Your research proposal should speak to **one** of the following research areas. Each research area is identified with a primary supervisor as indicated below. Please contact the named supervisor directly if you have any questions about your proposal.

**Research Area One: Dr Matthew Spokes**

Matt is looking to supervise projects that relate to the sociology of culture, which may include – but aren’t limited to – genre/taste cultures, interactive media/music. Whilst his research focuses on video games, he would welcome projects which overlap disciplines including game studies, political economy, spatial theory, sociology (subcultures, taste), criminology, human-computer interaction and ethnomethodology. Though a broad call, proposals with a novel approach to methods and a specific or niche cultural area of focus are welcome.

Key Words:Culture, Media, Subcultures, Video Games; Taste, Mental Health; Social Learning

*About Matt*

“My research background is in music, subcultures and communities alongside spatial theory. I am the co-director of [investigate.games](http://investigate.games) at York St John. I have published a variety of articles on the social function of playing video games, including violence, social harm as present in games such as social exclusion and systemic inequality. My current research focuses on ideas of failure and loss in video games, alongside performativity and presence in module synthesizer communities.”

*Contact:* [m.spokes@yorksj.ac.uk](mailto:m.spokes@yorksj.ac.uk)

**Research Area Two: Dr Charlotte Walker**

Charlotte is looking to supervise projects that focus on the criminal courts, particularly court users’ experiences of criminal court proceedings, the ways in which different court actors participate in court proceedings, and/or the impact that proceedings have on them. The research proposal and project may be relevant to the disciplines of criminology, sociology, socio-legal studies, and law.

Key words: Criminal Courts; Experiences, Participation, Court Users

*About Charlotte*

“I am a Lecturer in Social Sciences at York St John University. Prior to this, I completed my PhD at The University of Sheffield. My PhD focused on unrepresented defendants and their experiences at court. I have published two articles based on my PhD – one of which discusses the challenges that unrepresented defendants face when representing themselves, and the other focuses on the impact that virtual hearings have on defendants’ ability to participate in proceedings. I am currently writing another article on how unrepresented defendants are treated at court and another which focuses on the Single Justice Procedure. I am also in the process of setting up a research group which focuses on criminal court research.”

Contact: [c.walker3@yorksj.ac.uk](mailto:c.walker3@yorksj.ac.uk)

**Research Area Three: Dr Jack Lampkin**

Jack is looking to supervise projects in one of two specialist areas. First, projects that address the sensitive topic of suicide. This could include the impact of the media on suicide/suicidal behaviour, or suicide within specific high-risk populations like policing, emergency services professionals, young people, men or any other (vulnerable) group. Second, projects in the realm of space law, astro-green criminology or space criminology, ideally focussing on ‘harmful’ activities like space debris creation, rocket emissions pollutions, space mining or space tourism.

Keywords: Suicide; Suicidology; Vulnerability; Outer Space; Space Law; Space Criminology.

*About Jack*

I am a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at York St John University. A former Police Constable with West Yorkshire Police, I obtained a PhD in Law at the University of Lincoln in 2018. Since then, I have published over 20 academic works in books and peer-reviewed journals. Most of these publications are in the area of green criminology (the study of environmental harm and crime) where I have collaborated with many leading green criminologists, including Professor Nigel South, Professor Rob White, Professor Tanya Wyatt and Professor Matthew Hall. My most recent research is in the upcoming areas of space criminology and astro-green criminology. In 2024, I published a co-edited book (with Dr Yarin Eski) entitled ‘Crime, Criminal Justice and Ethics in Outer Space: International Perspectives’, which included 24 chapters from 26 authors spanning 13 nations over 6 continents.

Contact details: [j.lampkin@yorksj.ac.uk](mailto:j.lampkin@yorksj.ac.uk)

**Research Area Four: Dr Robyn Timothy**

I am interested in supervising projects that explore gender and popular culture with a feminist perspective. This can include examining the social, cultural, and political landscapes of print or digital media, the visual arts more broadly, or celebrity cultures. Projects can focus on representation(s) and their social contexts, audience understandings or receptions, or the importance of popular culture in shaping ideas pertaining to gender or sexualities. Projects can work across disciplines such as sociology, gender and women’s studies, media studies, and cultural studies. Further, I am looking to supervise projects that engage with qualitative, creative, and/or arts-based methodologies. Proposals should outline a methodological approach which includes discussions of feminist epistemology and research ethics.

Key words: gender, popular culture, media, representation, feminism, feminist methods and methodologies

*About Robyn*

“I am a lecturer in Social Sciences with a background in sociology and women’s studies. My research interests focus on how gender, sexualities, and bodies/embodiment matter and are experienced in relation to media cultures. My most recent work examines the Barbie movie through an engagement with cyberfeminism.”

Contact: [r.timothy@yorksj.ac.uk](mailto:r.timothy@yorksj.ac.uk)

**Research Area Five: Dr Steven Hirschler**

Steve welcomes projects focused on examining social, political and/or criminal justice responses to immigrants and/or people from ethnic minority backgrounds in the United Kingdom and beyond. This may incorporate empirical work, such as explorations of belonging, identity, community and housing experiences, and exposure to social control tactics. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of current issues relating to public, state and/or media responses to immigrants and ethnic minority communities in the UK. There should also be evidence of an awareness of the existing policy environment operating on select communities, and some of the contextual challenges individuals and groups may face when engaging with state and private institutions.

Keywords: immigration, ethnicity, inequality, intersectionality, harm, public policy

*About Steve*

Steve is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Criminology at York St John University with previous work experience at Edge Hill University and the University of York. He has a BA in Political Science with International Relations from UCLA in California, and an MA and PhD in Politics from the University of York. His research interests include the experiences of marginalised communities, including asylum seekers’ accommodation experiences and experiences of racism and discrimination in the North of England. He has experience conducting qualitative data collection and analysis, including interviews, and his work is traditionally grounded in notions of power, governmentality, structural violence, harm, and intersectionality.

Contact: [s.hirschler@yorksj.ac.uk](mailto:s.hirschler@yorksj.ac.uk)

**Research Area Six: Dr Katharine Parker**

Katharine would like to supervise projects which focus on gender, sexuality, and/or sexual practices in public and private spheres. Projects may be positioned from a social, legal, or political stance or may combine these disciplines depending on the experience and background of the applicant. Ideally, projects should be framed around the public/private dichotomy or should explore the ways in which this dichotomy is challenged by the identities or practices of the individuals and/or groups as they move between spaces, or navigate the margins of the spaces, or indeed, in the creation of their own spaces

Key words: Sexuality; Public/Private; Sexual Practices; Identity; Gender

*About Katharine*

Katharine’s research to date has primarily focused upon same-sex intimacies in the public sphere. Adopting a queer perspective to identity and intimacy, Katharine’s research seeks to develop contemporary understandings of the risk-taking behaviours of men who have sex with men in public sex environments, particularly in post-industrial cities. More broadly Katharine is also interested in the sex industry and has recently supervised a PhD project based on the experiences of women in County Lines Gangs.

Contact: [k.parker1@yorksj.ac.uk](mailto:k.parker1@yorksj.ac.uk)

**Research Area Seven:Dr David Hill**

Neurodivergence is more readily recognised and diagnosed today. Notwithstanding an increase in the number of people diagnosed, neuronormativity suffuses society, including social institutions and workplaces. While the social model of disability identifies social structures and practices as what disable, neoliberal thinking normalises the self-responsibilization of life, simultaneously hiding and intensifying the struggles of living as a neurodivergent person in a neurotypical world. We live in what Robert Chapman (2023) terms the ‘empire of normality’ where capitalist productivism continues to perpetuate the myth of the ‘normal’ brain in the reproduction of its dominant relations.

I am looking to supervise research exploring the intersections of capitalism and neurodivergence, including the contemporary struggles of navigating life as a neurodivergent person and the rise of the anti-capitalist neurodiversity movement in the UK.

Proposals should be positioned within critical neurodiversity studies, sociologies of class and work, Marxist political economy, and sociology of medicine. If your research includes participants, carefully consider the practicalities and ethical issues involved in conducting research into neurodivergent lives.

Keywords: Neurodivergence; capitalism; neoliberalism; normality; alienation; social model of disability.

*References:*

Chapman, R. 2023. *Empire of Normality: Neurodiversity and Capitalism.* London: Pluto Press.

*About David*

David is a social theorist with a background in moral philosophy, researching questions of moral experience as they relate to culture, technology, and the environment. David’s recent research has involved an interest in various workplaces, including professional kitchens, the labour of logistics, and the worker-priest movement. David is an autistic academic.

Contact: [d.hill@yorksj.ac.uk](mailto:d.hill@yorksj.ac.uk)