

**SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP
SPRING 2007 WORKSHOP AGENDA**

**Visual Culture
SHAREPOINT SITE**

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**Radisson Hotel Denver Stapleton Plaza, Conference Room #
Thursday, May 17 – Sunday, May 20**

This is the first of two workshops designed to help students prepare cogent and fundable dissertation proposals in their chosen field. The two goals of the first workshop are 1) to map the research field with respect to contributing disciplines, methods, sources, and area knowledge; and 2) to help prepare fellows for their pre-dissertation summer research. (The goal of the second workshop will be to focus on the mechanics and methods of writing a dissertation proposal). The two goals stand in close relation to each other: through a sustained and structured discussion of student proposals and their component parts, we hope to contribute to the mapping of the research field itself.

Visual culture can be defined by its objects of study, which are examined not for their aesthetic value per se but for their modes of image-making and for the manner in which they define visual experience in particular historical contexts. Visual culture has a particular investment in vision as a historically specific experience, mediated by new technologies and the individual and social formations they enable. Moreover, visual culture identifies and underscores the status of the visual as a sensory experience that is itself conditioned by a historical understanding of physiology, optics, and cognitive science. Students in this workshop have been selected because of the quality of the research questions they have posed. This field demands that students master problems and frame them in ways that at once addresses disciplinary historiography while also extending beyond their home discipline as well. This workshop will create common intellectual ground in Visual Studies while respecting disciplinary expertise.

Workshop Readings and Resources

Research Field resources will be placed on the relevant SharePoint websites. Students will receive separate explanations and detailed instructions about the access and use of the DPDF digital platform.

Workshop Assignments

During the workshops, participants will be asked to do the following:

- 1) discuss common readings which must be completed before arrival and will be posted on the DPDF Sharepoint Site by May 2.

- 2) Post your original proposal's longest narrative section and read all the participant proposals.
- 3) Each student will be paired with another student. Find the list of pairings on the DPDF Sharepoint.
- 4) Choose one piece of writing that has been most influential to your proposal, explain why in five minutes in one of the workshop sessions. The reading or a reference to it needs to be posted to the DPDF Sharepoint Site by May 10th.
- 5) Present one object, film, event or institution in ten minutes. Special attention will be paid to visual presentation. Students must post choice of object on DPDF Sharepoint by May 10th.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

ARRIVAL, Wednesday, May 16: Packets will be distributed at registration along with other materials.

Wednesday Evening: *Reception, 6-8 pm.*

Session 1: Introduction and Purpose of Workshops

(Thursday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

Plenary Session: Presentations by Program Director Peter Sahlins and the Research Directors

Session 2: Mapping Fields, Asking Questions

(Thursday, 1:30 PM – 5 PM)

Introduction of students. Students will introduce themselves by name and field but will actually describe the project of their partner very briefly.

Discussion of disciplinary modes of address; discussion of rhetorical models for the introduction of interdisciplinary projects.

Readings to be discussed:

- Bredekamp, "A Neglected Tradition? Art History as Bildwissenschaft" from *Critical Inquiry* (Spring 2003)
- Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility"
- Crary, selection from *Techniques of the Observer*, as anthologized in the *Nineteenth Century Visual Culture Reader*
- Mauss, "Essai sur le Don" or read English translation, Introduction and Conclusion, p. 1-11 and p. 90-106.
- Baxandall, Introduction and the chapter on the Forth Bridge from *Patterns of Intention*, p.1-36.

Friday May 19

Session 3: Questions of Method: The Art of Describing: What is the Relation of Question, Object, Method?

(Friday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

This session will look at the relationship between what the research question is, what the object under consideration is and what sort of method it entails. In particular, we will suggest that describing is central method for Visual Studies.

OBJECT: Foucault on “Las Meninas” from *The Order of Things*, 3-16.

INSTITUTION: Schwartz on the Cannes Film Festival

EVENT: Simon Schama’s “History of Britain” sequence to be screened together

Session 4: Where do you fit into this field?

(Friday, 1:30 PM – 5 PM)

Task 1: Each student will present the one piece of writing that has most influenced their choice of topic (it does not necessarily have to be directly relevant to their topic.) In 5 minutes or fewer, they will explain which central concept of the reading they were influenced by, using that concept to explain the larger significance of the dissertation project.

Session 5: Practicing Description/Description as Argument and Analysis

(Saturday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

Task 2: Each Student presents one object, film, event or institution in 10 minutes followed by group discussion. Special attention will be paid to the techniques of visual presentation and thus a powerpoint presentation is expected.

Session 6: Re-Thinking the Proposal

(Saturday, 12:30 PM – 5 PM)

Task 3: Revised Project Presentations: Each student presents their project proposal, revised in light of the two days of discussion.

Break into pairs for the last hour for greater follow-up on proposals and discussions. Instructors will meet with pairs for 15 minutes each pair.

SATURDAY EVENING: Optional Movie Night: details to be announced.

Session 7: Summer in the Field (and we don’t mean the corn field).

(Sunday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

- How and where are you going to be finding your “stuff?” This session is devoted to a practical discussion of the regular and irregular sources for work in Visual Studies. Dealing with archivists, collectors, other scholars, senior and junior.

- Summer plan of action and goals. How does the discussion continue over the summer and where should you be the first week-end in September?

General Bibliography

- Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things; Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Harvard, 1986.
- Baxandall, Michael. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the History of Pictorial Style*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.
- Baxandall, Michael, *Patterns of Intention*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
- Bordwell, David, *On the History of Film Style*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Carbonell, Bettina Messaias, ed. *Museum Studies; An Anthology of Contexts*. Blackwell, 2004.
- Elkins, James. *Visual Studies. A Skeptical Introduction*. New York: Routledge: 2003.
- Freedberg, David. *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Jay, Martin, *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Jenks, Chris. *Visual Culture*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Hunt, Lynn. *The New Cultural History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
- Panofsky, Erwin. Edited by Irving Lavin. *Three Essays on Style*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995.
- Preziosi, Donald and Claire Farago, eds. *Grasping the World; The Idea of the Museum*. London: Ashgate: 2004.
- Pryzblyski, Jeannene and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds. *The Nineteenth Century Visual Culture Reader*. London: Routledge: 2004.
- Steedman, Carolyn. *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002.

**SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP
FALL 2007 WORKSHOP AGENDA**

Visual Culture

Research Directors:

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ROOM 312

Crowne Plaza St. Louis Downtown, Saint Louis, MO

Thursday, September 6 – Sunday, September 9

This is the second of two annual DPDF workshops designed to help graduate student fellows prepare cogent and fundable dissertation proposals in their chosen field. The two goals of the second workshop are 1) to help fellows synthesize their summer research; and 2) to draft proposals for dissertation funding. The fall workshop focuses on the mechanics and the philosophy of proposal writing. The workshop also aims to challenge fellows to reflect on their summer research in ways that link meaningfully to their research field. In this, the goals of the fall workshop are closely related to the project of mapping a research field that was started during the Spring workshop in Denver, Co.

Fellows will come out of the second workshop with supportive networks, consisting of both mentors and cohorts of new scholars carrying out research in their fields, as well as intellectually mature dissertation proposals.

Workshop Readings and Resources

Each of the revised proposals will be placed on the SharePoint website. All other relevant material will be added to the website.

Workshop Assignments

Arrive with three pre-circulated items: research report, new proposal based on summer work and a CV. Each student should read all 11 other proposals by the Seminar meeting time.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

ARRIVAL, Wednesday, September 5: Registration packets will be distributed at check in.

Session 1: Panel – The Dissertation Proposal: Strategies and Funding Sources

(Thursday, 9 AM – 12:00 PM)

- Welcome and Introductions (DPDF Program Director Peter Sahlins)

- Dissertation Funder Presentations

Dr. Leslie C. Aiello, President, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research

Mr. William Hahn, Program Director, Division of Graduate Education National Science Foundation (NSF)

Mr. Walter Jackson, National Program Manager, Fulbright IIE

Dr. Nicole Stahlmann, Associate Director, SSRC International Dissertation Research Fellowships (IDRF)

Session 2:

(Thursday, 2:00 PM – 5 PM)

a) **Checking In:** What was your most challenging and most positive summer experience? Discussion will ask each student to share something about research methods that they think are applicable to all students. What were problems that remain unresolved and are they dead ends or can the group propose solutions? (1.5 hours)

b) **CV Workshop:** using pre-circulated submitted materials, go over the do's and don'ts of CV's. (1.5 hours)

Mandatory Evening Event, 9pm: Screening of “Meet Me in St. Louis” followed by a discussion. Popcorn and other treats provided.

Session 3: Discussing the Proposal: Writing to Please the Greatest Number of Readers

(Friday, 9 AM – 12:00 PM)

What is a research problem? What is the difference between a “topic” and a problem? Review of several grant-winning proposals to discuss their strengths and weaknesses.

Hypothesis, methods, literature review and research plan.

We will review each of these components of a proposal by using the proposals the students submitted. We will concentrate on the notion of developing a coherent idea of method for students enrolled in doctoral programs in a particular discipline but who have interdisciplinary aims because of the research field.

Session 4: Meet in Hotel Lobby for Transportation to Visit: “Bud Museum” What is the visual logic of the corporate museum? What is the connection of exhibition, branding and display to tourism and museums?

(Friday, 2:00 PM – 5 PM)

“Anheuser-Busch, one of the world's largest beer brewers, was established at this site in the 1860s, and many architectural gems from that time period remain. Tours of the brewing process take in the 1885 Clydesdale stable, the historic 1892 Brew House, and the packaging plant, ending with free drinks.”

Return to hotel and continue discussion of tour.

Session 5:

(Saturday, 9 AM – 12:00 PM)

This morning will be spent re-writing at least the first two paragraphs of the proposals and CVs based on discussion on Friday. Students may meet with faculty at this time as well. All re-written proposals must be submitted by 11:30 to the Sharepoint. Critics read new proposals and be ready to discuss on Saturday pm. Professors will be unavailable from 11:30-2pm while they read all the new and revised proposals.

Session 6:

(Saturday, 2:00 PM – 5 PM)

Discussion of each proposal for 15 minutes, led by the critic. This session will not only help each individual student leave with the strongest proposal possible but it will serve as a workshop for teaching students how to give proposal criticism and feed-back and not just receive it.

Session 7: Plenary Session – Student Mini-Conference: Mapping Research Fields

(Sunday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

The last session of the second DPDF workshop is devoted to student presentations of their research field. Students in each field are responsible for organizing their group presentations in the mode of a mini-conference. Each field will be given a total of 25 minutes, and projects should be presented in an order and grouping that gives the field coherence. Students are invited to use images and other media as appropriate, but should structure their very short presentations around the following: 1) a research question; 2) a working hypothesis; 3) the research site(s) and sources; 4) the methodological approach; and 5) contributions to the field. These interventions, in short, represent the “cocktail party” version of the answer to the question, “what are you working on?” The exercise is intended to give fellows the opportunity to develop a summary version of their research project while locating their work in a collectively-defined research field.