

## CALL FOR DOCTORAL CONTRACT APPLICATIONS

### Doctoral student (M/F) in Contemporary History

#### Knowledge Production and Environmental Transformations in the 19th and 20th Centuries

##### General information about the vacancy

**Publication date :** 09/07/2025

**Name of the scientific manager :** Katja Doose

**Type of contract :** PhD contract

**Duration of contract:** 36 months

**Start date of thesis:** 01/12/2025

**Working hours:** Full time

**Salary:** €2,200 gross per month

**Place of work:** Université Lumière Lyon 2 - Campus Berges du Rhône

14 avenue Berthelot, 69363 Lyon cedex 07, France

**Laboratory :** Rhône-Alpes Historical Research Laboratory (UMR 5190)

**Affiliated doctoral school:** École doctorale Sciences Sociales

**Languages spoken :** English or French (the thesis may be written in French or English.)

**Frequency of travel:**

occasional

international area

**Driving licence required:** NO

### Thesis description

This doctoral thesis will explore the environmental history of knowledge production about nature in the 19th and 20th centuries. It will centre on the scholarly and technical practices that enabled the exploration, measurement, and exploitation of so-called extreme environments—particularly high mountain regions, oceanic spaces, and extractive zones. The project will analyse how these environments were transformed into objects of knowledge, political stakes, and sites of development through the involvement of diverse actors and technical infrastructures, operating within imperial, colonial, or national contexts.

The aim is to examine how knowledge produced in these environments contributed to the emergence of what can be termed the cognitive infrastructures of the Anthropocene. The thesis will engage with current historiographical debates on multiple modernities and the plurality of trajectories that have shaped global environmental transformation.

A core focus will be on the actors involved in knowledge production—not only scientists, but also engineers, technicians, prospectors, mountain guides, sailors, and holders of vernacular or practical knowledge. The project will consider the material dimensions of their work (instruments, field routines, sampling practices), as well as the power dynamics that shaped their positions: circulation between centre and periphery, imperial and bureaucratic hierarchies, and tensions between situated knowledge and universalizing ambitions. Where relevant, candidates may also explore the role of non-human entities in shaping knowledge and field practices.

Geographical regions may include, but are not limited to, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe.

This thesis will contribute to the field through an original articulation of environmental history and the history of science, with particular attention to the connections between knowledge production and extractive logics.

### Working context

The PhD student will be recruited by Université Lumière Lyon 2 for a period of 36 months and will be enrolled in the Doctoral School of Social Sciences at Lyon.

The thesis will be co-supervised by Stéphane Frioux, Professor of Contemporary History at Université Lyon 2, and Katja Doose, Junior Professor of Environmental History. The position is funded through the research budget associated with Katja Doose's junior professorship.

The doctoral researcher will be affiliated with the research laboratory LARHRA (UMR 5190) and more specifically with the thematic areas "Environment, Territory, and Health" and "Knowledge, Actors, Dynamics, Spaces."

A dedicated research budget is available to support extended archival fieldwork in France and abroad (as required by the research project), as well as for the participation in national and international conferences.

### Eligibility criteria

- First-time enrollment in the doctoral program must be in autumn 2025.
- Not currently enrolled in a doctoral program at another French or foreign higher education institution (except in the case of a *cotutelle* agreement).
- A **Master's degree in history or a closely related discipline** (such as historical geography, STS, or historical anthropology) is required. Applicants must demonstrate a strong grounding in historical research methods and historiographical analysis. Eligibility is subject to the rules of the Doctoral School of Social Sciences at Lyon 2 (see: <https://edsciencessociales.universite-lyon.fr/>).

### Application documents

All documents should be compiled into a **single PDF file** and include:

- A curriculum vitae.
- A letter of motivation (1–2 pages maximum) explaining the applicant's interest in the proposed topic, how their academic background aligns with the project, the skills they wish to use or develop, and, if applicable, preliminary ideas for fieldwork or sources.
- Academic transcripts from the Master's program (one or two years, depending on the system), as well as from the Bachelor's degree. These documents must be issued or validated by the home institution.
- A document attesting to the evaluation or defence of the Master's thesis, if applicable.
- A summary of the final Master's thesis (maximum 5,000 characters including spaces)
- A doctoral thesis proposal (maximum 12,000 characters including spaces), outlining the originality of the project, the research question, methodology, and including a brief bibliography.

Applications should be sent by email to **katja.doose@univ-lyon2.fr** and **stephane.frioux@univ-lyon2.fr** no later than midnight (Paris time) on **23 August 2025**.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview **with a selection panel in autumn 2025**.

For any additional information, please contact **Katja Doose** ([katja.doose@univ-lyon2.fr](mailto:katja.doose@univ-lyon2.fr)).