

Postdoctoral position Gods, Games, and the Socioecological Landscape, Department of the Study of Religion

The School of Culture and Society at Aarhus University invites applications for a postdoctoral fellowship.

The position is a full time, fixed-term 3-year position and begins on May 15, 2024 or as soon as possible thereafter (please note in your application when you can begin).

The university is keen for its staff to reflect the diversity of society and thus welcomes applications from all qualified applicants regardless of their personal background.

Place of employment

The Department of the Study of Religion, Jens Chr. Skous Vej 3-7, 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark.

Research context

This position is funded by a Templeton Religion Trust grant awarded to the supervisor, Associate Professor Benjamin Grant Purzycki, at the Department of the Study of Religion. The successful applicant will be collaborating with an international team of researchers engaged in the scientific study of religion and cooperation.

Research and postdoctoral project

In spite of the continued growth in evolutionary and cognitive sciences of religion, little scholarly attention has been directed towards accounting for variation in religious expression using discrete, quantitative methods. The field also lacks the kind of detailed, individual-level data about traditional, small-scale religious beliefs and practices that ground debates. This postdoctoral position will therefore involve contributing to designing a set of empirical projects to be executed cross-culturally, with a particular focus on understanding whether religious beliefs and practices of small-scale traditions revolve around particular social dilemmas. There are two main objectives in the project: 1) an experiment that measures cooperation toward other individuals and 2) locally-catered empirical studies that assess the relationship between beliefs, behaviors, and context. More details can be found here:

<https://pure.au.dk/portal/en/projects/gods-games-and-the-socioecological-landscape>

Tasks

- Study design and pre-registration of behavioral experiments measuring the relationship between religious beliefs, practices, cooperation, and social ecology (e.g., economic game experiments, between-participant designs, surveys, etc.)
- Data pipeline, management, and analysis of cross-cultural experimental and ethnographic data, including data pooling, version control, and statistical modelling of individual-level quantitative data
- Drafting reports for publication
- Theory development and evidence synthesis in the study of the evolution of religious systems

Qualifications, job requirements and preferences

Applicants must hold a PhD or equivalent qualifications in anthropology, economics, ecology, biology, or any related field that addresses problems in the role religion plays in individual and collective wellbeing.

Applicants must also document:

- experience and training in quantitative research design and social scientific methods
- fluency in written and spoken English
- fluency in a programming language (e.g., R)
- data analytic skills including multi-level modeling
- the ability to work collaboratively
- project management experience excellent and effective communication
- a willingness to contribute to a vibrant, enjoyable and friendly work environment

Application Deadline:
25 February 2024

Institute/Faculty:
School of Culture and Society

Faculty:
Faculty of Arts

Academic contact person:
Benjamin Grant Purzycki
Lektor
+4587169154
bgpurzycki@cas.au.dk

Vacant positions:
1

Number of months:
36

Hours per week:
37

Expected date of accession:
15/05/2024

Assets but not requirements

- a research focus on religion with preference for small-scale traditions
- appreciation for/familiarity with evolutionary game theory, human behavioral ecology, mathematical and agent-based modeling, and cultural evolutionary theory
- involvement in the cognitive and/or evolutionary sciences of religion
- diverse expertise in social science research methods
- Bayesian data analytical skills
- familiarity with methods in causal inference
- Experience with field research (fieldwork support is a possibility)

Further details

Applicants should upload materials through the AU application system, including a full CV, a full publication list, a maximum of five articles, and a short cover letter (max. 3 pages) on how the applicant will fulfil the expectations highlighted in this call.

Applications must be uploaded in English.

Please note that only publications that are actually submitted with the application will be assessed; a list of publications is not sufficient. Applications that are not accompanied by publications will not be assessed.

References or recommendations should not be included with the application. Applicants who are invited for interview may be asked to provide professional references.

For further information about the position, please contact Associate Professor Benjamin Grant Purzycki (bgpurzycki@cas.au.dk). For more information about the application, please contact HR supporter Marianne Birn (mbb@au.dk).

The School of Culture and Society

At the School of Culture and Society, the object of research and teaching is the interplay between culture and society in time and space:

- From the traditional disciplines of the humanities and theology to applied social research
- From Antiquity to the issues facing contemporary societies
- From local questions to global challenges

The school's ambition is to produce compelling research with an international resonance as well as to offer teaching and talent development of the highest quality. The school has a broad cooperative interface with society as a whole, both in Denmark and abroad, and contributes to social innovation, research communication and further and continuing education.

For further information about the school, please see <http://cas.au.dk/en/>.

International applicants

International applicants are encouraged to check [Family and work-life balance](#) and [Attractive working conditions](#) for further information about the benefits of working at Aarhus University and in Denmark, including healthcare, paid holidays and, if relevant, maternity/paternity leave, childcare and schooling. Aarhus University offers a broad variety of services for international researchers and accompanying families, including a [relocation service](#) and career counselling for expat partners. For information about taxation, see [Taxation aspects of international researchers' employment by AU](#).

Qualification requirements

Applicants should hold a PhD or equivalent academic qualifications.

Formalities

The Faculty of Arts refers to the Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Danish Universities ([the Appointment Order](#)).

- Appointments shall be in accordance with the [collective labour agreement between the Danish Ministry of Taxation and the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations](#).
- Further information on qualification requirements and job content may be found in

the [Memorandum on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Danish Universities](#).

- Further information on the application and supplementary materials may be found in [Application Guidelines](#).
- The application must outline the applicant's motivation for applying for the position, attaching a curriculum vitae, a complete list of published works, copies of degree certificates and examples of academic production (**mandatory, but no more than five examples**). Please upload this material electronically along with your application.

Aarhus University also offers a junior researcher development programme targeted at career development for postdocs at AU. You can read more about it here: <https://talent.au.dk/junior-researcher-development-programme/>

If nothing else is noted, applications must be submitted in English. The application deadline is at 11.59 pm Danish time (same as Central European Time) on the deadline day.

Aarhus University's ambition is to be an attractive and inspiring workplace for all and to foster a culture in which each individual has opportunities to thrive, achieve and develop. We view equality and diversity as assets, and we welcome all applicants.

Shortlists may be prepared with the candidates that have been selected for a detailed academic assessment. A committee set up by the head of school is responsible for selecting the most qualified candidates. See this link for further information about shortlisting at the Faculty of Arts: [shortlisting](#)

Faculty of Arts

The Faculty of Arts is one of five main academic areas at Aarhus University.

The faculty contributes to Aarhus University's research, talent development, knowledge exchange and degree programmes.

With its 550 academic staff members, 240 PhD students, 9,500 BA and MA students, and 1,500 students following continuing/further education programmes, the faculty constitutes a strong and diverse research and teaching environment.

The Faculty of Arts consists of the School of Communication and Culture, the School of Culture and Society and the Danish School of Education. Each of these units has strong academic environments and forms the basis for interdisciplinary research and education.

The faculty's academic environments and degree programmes engage in international collaboration and share the common goal of contributing to the development of knowledge, welfare and culture in interaction with society.

Read more at arts.au.dk/en

The application must be submitted via Aarhus University's recruitment system, which can be accessed under the job advertisement on Aarhus University's website.

Aarhus University

Aarhus University is an academically diverse and research-intensive university with a strong commitment to high-quality research and education and the development of society nationally and globally. The university offers an inspiring research and teaching environment to its 38,000 students (FTEs) and 8,300 employees, and has an annual revenues of EUR 935 million. Learn more at www.international.au.dk/