

In the context of the SNSF Sinergia project *Capturing the Present in Northwestern Europe (1348–1648). A Cultural History of Present before the Age of Presentism*, the University of Neuchâtel is calling for a post of

SNSF doctoral student in history (15th – 16th century)

Position information

Start date: September 1st, 2024

Contract duration: 4 years (non-renewable)

Workload: 100%

Location: University of Neuchâtel

Your responsibilities

The doctoral student will be preparing a PhD thesis on the events relayed across Europe by news reports printed during the first half of the sixteenth century. This work will be supervised by Professor Thalia Brero (University of Neuchâtel).

The invention and success of the printing press stimulated a general interest in what we now call ‘news’, as well as an acceleration of the spread of information. From the 1460s onwards, cheap booklets recounting recent events started to appear throughout Europe (French *occasionnels*, Spanish *relaciones de sucesos*, German *Neue Zeitungen*...). They transmitted fresh news, often from faraway lands, to a wide audience, who through them experienced a multiplication of their present time.

This editorial phenomenon developed particularly during the Italian wars (1494–1559) in the territories of the two powers opposing each other in this conflict: France and the Habsburg Empire. As the entire continent was shaken by this war, a real need for information on an international scale was felt, reinforced by the Protestant Reform and the expansionist actions of the Ottoman Empire. Against this background, which events were broadcast in news reports and which were ignored?

The doctoral student will select a series of events (ceremonial, military or political) and identify the printed news reports dealing with them. Analysing how one event was represented in the territories of the different belligerents will allow measuring its media impact across Europe and the variety of discourses on current events.

General information about the project

Funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Sinergia project *Capturing the Present in Northwestern Europe (1348–1648). A Cultural History of Present before the Age of Presentism* examines how the concept of ‘present’ was perceived and experienced in Northwestern Europe from the Middle Ages to early modernity. This geographical area, which includes the Netherlands, the western German Empire, northern France, and southern England, underwent significant changes during this period in politics, economics, religion,



and the arts. Characterised by the coexistence of various political systems and languages, significant urban development, and rapidly evolving living conditions, this region offers a unique historical context that differs from the traditional depiction of the Renaissance.

The *Capturing the Present* project brings together around fifteen researchers from the universities of Neuchâtel, Lausanne, and Lille, including 6 PhD candidates and 3 postdoctoral researchers. The team is supported by an international network of experts in history, art and literary history, linguistics, media studies, anthropology, and political science. Its aim is to demonstrate how discourses and images shaped the perceptions that men and women of that time had of their own era; how contemporary events were represented and interpreted; and how new ideas, as well as environmental, political, and societal changes, were perceived.

Your profile

Master's degree in history, specialising in medieval history, early modern history or history of the book (or equivalent qualification).

Excellent command of French or English, as the thesis will be written in one of these two languages.

Ability to read Middle French and Middle High German. Fluency in Dutch would be a plus. Ability to work as part of a team in an international and interdisciplinary environment.

Your benefits

A pleasant working environment in a multicultural and diverse academic context.

A stimulating research environment in a team shared between three partner universities.

The doctoral student may benefit from doctoral training offered by the University Conference of Western Switzerland ([CUSO](#)).

Application Procedure

Interested candidates are requested to submit their application in a pdf file containing:

- a cover letter
- a curriculum vitae
- copies of university diplomas
- their master's thesis (or equivalent scholarly work)

Applications are to be sent by e-mail until May 15th 2024 to: thalia.brero@unine.ch

The thesis subject is partially predefined within the framework of the collective project. It will be discussed and refined by the proposals from the candidates selected for the interviews, which will take place in June 2024.

In order to promote diversity among its staff, the University of Neuchâtel is committed to offering non-discriminatory working conditions.

