

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

Delimiting the field of water sustainability can be attempted in a preliminary fashion by asking four basic questions, each of which is addressed by different disciplines or combination of disciplines (e.g., anthropology, history, economics, political science and international relations, sociology, and discourse analysis, broadly defined). (Students for the workshop have been chosen in part to reflect this inter-disciplinarity.) The first of these questions has to do with economic resources and human rights, especially how the concepts of “culture/society” and “nature/environment” intersect in the field. The second has to do with distribution and equity, or how water is valued as a resource and a right to be shared among members of a society or the inhabitants of the world. The third has to do with organization, or how institutional economics and politics play a role in the management and distribution of water. And the fourth question concerns debate and discourse, or how debates over water are conducted in civil society and impact legislation, water problem awareness and other issues. These questions will help jump start that part of the workshop’s discussion devoted to delimiting and defining the field.

### **Workshop Readings and Resources**

In general, you will want to familiarize yourself with your colleagues’ projects, all of which can be found by clicking the "Fellows" Tab from the Water Sustainability homepage on SharePoint: <https://home.ssrc.org/sites/DPDF/water/default.aspx>. You should also read the works listed on the “Water Field Reading List,” many of which are available on the SharePoint site.

## Workshop Assignments

**[May 8] Due on SharePoint site:** Go to the "Discussion" page and follow the instructions for the "May 8th Assignment." You are asked to "Post Reply" identifying one article or book that has particularly influenced your research, and write a short paragraph describing its importance to your formulation of a research problem. (These items will eventually be added to the field bibliography). If you have an electronic version of the article or part of the book available, then go ahead and post it in the "Documents Library" found on the Water Sustainability homepage, within the folder entitled "Reading Materials" (do not post this in the "documents library" next to the discussion page).

**[May 15]:** By now, you should have read through all the fellows' projects and much of the "Water Workshop Reading List" posted in the "Shared Documents." By the time you get to Denver, you must write a one page (re)statement of your project, and post this on your own folder on the "Fellows" page. In this restatement, can you describe a shift in your research question, proposed methodology, source base, or research strategy, having read through the other project descriptions and some of the bibliography?

## WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

**ARRIVAL, Wednesday, May 16: Reading handouts / 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)**

Morning Session. Introduction to the workshop, its aims and procedures. Students will give a brief presentation of their projects with five-minute discussion following each presentation. The discussion of how to define the field of water sustainability will then begin. The four guiding questions will be reviewed by the organizers and discussed/critiqued by the group as a whole, referring to bibliographical references whenever possible. Summary of the discussion will conclude the session, with an effort to delimit the field of water sustainability study more fully.

### **Session 3: Matters of Research Question, Method, Data and Sources I**

(Friday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

Morning: The aim of Friday's sessions is to understand what a research question is, how it relates to a field of study such as water sustainability and to a particular project of study within that field. Particularly important is an understanding of how methods relate to the research questions being asked, and what data or sources might be necessary to answer those questions in specific projects. Differences between quantitative/qualitative methods will be addressed, and attention to the problems (including ethical ones) of data collection and recording will be discussed (for example, taking field notes, keeping field journals). Problems of project scale and time constraints will also be touched upon, as well as the need/desirability of conducting research in different sites or comparatively.

After an introductory discussion of a half-hour, we will focus on four projects in the morning. Each discussion will last approximately 45 minutes: 10 minutes of presentation by the fellow, followed by 10 minutes of comments by the interlocutor and then 30 minutes of discussion by the group. We will consider two projects in the afternoon as well, followed by a field trip. In the discussion of each presentation, we will consider the issues raised in the preliminary discussion. (If students wish to illustrate a method, they should bring data, charts, or any other visual aids needed to make their point).

Projects (and interlocutors):

- Sandra Ruckstuhl, Socio-political Dynamics of Water Security: Understanding Institutions and Incentives for Improved Conflict Prevention and Sustainability (Jessica Lage)
- Christopher City, Constructing Drought: Law, Land Use, and Water Sustainability (Lisa Pfeiffer)
- Virginia Breedlove, Landscape and Livelihood in the Lake Chad Basin: A Social History of Environmental Change in Eastern Niger and Northeastern Nigeria Since 1968 (Maya Peterson)
- Neil Pischner, Andean Oral Traditions as Cultural Response to Climate Change (Julio Postigo)

### **Session 4: Matters of Research Question, Method, Data and Sources II**

(Friday, 1:30 PM – 5 PM)

The first half of the afternoon session will focus on two projects. The second part of the afternoon session will address research methods and sources with a field trip, a walking tour along the South Platte River, led by Mark Sullivan, an advanced graduate student in urban design at the University of Colorado, with a background in archaeology and architecture. We will examine the influence of water in this semi-arid environment on industry, transportation, residential housing and recreation, considering the influence of economic, political and cultural factors. Fellows are encouraged to bring notebooks, digital cameras and, if they think it would be useful, audio recorders.

Projects (and interlocutors)

- Angelia Haro, Water and Promises of Utopia in Development Discourse and Practice (Sarah Wise)
- Tessa Farmer, Water and Oasis: Social Meanings and State Administration of Water in the Egyptian Oasis of Siwa (Hao Nguyen)

## **Session 5: Analytical Strategies and Proposal Framing I**

(Saturday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

Saturday's sessions, like Friday's, will open with a morning session that consists of a general discussion and a consideration of four proposals. The afternoon session will be divided into two halves, the first considering two proposals and the second an additional activity, in this case a meeting with a political scientist. The aim of Saturday's sessions afternoon session is devoted to the question of how the formulation of a research project is strategically connected to specific sources or literatures in an inter-disciplinary field like water sustainability studies. That is, how does one frame one's project as a contribution to knowledge within an intersecting set of literatures (e.g., history, environmentalism, political ecology, etc.). The students who will present are asked to discuss two or three readings from the workshop's bibliography in relation to their project, showing how their project relates to a set of sources or other studies.

Projects (and interlocutors)

- Hao Nguyen, The urbanization of water: Planning for adequate water services in cities of the developing world- Case study of Vietnam (Chris City)
- Julio Postigo, Andean herders' responses to changing water availability (Virginia Breedlove)
- Sarah Wise, Fluid Boundaries: Marine Protected Areas and Shifting Perceptions of Seascapes (Neil Pischner)
- Lisa Pfeiffer, Sustainability, Equity, and Growth: The Role of Water Markets in Mexico (Tessa Farmer)

## **Session 6: Analytical Strategies and Proposal Framing II**

(Saturday, 12:30 PM – 5 PM)

Lunch with the entire workshop and the organizers, in preparation for the afternoon session.

Projects (and interlocutors)

- Jessica Lage, The role of water in rural land-use transformations in Spain (Lia Haro)
- Maya Peterson, An Environmental History of Central Asia in the Late-19th and Early-20th Centuries (Sandra Ruckstuhl)

Visit to the workshop of political scientist **Arun Agrawal** and a discussion of his work relevant to this workshop. (Students will be expected to have read his work listed in the workshop bibliography.) Especially important is to his research design, his research questions, the methods he thought appropriate to them, his sense of how to strategically locate his project within multiple fields of study, and how he developed his field proposal.

## **Session 7: Looking Forward**

(Sunday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

We will sum up what we have learned, re-visiting the question of water sustainability as a field of study. In the remaining session we will explore future directions. How to make best use of the summer period, how to stay in touch with each – especially concerning problems that arise in the field that we should know about, can discuss and might actually help with – and planning for the September workshop.

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

**WATER SUSTAINABILITY**

Research Directors:

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**ROOM 306**

**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**

You should reread the SSRC documents on writing proposals before our meeting, and critically examine your own proposal in light of those guides.

**Workshop Assignments**

- **August 31:** First Draft of Proposal is due. Please review the three documents on the SharePoint site that provide guidance on proposal-writing. :
- **September 4:** *Write Your Respondent Comments (first draft) to a Proposal to be Discussed at the SSRC Workshop (please see footnote for the discussion structure)*

Each pair of names below contains the commentator's name on the left, and the proposal-writer's name on the right.

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Virginia Breedlove/Lisa Pfeiffer | 7. Maya Peterson/Virginia Breedlove |
| 2. Christopher City/Julio Postigo   | 8. Lisa Pfeiffer/Sandra Ruckstuhl   |
| 3. Angelia Haro /Neil Pischner      | 9. Neil Pischner/Sarah Wise         |
| 4. Tessa Farmer / Jessica Lage      | 10. Julio Postigo/Hao Nguyen        |
| 5. Hao Nguyen/Christopher City      | 11. Sandra Ruckstuhl/ Maya Peterson |
| 6. Jessica Lage/Angelia Haro        | 12. Sarah Wise/Tessa Farmer         |

## ***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: The Art of Proposal Writing**

(Thursday, 2:00 PM – 5 PM)

First part: Discussing strengths and weaknesses in particular sections of the proposal: we will compose a list of the sections that make up proposals (e.g., literature review, methods, problem statement, etc.), and consider what makes them strong or weak.

Second part: Discussing the integration of the different sections of a proposal, and the fit of the problem, the site and the applicant. What makes a proposal well integrated, and what contributes to the fit?

Third part [briefer]: Discuss the format for the Practicum on Friday and Saturday.

Evening Homework: Revise your respondent comments with the day's discussion in mind of what makes a "good" proposal

**9 PM:** *Optional for all: Visual Culture movie screening, "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944), directed by Vincente Minnelli, starring Judy Garland.*

### **Session 3: Practicum**

(Friday, 9 AM – 12:00 PM)

The structure of the discussion is as follows: a respondent (chosen in advance) will comment on the proposal, followed by a general discussion. Each participant is expected to give their comments in writing to the author at the beginning of the session in which the proposal is discussed.

Discussion of Proposals 1-3

**Session 4: Practicum**

(Friday, 2:00 PM – 5 PM)

Discussion of Proposals 4-6

**Session 5: Practicum**

(Saturday, 9 AM – 12:00 PM)

Discussion of Proposals 7-9

**Session 6: Practicum**

(Saturday, 2:00 PM – 5 PM)

Discussion of Proposals 10-12

**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.