

SCHOOLS COMMONS

R.E.A.D.

READ (Research Ecologies & Archival Development) is one of three 'labs' at School of Commons (SOC). READ develops, presents and collects theory within the broader field of knowledge production. READ assembles two kinds of participants; 'editors' and 'mediators'. While editors produce a number of texts, mediators pursue a research project to be published in a series of online mediations. Additionally, along with other members of the SOC, participants jointly develop a series of roundtables. The roundtables connect READ-research with that of other SOC labs and host discussions on issues within the field of knowledge production. They will culminate in a public discussion at the end of the year.

ABOUT READ

Background

Research Ecologies and Archival Development (READ) is one of three laboratories at School of commons (SOC), a community-based initiative dedicated to the study and development of self-organized knowledge, located at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). Promoting a broad, integrative understanding of knowledge, we focus on matters of organization surrounding the production and mediation of knowledge with a focus on self-organized practices. As the SOC direction does not itself define a research program, SOC research is conducted in its three labs, all of which are run as collaborative, peer-based enterprises with annually changing members. While our labs work mostly independently, they jointly follow two overall goals: (1) Analyzing knowledge within its social contexts; (2) experimenting & innovating with different forms of mediation (learning, teaching, publishing etc.). All research at SOC will be published online on the SOC web-platform, freely available to anyone.

Summary

The task of READ is to develop theory-led discourse within the broader field covered by the SOC. For this purpose, READ invites young researchers and other knowledge producers to work on a topic of their choosing, to mediate it online, and to collaborate with other peers. READ research draws upon intellectual resources from a variety of fields. In particular, science & technology studies, philosophy of science, social epistemology, macroeconomics, postcolonial and gender theory, cultural studies and intellectual history.

Aims

With the fellowships, we address a number of issues:

- o #1: Young academics, artists, and other cultural producers often don't find a sustained source of income within their field right after graduation and even if they do, they often don't have the opportunity to mediate their 'darlings'.
- o #2: Publications are long and complex and only reveal the tip of the iceberg of thinking, efforts, and learning that has led to the theses presented in a final edit. A lot of complexity and comprehension is lost on the way.
- o #3: Theory and research is usually presented in inaccessible ways (expert-to-expert discourse) and moreover very often very expensive or not publicly available at all.
- o #4: Theory-led research and writing is often either underfunded or conducted in narrowly oriented academic (or other research) facilities. Peers from different backgrounds rarely ever come together.

MEDIATORS

Overview

In 2020 we will host two mediators for a period of 3 Months. The fellowship is decentral. That is, the participants can work from wherever they want. However, there will be one event at the SOC which we expect you to attend. Key information:

- o Duration: 3 months; 14 weeks (31 August – 06 December 2020)
- o Compensation: CHF 2000 (including salary and expenses)
- o Estimated effort: 100 hours (roughly 8 hours per week)
- o Self-determination of working hours/effort and content

Tasks

We expect the mediators to pursue and mediate a research project and jointly facilitate a discourse about it in relation to the work of other participants of the School of Commons. Since time and resources are limited, we don't need you to contribute 'original research' (or live up to other standards required by academic journals) and we suggest that you build your project on work you have already been conducting apart from the SOC. In particular, we would like you to complete the following tasks:

- o Personal research. (1) Define a basic topic, question, approach, viewpoint etc. within your field of research on which you would like to follow-up on. (2) Make sure that it can be examined and mediated to a wide public audience within the time being. (3) Your work should be easy to comprehend and passionate in thought. You care about stuff. Tell us what it is.
- o Mediation. Create a mediation of your topic/work structured in 6 subsequent 'mediation units' published on our website. You guide your audience from an introductory insight into your field to the specific issues of your own work. These units can be commentaries of texts you read or discussions of thoughts underpinning your argumentation. Ideally, they share insight over key readings in your field as well as your own previous work, leading to the specific interest you pursue with your fellowship. They can be on the basis of text, video, illustration, etc. You are invited to experiment with non-classical forms of teaching.
- o Collaboration. We would like you to build a group with the other participants of READ, further SOC participants, and guests of your choosing to facilitate a discourse about your work and field of research. There are minimally 6 sessions and one public discussion in late November 2020.

EDITORS

Overview

READ will host three editors in 2020 to publish one or a number of theoretical examinations into a topic in the field of self-organized knowledge. These can be essays, interviews, or manifestos – what matters is that there is a question or thesis which is clearly pursued and reflected on in the material you present. Key information:

- o Duration: 3 months; 14 weeks (31 August – 06 December 2020)
- o Compensation: CHF 500 (fix salary)
- o Estimated effort: 30 hours (3-4 workdays in total)
- o Self-determination of working hours/effort and content

Aims

With the editors, we lay a focus on theoretical writing. The editors present a concise thesis developed along an independent idea; argument; question; instruction; declaration etc. It is presented in an accessible manner to a wider audience and provides a meaningful contribution to the theoretical discourse about knowledge production at SOC.

Tasks

The editors are invited to join a collaborative venture side by side with the mediators. We would like you to complete the following tasks:

- o Publication. Produce one or more texts of a total minimum of 3000 words, published on our website.
- o Collaboration. We would like you to build a group with the other participants of READ, further SOC participants, and guests of your choosing to facilitate a discourse about your work and field of research. There are minimally 6 sessions and one public discussion at the end-of-the year conference of SOC in late November 2020.
- o Peer-Review. Provide meaningful, productive and goal-oriented feedback on the drafts of one other editor before they get published and submit your own contributions to the review of one of your co-editors.

TIMETABLE

This is only an anticipated schedule. It is subject to SOC-related planning as well as your personal availability and capabilities.

TIME	TASK
JULY	§ Deadline Open Call 31.07.2020
AUGUST	§ Deadline Selection 14.08.2020 § All: Getting to know each other plus formalities meeting: Last week of August
SEPTEMBER	§ Mediators: 2 Units per person § All: 2x Discussion/Session
OCTOBER	§ Mediators: 2 Units per person § All: 2x Discussion/Session
NOVEMBER	§ Mediators: 2 Units per person § All: 1x Discussion/Session § All: End of year discussion / presentation § Editors: Final draft deadlines
DECEMBER	§ Last formalities, feedback, etc. § Editors: Final deadline publication.