

Call for applications

**Summer school “Societies coping with risks: Environmental challenges and social mobilisation”**

supported by the German Volkswagen foundation  
(Vilnius/Druskininkai, Lithuania, 20-30 August 2010)

**Description:**

Contemporary societies are facing multi-faceted environmental challenges. Natural disasters, such as hurricanes (Katrina), tsunamis (Asia 2004), earthquakes (Haiti) and floods (Transcarpathia), technogenic catastrophes, such as those involving nuclear reactors (Chernobyl), chemical plant explosions (Bhopal and Toulouse) and oil and chemical spills (Baia Mara) highlight the importance of properly managing the environmental risks which are (re)emerging as a result of climate change, resource depletion and the development of science and technologies.

Social mobilisation as a response to such disasters and environmental risks is the focus of this year's summer school, organised by the international interdisciplinary research project “Politics and Society after Chernobyl”. The school intends to create a space where participants will be able to discuss the impact of environmental challenges on social and political processes, institutions and values. The range of issues to be discussed will be concentrated around (but not limited to) the experiences of post-socialist countries.

*The following questions will guide our discussions:*

- How do (post-socialist) societies respond to environmental problems?
- How do environmental challenges stimulate / determine / shape social and political development?
- What are social reactions to disasters? What comes after the initial shock, emergency relief efforts and humanitarian aid? How do social interactions change in the post-disaster context? Which memories do they produce?
- What is the role of social mobilisation in societies coping with environmental risks?
- How does social mobilisation contribute to the visibility of environmental risks in the public sphere?
- How do environmental challenges influence mobilisation patterns?
- How are identity issues involved in environmental movement initiatives?

The list of questions is not final and will be adjusted to the interests of the participants and lecturers involved. Outstanding experts in the field, such as Paul R. Josephson, Natalia Baranovska, and Leonardas Rinkevičius, will enrich our discussions with keynote lectures.

**Format:**

The participants will investigate these issues through a series of seminars and keynote lectures with an emphasis on intense debate and interdisciplinary exchange. A reader with texts for discussion will be available before the start of the summer school.

The working languages of the school are English and Russian.

**About the organisers:**

*Politics and Society After Chernobyl: Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Lithuania, and Germany in Comparative and Entangled Historical perspective (1986-2006)* is a joint project of the Center for Research on Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF), the Justus-Liebig University Giessen (JLU), the European Humanities University Vilnius/Minsk (EHU), and the Ukraine National University Kievo-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA). This project is part of the initiative of the Volkswagen Foundation “Unity in Diversity. Foundation and Prerequisites for an Expanded Europe.” For further information please visit [www.after-chernobyl.de](http://www.after-chernobyl.de)

**Participants and Application Process:**

The summer school is aimed at PhD students and junior faculty members; however MA and MPhil students with relevant research projects and/or interests are also welcome to apply. Enrolment is limited to 15 students.

Application forms must be submitted online not later than April 1, 2010. Please find the application form at

<http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dGVUQ2V3ZkVJTEdJOXZxMm9MNvZQcUE6MA> (The link can also be found at [www.after-chernobyl.de](http://www.after-chernobyl.de).)

All applicants will be informed about the selection process results by May 10<sup>th</sup> 2010.

Travel expenses are to be covered by the participants; however, for the duration of the summer school, accommodation and meals will be provided by the organisers.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [afterchernobyl@gmail.com](mailto:afterchernobyl@gmail.com)