

**SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP**

Oak Ridge Conference Center, Chaska, Minnesota
Thursday, May 30th to Sunday, June 2nd, 2013

SPRING 2013 WORKSHOP AGENDA

GLOBAL COMMODITY STUDIES

Research Directors:

Paul Gootenberg, History & Sociology, Stony Brook Univ. paul.gootenberg@stonybrook.edu
Judith Carney, Geography, UCLA, African Studies, UCLA carney@geog.ucla.edu

This is the first of two workshops designed to help doctoral students prepare cogent and fundable dissertation proposals in the interdisciplinary field of “Global Commodity Studies.” The two key but flexible goals of this first workshop are 1) to map our research field with respect to contributing disciplines, methods, sources, and geographic site knowledge; and 2) to help prepare fellows for their pre-dissertation summer research. (The goal of the second September workshop in Cambridge will focus on the art and methods of writing effective dissertation proposals).

Field Abstract, Global Commodity Studies: Since the 1980s, commodities have become—both across mass culture and in academic writings—a powerful medium for studying and integrating past and present relationships of material and social life, politics, and culture. Commodity studies connects highly global developments to divergent peoples and practices in specific sites. Often focusing on the pathways of single goods, this has become a vital way of thinking about contemporary globalization and historical capitalism. Some of these trends deserve criticism, yet commodity studies, broadly conceived in environmental, spatial, or political economy terms, is essential to critically informing such core topical research areas as food studies, political ecology, property rights, labor and gender studies, and illicit flows. Commodity studies remains an intrinsically cross-disciplinary enterprise linking many research frontiers, and makes an exciting entry point for innovative proposal writing.

Because most DPDF fellows come well-versed in Commodity Studies of one kind or another, we (Carney and Gootenberg) will mainly act as group facilitators and mentors. There will be a few collective readings to foster common grounds and terms for discussions. Student engagement, constructive commentary of each other’s projects, and informal presentations on disciplinary perspectives are key. We will use the SSRC strategy of minimizing student presentations of their *own* work in favor of group exposition and feedback for each other’s projects. We are also happy to report that John Soluri (History, Carnegie Mellon University) will be a workshop visitor on Day 3 to engage the group about integrating cross-disciplinary perspectives from environmental and science fields.

Assignments: Starting April 29th, the workshop portal opens and using this space, fellows are expected to:

---Post a 2-page version, by **May 10**, of their original DPDF proposal for common reading and group comments. They *may* also post a 1-page annotated bibliography of 3-4 influential works about their problem.

---Be assigned to prepare brief written (1 page) comments (and 10-minute reports in Workshop Days 2-3) on two other proposals. You will receive proposal assignments by May 10th and your written comments should be posted by **May 24**.

---Read all posted essays for indicated workshop discussions

---A number of you will be asked (again by May 10th) to prepare brief informal oral reports (for Day 1) about their home “disciplines” possible contributions to commodity studies, for example, from Anthropology, History, Geography, Sociology, and Science & Technology studies. These students, or others, may also recommend an exemplary essay or chapter that they wish the group to consult from their field or problem. If so, please send clean PDFs for general posting by **May 17**.

---We will schedule brief (20-30 minute) individual mentoring meetings about your projects--with either Carney or Gootenberg—following three of the afternoon sessions.

We are also posting a general recommended reading list, for methodological reference, on “Global Commodity Studies.” Feel free to contact one or both of us (emails listed above) for any questions about the workshop. We look forward to a warm, lively, and constructive meeting for all!

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Day 1, Thursday, May 30th

COMMODITY STUDIES

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Session #1: Introductions, Agenda, and Mapping Field

Discussion Readings: Kopytoff, “Cultural Biography of Things”; Mintz, “Food and Relationships to Power”; Schiebinger, “Prospecting Drugs”; Robbins, “Commodity Histories.” Recommended: Bair, “Global Commodity Chains.”

An open-ended discussion to articulate a common language or problematic of recent global commodity studies

2 to 5 p.m.: Session #2: Disciplinary Contributions

Discussion Readings: Gootenberg, “Cocaine in Chains”; Carney, “Landscapes of Technology”

In this session, fellows informally present and discuss some key contributions to commodity studies from their own fields of expertise and training (Anthro, History, Geography, Sociology, Science-Technology Studies). Carney and Gootenberg, for example, will speak on political ecology, gender studies, political economy, and the study of illicit goods.

5:30-6:30 p.m.: Individual meetings w/ Carney & Gootenberg (TBA)

Day 2, Friday, May 3rd

STUDENT PROJECTS/COMMENTARIES

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Session #3: Project Presentations I

Each fellows' project, 5 in this session, will receive an approximately half-hour exposition, beginning with commentaries by two peers.

12:30-1:15p.m.: Individual meetings w/ Carney & Gootenberg (TBA)

AFTERNOON: DPDF-wide Minneapolis "Fieldtrip" (R & R)

Day 3, Saturday, June 1st

INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Session #4: Project Presentations II

Presentation and group commentaries, discussion of 5 projects.

2 to 5 p.m.: Session #5: Going Interdisciplinary

Discussion Reading: Soluri. "Something Fishy"

Project Presentations III: group commentaries, discussion of last 2 projects.

Guest John Soluri (History, Carnegie-Mellon) will present and discuss the practical arts of integrating cross-disciplinary perspectives (such as science and environmental studies) into our research questions.

5:30-6:30 p.m.: Individual meetings w/ Carney & Gootenberg (TBA)

Day 4, Sunday, June 2nd

PLANNING SUMMER RESEARCH, THINKING AHEAD

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Session #6

Discussion Readings: Watts, "Holy Grail"; Przeworski-Salomon (SSRC), "Art of Writing Proposals"

Fellows focus on summer research plan for problematizing, concretizing their research; first taste of formal proposal writing goals.

SUMMER Assignments

Farewells

**SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP
Hyatt Regency Cambridge, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Wednesday, September 18th to Sunday, September 22nd, 2013
FALL 2013 WORKSHOP AGENDA**

GLOBAL COMMODITY STUDIES

Research Directors:

Paul Gootenberg, History & Sociology, Stony Brook paul.gootenberg@stonybrook.edu
Judith Carney, Geography, Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, UCLA
carney@geog.ucla.edu

A big welcome back to the Commodity Studies gang! We very much look forward to hearing about your research and our continuing rich discussions.

This is the second of two annual DPDF workshops designed to help graduate student fellows prepare cogent and fundable dissertation proposals in their interdisciplinary field. The two main goals of the second workshop are 1) to help fellows synthesize their summer research, and 2) to develop revised drafts of dissertation proposals, either for a Ph.D. committee or impending funding purposes. We want fellows to integrate their summer research and proposal development within the context of contributions to commodity studies. Thus, the goals of the fall workshop are closely related to mapping an emerging research field that began during the Spring workshop.

Fellows will come out of the second workshop with clear courses of action to revise drafts into intellectually mature dissertation proposals, as well, we hope, as supportive networks of new scholars and mentors engaged in global commodity studies.

On Thursday, John Soluri is participating in the Plenary session, and will informally work again with our group on Friday morning.

SUMMER WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENTS (to be posted by Sept. 1 or at conclusion of field research):

1. **Notes from the Field** (2-3 pages): Brief description of how research, identification of researchable sources, archives, or fieldwork unfolded. Were there unanticipated, surprising, or challenging findings?
2. **Brief Analysis** (1 page): In what ways has the experience of Preliminary Research shifted your perception and thinking about your main problem and research approaches?

FALL WORKSHOP READINGS:

Three overview readings relating to problematizing and writing proposals are placed in the Readings section of the DPDF Commodity Studies online workspace. (Folder: On Proposals). We will draw on them in a Day 1 discussion, and we hope that you also find them useful throughout a grant-writing career. Also, recall that during the summer the group posted PDFs of more seminal works on approaches to commodities--which we encourage you to consult too. However, this workshop is writing- rather than reading-intensive.

FALL WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be uploaded on the DPDF online workspace unless otherwise noted. We shall use new folder categories for the fall workshop, as indicated on the workspace:

- **Deadline, Sept. 9: Revised proposal draft due** (6-8 pages, as outlined on workspace after Spring workshop). The proposal should be significantly revised and expanded from the Spring submission, taking into account any substantive criticisms. They should ideally include an abstract (1/4 page), research questions, theoretical overview, literature review, methodology, qualifications, and significance, with a working bibliography (can be extra 1-2 pages). You may write it either as a dissertation prospectus or a grant proposal, following guidelines for a specific foundation if appropriate.
- **Deadline, Sept. 13: Reading Each Other's Proposals.** Having read everyone's proposals, compile and post 2-paragraph comments on each in preparation for workshop discussions. Ideally these comments should: 1) summarize your understanding of its major contribution; 2) address methodology: research design or concerns or questions about methods.
- **Deadline, Sept. 17: Discussant Groups.** As in the spring workshop, you are divided into the four-themed groups for prompting discussions. Everyone will serve as a discussant for the same proposals as in the Spring Workshop, though we reverse the order in the Fall Workshop and start with the last discussed proposal first (Knowledge Systems/Race; Space/Histories; Circuits/Emerging Goods; Resources). Each of the 3-member group will prepare brief 10-minute oral reports in Workshop Days 2-3 on the 2 other proposals.
- **Deadline, (Wednesday) Sept. 25: Revised Proposals.** Using student feedback you've received on the DPDF workspace, submit a revision of your first draft. You may also prepare a more polished post-Workshop version for sharing up to October 1.

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Paul and Judy will meet jointly with each fellow for approximately 30 minutes. Following each two-hour session, 90 minutes will be allotted for this discussion period to accommodate three students. In the meeting, each fellow receives our undivided attention. Individual meetings with the Research Directors will focus on changes in the research project resulting from summer work (as reflected in revised proposals), new thoughts emerging from the plenary on proposal writing and grant-seeking, identification of problems and questions to resolve before and during writing of final dissertation and/or grant proposals.

SMALL GROUP PEER EDITING EXERCISES

While individual fellows are meeting with the Research Directors, the other students will meet in small groups of their choosing for active peer editing of evolving proposals. Our expectation is that these interactions and writing sessions will result in more polished versions of each proposal during the Workshop.

PROPOSAL REVISION PROCESS

Fellows are expected to continually revise their proposals during the Workshop in response to feedback and insights so that they have a strong final version by late Saturday. We ask that you revise proposals before each meeting of your group and submit a hard or e-copy of the revised proposal to each of your small group members so that they can conduct peer editing exercises.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 18th

6 pm. Registration and welcome reception
Workshop materials distributed at registration.
Dinner on own—or with other fellows

Thursday, September 19th

9 to 11 am. Workshop Session #1: Summer Research: Successes and Challenges

Structured group discussion of summer preliminary research: expectations, achievements, and possible impact on original projects, research questions, and conceptions.

- Each student to describe briefly what expected to find at field sites, what surprised you, and how your research objectives changed once you recovered from reality shock
- Group discussion of concerns with fieldwork/ethnographic/archival research
- Group discussion of how projects incorporate natural sciences into social science and humanities research.

11 to 12:00 pm. Discussion of posted Proposal Readings (Alford, Watts, SSRC, ACLS):

What are some keys to developing a strong research problem and a well-argued proposal?

2 to 5 pm. Plenary Session on Funding and DPDF Alumni

Fellows from all research fields at this workshop attend this session. DPDF staff, in conjunction with Research Directors, will discuss the genre of proposal writing for research funding.

Topics include: Writing for disciplinary v. interdisciplinary audiences • finding appropriate tone and style • ways to accent pre-dissertation research as preparation for long-term research • best practices for preparing a research budget • pulling back the curtain on review processes.

In Part II of the plenary, students break into small groups to “role play” a review committee and discuss merits of two short proposals read before workshop. Following the exercise, all fellows will reconvene and debrief.

5:30 – 7:30. Student cocktails and informal interactions with John Soluri

Friday, September 20th

9 to 11 am. Workshop Session #2: Reviewing Proposals
Knowledge Systems/Race Group: Lafferty; Parker; Soileau

Group discussion/feedback on draft proposals: (including research design, methods, and committee v. funding aims)

11:00 am. to 12:30 pm. Individual proposal meetings w/ Carney & Gootenberg
(Lafferty; Parker; Soileau)

11:00 am. to 12:00 pm. During research directors' individual meetings, other fellows pursue peer "micro-editing" of research proposals. (Possible assistance with John Soluri)

2 to 4 pm. Workshop Session #3: Reviewing Proposals
Resources Group: Labruto; Ferguson-Cradler; Revette

Group discussion/feedback on draft proposals: (including research design, methods, and committee v. funding aims):

4 to 5:30 pm. Individual proposal meetings w/ Carney & Gootenberg
(Labruto; Ferguson-Cradler; Revette)

4 to 5 pm. Rest of students continue peer "micro-editing" research proposals

Saturday, September 21st

9 to 11 am. Workshop Session #4: Reviewing Proposals
Circuits/Emerging Goods Group: Beresford, du Plessis, Zakar

Group discussion/feedback on draft proposals: (including research design, methods, and committee v. funding aims)

11:00 am. to 12:30 pm. Individual proposal meetings w/ Carney & Gootenberg
(Beresford, du Plessis, Zakar)

11:00 am. to 12:00 pm. Rest of students continue editing proposals

2 to 4 pm. Workshop Session #5: Reviewing Proposals/Debriefing Issues
Space/Histories Group: Tsigkas, Smith, Vest.

4 to 5:30 pm. Individual proposal meetings w/ Carney & Gootenberg
(Tsigkas, Smith, Vest)

4 to 5:00 pm. Final peer "micro-editing" of proposals due Sunday

Sunday, September 22nd

9 am. to 12 pm. **Workshop Session #6: Wrapping Up, Next Steps**

REVISIT: Common proposal issues--problems, possibilities, & challenges

Final Proposal Writing Assignment (for Wednesday, following week, Sept. 25): Continuing discussion about revising abstracts, proposal slippery spots

12- 1:30 pm. **Farewell lunch at hotel**