

**The International Graduate School “The obligation of societal norms“ at the Center of Excellence  
“Enlightenment – Religion – Knowledge” invites applications for**

10 PhD scholarships

starting on 1 October 2018

The PhD position has a stipend of €1,500 / month and is funded for a maximum of 3 years.

Summary

The research of the international graduate school focuses on a central inter- and transdisciplinary question: How are political, ethical, legal, religious, cultural, or aesthetic norms and values made binding or acknowledged as binding for individuals within a society? Connected with this central question, we also ask: What sources of authority are concerned with justifying the recognition of these norms and values, or with motivating members of society to adhere to them? Are the rules, principles, and laws explicitly formulated or are they simply implicitly assumed? What are the relationships and tensions between transcendental sources of legitimacy and authority on the one hand and worldly contexts of justification on the other? What societal ideals do these norms and values express? Are they responding to specific cultural, social, philosophical, and religious conflicts, crises, or upheavals? Can societal processes and revolutions be triggered, in their turn, by discourses about norms and obligations?

These questions are of immediate relevance for the world today and provide new insights into the preconditions for the existence of modern pluralistic societies and their understanding of themselves as such. But both conflict and accommodation regarding the bindingness of norms and values are fundamental challenges in any process of societization. The topic is thus also relevant for historical and ethnological comparisons. Consequently, the international graduate school will look at the question of how norms are negotiated and made binding across both different cultures and time periods.

The projects in this interdisciplinary collaboration fall into four main topics:

- Research Area 1: Freedom, law, and obligation in the philosophy of the Enlightenment and/or as fundamental concepts of a general theory of action, as a guiding idea of social order and individual determination of freedom.

- Research Area 2: Debates about the preconditions for successful societization from the Early Modern Period to the present (for example, debates about political participation or the cultural preconditions for integration or the bindingness of religious beliefs)
- Research Area 3: Rules and rule-breaking in art, music, and literature in the Age of Enlightenment (1650-1850)
- Research Area 4: Implementation of norms from the Early Modern Period to the present

A more detailed description of the research programme of the International Graduate School can be found at: [www.netzwerk-arw.uni-halle.de](http://www.netzwerk-arw.uni-halle.de)

The graduate school is inter- and transdisciplinary. We particularly welcome applications from the following disciplines: history, German studies, music, philosophy, political science, religious studies, Romance studies, theology.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- excellent academic performance and final grades
- concept paper outlining the proposed PhD project
- documentation of academic expertise, including at least one letter of recommendation (but no more than two)
- a dissertation topic that is congruent with the methodology, concept, and goals of the graduate school and has a central question that engages with one of the school’s four research areas
- willingness of the applicant to participate regularly in events held by the graduate school and to actively contribute to dialogues with other colleagues.
- English skills at a level sufficient to engage in academic discussions with other members of the research school (the dissertation may be written in either German or English).

#### Application process

Application materials may be submitted in German or English and should include a covering letter, an exposé of the dissertation project which include a projected schedule for completion (max. 8 pages), a CV, and copies of diplomas along with both individual and final marks. The application should include the subject line “Internationale Graduiertenschule / Verbindlichkeit” and be sent by post to the Speaker of the Graduate School, Prof. Dr. Heiner F. Klemme:

Prof. Dr. Heiner F. Klemme  
Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg  
Seminar für Philosophie  
06099 Halle (Saale)

Please also send an additional copy of the application materials in electronic form (1 PDF document) as an e-mail attachment to: [annegret.jummrich@pietismus.uni-halle.de](mailto:annegret.jummrich@pietismus.uni-halle.de).

The letters of recommendation should be sent separately by the recommender, either in electronic form to the e-mail address above or via post to Professor Klemme.

The deadline for applications is 3 April 2018 (receipt of the electronic file).

Interviews will take place between 7 and 11 May at Martin Luther University in Halle. We regret that we are unable to compensate applicants for travel costs. Applicants outside of Germany have the option of arranging to conduct interviews via Skype.