

**Freie Universität Berlin**

**Exzellenzcluster "Contestations of the Liberal Script" (SCRIPTS)**

**Berlin Graduate School for Global and Transregional Studies**

**Doctoral Researchers**

Start of the application process: The application platform (<https://www.drs.fu-berlin.de/user/register>) will open on January 16, 2023

Application deadline: February 28, 2023

Start of the Graduate Program: September 1, 2023

The Cluster of Excellence “Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS)” is a research consortium that analyses the contemporary controversies about the model of liberal democracy and the market economy. The term “liberal script” relates to a set of ideas and institutional prescriptions about how society is organised based on the core principles of individual and collective self-determination. The main purpose of SCRIPTS is to describe and explain why the liberal script is being challenged and deeply contested despite its political, economic, and social achievements.

SCRIPTS has been operating since 2019 and is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) until the end of 2025 as part of the Excellence Strategy of the German Government and the Federal States. The Cluster is hosted by the Freie Universität Berlin and unites eight major Berlin-based research institutes. Cluster research teams are made up of doctoral researchers, postdoctoral researchers, and professors from social, political, and area studies. SCRIPTS is well connected with research institutes and knowledge exchange partners throughout the world, including political and cultural organisations, as well as civil society actors. In addition, SCRIPTS brings renowned visiting scholars from all over the world to Berlin.

The Berlin Graduate School for Global and Transregional Studies (BGTS) is the full-time PhD programme of the Cluster of Excellence “Contestations of the Liberal Script” (SCRIPTS). The BGTS offers a rigorous and dynamic English-language PhD programme for exceptionally talented and motivated graduate students in the field of global and transregional studies, bringing together a broad spectrum of disciplines and methodological approaches.

The selection is done according to the SCRIPTS Diversity Rules & Guidelines: [https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/about-us/Diversity/SCRIPTS\\_-\\_Diversity\\_-\\_Rules\\_-\\_Guidelines1/index.html](https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/about-us/Diversity/SCRIPTS_-_Diversity_-_Rules_-_Guidelines1/index.html)

## Field of activity

The three-year English language doctoral programme at the BGTS provides state-of-the-art theory classes, solid training in research methods and research design, soft skills courses, and individual supervision. The programme focuses on contemporary contestations of the liberal script from historical, global, and comparative perspectives with a particular interest in global and transregional processes. Apart from social science and historical approaches, we explicitly encourage students of area studies, gender studies, philosophy, and education studies to submit their proposals. Research at the BGTS focuses on the structures, risks, and opportunities of cross-regional interaction at various levels and we particularly welcome critical perspectives. PhD researchers with excellent university degrees should be knowledgeable regarding the various theoretical and methodological approaches in the disciplines relevant to the cluster. They should be open to interdisciplinary collaboration. We also expect excellent command of English in writing and speaking.

One of the doctoral projects is reserved to participate in the analysis of a comparative public opinion survey in more than 25 countries conducted by SCRIPTS. Candidates who are interested in this project should have a very good knowledge of survey data analysis and explain in their proposal what specific research question they intend to pursue with the survey. For more information on the survey see the [website of the responsible Junior Research Group](#).

One of the doctoral positions is reserved for a research project that should deal with nuclear safety and waste management issues. This is a position offered by the Federal Office for the Safety of Nuclear Waste Management (BASE) in cooperation with SCRIPTS. The use of nuclear power and the handling of its legacy are socially controversial issues. The current debates about nuclear safety in Ukraine, energy security and lifetime extensions in Germany show how political opportunities can create new incentive structures. At the same time, old and new lines of social conflict are breaking open. How do liberal societies deal with this? An overview of the BASE research activities can be found [here](#).

## Recruitment requirements:

The PhD students are expected to conduct independent research and to write a doctoral thesis. The successful candidates will be supervised by a senior scholar at the BGTS, depending on the proposal. Applicants should also familiarise themselves with the research interests of BGTS faculty members and indicate one or several potential supervisors in their application.

## Required documents:

- Master's degree, qualifying for PhD studies in the social sciences, history, economics, law, or area studies;
- proof of C1-level English language skills or the equivalent;
- most recent CV;
- letter of motivation (600 words maximum);
- research proposal (5,000 words maximum) with a timeline for your project;
- two letters of reference from professors at universities or research institutions.

Please check <https://www.scripts-berlin.eu> for further details and the link to the online application platform.

For more information please contact Dr. Matthias Hahn ([bgts@scripts-berlin.eu](mailto:bgts@scripts-berlin.eu) / 030 838 53735).