Stellenausschreibung

Reg.-Nr. 296/2026
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FRIEDRICH-SCHILLER-UNIVERSITÄT JENA

The Friedrich Schiller University Jena is a dynamic and innovation-driven university centrally located in Germany. With a broad range of disciplines, it shapes the future through excellent research and teaching. Its scientific excellence is reflected in the profile areas **Light – Life – Liberty**, which provide pioneering insights and sustainable solutions for the society of tomorrow. Through close collaborations with leading research institutions, innovative companies, and renowned cultural organizations, it advances interdisciplinary developments. With around 17,000 students and approximately 10,000 employees, it defines Jena as a vibrant, internationally connected city of science and innovation.

The Cluster of Excellence “Imaginamics: Practices and Dynamics of Social Imagining” is seeking

2 Doctoral Researchers

in part-time (65%), for a period of 48 months, starting 1 February 2027.

The Cluster of Excellence “Imaginamics” investigates the practices and dynamics of social imagining from an interdisciplinary perspective (https://www.uni-jena.de/imaginamics). The doctoral researcher positions are part of the Junior Research Group "Imaginaries of Democracy: Histories, Practices, and Global Perspectives" (led by Sara Gebh, PhD; https://www.uni-jena.de/406351/sara-gebh).

The Junior Research Group "Imaginaries of Democracy" examines how *alternative imaginaries of democracy* emerge, change, and become effective. The group is guided by the assumption that the question of where and how democracy is imagined differently can only be answered by leaving the beaten track and turning to alternative sites, practices, and traditions of democratic imagining. While this approach is rooted in political theory, it is explicitly open to interdisciplinary engagement (e.g. with philosophy, history, sociology, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, area studies, or anthropology).

The Junior Research Group is advertising one doctoral researcher position in each of the following two modules. Thematic overlaps between the modules are possible. Within this framework, candidates are free to define the focus of their doctoral project.

- Module „Re-Imagining Democracy from a Global Perspective “:

  This module investigates how democracy and collective self-government is imagined from *non-Western and global perspectives*. Its aim is to challenge the supposed self-evidence of the democratic imaginary and to explore democracy as a plural and contested practice and idea. Possible projects might address, for example, Indigenous practices, transnational or global movements, or non-Western traditions of self-government.

- Module „Doing Democracy “:

  This module examines *concrete practices* of imagining democracy. Its aim is to understand the dynamics that produce, stabilize, and/or challenge alternative imaginaries of democracy. This may include practices of imagining that mobilize and appropriate the concept of democracy in order to undermine it. Possible projects might examine the imagining of democracy and self-government in, for example, contemporary social movements, political organizations and networks, civil society campaigns, digital spaces, or artistic and cultural contexts.

Your responsibilities:

- You will conduct an independent doctoral research project (dissertation) in one of the modules described above that can be completed within the contract period, and contribute to the research of the Junior Research Group as a whole.

- You will independently organize events within the Junior Research Group (e.g., talks, workshops) and participate in external workshops and conferences.
- You will actively engage in interdisciplinary exchange within the Cluster.

Your profile:

- You hold a university degree (Master, Staatsexamen, Diplom, or an equivalent international degree) in the social sciences, humanities, or cultural studies.
- You are pursuing an original research project that advances the research program of the Junior Research Group theoretically and/or empirically and contributes to political theory.
- You are excited to work as part of a team on a shared research project, seek close intellectual exchange across different methodological perspectives, and value a productive and open feedback culture.
- You take initiative, are reliable, goal-oriented, and have strong self-organization skills.
- You are keen to collaborate across disciplines within the Cluster.
- You have a very good command of spoken and written English.

What we offer:

- Remuneration based on the provisions of the Collective Agreement for the Public Sector of the Federal States (TV-L) at to salary scale 13 — depending on the candidate's personal qualifications—, including a special annual payment in accordance with the collective agreement.
- A structured doctoral program in the Cluster's Research School, with regular colloquia, intensive supervision by the head of the Junior Research Group and by researchers involved in the Cluster, and close integration into the Cluster's working groups and forums.
- Resources for further training and support for individual development and qualification needs.
- No teaching obligations; support in gaining teaching experience if desired.
- A stimulating and vibrant working environment with numerous opportunities to take initiative.
- A family-friendly working environment with a wide range of services for families, including the university's family office (JUniFamilie) and flexible childcare (JUniKinder).

Application documents:

- Cover-letter (1-2 Seiten)
- Research proposal, including a preliminary structure and timeline (3-5 pages), outlining how your project contributes to the research program of the Junior Research Group
- Writing sample in the form of a chapter or article, e.g., from a thesis or publication
- Detailed CV
- Degree certificates and transcripts
- Contact details of up to 3 referees who may be contacted for letters of recommendation (optional)

Please indicate which of the modules described above your application primarily relates to.

If you have any questions about the application process, please feel free to contact the head of the Junior Research Group, Sara Gebh (sara.gebh@uni-jena.de).

Interviews are expected to take place in the week 49/2026 or 20/2026. Unfortunately, any costs incurred in connection with the selection process cannot be reimbursed.

The University of Jena has received multiple awards for its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and its family-friendly work environment. The university seeks to employ more women, first-generation college

graduates, people with a history of migration, and people of eastern German background. Severely disabled applicants with equivalent qualifications will be given preferential consideration

Are you eager to work for us? Then apply by **November 15, 2026** using our online form.

Online application

For further information for applicants and the information on the collection of personal data, please refer to Data privacy and information for applicants