

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Summer School for PhD Students

MINESCAPES

Socio-natural Landscapes of Extraction and Knowledge in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period

Dates of the Summer School: 31 May – 10 June 2024

Application Deadline: 17 December 2023. Applicants will be informed at the beginning of February.

Location: Harz Mountains, Herzog August Library Wolfenbüttel (Germany)

Subject fields: History, Art History, Literature, Archeology, Anthropology, Human and Physical Geography, Geology, Earth and Environmental Sciences, STS, Environmental Humanities

Language: English

Application Submission and Contact: minescapes2024@gmail.com

Conveners:

[Tina Asmussen](#), Assistant Professor, Early Modern Mining History at Ruhr University / Head of the mining history research unit at the German Mining Museum Bochum, Germany

[Pamela H. Smith](#), Seth Low professor of History and founding Director of the Center for Science and Society at Columbia University and the Making and Knowing Project, USA

Additional senior scholars from History, Archaeology, and the Earth Sciences will participate in the Summer School.

Summer School

The Harz Mountains in Central Germany bear witness to more than a thousand years of mineral extraction. Especially since the high Middle Ages the practices and infrastructures of extraction have transformed the region. The Harz provides an excellent laboratory for the collaborative investigation of a socio-natural landscape in the making and its multiple effects on societies and environments from the deep past up to present time. The MINESCAPES Summer School aims to explore and develop new interdisciplinary methods to investigate the complexity and dynamics of human-environmental interactions in one of the most prolific pre-industrial mining landscapes in Europe.

The MINESCAPES Summer School will bring together students and scholars from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences to study mining landscapes with a particular focus on the Harz

mountains through cultural-historical methods, archaeological data, and scientific analyses of soils, waters, flora, and fauna to gain a more comprehensive picture of the complex human-environment relationships of this site. A fundamental goal of the Summer School is thereby to foster interdisciplinary collaborations and communicative skills between the humanities, social, and natural sciences—an urgent need, especially when dealing with human-environment relations in the past, present, and future.

For eight days an interdisciplinary group of twelve PhD students and several senior scholars from disciplines including history, archaeology, geology, ecology, and the earth sciences will explore the archives of nature (mines, forests, water systems) and society (historical maps and drawings, manuscripts and printed books of mining, metallurgy, alchemy, forestry, and water management in the collections of the Herzog August Library, Wolfenbüttel. The combination of field trips and library explorations will enable students to reflect on the historicity of materials, processes, and bodily experience in specific environments—questions that are central not only to the history of science but to human-environmental relationships more broadly.

The Summer School will include lectures from scholars in the earth sciences, history, and archaeology, visits to the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Rammelsberg mine (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/623/>), as well as an introduction to, and group work in, the rare book and manuscript collections of the Herzog August Library, Wolfenbüttel (<https://www.hab.de/en/>). No prior experience, nor discipline-specific language or research skills are necessary to apply. One of the aims of the Summer School is to develop methods of collaboration between the natural and social/human sciences. Students will work in interdisciplinary groups to formulate feasible research questions of interest and utility in multiple disciplines.

The Summer School is generously funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and is organized by Tina Asmussen and Pamela H. Smith in collaboration with the Herzog August Library Wolfenbüttel and the Mining Archeology Unit of the Lower Saxony State Office for Monument Preservation.

Accommodation and most meals will be covered for participants, with transportation costs to be reimbursed after the Summer School.

The Summer School will be conducted in English.

Eligibility and Application

We welcome applications from PhD students of any disciplinary background whose research touches on the themes of the Summer School. These might include investigations of mine waste and environmental toxicity, or historical studies of pre-industrial mining (landscapes), or studies of the knowledge—economic, scientific, technical, religious, etc—that is produced in such sites, among other topics. We encourage applicants who are interested in change over time, in the historicity of socio-natural landscapes and the ways in which they have been represented and analyzed, as well as in long term relationships between humanity and natural sites. Applicants should show interest in collaborating with other disciplines to elaborate an

interdisciplinary methodology and formulate questions that can open new pathways for multidisciplinary research in other sites and historical contexts. The working language of the Summer School will be English.

Applicants must be enrolled and in good standing in a PhD program. Applicants must provide

- a two-page CV that includes the working title of the PhD dissertation and the languages they are able to read for research.
- Names, titles, institutions, and email addresses of two individuals who could act as referees (the applicant does not need to request letters of recommendation).
- A brief letter from the PhD Advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies that confirms enrollment in good standing in a PhD program.
- letter of application (max. 500 words) in English, that includes 1) information on the applicant's scholarly background; 2) a description of the PhD project; 3) how the Summer School relates to and would benefit the applicant's PhD research; 4) information on the applicant's interest in interdisciplinary exchange, especially between the natural sciences and humanities and social sciences.

Applications should be submitted as a single pdf document by 17 December 2023 to the e-mail-address: minescapes2024@gmail.com.

Information

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For questions about the MINESCAPES Summer School 2024, please contact Tina Asmussen tina.asmussen@bergbaumuseum.de and/or Pamela H. Smith ps2270@columbia.edu.