

## **DiSSGeA Visiting Professor “Mobility and the Humanities” 2022 CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

In the framework of the **Department of Excellence** Project “Mobility and the Humanities”, financed by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, the Department DiSSGeA (hereinafter referred to as “the Department”) has launched the *Visiting Professor “Mobility and the Humanities” 2022 Call for Applications*. The initiative provides the assignment of positions as Visiting Professor to professors and researchers from international universities or research centres.

### **Art. 1 – ELIGIBILITY**

The present call is addressed to professors and researchers with proven teaching experience, who are permanent faculty members in European and non-European universities and research centres. Applicants must spend a period of **approximately three (3) months** at the Department, in order to lecture official courses at the Master level (second cycle degree) with a topic on “Mobility and the Humanities.”

The duration of the courses will be **42 hours** and their programmes shall focus on

- Transport History
- History of Tourism
- Digital Philology

The selected Visiting Professors shall also contribute to the implementation of the “Mobilab” digital laboratory for the study of mobility and to the activities of the Centre for Advanced Studies on “Mobility and the Humanities” and their respective research groups.

### **Art. 2 – IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES**

During their stay at the University of Padua (hereinafter referred to as “the University”), the Visiting Professors must carry out the teaching assignments at the Department, in addition to the above-mentioned scientific collaboration.

The Department shall grant the Visiting Professors the use of:

- its spaces, libraries (including off-site electronic resource access, subject to publishers’ restrictions), laboratories, instruments, and any other facility necessary to fulfil the planned activities
- UNIPD login and e-mail account at the University
- attendance at public lectures and seminars

### Art. 3 – EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

The teaching contracts will be funded by the Department through the **Department of Excellence** Project “Mobility and the Humanities”. Teaching positions are assigned for 42-hour courses within a Master’s degree programme. Collateral scientific collaboration activities with the research groups of the **Department of Excellence** Project shall also be implemented.

All appointments are assigned for a fixed term. The planned teaching activities shall be carried out during the academic year 2022/2023. The related teaching contracts must be signed by 30/09/2022, for courses taking place in the first semester (*Winter term: September to February*), and by 31/01/2023, for courses taking place in the second semester (*Spring term: February to July*).

For the History of Tourism and Transport History courses, applications for the Winter Term (September to February) are particularly welcome.

For the activities referred to in Article 2 of the present call, the Department will provide a total gross amount of € 14.720 for teaching a **42 hour course** (over approximately 3 months). To this amount, the Department shall apply tax contributions in accordance with current legislation. If the non-resident Visiting Professor decides to apply an existing *Convention for the avoidance of double taxation*, between Italy and his/her country of residence, he/she will only pay taxes there. If not, the University will need to charge extra tax contributions in Italy (including Italian social security taxes).

The Department shall also provide insurance coverage for accidents and civil liability in accordance with the conditions stated in the policies taken out by the University. Under the teaching contract provided by the present call, Visiting Professors are not entitled to additional monthly payments, annual leave or severance schemes. No additional financial obligation shall arise for the University or the Department.

### Art. 4 – SUBMISSION

Applications must be submitted by professors and researchers of European and non-European universities and research centres, using the attached Application Form (Annex 1), together with:

- Curriculum Vitae, including teaching experience and other relevant activities
  - List of academic publications
  - Detailed programme of planned activities (*see the Application Form*), in particular:
    - A proposal for a 42-hour course, including a title and a detailed syllabus
    - A copy of Passport (or ID Card, for EU citizens only)
    - Selection of the Research group, at the Department, to collaborate with
- and a brief statement of the proposed research activities to be undertaken
- Motivation letter, in line with the Department’s educational and scientific programmes, as well as future cooperation opportunities

The deadline for submission is **January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 1:00 pm (CET)**. Applications must be submitted by e-mail to [international.dissgea@unipd.it](mailto:international.dissgea@unipd.it) with the subject **Visiting Professor “Mobility and the Humanities.”** Incomplete or incorrect applications will be excluded from the selection procedure.

## **Art. 5 – SELECTION PROCEDURE**

Applications will be assessed by a Selection Committee appointed by the Department's Scientific Committee, who will review the proposals. Assignment will be awarded on merit ranking criteria.

The results of the selection procedure will be communicated to successful candidates no later than January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Selected candidates must communicate their formal acceptance no later than February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Those who do not respect this deadline will be excluded from the selection procedure.

In case of renouncement of one or two selected Visiting Professors, suitable candidates will be contacted according to ranking.

An official approval from the home institution's competent authorities will be requested of successful candidates at the end of the selection procedure.

Padova, 10th of November 2021.

The Director of Department DiSSGeA  
*Prof. Gianluigi Baldo*

## Appendix

### **'Mobility and the Humanities' Project of Excellence**

The Department of Historical and Geographic Sciences and the Ancient World (DiSSGeA) has been selected by ANVUR, the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research Systems, as **Department of Excellence** for the period 2018-2022. Thanks to this achievement, DiSSGeA will receive 6,075,000 € from the Italian Ministry for Education, University and Research (MIUR) for strengthening research activities, developing excellent teaching methods and enhancing its international profile.

Combining mobility studies and research in the humanities, the project will boost the Department's activities in the coming years. DiSSGeA aims to become a **research hub for the humanistic study of mobility**, meaning the movement of people, objects, ideas and texts in space and time.

The project has funded the recruitment of **four (4) new staff members**, as well as the development of **two (2) new research infrastructures**: a Centre for Advanced Studies in Mobility and the Humanities, and a Digital Laboratory for Mobility Research in the Humanities (MobiLab).

The project also includes **a series of initiatives fostering excellence in education**: A new curriculum in Mobility Studies within the Historical Sciences Master programme, scholarships and study prizes for students with an outstanding academic record, additional funding for Erasmus+ outgoing mobility, PhD and post-doc research grants supporting research on mobility, and an invitation to world-renowned visiting scholars. Such initiatives contribute to the **training of a new generation of humanists** who know how to manage mobility-related topics with a high degree of awareness of their complexities.

The study of mobility will allow the DiSSGeA to deal with current urgent problems and with topics that have a strong **impact on the present socio-economic context**. The implementation of dissemination activities and networking with stakeholders at different scales will support an effective action of public engagement in line with the principles of Open Science.

### **Research aims**

The scientific objective of the Project is to significantly advance the study of mobility, understood as the movement of people, objects, ideas and texts in past and present societies as well as in different geographical contexts. Taking advantage of a rich and unique mix of disciplines, with a distinctive reference to the connections between past and present times (from antiquity to contemporaneity), the Centre for Advanced Studies in Mobility and the Humanities aims to contribute to the emerging area of mobility study through the humanities, which is increasingly pursued by other research hubs worldwide.

Technological and societal advancement have moved toward an increased interest in mobilities and their complexity. While this has been the object of a major involvement by the hard and social sciences, the humanities can play an equally important role in understanding mobility in a diachronic and spatial perspective. Thanks to a multifaceted conceptualisation of mobility, the availability of an ever-increasing amount of data, an expanding methodological creativity involving a variety of sources, and the convergence of social and humanities research, mobility studies today can bring together a multiplicity of movement-related phenomena in a single study program. Indeed, the study of movement-related processes is central to a diverse range of research topics and disciplinary domains at DiSSGeA.

This inclusive and plural approach will help in overcoming the traditional paradigm that reads past and present as static entities developing independently one from the other. The combination of historiographical, philological, geographical and anthropological methods, with a reference also to economic and legal aspects, allows better understanding of the dynamism of human societies and nonhuman entities, and to reconstruct in critical ways the related contexts, practices and experiences at different scales.

The project takes into consideration three areas of interest:

**Mobility study methodologies.** DiSSGeA aspires to develop new methodologies to become a landmark in the scientific landscape of humanistic mobility studies. The approach is both quantitative (such as data mining and big-data analysis, historical geographical information systems and geovisualisation of mobility issues) and qualitative (such as comparative textual analysis, thematic reconstruction of networks, mobile ethnography, creative methods, phenomenological reading of mobile experiences and their representations). The newly elaborated methodologies will also be able to contribute to other fields of mobility studies in the future.

**Mobility phenomena.** DiSSGeA intends to contribute to the rethinking of mobility phenomena from a humanistic perspective. Mobilities are not limited to transport or current migratory challenges, but include a variety of subjects, as for example: movements of knowledge and political cultures; movements and translation of books and textual tradition; landscape mobility practices; the narration and representation of movement; movements of scientific collections; the reimagination of the mobility-immobility nexus.

**Mobility impact on the social sphere.** This area aims at understanding and interpreting the social, cultural, political and economic changes triggered by mobility phenomena. In such a framework, the synergy between the different disciplines within DiSSGeA allows, on one hand, to contextualise the impact of mobility phenomena in the contemporary world and, on the other, to study the profound dynamism of societies in all historical epochs. Historicising mobilities, thus, is also seen as an opportunity to critically rethink present and future mobilities.

## The Centre and MobiLab

Starting from a collaborative stance, the newly established **Centre for Advanced Studies in Mobility and the Humanities**, hosted at DiSSGeA, is committed to running the **Mobility and the Humanities Seminar Series**. Key speakers in the field are regularly invited to further elaborate on, and advance, their research activities. This way, the Centre configures itself as an **international research hub for the humanistic study of mobility**, a place where intellectual exchange and hospitality take a crucial part in the development of brand-new research directions. The Centre aims at stimulating collaboration around **new basic and interdisciplinary research**, consolidating the international standing of DiSSGeA and making it more attractive for young researchers, while clearly identifying its scientific mission as a Department of Excellence.

**The Digital Laboratory for Mobility Research (MobiLab)** aims at addressing the need to manage large quantities of data connected with mobilities and to provide digital support to qualitative research. The lab is also interested in reflecting upon the challenging epistemological issues that digital research in the humanities involves.

The lab, equipped with state-of-the-art technology and staffed by digital humanities experts, will **develop new methodologies, research tools, empirical digital projects and innovative teaching and dissemination**. The aim is to use IT in the humanities not only as a mere tool, but to advance the understanding of mobility phenomena and the concept of mobility itself within the humanities.

## Clusters – NODES

### PEOPLE

The so-called new mobilities paradigm does not constitute a change such that concepts of place, territory, landscape and borders are considered outdated and no longer suitable for studying times and spaces or providing interpretative keys to texts, representations or discourses. The mobility turn does not introduce radically new themes, since the social sciences and the humanities—including history, geography and anthropology above all—have always dealt with movements and especially with those of individuals and peoples. The main feature of this new paradigm is instead the development of a holistic and interdisciplinary reflection on what mobility is, as well as on a comparative, multiscalar and transcalar approach. Scales and research areas that used to be disconnected are now stimulated to meet and confront under the mobilities studies umbrella and to reconsider their own concepts, models and objects of study with a renewed focus on the role of mobility.

The attention on people on the move is a central aspect of the research inspired by the mobility turn. Scales and subjects of the studies dealing with people's mobility are innumerable: single movements of bodies—living, dead or even parts of bodies; dances and rhythms of daily movements characterising contemporaneity or past ages; movements inside our homes, in schools and offices, within neighbourhoods and along the streets, in gated communities as well as in refugee camps; movements within metropolis, by road or rail, between countryside and city, for different purposes (tourism, trade, military campaigns or religious pilgrimages); migrations and the movement of peoples through political or physical borders, between states or continents.

This node aims to explore whether and how this renewed attention to people's mobility and movements, over a temporal and chronological period of *longue durée* and with diachronic and comparative approaches, can fruitfully influence the already consolidated studies characterising the Department of Historical and Geographic Sciences and the Ancient World. This approach also aims at stimulating new research projects willing to consider and problematise what happens during movement, between the places from which or to which people move, in its material, symbolic and experiential aspects, as well as exploring how different movements and movements of people can redefine places themselves, in a dynamic and diachronic perspective.

In order to contribute to a mobile approach in the humanities, this node plans to deepen different themes, such as:

- *migrations of peoples and individuals over time*: reasons, conditions, experiences, representations and narrations; permanent, temporary or seasonal migrations
- *other forms of mobility*: small-scale daily movements, commuters, conditions and mobility possibilities for the elderly or young people, group mobilities, tourism, military travels, mobility of students and scientists, mobility in the afterlife, the movements of priests and friars, merchants, entrepreneurs, artisans and other professionals, pilgrims, patrons and people carrying works of art
- *the immobility of people*: the political and social control of mobility on people of different gender, origin, condition; frictions, obstacles and barriers to travel

## OBJECTS

This node is placed within the Materialities and Mobilities research line as it is identified in the new mobilities paradigm context. It aims at exploring the different forms of objects circulating in space and time and the way in which mobility transforms their materiality, value (economic, symbolic) and functions. In addition to mobility traditionally understood as circulation of goods, the mobility of material objects widens its investigative horizon/perspective to the different declinations of the traveling object, the role of material contacts, the technical instruments, structures and physical contingencies, and the symbolic dimension, as variously involved in the concept of plural mobility.

In this perspective, a preliminary survey highlighted the following topics to be investigated:

- The value of things and its transformations induced by mobility; the creation of value (economic and symbolic)
- The impact of mobility, both spatial and inter-generational, on the materiality of objects, from an economic, political and artistic point of view, in a global view of material culture
- The processes leading to the development of collections, which arise from mobility and circulation of things
- A methodological reflection on big-data, digital humanities and visual representation

Seminars with a theoretical approach will allow questioning of the conferment of value upon objects, regardless of their original materiality (common use objects or small human remains). Alternative kinds of materiality, such as those regarding reliquaries, images and inscriptions, as well as their circulation, will be investigated. The reflection on material culture from a global perspective will investigate themes related to collections, history of collections and cultural heritage preservation through seminars on museum objects interpreted from a mobility perspective (as well as from an interdisciplinary perspective involving geography, history and history of

science) and on the history of “political” objects, especially those traveling through diplomatic channels. The methodological aspects will be discussed with the contribution of maritime historians, in particular starting from a quantitative analysis of shipwrecks.

## IDEAS

This node aims at reflecting on the processes related to the mobility of ideas through time and space. It also aims at understanding the forms and reasons for the affirmation and circulation of some ideas in a context in which they are not the only ones available, as well as how ideas change in time and space.

In this context, ideas should be thought jointly with the practices they convey by widening the spectrum of the analysis, thus implying that this node should also research the conditions for their affirmation, reproduction and appropriation in geographical and historical contexts, even very distant. Thus, we wonder whether it is possible to discuss the mobility of ideas without binding ourselves to a diffusionist scheme, referring to variation also in epidemiological terms and, at the same time, whether it is productive to distinguish mobility from circulation.

In order to proceed in this direction, the working group set a common target allowing us to progress in a diachronic and interdisciplinary way: the common topic is tyranny, the despotic power or the dictatorship in the spatial-temporal articulations assumed by the use of such concepts.

Therefore, the aim is to keep on questioning, within the framework of the mobility turn, the synchronic and diachronic circulation of a complex device (e.g., crystallisation of ideologies, practices and political, social and economic dynamics). This theme has been defined on the basis that it is recurring in our studies, from the Ancient World (Fezzi, Raviola), to the Middle Ages (Canzian, Gallo), to the Modern Age (Piccinini, Savio, Valseriati, Viggiano), to the Contemporary (Albanese, Basso, Fava, Millan) and the Present (Quatrida). It also seems promising to explore and measure the theoretical import of the paradigm in relation to traditional categories of the social sciences used to thematise the phenomenon (circulation of ideas, diffusion, influence of the effects, transformation) and to activate debate and reflections about how to rethink the comparison action within the working group (and beyond).

## TEXTS

In the framework of the Mobility and Humanities project, books (manuscripts and printed), texts, documents and the relative writers' supports (rolls, codices, epigraphs) hold an ambiguous status. On the one hand, they are objects exposed to all the concrete events of production, sale, loan, circulation, damage, conservation and loss. On the other hand, they are intangible objects. They convey texts and, therefore, ideas. The transmission of a book constitutes the circulation of words, texts, notions, names, ideas. This is a factor driving aggregation and identity, but also disaggregation and dissent. In such dual nature of material and immaterial objects, books and texts are always connected to people, who transcribe, translate, collate, annotate and comment upon texts. People also search/look for, buy, sell, give/lend and borrow, collect and bind books and manuscripts. Books travel with people, in a wide spatial and chronological dimension; they are gathered in public and private libraries that change locations, order, goals and destinations. As properly intended, in mobility—of places and contexts of use, of conservation spaces, of material supports, of writing/handwriting/spelling, of languages, of forms and functions—lies the distinctive feature of written communication tools.

This research group works on the spatial, chronological and conceptual mobility of books and texts, intertwining different disciplines (philology, palaeography, codicology, medieval diplomatics, history of religions, philosophy) and following multiple thematic perspectives, within which tradition (in its broadest sense) and identity assume a decisive significance. In the first year, the programme will focus on two main themes:

### 1. Mobility of texts

The programme will provide seminars and workshops on texts as a factor of tradition and transformation (handwritten traditions, translations, interpretations), in particular on: Aristotelian tradition; medical tradition; school books and literature; Bible and biblical translation and related exegesis in the Greek, Latin, Syriac and Arabic cultural contexts; tradition of Lombard/Longobard documents and early medieval documentary koiné (transformations, updating, forms contamination between North and South of the Alps).

## 2. Mobility of books

The programme will include seminars and workshops on books as “mobile” containers/boxes of texts (Greek, Latin, Arabic and Venetian manuscripts in Europe), and books programmatically conceived as vectors for long distances or, in any case, variously assembled and widely circulating information, even within narrower contexts, with function of identity aggregation (Franciscan miscellanies, commemorative texts, monastic fraternities lists).

### **THEORIES AND METHODS**

The conception of the Mobility and the Humanities Department Project started from a preliminary survey of the Department’s scientific production in its multiple disciplinary variations.

Indeed, the project was essentially aimed not only at strengthening the dialogue between such different disciplinary perspectives, but also at concretely defining a transversal theme that could validly constitute a basis for stimulating an interdisciplinary dialogue.

The theme of mobility—or rather, mobilities—provided a potential common platform that allowed for the inclusion of increasingly more specific Department lines of research dedicated to circumscribed areas, namely the mobility of people/individuals/bodies; the mobility of objects/things/goods; the mobility of ideas/concepts/knowledge; the mobility of texts/books/representations.

Beyond these thematic framings, which are specifically considered by dedicated Department research groups (nodes), the project also includes a node working through a more transversal perspective on theories and methods for the mobility humanities.

The Theories and Methods node aims to promote reflection on theoretical and methodological issues, with a particular reference to the most innovative component of the project, namely the combination of mobility studies and the humanities.

Hence, the need for investigating the implications of this innovative formulation also from an epistemological point of view, and through a discussion of methodological possibilities which have been already implemented or are to be experimented.

Therefore, the purpose of the Theories and Methods node is to feed a broad theoretical vision on the topic (e.g., varied conceptions of mobility; development of innovative interpretations; terminological experimentations), on the one hand, and to think in a comparative and transversal way about quantitative, qualitative and creative methodologies on the other.

Maintaining the ability to constantly reimagine the relations between mobility and the humanities, the node also intends to provide theoretical and application tools that are productive for more specific research areas, such as the mobility of people, objects, ideas and texts.