

EXPLORE THE BALKANS

Six Doctoral Research Opportunities in Linguistic and Ethno-Cultural Studies in the Balkan Region

Fan S. Noli University of Korçë × West University of Timișoara

One Region. Two Universities. Six Research Paths. Your PhD Journey.

The Joint Doctoral Programme invites researchers to explore the Balkans through literature, language, folklore, memory, identity, borders and translation. Each project is jointly supervised by academics from the two partner universities, creating an international and interdisciplinary research environment.

Which research path could become yours?

1. Female Characters in Albanian and Balkan Ballads: Between Myth, Sacrifice and Cultural Memory

Scientific Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jonela Spaho — Fan S. Noli University of Korçë

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Otilia Hedeșan — West University of Timișoara

Folklore Studies • Ethnology • Comparative Cultural Studies

How do women in traditional ballads become carriers of cultural memory?

Comparing Albanian and Balkan ballads, this project studies women as mothers, sisters, wives, sacrificed maidens and guardians of memory. It explores myth, sacrifice, loyalty, gender roles and collective identity through traditions such as “Rozafa”, “Konstandin and Doruntine” and “Ago Ymeri”.

Ideal for: Folklore, ethnology, anthropology, gender studies, comparative literature and cultural heritage.

2. Terminology, Classification and Ideology in German-Speaking Scholarship on Romanians and Aromanians

Scientific Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniela Stoica — Fan S. Noli University of Korçë

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Daniel Dejica-Cartis — West University of Timișoara

Linguistics • Ethnography • Intellectual History

How has scholarly language shaped the way Balkan identities are understood?

This project examines how German-speaking scholars named and classified Romanians and Aromanians from the nineteenth century onward. Focusing on language, dialect, ethnicity, minority and heritage, it connects linguistic historiography with contemporary questions of identity and linguistic legitimacy, including the legacy of Gustav Weigand.

Ideal for: Linguistics, Romanian and Aromanian studies, minority languages, Balkan studies and historiography.

3. The Poetics of the Absurd and the Fantastic in Modern Balkan Literature

Scientific Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eris Rusi — Fan S. Noli University of Korçë

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Dr. habil. Dumitru Tucan — West University of Timișoara

Comparative Literature • Literary Theory • Ethno-Cultural Studies

What can the fantastic say when reality itself becomes absurd?

The project studies the fantastic and the absurd as responses to censorship, repression, trauma and identity crisis in modern Balkan literature. A comparative corpus may include Kadare, Kuteli, Eliade, Cărtărescu, Gopodinov, Pavić and Kiš, with Kafka, Buzzati and Borges as wider reference points.

Ideal for: Comparative literature, the fantastic, narratology, semiotics, memory studies and literature under totalitarianism.

4. Telling Stories, Sharing Memories: Women's Status, Roles and Knowledge in a Multiethnic Area

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Otilia Hedeşan — West University of Timișoara

Co-Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jonela Spaho — Fan S. Noli University of Korçë

Cultural Studies • Comparative Ethnology • Oral History

What changes when a community's history is reconstructed through women's voices?

Based on fieldwork and life-story interviews, this project explores women's status, roles, traditional knowledge and cultural memory in multiethnic communities. The candidate will build an original oral-history corpus linking personal biographies with family life, work, ritual, migration, social change and intergenerational transmission.

Ideal for: Ethnology, anthropology, oral history, gender studies, memory studies and field research.

5. Translating Identity and Cultural Experience Across Linguistic Ecosystems in the Balkan Region

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Daniel Dejica-Cartis — West University of Timișoara

Co-Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniela Stoica — Fan S. Noli University of Korçë

Translation Studies • Ecolinguistics • Intercultural Communication

When we translate between languages, do we also translate parts of ourselves?

This project approaches translation as a negotiation of identity, memory and cultural experience. It may examine translators, multilingual speakers, migrants and minority-language communities, with attention to metaphor, emotion, belonging and culturally embedded concepts. A key direction is the proposed Ecolinguistic Translation Analysis (ETA) framework.

Ideal for: Translation studies, ecolinguistics, multilingualism, migration, applied linguistics and intercultural communication.

6. The Border as a Cognitive-Cultural Metaphor in Balkan Literature: Home, Exile, Memory and Linguistic Displacement

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. Dr. habil. Dumitru Tucan — West University of Timișoara

Co-Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eris Rusi — Fan S. Noli University of Korçë

Cognitive-Cultural Literary Studies • Cognitive Poetics • Border Studies

What is a border: a line, a bridge, a wound, a memory?

This project studies the border as a metaphor for home, exile, migration, belonging, memory and linguistic displacement. Possible authors include Kadare, Lea Ypi, Andrić, Kassabova, Ugrešić, Kiš, Manea and Herta Müller. The approach combines cognitive poetics, cultural linguistics, narratology and close reading.

Ideal for: Comparative literature, cognitive poetics, border and migration studies, cultural memory and identity.

Six projects, two universities and one shared research space. Choose the path that best matches your academic interests and develop original research with international academic guidance.

LOOK AT THE BALKANS DIFFERENTLY. ASK NEW QUESTIONS. CREATE NEW KNOWLEDGE.

PhD in Linguistic and Ethno-Cultural Studies in the Balkan Region