Post-Doctoral Researcher in Sociology of Human Rights (With Romanian and/or Hungarian Language Expertise)

Grade/Salary 7 (Point 29) – Starting salary £38,308 (including London Allowance)
Duration 36 months (starting 1 January 2023 or promptly thereafter)
FTE 100%

The Faculty
As of the 2023-24 Academic Year, the UCL School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies (SSEES) will become a constituent academic unit of UCL’s Faculty of Arts & Humanities.

Ranked fifth in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings by Subject for the last two consecutive years (2021 and 2022), and with several departments ranked 6th for Research Power in the recent REF 2021, the Faculty of Arts & Humanities is recognised globally for both its teaching and research excellence.

The Faculty offers study at all levels – Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and PhD – in departments which, alongside the traditional arts and humanities disciplines housed within English, Philosophy, Greek & Latin, the Slade School of Fine Art and the School of European Languages, Culture & Society (SELCS), include Hebrew & Jewish Studies, Information Studies, European & International Social & Political Studies (EISPS) and Arts and Sciences (offering the interdisciplinary BASc programme and, new for 2023, the BA Creative Arts & Humanities).

The School
Founded in 1915, the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) is one of the UK's largest institutions for research and teaching on Russia, the Baltics, and Central, Eastern and South-East Europe. Our mission is to create in-depth knowledge of Russia and Eastern Europe in regional, comparative, transnational, and global contexts, and to promote and disseminate an understanding of our region to the wider world; developing multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multi-method approaches to knowledge creation and to teaching; and to enhance the development of area studies at UCL and among the wider academic community.

We offer undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes, both within our four core disciplines (Economics and Business; Politics and Sociology; Languages and Culture; and History), as well as interdisciplinary programmes (for example, our BA in History, Politics & Economics).
The Role

The UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) is seeking to appoint one full-time post-doctoral Researcher to work on the project HuRiEE – Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Russia funded by UKRI. The successful candidates will work with Associate Professor Agnieszka Kubal (Principal Investigator) and be part of an exciting team of scholars exploring the socio-legal aspects of human rights mobilisation in Eastern Europe and Russia.

HuRiEE treats human rights mobilisation as a window into the broader societies. It asks: How do claims-making before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) shape the lives of individuals and the development of societies in Eastern Europe and Russia? The ultimate ambition for this project is to develop a brand-new theory of the relationship between human rights mobilisation, ECtHR’s legitimacy, and the development of societies under the conditions of ‘abusive constitutionalism’ (Russia), open military conflict (Ukraine), deep transformations (Romania) and democratic backsliding (Poland and Hungary).

This position is aimed at providing a career development opportunity for those in the immediately postdoctoral stage of their career, to provide the opportunity to consolidate their PhD through developing publications, their networks, and their research and professional skills.

Duties and Responsibilities

The successful candidate will:

1. Be responsible for data collection in Romania and Hungary among the people who mobilise human rights law (claimants, human rights lawyers, activists, and judges). This will involve qualitative interviewing and fieldwork in NGOs, which bring cases to the ECtHR, and observations in the domestic courts.
2. Conduct archival research in different national and regional archives on the adaptation of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) in Romania and Hungary.
3. Qualitative data coding, preparing comparative NVivo database, merging datasets.
4. Summarizing findings and literature reviews, analysing data leading to co-authored (with the PI) and independent articles and chapters on everyday mobilisation of the ECHR in Eastern Europe.
5. Developing own research and presenting it at international conferences and workshops.
6. Produce publications in order to help establish track record.
7. Build networks to develop impact opportunities and inform and support further development.
8. Responsibility for day-to-day running of the project, organizing events, running the project website and social media.

For the data collection the post-doctoral Researcher will be based in Hungary and Romania, but for the remainder of the employment the Researcher is expected to be based at SEES and be integral part of the research team.
Person Specification

The essential requirements of the post include:

1. PhD (or DPhil) in Anthropology, Sociology, Human Rights, or a closely related field of social science.
2. Previous experience of social science research: qualitative data collection, archival research, and analysis (experience of working with in-depth interviews or biographical narrative interviews is desirable).
3. Good skills of NVivo (or demonstrable ability to learn this software).
4. Demonstrable research interest in human rights and legal mobilisation in Hungary and/or Romania (previous knowledge of the human rights field and access to research participants is desirable).
5. A proven commitment to high-quality research demonstrable through publications.
6. Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English (fluent) and Hungarian and/or Romanian (advanced).

Salary and Starting Date

The Research Assistant will be appointed on Grade 7, point 29, currently £38,308 per annum (including London Allowance).

The appointment should start on 1 January 2023 or promptly thereafter.

Application process

Application for the position should be made online via the UCL Human resources website at:
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/jobs/

Please also upload your CV and cover letter as well as one of your research papers or a piece of original writing that is relevant to this post.

For enquiries relating to the post, please contact Dr Agnieszka Kubal (a.kubal@ucl.ac.uk)

For queries relating to the application process, please contact Shevanese Anderson (shevanese.anderson@ucl.ac.uk)

About the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies

The UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) is a world-leading multidisciplinary specialist institution for the study of Russia, Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. More than 70 staff teach and conduct research at SSEES with specialisations that cover most of the disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences. For more information see http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/.