



Call for interest

The Catholic Church and the Environment – CATCH, Funded by the European Union (ERC ADG CATCH, Grant Number 101199683).

The ERC research project CATCH - The Catholic Church and the Environment is hiring 5 PhD students, 2 Postdocs, and 1 research assistant. We are looking for committed researchers, passionate co-workers, and dedicated scholars who wish to join our team and build together our new Radical Environmental Humanities Hub.

CATCH

CATCH will provide the first comprehensive environmental history of the Catholic Church from the 1960s—when Vatican II coincided with new social and ecological concerns—to the papacy of Pope Francis. While scholars have explored religion and the environment from theological perspectives, the historical relationship between the Church and environmental politics remains largely understudied.

CATCH addresses this gap by examining the Church’s environmental engagement at multiple scales: its role in international environmental governance and UN debates, as well as regional case studies across the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

CATCH is a non-confessional research project. Participation does not require any religious affiliation or belief, nor does the project privilege any confessional perspective.

The Radical Environmental Humanities Hub

The climate crisis, pandemics, wars, and democratic backsliding highlight the need for new forms of interdisciplinary knowledge. Fields such as Environmental Humanities (EH) and Political Ecology (PE) offer complementary approaches to understanding socio-ecological challenges, yet they rarely intersect.

REH2 seeks to bridge this divide by connecting EH and PE and amplifying perspectives from the Global South and non-Anglophone contexts. Hosted at CISPAC, the hub will foster an international and interdisciplinary environment dedicated to research, education, and public engagement on major ecological challenges. REH2 aims to become a leading center for Environmental Humanities and Political Ecology in the Mediterranean and Southern Europe.





Recruitment

The table below presents the profiles we aim to recruit. Please review the required backgrounds and qualifications carefully,

Cod.	Requirements	Preferred background	Language skills (required)	Duration
PDR 1	PhD in hand	International relations; Political Science; Global Governance	English; Italian	3 years (eventually extendible for 1 or 2 years).
PDR 2	PhD in hand	Italian Contemporary History; Environmental History; Social History; Sociology/History of Social Movement; Experienced in coordination of research team/projects	English; Italian	3 years (eventually extendible for 1 or 2 years)
PhD 1	Master	Modern/Contemporary History; Latin American History; Anthropology; Oral History	English; Portuguese	4 years
PhD 2	Master	Modern/Contemporary History; US history; Sociology/History of social movements; Oral History	English; Spanish	4 years
PhD 3	Master	Modern/Contemporary History; Italian History; Social history; Oral History	English; Italian	4 years
PhD 4	Master	Modern/Contemporary History; African history; History of South Africa; Sociology; Anthropology; Oral History	English; one of the following: Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans	4 years
PhD 5	Master	Modern/Contemporary History; History of the Philippines; Sociology; Anthropology; Oral History	English; Tagalog; Spanish	4 years
RA	Master	Digital humanities; basic IT and web management skills (WordPress), experience in social media communication, and the ability to organize and curate digital research materials and archives.	English; Spanish/Galego	2 years (eventually extendible to 5 years)



Legend and timing of the recruitment:

PDR: Postdoctoral researcher - The position is expected to begin as soon as possible, with some flexibility depending on the candidate's availability.

RA: Research assistant - The position is expected to begin as soon as possible, with some flexibility depending on the candidate's availability.

PhD: The position is expected to begin in September 2026.

Our expectations

All team members are required to relocate to Santiago de Compostela. Remote work will not be permitted, except during periods spent abroad conducting fieldwork.

Each researcher will be responsible for a specific case study within the CATCH project and will contribute through research, publications (academic and non-academic), and the dissemination of results.

The project also involves the creation of the REH2 Hub. We are therefore looking for motivated researchers interested in contributing to this initiative by participating in its events, activities, and collaborative work.

Resources

The REH2 Hub is based at CISPAC. The team will have dedicated workspace for each researcher, as well as shared areas for collaborative work, in the iconic Edificio Fontán.

Each team member will also have access to funds for travel, IT equipment, and publications.

Salaries will be competitive and aligned with the upper end of each academic rank at USC.



How to apply

This is a two-stage application process

Step 1 - expression of interest. Send us:

- A cover letter explaining why you wish to join CATCH and the REH2
- (for PDR and PhD) A research plan on how you will contribute to the specific case studies you are connected with (see the attachment). Please be specific and show us that you know how to implement this research. For instance: do you have contacts; can you mention any archives or people you wish to interview, sources in general?
- (For the RA). A plan for the communication and management of the website. Ideas for digital content
- Your CV
- (for PDR and PhD) Writing samples (it can be the master thesis)
- (for the RA). Samples of work you have done (websites, social media, graphic etc.)
- The names of 3 people we can contact for references (include their email addresses)

Step 2 - formal application. Those who will be selected in step 1 will be asked to apply to the formal call for the USC. Consider that the administration will ask you to provide official translations and recognition of degrees.

Please send your application to marco.armiero@usc.es as one PDF file. Name the file with your last name and the label of the position you are applying for (for instance: ArmieroPhD2). In the subject of the email, please write “expression of interest CATCH [code of the position you are applying for].”

Attachment - case studies

In the following table, you will find the lines of investigation we have envisioned for each case study. Please feel free to elaborate on them or propose additional ones.

Code	Case study
PDR1	The role of the Catholic Church at the international level (UN conferences, global institutions and negotiations). In-depth analysis of the Catican representatives
PDR2	Italy: environmental concerns and policies of the Christian Democratic Party and their intellectuals



PhD1	Brazil: Pastoral Land Commission; Liberation theology; Sem terra; Pastoral das Favelas
PhD2	United States: Catholic sisters planting organic gardens in the 1970s; anti-nuclear protests in the 1980s and 1990s; the Catholic Church's involvement with the environmental justice movement
PhD3	Italy: research grassroots Catholic organizations and the environment (mainstream and not mainstream)
PhD4	South Africa: connections between anti-apartheid and environmental struggles; social work in the slums; anti-extractivism
PhD5	Philippines: focus on anti-extractivism (Mindanao; Visayas; Luzon). Work of the Secretariat for Social Action of the Catholic Bishops' Conference