives on the subject of vaccines and reflect key methodological approaches in the medical humanities:

Number of fellowships available

- 4 doctoral positions for 3 years each, with the option of an extension of another year
- 1 Post-doc position for 2 years, with the option of an extension

Key Dates

- 22 Okt 2021 Deadline for online applications for PhD fellowships
- 12 Nov 2021 Recruitment event at the University of Hamburg
- 01 Feb 2022 Start date of PhD fellowships

Location of Employment

University of Hamburg (Germany)

Career Stage for PhD Students

Early Career Researcher, i.e., postgraduate with up to four years of academic experience from the following disciplines: Empirical Cultural Studies, Historical Studies, Social/Cultural Anthropology, Media Studies

Humanities Research Fields

Medical History, Science and Technology Studies, Anthropology of the Body, Public Health

Benefits and salary

4 PhD 65% research positions, pay roll level TVL E-13, with the option of an additional year
1 Postdoctoral 100% position, 2 years, with the option of extension

Interdisciplinary qualification for research on infectious diseases in the Humanities

Supervision and joint knowledge production in one jointly-organised “Humanities Studio” per semester (incl. guest lectures and presentations)

The ITN “Knowing Vaccines” is explicitly committed to the principle of equal opportunities. Qualified women are especially encouraged to apply. Severely disabled applicants will be preferentially considered in case of equivalent qualifications. For further information please see: <https://www.uni-hamburg.de/en/gleichstellung.html>

Skills/Qualifications

- Excellent English language skills
- Strong track record of interdisciplinary research and collaboration
- Strong motivation to work in a cooperative and flexible team environment
- Preparedness to contribute to the outreach of the project, especially by:
 1. participation in publications in high-impact journals, and in the joint knowledge production across projects and disciplines
 2. Active participation at scientific conferences, policy workshops, public debates and panels, etc. at national and international level to address scientific communities, health institutions, cultural industry, IT sector, and the wider public,
 3. Participation in media communication (Twitter account, “Knowing Vaccines” blog and website) as a form of research-reflexivity and communicating project information
- IT knowledge (basic communication skills).
- For further specific requirements please see project descriptions below

Recruitment Procedure

Candidates must apply electronically in English until **22. Oktober 2021** and are requested to send their application as a single PDF file (max. 5 MB) to knowingvaccines.geisteswiss@uni-hamburg.de.

Applicants can apply for one position and are requested to indicate their preference with **the Knowing Vaccines Project number (see below)** in the e-mail’s subject line and justify their choice in the motivation letter, also answering the question for how long you have been working in your chosen field of research.

The application shall comprise:

- a motivation letter,
- detailed up-to date CV,
- relevant documents and copies of diploma such as verified Bachelor’s and Master’s transcripts of record with diploma supplement,
- master thesis and sample of academic writing (in English) (if applicable, e.g. paper, essay, publication, etc.).

The “Knowing Vaccines” Recruitment Committee will select and invite shortlisted candidates for a recruitment event which will take place on **12 November 2021** in Hamburg, Germany. The starting date for the selected PhDs will be **1 February 2022**. Please send your application to knowingvaccines.geisteswiss@uni-hamburg.de.

Further information about the application may be found at: <http://www.knowingvaccines.uni-hamburg.de>

Applicants for the post-doc position should provide a copy of the PhD degree certificate and the PhD thesis.

Key duties of the PhD fellows

Successful applicants will be expected to undertake the programme of work as detailed in the work section of the “Knowing Vaccines” consortium agreement.

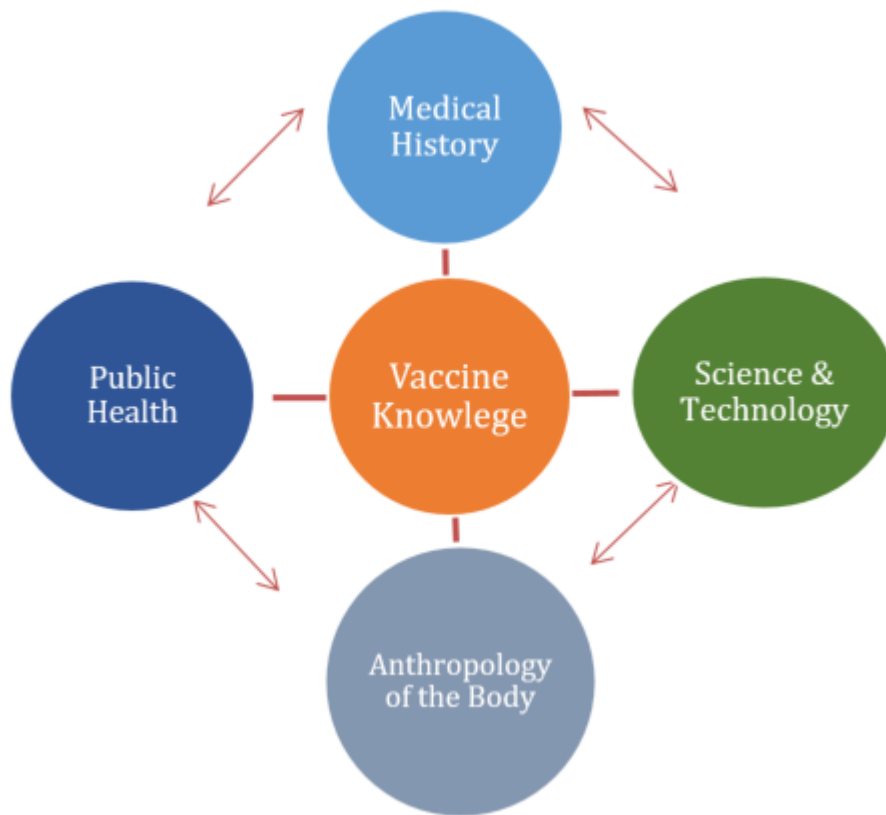
Key duties of the PhD fellows include:

- Pursue the research theme with diligence, independently and as part of the wider “Knowing Vaccines” consortium, with constant reference to interdisciplinarity and innovation.
- Attend and present at “Knowing Vaccines” training activities and meetings as outlined in the wider programme, including at national/international conferences relevant to the research.
- Report on progress regularly to the supervisory network and the rest of the research group.
- Thorough documentation of research data.
- Engage in outreach activities and public dissemination of knowledge.

Key duties of the post-doctoral fellows

The Post-doc researcher will play a central role in the *Innovative Training Network Knowing Vaccines*. More advanced in his/her academic career, the Post-doc will further develop his/her thematic qualification in one of the research fields, support and contribute to the joint knowledge production of the ITN and the supervision of the doctoral researchers. The Post-doc researcher will have an exemplary function for the inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge production across the Humanities and Sciences in the ITN, contribute to internationally visible dissemination and communication of the research results to various scientific communities and the general public. The Post-doc position is pivotal for capacity building in interdisciplinary infectious disease research in the Humanities in Hamburg; their competence and knowledge of the research landscape in Hamburg will be an essential asset in supporting the grant writing process of the Infectious Disease Cluster proposal.

The four integrated research fields will be tackled from different disciplinary backgrounds:



Project 1: Vaccine History “Prophylaxis for the People: Historicising Vaccine Research and Development in the German Democratic Republic”

Using East Germany (GDR) as a case study, the project will study the history of ideas, policies and practices in the research and development of novel types of poliomyelitis vaccines, and examines strategies to use vaccine knowledge and technology for propaganda purposes. Recent work on the GDR has focused on the role of Western pharmaceutical companies in conducting drug trials with human participants (Hess et al., 2016). While this work studied the extent to which trials complied with medical ethics standards, it not only overlooked the gendered and generational dimensions of the trials but also paid little attention to human experiments with novel vaccines. How were women and children selected and informed about the various risks of vaccine trials? Was informed consent obtained, and if so, how? Clinical trials in the U.S. in the 1950s on thousands of test subjects raised concerns about the ethics of human experiments, especially in light of the 1947 Nuremberg Code (Schmidt, 2004). Women and children in the GDR were not only prime target groups for researchers, but also were enrolled in mass trials with experimental vaccines (Chumakov-Sabin & Salk/Sabin). Recent scholarship (Kaminski, 2016) has shown that large parts of GDR society, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, were less emancipated and more patriarchal than has previously been suggested. Initial work on 1950s Hungary suggests that polio care resonated with political discourses regarding gender equality (Vargha, 2018). Can the same be said for the GDR? And how did this look in practice? What provisions were made in state-funded vaccination programmes to support women in their families, communities and workplaces? How was this debated in public policy forums in both East and West? More broadly, to what extent did medical ethicists highlight issues of medical ethics in vaccine development? How did they bring ethical concerns to the attention of the authorities and the public? Although their methods and means differed, the project aims to establish the extent to which medical ethicist in East and West shared the vision that health was an important common good.

Lead Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ulf Schmidt (ulf.schmidt@uni-hamburg.de), PhD in Historical Studies.

Project 2 Vaccine Science “Navigating the unknown. Vaccine development, admission and administration”

The project inquires how the unknown is managed in the processes of vaccine development, from basic research to the admission and administration of a vaccine. Even though vaccination is an established medical and social practice, it is still debated, criticized and feared for its unintended side-effects. During the Covid-19 pandemic the development of vaccines became a public issue in an unprecedented way. In this situation of high speed development of vaccines protecting against Covid-19 infections one could observe how experts and lay knowledge of vaccination were negotiated against each other, how different value and knowledge systems were applied, and how the unknown was a constant element that shaped the debates about vaccination and the defence against the Covid-19 virus as a whole. The development of vaccines is a highly professionalized process, depending on the one side on creative processes of scientific experimentation and invention in a large bandwidth of different expertises that need to be coordinated. On the other side it depends on highly regulated procedures of admission and administration. In this double bind, managing the unknown is a constant issue which is to be negotiated and managed among the involved actors: scientists in basic and applied research, experts of admission authorities, pharmaceutical industries, politicians, and finally people who accept or reject their personal vaccination. In this process of navigating the unknown different ideas, perceptions and coping strategies are conflicting. What is perceived as unknown, how is missing knowledge identified, specified and studied? What professional processes are established to navigate the unknown in vaccine development from basic research to administration? How do professional standards and forms of knowledge production matter for the perception of the unknown? How are coping strategies of the unknown communicated, negotiated and established in the different processes of vaccine development among different stakeholders? In which way do expert and lay perspectives and knowledge relate, mix or clash?

Lead Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Gertraud Koch (gertraud.koch@uni-hamburg.de), PhD in Empirical Cultural Studies

Project 3 Vaccine Anthropology “The Comeback of Anthrax: science, state interventions, and local understandings of global warming and pandemics in the Far North”

At the intersection of global environmental change, human-animal relations and research into infectious diseases, this study will examine public and scientific discourses on permafrost degradation and the recurrence of anthrax outbreaks in the northern hemisphere, with particular focus on Russia. A disease with a potential to affect both animals and humans, anthrax has made it (back) into the limelight of press releases in 2015-16, when outbreaks were reported from two different regions within northern Siberia. These are believed to have emanated from earlier cattle, horse and reindeer graveyards. Reportedly, ungulates that died of anthrax were buried at numerous sites across northern Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Diagilev 2017). Many of these animal graveyards are located in permafrost soil layers, previously believed to provide security against new outbreaks.

At present, regional effects of global warming increase the risk of anthrax spores becoming reactivated. With growing anxieties of anthrax recurrence, large numbers of reindeer were vaccinated over the last five years. However, state-induced vaccination campaigns have come to be associated with interventions “from above”, leading to certain expressions of suspicion among local inhabitants. Conspiracy theories thus emerged around anthrax vaccinations; these tie into more recent events in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Stammler & Ivanova 2020). The debate around “the fight against anthrax” thus relates to different yet interconnected tropes: pandemics, climate change, well-being of humans and animals, invasive species, health policies, and outsiders’ interventions.

Presenting a detailed analysis of the linkages between scientific research, state policies, media discourse, and local inhabitants' ways of making sense of infectious diseases "on the ground", this study will provide for a more nuanced understanding of risk and prevention, climate change, the ways in which climate change is narrated but also the ways in which it affects the togetherness of humans and animals in the circumpolar North (Anderson 2017). In prospect, the study may be potentially connected with research on biological warfare at the margins of Russia (Finland, Manchuria) in the first half of the 20th century. Additionally, or alternatively, this research may contribute to research on anti-vax (reluctance against vaccinations) in Russia, providing a basis for comparisons world-wide.

Lead Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Joachim Otto Habeck (otto.habeck@uni-hamburg.de), Phd in Social and Cultural Anthropology

Project 4 Vaccine Communication: "Images and Metaphors of Infection and Vaccination"

All actors and agencies involved in researching infectious diseases necessarily use different media as a tool for gaining knowledge and as a tool for communication, for example in the form of language, images, graphic models, IT technology, print media, mass media or interactive networks. All of the media bring specific qualities to the process of conducting research into infectious disease and the broader discourses about that work: the possibilities of abstraction and meaningful representation differ in their same way as the possibilities of reaching out, directly or indirectly, to various audiences. An historical perspective shows the extent to which infectious research and the societal discourses about infection have been shaped through changes in the media landscape in which they took part.

Against such a broader perspective the doctoral project studies the specific role of images in scientific and public discourses on infectious disease and vaccination. Because of their high degree of visual representation, images are widely used within the field of research as well as in the field of mass- and social media – as the current debates about Covid-19 make clear.

Especially metaphors help both experts in natural sciences, as well as journalists, politicians and other actors to give complex infectious processes an easy to grasp image. Viruses, for example, are portrayed as "dangerous enemies" or "parasites" to which medicine and society "declare war" (cf. Evas/Salis/Fanari 2021). In addition to such popular war metaphors, vaccination with the goal of "herd immunity" ("Herdenimmunität") is also metaphorically conceived and visualised (cf. Biss 2015). Especially in politics and the media, metaphorical concepts significantly shape public discourses and ideas. The project will explore the visualisations and metaphoric concepts of infection and vaccination in expert medical discourses and compare them with the public ones.

The project would specifically aim to study:

- a) the role image metaphors of infectious disease and vaccination play in the process of knowledge production in the natural sciences
- b) the role image metaphors play in the public dissemination of knowledge about infectious disease and vaccination (e.g. through cartoons, animations, info-graphics, photo collage)
- c) recurring iconographic motives and visual topoi within public debates about infection (for instance the image of the "syringe" as an image topoi) and the extent to which these have undergone changes over time.
- d) the mass distribution of individual images as "media icons" which diachronically appear and reappear in the collective memory at different times and are updated and recontextualised.

Lead Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Kathrin Fahlenbrach (kathrin.fahlenbrach@uni-hamburg.de), PhD in Media Studies

Supervisory Team

Lead Supervisors:

- Prof. Dr. Kathrin Fahlenbrach is professor for media studies at the Department for Media and Communication at the *University of Hamburg*. Her main research fields are: emotion and cognition in audiovisual and digital media; embodied metaphors in pictures and audiovisual media; media icons in mass media and online media; visual performances and the role of images in protest movements and online-activism. Her works include (2019) *Medien, Geschichte, Wahrnehmung. Ein Lehrbuch zur Mediengeschichte*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS-Verlag. (2010) *Audiovisuelle Metaphern. Zur Körper- & Affektästhetik in Film und Fernsehen*. Marburg: Schüren-Verlag; edited volumes: (2016) *Embodied Metaphors in Film, Television, and Video Games: Cognitive Approaches* (New York/London: Routledge). (2017) *Protest Cultures. A Companion*. Oxford/New York: Berghahn Books. (together with Martin Klimke, Joachim Scharloth).
- Prof. Dr. Joachim Otto Habeck teaches social anthropology at Universität Hamburg. His research interests comprise the nexus of indigenous land use and permafrost; pastoralism in northern Eurasia and Mongolia; agrarian history in socialist societies; notions of “culture” (cultivatedness), gender and lifestyle in diverse regional settings. He served as German representative in the Social and Human Working Group of the International Arctic Science Committee. Within the Horizon-2020 Project CHARTER (Drivers and Feedbacks of Changes in Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity) Habeck is lead scientist of Work-Package 3, investigating the social-economic dynamics of environmental change in reindeer-herding communities. He has also conducted research on cultural aspects of masculinity and the body, on alcohol consumption and hangover. Among other publications, he has written monographs about Arctic pastoralism and the concept of culture in Russia, including *What it Means to Be a Herdsman: the practice and image of reindeer husbandry among the Komi of Northern Russia* (2005) and *Das Kulturhaus in Russland: postsozialistische Kulturarbeit zwischen Ideal und Verwahrlosung* (2014). He is co-editor of *Nomadic and Indigenous Spaces: productions and cognitions* (Ashgate, 2013) and editor of *Lifestyle in Siberia and the Russian North* (Open Book Publishers, 2019).
- Prof. Dr. Gertraud Koch (Speaker) is Professor of *Anthropological Studies in Culture and History* at University of Hamburg. She has studied digitization as social and cultural phenomenon since the 1990s. In her research she combines approaches from Science and Technology Studies, Digital Humanities, Media Archeology, and Critical Data Studies and with an emphasis on methodological and theoretical frameworks (e.g. Digitisation. Theories and concepts for empirical cultural research, 2017). Another research is diversity social inclusion (e.g. Pathways to empathy 2013, with Stefanie Everke Buchanan). Her research on intangible cultural heritage and memory making link to her activities in the German Commission for UNESCO, as member and Vize Chair of the Expert Committee Intangible Cultural Heritage. She is Coordinator of POEM. Participatory Memory Practices. Concepts, strategies and media infrastructures for envisioning socially inclusive potential futures of European Societies through culture. The Innovative Training Network, funded by Horizon 2020 MSCA, addresses the urgent need of experts in the heritage sector who are qualified for working with the mediatized memory ecology, the changing socio-technical, organisational, legal, economic, and ethical frameworks for the use of cultural materials.
- Prof. Dr. Kay Grünewald is head of the research department Structural Cell Biology of Viruses at the Heinrich-Pette Leibniz Institute for Experimental Virology and group lead at the Centre for Structural Systems Biology (CSSB), a joint initiative of three universities and six research institutes. With his working group at the University of Oxford he works on understanding the entirety of a virus’ ‘life cycle’, which requires an understanding of its transient structures at the molecular level. The aim is a comprehensive picture of the functional interaction between viral protein complexes and cellular structures in the course of the infection.

- Prof. Dr. Ulf Schmidt (Speaker) is Professor of Modern History at the University of Hamburg and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. His research interests are in the area of the history of modern medical ethics, warfare and policy in twentieth-century Europe and the United States. He is especially interested in the history of authoritarian regimes and dictatorships. He has published widely on the history of Nazi Germany, the history of human experimentation during the Cold War, the Nuremberg Doctors' Trial and the Nuremberg Code, the history of eugenics and euthanasia, and the history of propaganda. He is the author, among others, of "Medical Films, Ethics and Euthanasia in Germany, 1933–1945" (2002); "Justice at Nuremberg: Leo Alexander and the Nazi Doctors' Trial" (2004); "Karl Brand: The Nazi Doctor. Medicine and Power in the Third Reich" (2007); "Secret Science. A Century of Poison Warfare and Human Experiments" (2015); "Propaganda and Conflict: War, Media and the Shaping of the Twentieth Century" (2019), and "Ethical Research: The Declaration of Helsinki, and the Past, Present, and Future of Human Experimentation" (2020), published with OUP. He is one of the PIs of the ERC Synergy project on "Taming the European Leviathan: the Post-War Legacy of Medicine and the Common Good".

General contact

Address for applications: knowingvaccines.geisteswiss@uni-hamburg.de

In case of questions please contact:

e-mail: knowingvaccines.geisteswiss@uni-hamburg.de

In case of questions to a specific PhD project, please contact the relevant lead supervisor:

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Prof. Dr. Gertraud Koch (gertraud.koch@uni-hamburg.de)

Prof. Dr. Ulf Schmidt (ulf.schmidt@uni-hamburg.de)