Postdoctoral Research Fellow Position

There is a vacancy for the position of postdoctoral research fellow at the Department of Social Anthropology, as a part of the project "Technoscientific Immortality: A study of Human Futures", which is funded by the Research Council of Norway's Program for Groundbreaking Research, running from 2021 until 2025. The position is for a period of three years.

We are looking for a creative, independent, and ambitious junior researcher who wants to contribute to a dynamic research program that addresses core issues in contemporary anthropology of the future.

About the project/work tasks:

"Technoscientific Immortality: A study of Human Futures" (Immortality) examines changing conceptions of the human being, mortality, and social relations in an increasingly technologically advanced world. Technological innovation in human-computer interfaces, medical breakthroughs in biotechnology, and an emerging notion that ageing is a disease seem to seriously challenge established understandings of what a human being is or might be. Based on comparative ethnographies from seven different case studies in the US and Russia this project will investigate the socio-cultural foundations for, and effects of, the increasing interest in new forms of immortality (as ‘living on’ in AI, ‘mind upload/transfer, cryonics etc.) through techno-scientific developments. In particular the project will investigate the way in which immortality-thinking forms, and transforms, social relations in general and kinship relations in particular.

The postdoctoral research fellow will have a primary responsibility for case study 2 in the research agenda of Immortality, entitled “Cryonics in the US”. This research task is summarized as follows:

This is an ethnographic study of Cryonics, in the US, where the ideology and organizational infrastructure of this form of transhumanism and immortality projects are most developed. In the United States, cryonics had its beginnings with the works of Robert Ettinger who in 1964 popularized the idea of freezing the body or the brain in order to be reanimated when technological advancements would allow restoration and rejuvenation of damaged tissues. Several organizations in the US offer cryonic emergency services, but only a few institutions are active in research, and world-wide currently only three institutions (two located in the US and one in Russia) offer long-term cryogenic suspension of human ‘patients’. The two largest US cryonics institutes claim to hold approximately 300 human subjects in suspension, and the postdoc will locate the research efforts to one of these facilities. We welcome project descriptions that can expand on the key topics of the Immortality project; how new techno-scientific immortality forms have effects on, but also formed by, perceptions of the social: How are social relations formed and transformed in the context of cryonics and technoscientific forms of immortality?

Applicants are requested to develop a research proposal including descriptions of fieldwork and timeline, that addresses these dimensions of research outlined for case study 2, and that relates the research to the overall information on the project available at https://www.uib.no/en/immortality/142361/about-project

Qualifications and personal qualities:

- The applicants must hold a PhD, or must have submitted his/her doctoral thesis for assessment prior to the application deadline, in anthropology or similar (candidates with PhD’s in studies of religion, sociology, Science and Technology Studies (STS) or similar disciplines may also be considered if they can demonstrate skills in ethnographic research). It is a condition of employment that the PhD has been awarded.
- Active research and publication orientation is required.
- The candidate must show ability to work independently and in a structured manner and have the ability to cooperate with others.
- Proficiency in both written and oral English.

Potential candidates may be invited to the department for an interview and might be asked to hold a trial lecture in a given topic.

About the position of postdoctoral research fellow:

The position of postdoctoral research fellow is a fixed-term appointment with the primary objective of qualifying the appointee for work in top academic positions. Individuals may not be hired for more than one fixed-term period as a postdoctoral research fellow at the same institution.
The successful candidate will be expected to relocate to the University of Bergen and participate in the scholarly activities of the Department. A research proposal of max 5 pages (references excluded) must accompany the application. The proposal should present the topic, the research problem(s) and choice of theory and methods, according to the specific requirements given above. The proposal should also include a progress plan for the different parts of the project.

We can offer:
- A good and professionally challenging working environment.
- Salary at pay grade 61-63 (code 1352) on the government salary scale upon appointment. This currently amounts to an annual salary of NOK 553 500 - 574 700 before taxes. Further promotions are made according to length of service in the position. For particularly highly qualified applicants, a higher salary may be considered.
- Enrolment in the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund.
- A position in an inclusive workplace (IW).
- Good welfare benefits

Your application must include:
- A cover letter including a brief account of the applicant's research interests and motivation for applying for the position.
- The names and contact information for two reference persons. One of these must be the main advisor from the PhD programme.
- CV
- Transcripts and diplomas and official confirmation that the doctoral thesis has been submitted.
- Relevant certificates/references.
- PhD dissertation
- Research proposal (as outlined above)
- List of any works of a scientific nature (publication list). Any publications in your name.

The application and appendices with certified translations into English or a Scandinavian language must be uploaded at Jobbnorge.

General information:
Detailed information about the position can be obtained by contacting: Professor Annelin Eriksen, e-mail: annelin.eriksen@uib.no

Practical questions about the application process should be directed to Bjørn Arild Petersen, e-mail: bjorn.petersen@uib.no

The state labour force shall reflect the diversity of Norwegian society to the greatest extent possible. People with immigrant backgrounds and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply for the position.

The University of Bergen applies the principle of public access to information when recruiting staff for academic positions.

Information about applicants may be made public even if the applicant has asked not to be named on the list of persons who have applied. The applicant must be notified if the request to be omitted is not met.

Further information about our employment process can be found here.

About The University of Bergen (UiB)

The University of Bergen is a renowned educational and research institution, organised into seven faculties and approximately 54 institutes and academic centres. Campus is located in the centre of Bergen with university areas at Nygårdshøyden, Haukeland, Marineholmen, Møllendalsveien and Årstad.

There are seven departments and three centres at Faculty of Social Sciences. Read more about the faculty and departments.

Jobbnorge-ID: 209052, Søknadsfrist: 1. oktober 2021