

Profile of the junior professorship
“Qualitative Methods and Methods of Cultural Research“

02.11.2018

1. Denomination

The junior professorship’s denomination is „Qualitative Methods and Methods of Cultural Research“ (in German: „Qualitative und kulturwissenschaftliche Methoden“). The junior professorship includes teaching and research duties and is remunerated as W1 position (salary grade) under relevant state law. The junior professorship is funded by state financial assistance for the assurance and improvement of academic studies (Studienqualitätsmittel).

2. Faculty and institute

The junior professorship for qualitative and cultural methods is situated at the interdisciplinary Center of Methods at Leuphana University Lüneburg. The junior professorship will also be part of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, presumably at the Institute of Sociology and Cultural Organization.

The junior professorship is expected to make a significant contribution to the Faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences at Leuphana and its academic initiative “Culture”. The interdisciplinary and international cultural research initiative focuses on questions of the constitution and transformation of cultural structures and institutions, artefacts and practices. Methodological questions of, and reflections on, the collection and analysis of verbal as well as medially transmitted data, observations, documents and records are of great importance here. In this context, references to the following internationally oriented research foci are also desirable: to digital cultures - for example with a view to their exploration by digitally mediated methods (e.g. "netnography", "infrastructural ethnography" and other approaches enabled by media technology); on the DFG Research Training Group "Cultures of Critique" (KdK) - for example with regard to methodological criticism as well as ethnographic, discourse-analytical, visual methods as well as art critique, media critique and social critique; and to relevant general discussions of the methodology of cultural research and cultural theory, such as those conducted in the context of neo-material approaches to cultural and social theory, actor network theory, science and technology studies, gender studies, and aesthetic and affective theories.

The aim of the Center of Methods is to provide an intensive and high-quality range of courses to promote the research skills and methodical knowledge of Leuphana students, especially for seminar, bachelor, master and doctoral theses. The competences and qualifications acquired by the students should correspond to national and international standards. With the establishment of the Center of Methods, Leuphana seeks to emphasize the importance of methodological research competence and strengthen the idea and practices of research-oriented teaching. During their studies, students are thus given the opportunity to participate in Leuphana's research processes. The implementation and supervision of student research projects take account of this basic idea of research-oriented teaching.



The junior professorship for Qualitative Methods and Methods of Cultural Research is one of five professorships that are located in the Center of Methods. The bundling of methodological competence within the Center supports the interdisciplinary exchange and the systematic development of the methodological training of the students through a jointly developed, interdisciplinary teaching concept. New developments and methodological concepts from the junior professorships' own research activities are to be incorporated into the education of the students.

3. Focus of the junior professorship

The junior professorship is dedicated to the reflection and further development of qualitative methods and methods of cultural research. It thus refers to a diverse spectrum of methods of sampling and the selection of cases, of survey and analysis, of field research on site (or on digitally mediated sites), of reflexive methods of participatory observation, as well as of the analysis and description of empirical material, which can refer to the level of verbalization (narration, discourse, conversation, opinions and convictions), but also to that of practices and behavior as well as to code, recordings and artefacts. These methods - which include everyday observations and interviews, the observation of extra-ordinary and subcultural behavior, visual documentation, material objects, performative interventions and media-based or networked data generation - and their reflection are of considerable relevance for cultural research and are currently a matter of great concern in various disciplines and thematic fields. In addition to cultural anthropology, sociology, qualitative network analysis, the various types of discourse analysis, cultural and visual studies, organizational research, qualitatively oriented media studies, science and technology studies, as well as current cultural theoretical approaches to gender and queer theory, postcolonial and decolonial, aesthetic and affect-theoretical approaches should be mentioned here. Self-reflexive (methodological) research plays a special role in this, insofar as it deals with the history of different methods and their media-technological conditions, traces their historical conditions and developments, and reflects these matters within the framework of different cultures of knowledge and science.

3.1 Contribution to research

It is expected that the junior professor will strive for innovative and internationally recognized research and high-quality publications within the framework of his or her activities at Leuphana. In addition to the interdisciplinarity of methodological research, close interaction with the respective disciplines - taking into account the specific concepts and procedures in each case - is indispensable. Even if the junior professorship has a multidisciplinary teaching assignment, it will assign itself to a discipline at Leuphana in its research and with regard to its own further academic qualification, which in this particular case, however, can be determined by the applicant himself. The development of own research activities in the discipline of the junior professor as well as joint interdisciplinary research on research methods is expected.

The contribution to research in the junior professorship is therefore on the one hand situated on a disciplinary level, in order to take account of the disciplinary structure of the research landscape and to enable the junior



professor to position himself/herself in a disciplinary field. On the other hand, the discussion of methods - for example with regard to digital cultures - increasingly takes place on an interdisciplinary basis, which makes it possible to aim for contributions that impact these interdisciplinary debates and thus various disciplines. This is of particular relevance for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, because methodological developments and differentiations of the individual disciplines need to be understood in, and made fruitful for, the wider context of cultural research. This will contribute to the further development of disciplines that need to respond to social change, but which have in particular resulted from processes of globalization, interculturality and transculturality, communication, media, culture and the arts that can be categorized historically, spatially and temporally.

The junior professorship will be integrated into existing research activities at Leuphana. In accordance with its character as a link between different disciplines, it is to cooperate with various research units and also aim to acquire external funding together with these units.

The junior professorship is intended to strengthen methodological training at Leuphana across disciplines and to promote the integration of students in research projects. The relationship between methodological research and teaching is therefore paramount. The junior professorship cooperates with colleagues at Leuphana who share the research interest in methodological concerns.

3.2 Contribution to teaching

Within the framework of the Center of Methods, the junior professorship works on the development and implementation of the teaching concept through which the students at Leuphana College and Leuphana Graduate School develop methodological competence. Students are enabled to make competent, reflective and critical methodological decisions and to build up the ability to work independently in scholarly research at an early stage of their studies.

The junior professorship strengthens the methodological offerings from the spectrum of qualitative methods and methods of cultural research in the study programs of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and - with special emphasis - in the interdisciplinary study elements at Leuphana. It advises and supervises students throughout their studies on methodological issues and is available to young researchers for consultation on their research activities.

Corresponding to the research profile, a conceptually demanding, methodologically multi-faceted and empirically oriented teaching with a high didactic standard is aspired to. In the course of updating the teaching structures, the position holder is expected to contribute to the development and introduction of new forms of teaching and learning.

Leuphana promotes the gender diversity competence of its students on the basis of integrative gendering. The professorship takes this as a guiding principle and incorporates findings from gender studies and diversity approaches into its teaching.

The teaching load for the junior professorship is 4 LVS per semester.



3.3 Transfer, Outreach, and Further Education

Designed to establish and enhance the internal transfer of knowledge, the position profile includes close cooperation with colleagues; methodological training of students and researchers is a central component of the position. Further external transfer activities are welcome, both with regard to the interdisciplinary discussion of methods and with regard to other forms of knowledge transfer for the interested public.