Postdoctoral Fellow in Socio-Cultural Study of Citizenship and Kinesiology in Higher Education, and Citizenship (Physical Cultural Studies)

**Category:** Postdoctoral Visitor  
**Supervisor(s):** Parissa Safai, PhD and Yuka Nakamura, PhD  
**Unit:** School of Kinesiology and Health Science (KHS)  
**Location:** Remote/Online and Keele Campus, York University (when necessary and permitted)

**Background**

There is a robust body of literature on how the scope, directions and drivers of Kinesiology in Canadian universities have shifted over time – for example, its origins in Physical Education and popularity among students looking to become physical education teachers, to the push to legitimize Kinesiology as a scientific domain, to the alignment and entrenchment of Kinesiology with health and health promotion. What is lacking, however, is a more current interrogation of the social, political, and economic contours of Kinesiology as a disciplinary area in Canadian higher education given the increasing alignment of the university and university education with industry, business, and labour.

Employing qualitative methods, the central questions of this SSHRC IG-funded study (hereafter referred to as the KIN-Citizenship Project) are: How do contemporary Kinesiology departments/Faculties define and distinguish themselves as academic units in Canadian universities and Kinesiology as a multi-disciplinary area of study given the contemporary backdrop of social, political and economic flux? And how do contemporary Kinesiology academic units frame students' understandings and experiences of Kinesiology as the study of human movement and human movement practices? The specific objectives for this study are to:

1) Map the ways in which current Kinesiology academic units define themselves and the multi-disciplinary area within their specific institutions;  
2) Examine how Kinesiology academic units construct themselves as relevant to undergraduate (UG) students across the entire student cycle (i.e., from prospective student to alumni);  
3) Examine how UG students (current and alumni) understand their experiences in and conceptualize the purpose of higher education in their lives broadly, and Kinesiology as a multi-disciplinary area specifically, with particular interest in how they understand the role of sport; and
4) Explore the tensions and synergies between social citizenship and workplace readiness in the specific context of Kinesiology in Canadian universities, and its implications for research on and initiatives to encourage accessible and equitable sport participation in Canada.

Theoretically, the KIN-Citizenship Project is guided by a critical political economy framework intertwined with the concept of social citizenship. The research provides an opportunity to examine the tensions and synergies between social citizenship and workplace readiness in the context of Kinesiology in Canadian universities, and its implications for research on and initiatives to encourage sport participation in Canada. Methodologically, this multi-year project will employ qualitative research methods to initially map the discursive framing of Kinesiology in the Canadian higher education landscape, and then to dive deeply into the how this landscape structures faculty and students’ perceptions and praxis. The principle methods to be employed for this project include documentary research/textual analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. This project design is progressive in manner and timing so that the research will occur in consecutive stages that build upon one another and align with the specific objectives of this project. At this stage of the research project, textual analysis of web-based data has been completed as well as interviews with academic administrators from a number of Kinesiology programs from across Canadian universities.

We aim to share the findings with a range of audiences who may benefit from the theoretical and conceptual insight, and the programmatic implications the new knowledge offers. The design of the project allows for the results to be communicated in stages, and disseminated through a variety of fora including, but not limited to, academic journals, digital stories, and executive reports.

Overall Purpose of Postdoctoral Position
As a researcher affiliated with this project, with the guidance of the project leads (Safai, Nakamura and Barnes), the Postdoctoral Visitor will be involved with and part of the research study (from the stages of ethics applications to data collection/analysis and write-up) and support the project leads with the operational management of this project. More specifically, the Postdoctoral Visitor will be responsible for the following tasks and activities:

- Participant recruitment (institutions and individuals for focus groups)
- Preparation and oversight of ethics approval with participating institutions where needed
- Data collection, management and analysis (requiring high-level conceptual, analytical, and critical appraisal skills)
• Supporting project leads with the coordination and supervision of UG/G research assistants around data collection, where necessary
• Preparation of literature review(s), writing summary reports, development of manuscripts for academic journals, and other KMb-related outputs (including presenting study results to the scholarly community at conferences, where/when available and interested)

Key Responsibilities
• Recruitment of institutions including outreach to Kinesiology academic units in Canadian universities with invitations to participate in the KIN-Citizenship Project and preparing/overseeing ethics approval with participating institutions where needed
• Participant recruitment for student and/or alumni focus groups with participating Kinesiology academic units
• Supporting project leads with student supervision (i.e., the UG/G research assistants hired to facilitate the focus groups), where necessary
• Analysis of focus group data where/when available
• Preparation of literature reviews
• Writing summary reports, manuscripts for academic journals, and other KMb-related outputs (including presenting study results to the scholarly community at conferences, where/when available)

Skills and Qualifications
Applicants must have completed all requirements for a PhD or be completing imminently.

Expertise with sociology/cultural studies (or related social science field) and qualitative research methods required. Expertise in citizenship studies and/or the socio-cultural study of sport/physical cultural studies considered an asset. Candidates should have excellent organizational, interpersonal, self-management and communication skills; fluency in spoken and written English; and a strong personal commitment to research and teaching. French language skills are also an asset. The demonstrated ability to thrive in a collaborative team environment, with enthusiasm for supporting UG/G students who work as research assistants with this project will be considered an asset. The ideal candidate must be able to be adaptable as the project evolves in large complex education systems, and have demonstrated skills in data management. In light of the need to work remotely due to COVID, the ideal candidate will have the ability to work independently and without direct supervision, and problem solve technical and methodological issues that arise during the course of the research.
Terms and Conditions
This postdoctoral position based in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science will be 1 year in length. There may be the possibility of renewal for an additional period of one year. Annual Salary Range: $40,000 to $45,000 (to be negotiated) + benefits.

How to Apply
To apply for this position, please submit the following documents:

- A cover letter (max 2 pages) which includes past experience and current research interests and, in particular, how these may align with and contribute towards the goals of the KIN-Citizenship Project;
- A detailed and up-to-date CV
- 1–3 academic writing samples
- Contact information for 2 to 3 referees

Please submit all documents by email to Parissa Safai at psafai@yorku.ca by no later than November 22, 4:30PM EST. Qualified applicants will be invited for an interview to be conducted by telephone or Zoom. Only those applicants selected for consideration will be contacted.