

***Bittersweet, Ancient and Modern:  
Mixed Affect in Emotional Experience from Plato to Brain Imaging***

**18-month research fellowship**

**1. Job purpose**

The Department of Philosophy and Communication Studies at the University of Bologna seeks to appoint one 18-month research fellowship (approx. € 2,000/month) under the aegis of the PRIN 2022 project, *Bittersweet, Ancient and Modern: Mixed Affect in Emotional Experience from Plato to Brain Imaging* (PI: Pia Campeggiani – University of Bologna; in collaboration with Luca Cecchetti – IMT Lucca. Grant number: J53D23007980006). The Research Fellow will work under the supervision of Pia Campeggiani. He/she/they will contribute to central and substantial areas of the project's focus, by participating in the project's research and impact/outreach activities as well as by facilitating the collaboration between the two research teams involved in the project (UniBo and IMT). The post is available from 5 February 2024. The starting date is negotiable, but it shall be no later than 29 March 2024.

**2. Job description**

The advertised position forms part of the PRIN 2022 project *Bittersweet, Ancient and Modern* (henceforth *BAM*), directed by Pia Campeggiani (philosophy, Bologna) in collaboration with Luca Cecchetti (psychometrics, IMT Lucca). *BAM* aims to achieve a deeper and more thorough understanding of the phenomenon of mixed affect. Its main focus is on the notion of 'valence'.

The term 'affective valence' typically refers to the way an emotion (or an affective state) feels, i.e. the quality of the (dis)pleasure we subjectively experience: fear usually feels unpleasant, while amusement and joy feel good. Yet, in some cases affective experience feels 'bittersweet', i.e. good and bad at the same time, as when we enjoy being scared when riding the roller coaster or being sad when reading a heart rending novel. In these situations, mixed affect is experienced as a blended state in which positive and negative aspects of the experience cannot be pried apart from one another in any meaningful way. But mixed affect can also arise from conflicting emotions (e.g., when we experience the desire to pursue something that we also wish to keep away from), from ambivalence (e.g., when we are of two minds about something), and from other affectively-laden situations. Taking a multidisciplinary perspective, *BAM* aims to enrich our understanding of the phenomenology of mixed affective experiences and to explore relevant conceptualizations in folk, scientific, and clinical psychology.

Applicants are invited to design their own project within this framework. More specifically, applications are invited at the intersection of the following work packages:

WP1. Ancient theories, modern problems: Exploring the potential of ancient Greek discussions of mixed affect and theories of pleasure and valence to contribute to contemporary views on emotional (dis)pleasure.

WP2. Current theories: Assess current models of affective (ambi)valence as they are employed in both folk and scientific psychology, uncovering their assumptions and their blind spots.

Although the Committee will also evaluate proposals concerning only one of the work packages above, proposals at their intersection will be taken into higher consideration.

In addition to the execution of her/his/their programme of research, the Fellow will also be required to coordinate the Bittersweet monthly journal club, involving the Bologna and the IMT Lucca Teams, and to participate in the development of the project website.

### **3. Requirements**

#### *Qualifications and Experience*

##### Essential

- Specialization in emotion research (philosophy, psychology, and/or history).
- Research publications in print or in press, preferably if connected with the project's topics and goals.
- Excellent command of English.

##### Desirable

- PhD on a subject relevant to the research focus of the Bittersweet project.
- Advanced knowledge of ancient Greek (to BA level or equivalent).
- PhD thesis accepted for publication (as a monograph or collection of research articles).
- Experience in preparing research for presentation at workshops and conferences.
- Previous experience with collaborative research projects.
- Experience of interdisciplinary research.
- Familiarity with the contemporary debates in affective science and psychology of emotion.

Remote working is possible, provided that the Fellow: a) regularly communicates and interacts with the supervisor and other team members; b) fills out reports on in-progress activities on an as-needed basis; c) meets the goals envisioned by the proposed project; d) communicates promptly regarding potential hurdles or delays. Regular visits to Bologna (e.g. once or twice a month) will be required and might become more frequent as the project unfolds.

### **4. Application documents and procedure**

Applications must be submitted online via the website <https://concorsi.unibo.it>

Applicants are required to submit an up-to-date CV and a research proposal (max 3000 words). In the light of recent findings on implicit bias, candidates are required to anonymize their research proposal, which will be initially assessed in terms of scholarly quality and relevance to the research focus of BAM. At a second stage of the selection process, proposals will be reassessed in terms of feasibility in the light of the applicant's CV and track record.

Interviews will be held online on 11/01/2024.

Deadline for submission is 5/12/2023 at 11.59 pm (CET).

For the details on conditions of employment please see [https://bandi.unibo.it/ricerca/assegni-ricerca?id\\_bando=66841](https://bandi.unibo.it/ricerca/assegni-ricerca?id_bando=66841)

If you have any questions about the fellowship and/or the application process, please write to [pia.campeggiani2@unibo.it](mailto:pia.campeggiani2@unibo.it).