

# PhD or Postdoc- Position in Philosophy

Position available at the Institute of Philosophy II

Ruhr-University Bochum

Call for applications

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**Title of the Collaborative Project: “Constructing Scenarios of the Past: The Interdependence of Episodic Memory and the Self-Model”**

**Thematic Framework for the Position: Philosophy of Self-Consciousness/Self-Understanding and/or Philosophy of Memory**

At the Institute of Philosophy II of the Ruhr-University in Bochum a position for a PhD student (65 % TVL) or a postdoc position (100% TVL) is offered in the area of philosophy of mind and cognition in the research group of Prof. Albert Newen. The position is available for a period of three years (with an assessment after the first year). The project will be situated in Bochum and developed in a close collaboration with philosophers from other RUB departments. The candidates should be interested in working out a project within the thematic framework of the position determined by the research project described now:

## **Project Description**

The leading questions of this philosophical project are: How is the self-model constituted by episodic memory recall and how is episodic memory recall shaped by the self-model? One general idea is that the self-model is constituted by memory processes. If we had no memories (including short-term memories), then there would be no content in the self-model. In the other direction, the self-model constrains episodic memory recall by demanding coherence with prior background beliefs in the self-model. How can we adequately account for the double role of the self-model, as being constituted by the memory systems and as constraining episodic recall? The answer has to be found within our general framework of a generative view of memory, namely that the recall of an autobiographical episode is based on triggering relevant memory traces which are used to construct a scenario by enrichment or modification through semantic information. The project aims to describe both directions of the interdependence of self-model and memory, focusing on strong influence of the activated content of the self-model on the construction of episodic memory. Thus, a main challenge of this project is the adequate description of the whole Self-Memory System with a detailed description of the influence of the self-model on recall of autobiographic episodes. This theoretical project is realized in close collaboration with an additional empirical fMRI project (guided by Prof. Nikolai Axmacher in the same Research Group) in which we aim to measure the neural correlates of the influence of the self-model on episodic recall. Thus, an interdisciplinary perspective is essential for the project.

Requirements for PhD applicants: The applicants for a PhD-position are expected to have an excellent M.A. (or Staatsexamen degree) in Philosophy. Their area of expertise should be in Philosophy of Mind

and they should be familiar with at least one of the following areas: Cognitive Psychology, Artificial Intelligence or Cognitive Neuroscience.

Requirements for postdoc applicants: Candidates should have an outstanding PhD in philosophy and, in the ideal case, an additional degree in psychology, cognitive science, linguistics, psychiatry or neurosciences. Some substantial expertise in at least one of these areas will be expected.

Furthermore, the candidate is expected to have proven expertise either in “theories of self-consciousness or self understanding” or concerning theories of episodic memory.

Application documents: Please send your application to sekretariat-newen@rub.de

Your application should consist of two PDF files. The first one is to include your personal documents: letter of motivation, CV, copies of certificates and records, list of your publications, talks, conferences you attended and courses you held; names of 2 referees. The other PDF files to be attached should be (i) in the case of a postdoc application: your best two publications (accepted papers count) or the completed PhD-thesis (ii) in the case of a PhD application: the completed master thesis or a published paper if available.

The applicant need not speak German at the time of application but he or she should be willing to learn German in order to be able to engage in everyday conversations soon. Candidates should be prepared to participate in weekly meetings of the research group of Prof. Newen in Bochum.

The position is available from **1<sup>st</sup> of July 2019**. The position is available for a period of three years (with an assessment after the first year).

Please produce one PDF with all documents and submit them **via email until 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019** to (hard copy submissions cannot be returned): **sekretariat-newen@RUB.DE**