

Call for applications

KIU PhD programme in Interdisciplinary Ukrainian Studies

The KIU Graduate Programme is the first structured doctoral programme in Germany on Ukrainian studies. The programme offers up to 15 early career researchers from various disciplines the unique opportunity to conduct intensive research on aspects of history, culture, state, society and conflict related to Ukraine.

At one of the most inspiring research locations, the Viadrina, which is located directly on the German-Polish border, and in the excellent research environment of the KIU, which includes the most important Berlin research institutions, our PhD students will become part of the endeavor of establishing Ukrainian studies in Germany.

The KIU invites interested master's graduates to apply to participate in the PhD programme entitled:

„Resilience, Restoration and Transformation. Ukraine in a world of turmoil“

The war of aggression caused by Russia against Ukraine has not only brought immeasurable suffering to a peaceful country and war back to Europe. It has brought to the surface globally relevant fractures and conflicts, but also violence, colonialism and the elementary breaking of rules that were believed to be part of the past. The immense violence that emanates from Russia until today confronts the global community, the European Union and, in particular, every single European society with the challenge of finding answers to the threat to freedom and the fragility of peace. This is a new era – for societies, for politics, for economies, but also for science and academia.

This war has also introduced a new era in East European Studies, with major implications for a broad spectrum of disciplines. Not only has it transcended the prior centrality of Russia in the field of East European Studies, but it has also challenged a whole number of paradigms and geopolitical assumptions that were often based on an inherent Russia-centered bias. By contrast, the complexity and contradictions, the richness in tension and ambitions, the creativity, resilience, European rootedness and global relevance of Ukrainian society, politics, economy and culture in history and present have been too often been given little consideration. In the KIU programme, we take up this perspective to foster and strengthen Ukrainian Studies in European and global perspectives.

The KIU competence network is a four-year DAAD-funded project to strengthen Ukraine-related research, teaching, networking and transfer activities. The competence network, initiated and led by the European University Viadrina, includes the ZOiS, the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, the Freie Universität Berlin, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin.

About the PhD Programme:

The KIU Graduate Programme places Ukraine in the epicenter of a new research programme that focuses on the topics of “Resilience, Restoration and Transformation” through the lenses of History, Literature and Cultural Studies, Political Science, Economics, Law, Peace and Conflict Studies, Sociology, and Digital Studies. From 2025 on, the KIU Graduate Programme intends to train a new generation of scholars who will dedicate their PhD to an entangled understanding of Ukraine within its multiple historical, political, and institutional layers.

Utilizing the elite network of Berlin-Brandenburg universities (Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt University Berlin, European University Viadrina), united by a profound focus on Ukrainian and European Studies, the proposed thematic corridors advance the respective disciplines represented in the KIU Graduate Programme, while suggesting a new global direction in the area of Ukrainian Studies. We actively invite international scholars to work with us within this framework and develop their doctoral projects. Project proposals should directly relate to the KIU Graduate Programme's framework topic, “*Resilience, Restoration and Transformation. Ukraine in a world of turmoil*”. Projects dealing with the overall topic from a comparative, interdisciplinary or transnational perspective are particularly welcome.

Possible thematic corridors include: In *history*, we encourage applications that deal with the entangled, postcolonial, and decolonial history of Ukraine, German-Ukrainian and Polish- Ukrainian relations, and comparative approaches towards democracy and dictatorship. In *political science*, we concentrate on comparative authoritarianism and democratic theory, EU- Ukraine relations, and the role of culture in political development. In *economics and political economy*, we focus on comparative institutions, economic development, international economic policy and global political economy, and economics of nation- and state-building. In *law*, we touch on important issues of public and private international law, EU economic and criminal law, and the law of Ukraine in comparative perspective. In *sociology*, our interests lie with migration and the role of technology and digitalization in societal transformations; public activism. Impact of war on minorities, urban /rural spaces. In *peace and conflict studies*, proposals on innovative perspectives on dialogue, mediation and conflict transformation as well as methodological studies on necessary adaptations of the field are encouraged. In *literature and cultural studies*, we encourage research ideas on geopoetics, cosmopolitanism, and the role of natural resources in the formation of collective identities. In *digital studies*, we invite research that focuses on the role of (digital) media technologies, practices and infrastructures in shaping contemporary epistemic cultures about Ukraine and/in Europe, with a particular focus on the digital dimension of war in Ukraine and Europe.

PhD students will complete their respective formal PhD requirements including the dissertation at the respective KIU partner university, which are European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Freie Universität Berlin. Successful candidates will have the opportunity to participate in activities in the framework of existing Graduate Schools from all three universities. Furthermore, and beyond disciplinary boundaries, the KIU Graduate Programme aims at forming an interdisciplinary scholarly collective based in the KIU premises in Frankfurt (Oder), with specific workshops, seminars and lecture series, designed for KIU PhD students. Participants of the programme are also encouraged to benefit from Ukrainian language courses offered at all three universities.

The programme offers **9 PhD scholarships plus 6 positions for associated doctoral students** who bring their own funding but will be part of the KIU Graduate Programme. All successful applicants will be offered a co-working space in the KIU premises in Frankfurt (Oder).

The whole duration of the programme is **36 months**, starting in April 2025. Within these 36 months, KIU scholarship holders will receive a **stipend of monthly 1.300€**.

The working language of the PhD programme is English. Future PhD students are expected to have a basic knowledge of the Ukrainian language or to acquire it by the start of the doctoral programme. Successful candidates are expected to continue to learn Ukrainian regularly during the doctoral phase and attend the corresponding courses at the KIU universities.

Actual enrollment as a doctoral student ultimately depends on the fulfillment of all formal requirements and a positive vote by the doctoral committee of the respective university.

How to apply:

Interested candidates should apply online through the KIU application portal by 9 February 2025, 23:59 CET. Applicants first need to register on the portal. The portal will open on December 15th, 2024.

Please note that due to our funding conditions, scholarships are only eligible for non-German nationals. The positions for associated doctoral students are open to all applicants regardless their nationality.

Please find a list of potential thesis supervisors below. The supervisor will be proposed by the selection committee. For your application, please prepare the following documents and information:

- Curriculum vitae information
- Cover letter of max. 700 words addressing the following questions:
 - What is your motivation for doing research on Ukraine?
 - How would your professional development benefit from participating in the KIU PhD programme?
 - How do you envision your personal contribution to the programme?
 - For applicants for associated doctoral student positions only: How will you finance your doctorate?
- Title and summary of your PhD project of max. 350 words including
 - an indication of your discipline and the thematic/disciplinary corridor in which you situate your research
 - a proposal of which KIU researcher might become your doctoral supervisor (for information, please see the KIU homepage)
- A research exposé as a PDF document (max. 10 pages), including project description,
 - the scientific research question,
 - the state of research,
 - the envisaged methodology,
 - a reflection on how you will deal with the challenges of current research on Ukraine, such as travel restrictions for non-Ukrainians, the physical danger from Russia's war of aggression, political uncertainty, etc.
 - the preliminary time frame & schedule of your research and publication plans.
- A letter of recommendation from a university teacher who conducts research on Ukraine-related topics.
- A copy of the university degree certificate (equivalent to a master's or diploma) that qualifies you to do a doctorate.

Applications received by 23:59 CET on **9 February 2025** will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary and international selection committee. Promising candidates will be invited to participate in an online interview on February 17th, 18th and 19th, 2025.

Online consultation: **23 January, 3 p.m.** (zoom link will be published on the KIU website)

Work on the doctoral projects within the programme is to begin on-site at Viadrina between April and June 2025.

The official opening is envisaged to take place on June, 16th 2025.

Please direct any questions about the application to the programme coordinator, Dr. Susann Worschech: kiu@europa-uni.de.

List of potential supervisors:

Robert Kindler,	History , History of Eastern and Central Eastern Europe
Jan Claas Behrends	History , dictatorship and democracy. Germany and Eastern Europe from 1914 to the present
Andrii Portnov	History , entangled history of Ukraine
Frank Grelka	History , twentieth century Eastern European studies
Stephan Rindlisbacher	History , Eastern European history
Jan-Hendrik Passoth	Sociology of Technology, Science & Technology Studies, (Post-) Actor-Network Theory, Politics of Software and Digital Infrastructure, Co-Creation and Critical Prototyping, Qualitative, Digital & Inventive Methods
Viktoriya Sereda	Sociology , War, Migration, Memory, Identity and belonging, Urban studies
Timm Beichelt	Political Science , European Studies, Democracy and Autocracy in Central and Eastern Europe, European Union, Emotions in Politics, Culture and Politics
Gwendolyn Sasse	Politics , comparative democracy and authoritarianism research
Julia Langbein	Political Economy , East European and International Studies, Political Economy and Integration
Theocharis Grigoriadis	Economics , Economics of Nation-Building, Empires & the Rise of Nations, Economic Development, Comparative Economic Systems, International Economic Policy
Dagmara Jajeśniak-Quast	Economic history , Interdisciplinary Polish Studies, East Central European border regions, Socialist Transformation / Socialist Industrialization, Economic nationalism in East Central Europe, European history of technology and engineering, Economic integration processes in East Central Europe

Tetiana Kyselova	Law/Peace and Conflict Studies , Dialogue, Mediation and Conflict Transformation; Method Innovation
Lars Kirchhoff	International Law/Peace and Conflict Studies , Dialogue, Mediation and Conflict Transformation; Method Innovation
Florian Jeßberger	Law , Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, International Criminal Law and Contemporary Legal History
Eva Kocher	Law , Civil Law, European and German Labor Law
Erol Pohlreich	Law , criminal law, criminal procedure law, sanctions law and human rights
Christoph Brömmelmeyer	Law , civil law, insurance law, European commercial law, in particular antitrust and state aid law
Stefan Haack	Law , public law, in particular constitutional law
Benjamin Lahusen	Law , Civil Law and Modern Legal History
Kilian Wegner	Law , criminal law, criminal procedure law and commercial criminal law
Arkadiusz Wudarski	Law , Polish and European private law and comparative law
Carmen Thiele	Law , international law, Eastern European law and comparative law