

**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

Critical Approaches to Human Rights

Research Director: Amy Ross [rossamy@uga.edu]
Research Director: Chandra Lehka Sriram [cs79@soas.ac.uk]

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 incorporating lessons from your preliminary summer research).

Our research field engages projects that share a common critical approach to human rights, from different disciplines, methodologies, and geographical sites. Scholars from Anthropology, Geography, Sociology, History, Ethnic Studies, Law and Latin American Studies form the cohort. Projects include the critical examination of: art, archives, courtrooms, and colonial texts; rape-kits, 'post-traumatic stress,' and counter-terrorism; human trafficking, historical memory and transitional justice. Projects in the workshop question how 'rights' ---for indigenous peoples, transgendered bodies, migrants, women and 'victims' --- are debated, interpreted, and materialized in law and practice. We will examine the rescued and the rescuers; governments and NGOs, experts, antagonists and the subjects, objects and targets of law. At the root of the project is the question of how violence, knowledge and power operate to produce both the protection and violation of human rights.

WORKSHOP READINGS AND RESOURCES

Readings and other resources will be placed on the section of the DPDF online workspace devoted to this field. Students will receive separate explanations and detailed instructions about the access and use of the DPDF digital platform.

WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be uploaded on the DPDF online workspace unless otherwise noted:

- **Project Summary (May 8th):** 1 page revised summary of the proposed research. Fellows should be prepared to present, comment on and evaluate one's own proposal during the workshop sessions. Along with the summary, please provide one (1) slide that illustrates your project for a group presentation. Please also share your one page bibliography with the group via the webpage.

- **The Field (May 22th):** READ all of the one-page project summaries for your cohort. Identify 2-3 projects that you believe are the most similar to yours, and 2-3 that you consider the least similar to your own approach, interests, or background. Write a short (400-600 word) statement explaining your rationale for these choices in total. These will be shared with the RD directors before the workshop so we can do some 'matching' with your input. At the workshop, you will draw on this document to make presentations on each other's work. Also review the bibliographies of your 11 colleagues, and identify overlaps with your own bibliography.
- **Sikkink Reading assignment (May 28th):** read one of the two pieces we have posted by Kathryn Sikkink, who will visit the workshop in the afternoon on June 1st. Prepare (bring to workshop) three (3) questions for Kathryn, about 1) her work and development as a human rights scholar, 2) a specific facet of your work, for her to assist in your project, and 3) your ideas regarding the development of the research field, for her comment.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Thursday, May 30th

9 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.: Workshop Session #1: Introductions, and Mapping the Field

The goal of this session is to get to know each other, and identify the areas in which we overlap, as well as to identify areas of diversity, divergence and contestation. In the process, we will begin to 'map' the field of critical approaches to human rights, establishing certain common languages and questions, while evaluating the breadth and depth of the research cohort and its proposals. In the first part of the session, we will have a round of 'flash' presentations--think of 'speed dating'. Each fellow has just three (3) minutes to introduce themselves, (in front of the group and with your slide as background). Tell us who you are, what you want to accomplish with your dissertation, and your contribution to our community (everyone has one!). In the second half, the RDs will each provide 'opening statements' on ourselves, our work, and our objectives for the workshop and the field. Finally, we will conclude the session with a discussion about 1) what we want to get from the workshop, 2) what we hope to gain from the summer, and 3) our desires and fears about the precarity of a career devoted to social science and humanities research on the human condition.

11-12, 2 to 5 p.m.: Workshop Session #2: The Twelve Projects: Overlaps and Diversity

Whereas in the morning we talked about ourselves, in the afternoon we will talk about each other. In 18-minute segments, the group will discuss each project. The author of the project will be required to keep silent and listen (and take notes of course) while the group discusses the project for appropriately 15 minutes. Each fellow will have three (3) minutes to respond to the group's critique. We will wrap up with a short discussion, where the group identifies synergies and constructive tensions in the field.

PLEASE NOTE: We want to let you know that we expect all 14 participants to be prepared, and punctual, for this session. Read all projects ahead of the workshop, and commit to returning from lunch and coffee breaks on time, so that all fellows receive equal and full consideration. Thank you.

11:00AM- Noon

- 1) Al-Bulushi, Samar
- 2) Chang, Jian Ming Chris
- 3) Galinda-Doucette, Evelyn

LUNCH

2:00 p.m.--5:00 p.m.

- 4) Hagerty, Alexa
- 5) Hanssmann, Christoph
- 6) Hervuet-Zeiber, Gregoire

(ten minute break)

- 7) Kocher, Austin
- 8) Matson, Laura
- 9) Morse, Jaimie

(ten minute break)

- 10) Perez, Justin
- 11) Ranjbar, Azita
- 12) Sebastian, J

Friday, May 31st

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #3: Fieldwork: Opportunities and Challenges

Methodology is integral to research design. Dissertation funding reviewers consistently look for a good match between the research question and the methods used to arrive at viable conclusions. In our experience, scholars conducting research concerning human rights have special considerations to take into account. While all research environments are undoubtedly complex, working in and with people and places experiencing violence, conflict and suffering requires particular practical and ethical considerations. Caution must be exercised at every stage of the research project. From conception through publication, dissertation projects in this field must continually evaluate the security and well-being of all those affected by the projects, including the researcher. In this workshop, we will discuss these challenges in conducting fieldwork in this area.

We will discuss:

- 1) *Identifying your objectives*: What do you hope your research will accomplish? Who do you want to 'help'---if at all? Why is your research relevant and creative, in an already crowded field? Why will the time and money invested in your dissertation be worthwhile?
- 2) *Situating the Self*: What skills do you bring to the project? What elements of your subjectivity and identity will influence the ways in which you conduct fieldwork, and are treated in the field?

Are you ‘outside’ or ‘inside’ the location or community of study? How does your research advance or challenge academic research in this area?

3) *Security/Insecurity*: What activities do you expect could be dangerous, for yourself and others? How do you consider the safety of research participants and your own safety? What degree of security is it reasonable to expect? How might security concerns influence what data you collect, and what data you identify as being off limits?

4) *Access and Veracity*: How do you identify interview subjects, and what do you expect to gain from interviews? How might your technique differ when interviewing people with different socioeconomic or demographic statuses? Can you expect to reach a single ‘truth’ about conflict and human rights violations in a given situation?

5) *Ethics*: What concerns, beyond the security of your interlocutors, must you consider in your research? Do you owe individuals a special duty of care because of the trauma which they may have undergone or which your research may help to create? How will you manage the power and resource disparities between yourself and your interlocutors, and do you owe them something more than ‘do no harm’?

6) *Critically Assessing the Human Rights Toolkit*: Consider the relative advantages and disadvantages of the following methodologies, when examining human rights: case study, document review, focus groups, surveys, interviews, ethnography, participant observation, trial monitoring, discourse analysis, statistics, and visual analysis. How are certain methods appropriate for particular research objectives? How might mixing methods produce more satisfactory results?

We will conduct these conversations in breakout groups, and then collectively.

Saturday, June 1st

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #4: From summer fieldwork to dissertation proposal

Translating a preliminary proposal into a full dissertation proposal both for one’s dissertation committee and for possible funding support can be a challenge, perhaps more so after preliminary research than before. In this session, we will discuss how to fruitfully use material gathered from preliminary research to develop the proposal not only empirically but methodologically. We will also discuss the possibility that preliminary research reveals challenges or (opportunities) in accessing data, sites, and key interlocutors, or reveals the limitations (or over-ambitiousness) of the original research questions.

Students will work in groups to identify potential pitfalls, surprises, or opportunities in one another’s research plans which may be revealed during preliminary research. Each researcher will take note of points regarding their research plan, and then present this in brief to the wider workshop with their own initial thoughts about ‘fixes’ and receive suggestions from the rest of the group.

LUNCH

2 to 5 p.m.: Workshop Session #5: Developing the Field

In the first hour of this session, students will work in small groups to streamline their prepared questions for Kathryn, and then we will convene to talk as a group about the draft questions. In the

next two hours, we are thrilled to have Professor Kathryn Sikkink (Professor of Political Science, University of Minnesota) as a guest speaker. Professor Sikkink will share her insights on the field in general, and, where appropriate, comment on the particular projects of research fellows. Professor Sikkink will be joining our group for dinner, and the Saturday night festivities.

Sunday, June 2nd

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #6: Looking Forward

In our final session, we will discuss our strategies for communicating, as a group and individually, over the summer. Fellows will be assigned a 'buddy' to check in with at regular intervals over the summer. We will also discuss our objectives as a group---perhaps submitted a series of panels to an appropriate conference, or drafting a proposal for a special issue of a journal or edited volume.

**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**

Critical Approaches to Human Rights

Research Director: Amy Ross [rossamy@uga.edu]
Research Director: Chandra Lehka Sriram [C.Sriram@uel.ac.uk]

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 develop revised drafts of dissertation proposals, either for committee or funding purposes. The workshop challenges fellows to consider their summer research and proposal development within the context of contributions to their research field. In this, the goals of the fall workshop are closely related to the project of mapping a research field that began during the spring workshop in Minnesota.

The second workshop will assist the Fellows in revising their dissertation proposals, based on their summer experiences. An additional objective of the Fall Workshop is to develop the cohort into an intellectually vibrant and supportive network. Their sophisticated research projects, in well-articulated and viable dissertation proposals, will form the basis for future contributions of the field of Critical Approaches to Human Rights. Our goals are to advance both the individual dissertation projects and the research field more broadly, in the belief that these goals are symbiotic.

WORKSHOP READINGS AND RESOURCES

Any new readings and other resources will be placed on the section of the DPDF online workspace devoted to this field.

WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be uploaded on the DPDF online workspace unless otherwise noted:

- 1) Draft of the Dissertation Proposal. [September 1].** This should be as close as possible to your own department's structural requirement for a proposal in terms of length and major elements. If your department does not have a set structure or formal requirement, then please choose a funding source (such as the SSRC IDRF, NSF or Wenner-Gren) and model your draft proposal after the guidelines. Dissertation proposals should include a clear articulation of the research questions, the case study (if applicable), the theoretical framework, methodology/ies, the timeframe for completion, and the personal qualifications of the researcher. Please pay particular attention to demonstrating clearly how the research question(s) build on the existing literature to construct the theoretical framework for the project. You might also consider drafting a budget.
- 2) 'Pen-Pal' Précis [September 8]:** Using your correspondence/discussion board/diary generated through the pen pal assignment, write a two page memo detailing your challenges, accomplishments, surprises, and other note-worthy experiences during your summer field work. Focus on the 'key issues and critical junctions' we asked you to report to your pen-pal.

(Note: this memo is about you and your project, but you are welcome to discuss correspondence from your pen pal, if that was relevant to your own learning experience.)

3) Field Building Writing Assignment [September 8th] Deadline: Please see web-portal for the two options available as your writing prompt. These are the options for the required short writing assignment based on engaging with the field and the cohort's projects.

4) Peer Comments on Proposal Drafts [September 18]: Read all of the draft proposals of all of the fellows, and prepare specific comments on the two assigned to you either as initial discussant or recap discussant (as explained below). In reviewing proposals and developing comments, please think about comments that relate to challenges in methodology and implementation, eg: can the primary research question be sharpened and if so how? Can the question be addressed with the research approach currently in place? Are there lessons from the proposal author's summer experience or your own that are helpful in thinking about revising methodology/research design?

Note: Where relevant, you are welcome to repeat portions of text to complete different assignments. For example, while completing your field-building memo, you may write text that is relevant for your proposal's theoretical framework, or for your prepared comments on a colleague's draft proposal. While writing your proposal draft, you might articulate your research question, or consider challenges to fieldwork, in a way that is useful for your pen pal memo.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

As in the Spring workshop, we look forward to one-on-one meetings with each Fellow, but will arrange these as appropriate in Cambridge rather than pre-scheduling.

Wednesday, September 18th

6 p.m.:

Registration and welcome reception

Workshop materials will be distributed at registration.

Dinner on your own

Thursday, September 19th

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #1: Summer Research - Challenges and Accomplishments

The purpose of this session is to present and process the summer fieldwork experience, in order to identify the issues that will shape the future dissertation research. Each fellow will have 5 minutes to briefly present a few key challenges that occurred. We will do this much like the 'speed dating/flash presentations' we did at the opening of the Spring workshop. In this short presentation, please tell us: Where did you travel? Who did you speak to, and/or what sites did you visit? What was the biggest challenge, disappointment, or frustration that you experienced? (eg: "The NGO I wanted to work with on monuments now focuses on turtles!" "The archives were boring---I spent all that time and got nothing!") How did you adapt to challenges or identify opportunities/alternate venues for research? Looking back over the summer, what moment or experience stands out as being most productive? You may draw from your pen-pal writing assignment as you prepare these short comments for the group.

After a break, we will re-convene and identify aspects of each fellow's individual experiences or challenges that are common to the field. Fellows are encouraged to consider that what might seem like a "failure" is actually informative for the revision of the proposal and research design. As a group, consider what we wanted to do (in June) compared to where we are in September. Finally, we will conclude the morning with a short discussion on the core elements of dissertation proposal writing, in preparation for the afternoon plenary.

2 to 5 p.m.: Plenary Session on Funding and DPDF Alumni

All fellows from the research fields at this workshop will attend this session. In this session, DPDF staff, in conjunction with some of the research directors, will discuss the genre of proposal writing for research funding. Topics to be discussed will include:
writing for disciplinary v. interdisciplinary audiences * finding an appropriate tone and style * ways to write about your pre-dissertation research as preparation for long-term research * best practices for preparing a research budget * pulling back the curtain on general review processes.

In the second part of the plenary, students will break out into small groups to role play a review committee and discuss the merits of two short proposals that have been assigned to read prior to the workshop. Following the exercise, students will reconvene and debrief.

(Dinner on your own.)

Friday, September 20th

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #2: Peer-review of Proposals

In this session, we will focus intensively on four proposals, with comments from peers. The same structure will repeat for the next two sessions. Each proposal author will have about 5 minutes to present their proposal. As everyone will have read all the proposals, use your 5 minutes to point out only key aspects of the proposal (rather than try to sum up the entire content of your proposal draft). After the proposal writer's 5 minutes, one assigned fellow (the initial discussant) will have a chance to offer comments for about 5 minutes. We will then have 20 minutes for general discussion from the group, in which we request that the author remain silent in order to listen to the feedback of the cohort. At the 30 minute mark, we will hear from the author for a few minutes of response, and then ask the second recap discussant to close the session with their comments/suggestions.

4 proposals at 40 minutes each, with breaks

Proposal	Initial Discussant	Recap Discussant
1. J	Chris	Austin
	(Break)	
2. Azita	Evelyn	Laura
	(Break)	
3. Justin	Alexa	Christoph
	(Break)	
4. Jaime	Greg	Samar

Lunch

2 to 5 p.m.: Workshop Session #3: Reviewing Proposals

Proposal	Initial Discussant	Recap Discussant
1. Laura	Jamie	Evelyn
	(Break)	
2. Austin	Azita	Justin
	(Break)	
3. Greg	Samar	Alexa
	(Break)	
4. Christoph	J	Chris

Saturday, September 21st

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #4: Reviewing Proposals

Proposal	Initial Discussant	Recap Discussant
1. Alexa	Christoph	Azita
	(Break)	
2. Evelyn	Justin	Greg
	(Break)	
3. Chris	Austin	Jaime
	(Break)	
4. Samar	Laura	J

2 to 5 p.m.: Workshop Session #5: Common issues with the projects and the proposals

Breakout group session: in which each group reflects on key issues in research design that need to be reflected in proposals.

Three groups of four students: TBA (Field Directors will organize the break-out sessions, based on our evaluation of the synergies of the projects as presented in the Friday-Saturday AM peer review sessions.)

Individual proposal revision based on discussions of the past two days: Depending on the pace of the break-out group activity, we aim to provide a short concentrated interlude in which each scholar can organize their notes on suggested proposal revision, and prepare short comments on how they plan to move forward with the revision after the workshop.

We conclude with a group discussion to reflect on core elements of proposal writing for dissertation purposes and conversion for funding applications.

7 p.m.: Dinner with the group in a nice restaurant

Sunday, September 22nd

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #6: Wrapping Up and Next Steps

Drawing from your field-building writing assignment (option 1 or 2), consider how the diverse themes and projects associated with critical approaches to human rights contribute to a theoretical framework for your project. How do these 12 projects, and the existing published literature, constitute a unique and essential approach to understanding knowledge, power and violence? How is a critical approach useful for reviving and reinvigorating the more common approaches to human rights?

How might these projects work as an edited volume, a special issue for an academic journal, or as asset of papers to present at a professional conference? Which conferences and publishing venues are feasible and appropriate? Specific suggestions are welcome.

Additionally, please bring your ideas about possible funding sources, research affiliations, etc, for your colleagues. During your work on your own projects, you might have encountered spectacular resources that were not right for your project, but might be a terrific opportunity for a peer. Collaborate! It's much better than mere competition. Discuss modes by which collaboration may continue, including via the googlegroup and Zotero.

Finally, identify your timeline for finishing your proposal, and what you need to do to get there.

12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Farewell lunch at hotel