

What aspects of the posting most attracted you?

One of the job postings that I've found was an Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern History position at the University of Utah. I would be excited to apply for this position for four main reasons: (1) the location is great - my partner and I have spent significant time in Salt Lake and there's so much to explore (trails, National parks, rock climbing). (2) The posting bridges some of my research interests (e.g. religion, environmental humanities / infrastructural studies) and I feel like I could contribute a lot within these areas. (3) The department seems to honor a commitment to DEI and expects the same from their candidate. (4) I would be teaching only 2 courses per term and a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students. I haven't drafted any syllabi for graduate students yet, but it seems like it would be a fun challenge.

How do you relate with the geographic location of the posting on the level of familiarity? Talk about its political, social, institutional, material and cultural contexts that you are and are not familiar with.

The geographic location of the post is complicated: I'm familiar with the area (Salt Lake) because I've had family who has lived there for the past four years and we've (my partner and I) have visited several times. Politically, it is a conservative city due to the high Mormon population. Parts of Salt Lake City are becoming gentrified which is one factor (but not the only factor) contributing to a large homeless population. Obviously, it is stolen land from the Ute tribe and this should be acknowledged.

How does the location of the posting enable your research contexts or career trajectories?

I feel like location is incredibly important in terms of creating a happy environment in which your research goals can be actualized. Location often determines cost of living and if the COL is too high, then there's a lot of stress that comes with that — which takes away from research productivity. As a graduate student, I lived on about 20k in San Diego which was rough and I felt like I worried more about budgeting than completing my work. Also, I didn't enjoy living in a place that never rained—I missed seasonal weather. Living in a place where you feel comfortable is conducive to keeping

motivated to doing good work.