PhD position in experimental philosophy (University of Geneva)

The University of Geneva’s Philosophy Department offers a 3-year PhD fellowship (with a possible one year extension) within Florian Cova’s research project entitled “Eudaimonic emotions and the (meta)philosophy of well-being”.

STARTING DATE: Autumn 2019 (September, October or November depending on various administrative details, such as delays to get a working permit).

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT: Philosophical and psychological accounts of well-being (i.e. the life worth living) have emphasized that the good life cannot be defined only in terms of positive hedonic states or desire-satisfaction because a good life, in addition to being happy, must also be meaningful. However, it is not clear what it means for a life to be ‘meaningful’. The current project thus aims to clarify this notion by bringing together the conceptual methods of philosophy and the empirical tools of psychology and cognitive science.

Within this project, the PhD student will be asked to:

i. Conduct research and write a PhD thesis on the topic of the meaningful life, in which emphasis will be put on the ordinary (i.e. common sense) concept of ‘meaningful’, folk intuitions about what makes life meaningful and good, and the role of emotions in the experience of meaningfulness.

ii. Survey the philosophical literature on meaningfulness and well-being to map the various philosophical accounts of the meaningful life and the intuitions and arguments that are used to vindicate or reject them.

iii. Run studies in which folk intuitions about meaningfulness and the good life, as well as their psychological underpinnings, will be investigated.

SCIENTIFIC REQUIREMENTS: Past experience in philosophy is required. A strong background in ethics and/or philosophy emotions is a plus, but not required. Past experience in running and conducting psychological experiments is also welcome. Overall, preference will be given to strong interdisciplinary profiles, at the intersection of philosophy and empirical sciences, and candidates with past experience in the field of experimental philosophy.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS: For the purposes of the position, only English is compulsory, since it is the language of most of research activities.

SALARY (before taxes and social charges, in Swiss Francs): CHF 47’040. for the first year.

HOW TO APPLY: Please send your application by e-mail to Florian Cova (florian.cova@gmail.com) by May 24th, 2019. It should include a CV, a writing sample (e.g. Bachelor or Master thesis), a motivation letter describing the candidate’s curriculum, interests and skills (keep motivational bull***t to a minimum) and the name of two persons who can act as referees if contacted.

Decisions will be made by the end of June at the latest.

For further information, please contact Florian Cova (florian.cova@gmail.com)