

Call for Applications

Visiting Fellowships (Pre-Doctoral and Post-Doctoral)

Epistemic Violence and Institutional Complicity in the Global War-Industrial Complex

Research Area: Cultural Encounters – Cultural Conflicts
University of Innsbruck

Application Deadline: 10th April 2026

Fellowship Period: 3rd November 2026 – 3rd December 2026

Number of Fellowships: 3

Overview

The Research Area Cultural Encounters – Cultural Conflicts at the University of Innsbruck invites applications for up to three researchers (pre-doctoral or post-doctoral) for a one-month research fellowship in November 2026. Hosted by the Unit for Peace and Conflict Studies and the Doctoral College Dynamics of Inequality and Difference, the fellowship supports scholars whose work critically interrogates the structural entanglements between knowledge production, institutional power, and contemporary forms of global violence.

In a historical conjuncture marked by intensifying global militarization, protracted wars, mass displacement, and the normalization of large-scale civilian harm, there has been a growing scholarly imperative to reflect critically on the role of knowledge institutions within these conditions. Across both academia and policy networks a growing body of scholarship has turned to examining how universities and research institutions participate in the epistemic and institutional architectures that render contemporary violence intelligible, governable, and politically defensible (See Iheduru-Anderson 2025; Wind 2024; Ajonye 2024; Giroux 2015; SCCP 2025; Price 2008; Stavriana-kis 2006; Pervez 2025; Ziadah 2025; Whittington 2025; Woodward et al. 2017; Vatansever 2018). These debates have gained particular urgency in light of the persistence of globally protracting and escalating conflicts, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity, and Genocide that demand sustained critical scrutiny of the infrastructures that enable them.

Within this field of inquiry, universities and research institutions are often understood to occupy a complex and at times paradoxical position. On the one hand, they continue to function as sites of critique, ethical deliberation, and public reason; on the other, they are embedded within broader epistemic, technological, and administrative systems that intersect with processes of militarization, extraction, and global inequality. This dual positioning has prompted scholars to ask

how academic practices and institutional frameworks are implicated in the reproduction and even normalization of violence at a moment when claims to neutrality are increasingly mobilized to distance knowledge production from its material consequences.

In this context, the frameworks of epistemic and onto-epistemic violence offer important conceptual resources. Epistemic violence refers not only to the exclusion or marginalization of particular knowledges, but to structural conditions through which certain questions, subjects, and forms of harm become legible, credible, or actionable within institutional settings. Onto-epistemic repression extends this concern by emphasizing the inseparability of knowledge and being, directing attention to how academic infrastructures may participate in delimiting which forms of life, political struggle, or suffering are recognized as meaningful within dominant regimes of expertise.

From this perspective, universities need not be approached simply as external observers of global militarization and extractive violence, nor assumed to be inherently complicit. Rather, they can be examined as institutions whose funding arrangements, research priorities, partnership structures, ethical governance mechanisms, and normative commitments raise important questions about proximity, responsibility, and epistemic alignment. An inquiring engagement with these dynamics allows for a critical exploration of how academic practices may, at times, coincide with broader systems of coercion, coloniality, and inequality, while also opening space to consider how alternative institutional orientations and epistemic practices might be cultivated.

Guiding Questions

Applicants are invited to engage critically with one or more of the following questions:

- How does epistemic and onto-epistemic violence operate within academic institutions, shaping what is knowable, researchable, and ethically legible?
- In what ways are universities structurally implicated in ongoing militarization, conflicts and global violence, through funding, partnerships, and institutional collaborations?
- How do claims of neutrality, balance, or objectivity function to distance universities from the material and structural consequences of knowledge production?
- How do institutional ethical frameworks, review processes, and governance structures reproduce or obscure forms of systemic violence?
- Which lives, knowledges, and struggles are rendered visible, marginal, or unintelligible within dominant academic discourses on war, security, and global order?
- How do researchers analysing academic power relations navigate tensions between critical inquiry and institutional constraint?
- What forms of epistemic disobedience, accountability, and frameworks of refusal might challenge institutional complicity?

Fellowship Format

Fellows will spend one month in residence at the University of Innsbruck, during which they will:

- Pursue their individual research projects
- Engage in workshops, seminars, or discussion formats with local scholars and doctoral researchers
- Contribute to collective intellectual exchange around the fellowship theme in formats appropriate to their work (e.g. presentations, workshops, or public/semi-public lectures)

Eligibility and Disciplinary Scope

The call is open to researchers from all relevant disciplines, including but not limited to, Peace and Conflict Studies, History, Philosophy, Sociology, Queer and Feminist Studies, Ethnography, Geography, International Relations, Security Studies, Decolonial and Postcolonial Studies, Critical Legal Studies, Area Studies, Education Studies, Science and Technology Studies, etc. Interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and critically engaged research projects are especially encouraged

Funding and Support

The University of Innsbruck will provide the following financial support:

- Travel costs:
 - Up to €600 for travel within the EU
 - Up to €1,200 for travel from outside the EU
- Living allowance:
 - A grant of €1,400 to cover accommodation and food during the stay

Where possible, assistance in finding accommodation in Innsbruck will be provided.

Application Procedure

Applicants are requested to submit the following documents:

1. A brief description of the planned research project and proposed formats for engagement during the fellowship (e.g. workshop themes or presentation topics)
(approximately 1 page)
2. Curriculum Vitae (CV), including publications and presentations where applicable

Applications should be sent by **10th of April 2026** to: fsp-kultur@uibk.ac.at

Contact

For inquiries, please contact:

- zeus.mendez@uibk.ac.at
- andreas.oberprantacher@uibk.ac.at