



Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

Call for applications

20 Summer Fellowships for SIAS Summer Institute 2015/2016

The Investigation of Linguistic Meaning: In the Armchair, in the Field, and in the Lab

July 20 to 31, 2015, Berlin, Germany, organized by the Wissenschaftskolleg and ZAS
July 18 to 29, 2016, National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, USA

Application deadline: January 6, 2015

The Summer Institute wants to attract junior postdoctoral researchers (PhD 2009 or later) from one of three fields: (a) Theoretical Linguistics, especially Semantics and its interfaces with Pragmatics, Syntax, and Phonology, (b) Cognitive Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience, and (c) Linguistic and Anthropological Fieldwork. One goal of the Summer Institute will be **interdisciplinary team building**, resulting in joint publications at the end of the project. A second goal will be **capacity building**, especially the acquisition of methods in the neighboring fields.

Conveners

- Angelika KRATZER, Professor of Linguistics, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.
- Manfred KRIFKA, Professor of General Linguistics at Humboldt Universität Berlin and Director of the Zentrum für Sprachwissenschaft, Berlin (ZAS).

Guest lecturers

- Emmanuel CHEMLA, Research Scientist (CNRS), Laboratoire de Sciences Cognitives et Psycholinguistique, École Normale Supérieure, Paris
- Lisa MATTHEWSON, Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of British Columbia
- Jesse SNEDEKER, Professor, Department of Psychology, Harvard University
- Malte ZIMMERMANN, Professor of Semantics and Theory of Grammar, Universität Potsdam

The investigation of linguistic meaning: in the armchair, in the field, and in the lab

One major impulse in semantics has been, and still is, the building of formal theories of meaning. Crucial sources of evidence are the researcher's intuitions about the truth-conditions of sentences. This kind of research has been dubbed the "armchair method." The armchair method is the method of choice in Philosophical Logic, Philosophy of Language, and Theoretical Linguistics. It has led to interesting formal models showing that, underlying our sometimes rather chaotic communicative behavior, there are structures that can be captured by insightful theories that rely on mathematical tools.

During the last fifteen years, linguists have become more and more involved in the documentation and theoretical investigation of underdescribed and endangered languages, and this has led to an increased interest in fieldwork-based semantic work. At the same time, the experimental investigation of linguistic meanings has been gaining momentum and seems to have reached a point where theoretically sophisticated questions can be addressed with sophisticated experimental tools. Both of those developments made it necessary to supplement the armchair method with other ways of collecting evidence for the investigation of linguistic meanings. Practitioners of linguistic fieldwork use questionnaires for studying the construction of meanings in languages that the researchers themselves do not master natively. Psycholinguists, cognitive psychologists, and neuroscientists rely on behavioral or neurophysiologic data typically coming from a lab, including self-paced reading tasks, preferential looking tasks, various forms of eye tracking, ERP (event-related potentials), fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) and MEG (magnetoencephalography).

Format

The participants of the Summer Institute will work in interdisciplinary teams from the very start. Teams will be organized around broad semantic themes, rather than methods. Before the start of the first session of the Summer Institute, participants will select one - or possibly two - project groups with about five participants coming from different subareas that decide to work together on a topic. Work on this will continue over the year, and culminate in the second session of the Summer Institute, with the goal of achieving a high-ranking publication. In order to facilitate group formation, we propose the following list of possible topics:

- The linguistic expression of causality
- The mass/count distinction; measure phrases
- Information structure
- Modality and evidentiality
- Tense and aspect
- Attitude ascriptions and speech reports
- Speech acts (questions, imperatives, assertions)
- Presuppositions, conversational and conventional implicatures
- Free choice and negative polarity items
- Discourse particles
- Comparison

Applicants are asked to identify up to three of these topics and describe why they find them interesting, and how they could contribute. Other topics may be considered if there is enough interest among applicants. In the selection of applicants we will try to make sure that topic-centered project groups can be formed naturally.

In addition to interdisciplinary team building, the Summer Institute will also be an opportunity for capacity building and the acquisition of methods in the neighboring fields. This will be accomplished by presentations and hands-on workshops, mostly by experts among the participants themselves, supplemented by outside specialists.

Applicant Profile

We want to attract junior postdoctoral researchers from one of three fields: (a) Theoretical Linguistics, especially Semantics and its interfaces with Pragmatics, Syntax, or Phonology, (b) Cognitive Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience, and (c) Linguistic and Anthropological Fieldwork. We are thinking of

participants who have strong additional interests in at least one other field. For example, a linguist working in pragmatics seeking ways of experimental validation of formal models of language use, a cognitive neuroscientist who wants to probe into the process of meaning composition, or a linguistic field worker interested in developing experimental techniques that are suitable for small language communities. Applicants should be in the final stages of completing their PhD or have received their PhD in 2009 or later. They should have an institutional affiliation in the US or in Europe.

Application Procedure

Please submit your application electronically no later than January 6, 2015 to

<https://siassi-application.wiko-berlin.de>

Candidates selected will be notified by the end of February.

The application will consist of

- contact and website information
- a 1-page CV with a list of up to 5 publications
- names and e-mail addresses of two people we might contact for references
- a 1-page statement of purpose with information about theoretical and methodological qualifications, research interests, and expectations for the Summer Institute
- a list of up to three semantic topics (preferably from the list of possible topics given above) that you would be interested in working on during the Summer Institute
- a declaration that you understand that acceptance as a Summer Fellow carries the obligation to participate in both the 2015 and the 2016 segment of the Summer Institute, and
- The dissertation and up to two additional publications.

U.S. CANDIDATES SHOULD ADDRESS QUERIES TO:

SIAS Summer Institutes c/o Elizabeth Mansfield
National Humanities Center
P.O. Box 12256
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2256, USA Tel.: 919-549-0661
Fax: 919-990-8535
E-mail: emansfield@nationalhumanitiescenter.org
<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/sias/index.htm>

EUROPEAN CANDIDATES SHOULD ADDRESS QUERIES TO:

SIAS Summer Institutes c/o Martin Garstecki
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin Wallotstrasse 19
14193 Berlin, Germany
Tel.: +49 30 / 89001 - 212
Fax: +49 30 / 89001 - 200
E-mail: garstecki@wiko-berlin.de
http://wiko-berlin.de/SIASSI_calls

ABOUT THE SIAS SUMMER INSTITUTES (SIASSI)

The SIAS Summer Institutes are two-year research programs for young researchers and treat interdisciplinary topics.

The goal of the SIAS Summer Institutes is to sponsor joint interdisciplinary work by European and American researchers at an early stage of their career, thus fostering research networks and common activities. The idea is that cohort formation will, in the long run, contribute to close ties between research activities in Europe and the USA while simultaneously supporting the development of new fields of research.

Every Summer Institute consists of two 10- to 14-day workshops held in consecutive years, alternating between Europe and the United States. A team of one European and one American researcher heads the Summer Institute, in which these two Conveners and 20 Fellows - generally 10 Europeans and 10 Americans - as well as two to four outside specialists take part. Doctoral candidates near completion of their dissertation and post-docs may apply. Post-docs' doctorates should have been completed no more than five years earlier, and their research work should have addressed one of the topics proposed for the institute. Participants receive a small stipend; travel and lodging costs are covered by the program. Accepting the fellowship commits the researcher to taking part in both workshops.

The SIAS Summer Institutes are sponsored by the SIAS (Some Institutes for Advanced Study), an association of eight institutes for advanced study. Their Directors constitute the Summer Institutes' Steering Committee, whose tasks include determining the seminar topics and commissioning European and American researchers to organize and lead them. The Steering Committee's work is supported by a large network of outstanding researchers (Fellows and former Fellows of member institutions), as well as other international contacts.

The Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation jointly fund the SIAS Summer Institutes, whose organization in Europe is the task of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and in the USA of the National Humanities Center.