

### **Vacancy 3: The narrative of language**

Research school: ASH

As part of the humanities sector plan 'Languages and Cultures', the faculty is looking for a researcher with a broad intellectual historical profile, who can help give new content to the narrative of the study of language, from a diachronic, multilingual perspective. This is a UD position with a division of labour of 60% teaching - 40% research.

Humanities help us to understand how the human perspective is formed and how people have experienced, positioned, and legitimised themselves over the centuries: who are we, who were we, who do we want to be? Some disciplines do so from the Big Questions, others from the desire to know the past and understand continuities, still others by focusing on cultural objects that represent a specific perspective.

Such a perspective is (has always been) mediated, of course, and much attention has therefore been paid to this mediality in recent decades. The central role of language and of linguistic imagination and signification has sometimes been pushed into the background. We expect the new colleague to innovatively integrate the fundamental linguistic nature of the world into the core mission of the humanities: the study of the human perspective in a mediated society and a global, i.e. multilingual, context.

In addition to disciplines that provide insights into macro economic processes, historical chains of causes, social and cognitive processes and guiding information flows, we also need to look at the set of personal, political, artistic and mythical narratives that have legitimised and provided meaning, sometimes briefly, sometimes for generations, to different positions and developments in the world. Understanding that historical repertoire, its inner tensions and contradictions, is necessary for a layered historical interpretation of the world around us. Access to the world's linguistics is needed, moreover, when, as now, substantial geopolitical shifts coincide with major changes in language control. Think of the role and valuation of mother tongues, the use of second and heritage languages, global Englishisation and the outsourcing of linguistic competences to artificial intelligence. And all this against the backdrop of a deep-rooted epistemic crisis.

The MVTC department is therefore looking for someone with a sense for re-embedding the world's linguistics in the Humanities to make teaching and research in and around languages relevant for the 21st century, with a focus on long diachronies and exciting multilingualism.

For actual embedding in the department and the teaching it provides, we are looking for someone with a background in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, a line of research currently represented by Prof Irene Zwiep. The Jewish case is relevant and productive because language, language control and linguistic narratives have always played a crucial role in the social, cultural and other (power) relations between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. Diasporic Judaism, moreover, has always been multilingual, permanently switching between religious Hebrew, deterritorialised languages such as Yiddish and Ladino, and hegemonic, local and national, spoken languages.

Subject-specific desiderata are:

- intellectual historian with a broad Jewish Studies profile
- able to contribute to the development of global intellectual history
- able to contribute to the development of Critical Jewish Studies

- good didactician with an appealing educational philosophy
- (near)native fluency in Hebrew
- team player