

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

**Oak Ridge Conference Center, Chaska, Minnesota  
Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013**

**SPRING 2013 WORKSHOP AGENDA**

**Public Finance and Society: The New Historical Fiscal Sociology**

Research Director: Isaac William Martin [iwmartin@ucsd.edu]

Research Director: Ajay K. Mehrotra [amehrotr@indiana.edu]

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 assessing the research completed over the summer, and the mechanics and methods of writing a dissertation proposal).

Taxation, public debt, and state spending are central institutions in every modern society, and their history is a dramatic story of change, punctuated by wars, social movements, and revolutions. The purpose of this workshop is to promote a comparative and cross-disciplinary conversation about the development of these institutions and their consequences for political, social, and cultural life. Any field that investigates questions such as these *must* be interdisciplinary. “Fiscal sociology” is no monopoly of sociologists; like “political economy,” it is a classical label for an interdisciplinary endeavor. Many recent contributions to the field have come from political scientists, economists, legal scholars, historians and anthropologists.

Scholars in these and other disciplines are investigating how fiscal policy is embedded in formal and informal contexts, including institutions that are not codified in law, but that are anchored in custom and tradition. Fiscal policies are imbricated with property law, but also with ideologies, families, ethnoracial identities, cultural beliefs about gender, and philosophical and literary traditions. Tax policy changes in response to the outcomes of formal processes such as elections, acts of legislation, and judicial decisions, but it also changes in response to such irregular, informal and unruly events as social movements, insurrections, wars, and other political and economic crises. Fiscal policy affects the formal contracts between buyers and sellers that constitute market society, but it also affects the informal bargains that constitute political and civil society.

In order to map the field and prepare Fellows for their pre-dissertation research, we will spend our time in the workshop doing three things. First, we will equip Fellows with a common foundation of knowledge to enable a continuing interdisciplinary conversation, including a common set of core concepts and foundational texts that may serve as points of reference. Second, we will make some of the technical issues in the literature on taxation and public finance approachable for Fellows whose disciplinary training might not ordinarily include courses devoted to public finance. Third, we will make the most of our methodological diversity. Scholars in this field must read across disciplines and appreciate the contributions of a great variety of methods. Exemplary studies in the field have

relied on archival research; qualitative interview studies; ethnographic data; large-N statistical studies; and survey experiments. It is characteristic of this interdisciplinary field that studies using these different approaches are frequently in dialogue with each other—indeed, these methods are often explicitly used to complement each other.

## 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 proposal due May 23.** Submit a five-page summary of the dissertation project, including your research question and your research plan for answering that question. Feel free to draw from your original DPDF proposal, revising and updating to reflect any changes you have made. This proposal will be the basis for much of the workshop discussion.
- **Required reading for the first day of the workshop.** Read the other Fellows' summary proposals, and the required articles that we have posted to the course web site.
- **Prepare to serve as discussant for another Fellow's proposal.** Fellows will not make a formal presentation of their own dissertation projects. Instead, each Fellow will be assigned a partner (see below), and each Fellow should prepare to play the role of discussant for their partner's projects. The role of the discussant is not to summarize—we will assume that everyone has read the proposals—but *briefly* to characterize the scholarly contribution of the project, and to put a constructive question or suggestion on the table for discussion. A handout with instructions for discussants will be made available online.

## WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

*Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>*

**9 a.m. to 12 p.m.:**     **Workshop Session #1: Introductions (with Monica Prasad)**

9-9:50 Introduction to the group. Fellows introduce themselves. An interdisciplinary field arises when people in different disciplines get acquainted and realize that they are working on common problems. By way of introducing the workshop, Isaac, Ajay, and Monica will discuss how we each discovered that we were part of a field, and open up a discussion about the nature of a scholarly “field”—is it something “out there” that we discover, something we construct retrospectively, something we enact, or all three?

10:00-11:30 Introduction to classic research questions in historical fiscal sociology. What are the most general research questions that animate the field of historical fiscal sociology? We will lead a seminar-style discussion of classical and field-defining readings, in order to highlight some shared questions and begin to map the range of approaches that scholars have taken to answering them.

- Seligman, “The Development of Taxation”
- Schumpeter, “The Crisis of the Tax State”
- Martin, Mehrotra and Prasad, “The Thunder of History”

11:40-12:00 Everything you always wanted to know about taxes but were afraid to ask. Interdisciplinary work on public finance and society assumes familiarity with the specialized jargon of more than one field. We will spend the last part of the first session briefly introducing (or refreshing our shared memory about) some key ideas.

**12 to 2 p.m.: Lunch, and individual meetings**

During the second lunch hour, Ajay, Monica and Isaac will hold meetings with these Fellows:

- 1:00-1:30 *Nathan Coben* and *Hoa Duong*
- 1:30-2:00 *Bryan Chitwood* and *Chris McFadin*

**2 to 5 p.m.: Workshop Session #2: Asking questions about public finance (with Monica Prasad)**

2-3:45 Contemporary approaches to historical fiscal sociology. We will discuss more contemporary readings that take different methodological approaches to similar questions, in order to begin a discussion about the trade-offs involved in the choice of research strategy. What is gained, and what is lost, by different methods of data collection and analysis?

- Feldman and Slemrod, “War and Taxation”
- Jones, “Mass-Based Income Taxation”
- Abelin, “‘Entrenched in the BMW’: Argentine Elites and the Terror of Fiscal Obligation”

3:45-4:00 Break

4:00-5:00 Discussant meets discussant. Fellows will be paired off with their discussants. This is an opportunity to ask questions about the proposed research, to offer constructive suggestions, to ask advice, and to consider revisions, before the discussant presents the proposal to the full workshop.

During this time, Ajay, Monica and Isaac will hold meetings with these Fellows:

- 4:00-4:30 *Jackson Bartlett* and *Emily Brock*
- 4:30-5:00 *Mariaelena Rivera* and *Stephanie Bradley*

**5 to 6 p.m.: Meetings continue**

During this time, Ajay, Monica and Isaac will hold meetings with these fellows:

- 5:00-5:30 *Camden Hutchison* and *Carly Knight*
- 5:30-6:00 *Daniel Alvord* and *Michael Vasseur*

***Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>***

**9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #3: From questions to methods**

In this session, we will explore the relationship between questions and research strategies by discussing Fellows’ own research proposals. Four research proposals will be presented by their respective discussants; each discussant will have five minutes to present the proposal, followed by 25

minutes of group discussion. Discussion should aim at constructive engagement with the proposed research, focusing on such issues as the clarity of the research question, the relation of the research question to the proposed methods, and the contributions of the proposed research to our knowledge of public finance and society.

- *Nathan Coben* presented by *Hoa Duong*
- *Hoa Duong* presented by *Nathan Coben*
- *Bryan Chitwood* presented by *Chris McFadin*
- *Chris McFadin* presented by *Bryan Chitwood*
- *Daniel Alvord* presented by *Michael Vasseur*

## **12 to 2 p.m.: Lunch**

***Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup>***

### **9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #4: From questions to methods, continued**

In this session, we continue the discussion of Fellows' research proposals. Five research proposals will be presented by their respective discussants; each discussant will have five minutes to present the proposal, followed by 25 minutes of group discussion. Discussion should aim at constructive engagement with the proposed research, focusing on such issues as the clarity of the research question, the relation of the research question to the proposed methods, and the contributions of the proposed research to our knowledge of public finance and society.

- *Michael Vasseur* presented by *Daniel Alvord*
- *Jackson Bartlett* presented by *Emily Brock*
- *Emily Brock* presented by *Jackson Bartlett*
- *Mariaelena Rivera* presented by *Stephanie Bradley*
- *Stephanie Bradley* presented by *Mariaelena Rivera*

## **12 to 2 p.m.: Lunch**

### **2 to 5 p.m.: Workshop Session #5: From Preliminary Research to Proposal**

2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

In this session, we continue the discussion of Fellows' research proposals. Two research proposals will be presented by their respective discussants; each discussant will have five minutes to present the proposal, followed by 25 minutes of group discussion.

- *Camden Hutchison* presented by *Carly Knight*
- *Carly Knight* presented by *Camden Hutchison*

3:00-3:15 break

3:15 to 5:00 p.m. From research to proposal

We will devote the remainder of the session to a discussion of how we go from research to proposal. Fellows should come to this session prepared to write: we will engage in a mix of timed writing exercises and discussion, focused on the practical questions involved in transforming preliminary research into an effective proposal. How do you write a compelling description of research that no

one has done yet? How do you write about the same project for multiple audiences, without seeming indecisive? What part of your dissertation proposal still needs clarification—and how will summer research help to clarify it?

- It is recommended that participants read Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon, [\*The Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions.\*](#)

*Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>*

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

In this session we will reflect on the future of the field by discussing how it will look different when the dissertation projects proposed here are complete. We will also review summer research plans and reading assignments, make plans for communication over the summer, and discuss ideas for the fall workshop.

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

**Public Finance and Society: The New Historical Fiscal Sociology**

Research Director: Isaac William Martin [iwmartin@ucsd.edu]

Research Director: Ajay K. Mehrotra [amehrotr@indiana.edu]

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 fields. In this way, 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.

Fellows will come out of the second workshop with clear courses of action to revise drafts into intellectually mature dissertation proposals, as well as supportive networks of mentors and cohorts of new scholars within the research field.

#### **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:

- **Draft Proposal Deadline, September 12:** (Prior to the workshop) Proposal drafts due, as outlined on workspace after spring workshop.
- **Comments on Draft Proposal, September 17:** (Prior to the workshop) Read all proposals and compile brief comments in preparation for workshop discussions. During the fall workshop, we will devote a significant amount of time to group discussions of each fellow's draft proposal. Fellows do not need to upload their comments, but they should come prepared to contribute to these discussions.
- **Abstract and Next Steps Deadline, September 21:** (During the workshop) Using student and faculty feedback you've received from this workshop, please submit by 9 pm, Saturday, September 21, a 300-word abstract for your project and a list of between 3 – 5 next steps for your dissertation research and proposal writing. We will discuss these abstracts and next steps during our last session, with the goal of ending the fall workshop with a clear sense of what is required to construct a successful dissertation proposal.

## WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

### *Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>*

**6 p.m.:**       **Registration and welcome reception**  
Workshop materials will be distributed at registration.  
*Dinner on your own*

### *Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>*

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

Toward the end of our spring workshop, we engaged in several timed writing exercises about how one goes from research to proposal. Fellows focused on practical questions about redefining research questions, and thinking ahead about how summer research would help clarify the writing of a dissertation proposal. In this opening session for the fall workshop, we will revisit the earlier writing exercises and compare what we expected to find in our summer research with what we did, in fact, find. We will discuss how fellows' summer research experiences reinforced or challenged original research questions and assumptions. And, more generally, how summer research has informed or shaped the development of dissertation proposals as a whole.

#### **12 to 2 pm: Lunch**

#### **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.

### *Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>*

#### **9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #2: Reviewing Proposals**

During this session, the entire group will discuss the proposals submitted by the following fellows:

1. Carly Knight
2. Bryan Chitwood

Brief Break

3. Jackson Bartlett
4. Emily Brock

Each fellow will have 5 -10 minutes to present their proposals, after which the entire group will spend 35-40 minutes discussing the strengths and weakness of the proposal, and suggested next

steps. We will devote a total of 45 minutes to each proposal. In addition to discussing each of the proposals, we will also try to identify common methodological challenges faced by all fellows.

### **12 to 2 p.m.: Lunch, and Individual Meetings**

As we did during the spring workshop, Isaac, Ajay, and Monica will use the second hour of the lunch break to meet individually with fellows who presented their proposals during the previous session:

1:00 – 1:30: Carly Knight and Bryan Chitwood

1:30 – 2:00: Jackson Bartlett and Emily Brock

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

During this session, the entire group will discuss the proposals submitted by the following fellows:

1. Nathan Coben
2. Marialena Rivera

Brief Break

3. Hoa Duong
4. Michael Vasseur

As in previous proposal review sessions, each fellow will have 5 -10 minutes to present their proposals, after which the entire group will spend 35-40 minutes discussing the strengths and weakness of the proposal, and suggested next steps. We will devote a total of 45 minutes to each proposal. In addition to discussing each of the proposals, we will also try to identify common methodological challenges faced by all fellows.

### **5:30 – 6:30: Pre-dinner Individual Meetings**

The Research Directors and guest will meet individually with the following fellows:

5:30 – 6:00: Nathan Coben and Marialena Rivera

6:00 – 6:30: Hoa Duong and Michael Vasseur

### ***Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>***

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

During this session, the entire group will discuss the proposals submitted by the following fellows:

1. Chris McFadin
2. Camden Hutchinson

Brief Break

3. Daniel Alvord
4. Stephanie Bradley

As in previous proposal review sessions, each fellow will have 5 -10 minutes to present their proposals, after which the entire group will spend 35-40 minutes discussing the strengths and weakness of the proposal, and suggested next steps. We will devote a total of 45 minutes to each proposal. In addition to discussing each of the proposals, we will also try to identify common methodological challenges faced by all fellows.

### **12 to 2 p.m.: Lunch, and Individual Meetings**

As we did during the spring workshop, Isaac, Ajay, and Monica will use the second hour of the lunch break to meet individually with fellows who presented their proposal during the previous session

1:00 – 1:30: Chris McFadin and Camden Hutchinson

1:30 – 2:00: Daniel Alvord and Stephanie Bradley

### **2 to 5 p.m.: Workshop Session #5: Debriefing Proposal Reviews**

During this session, we will identify and address some of the common issues and challenges that all fellows will face as they develop their proposals. Fellows should come to this session prepared to think creatively about how they can visually describe their research projects as it relates to the broader field of historical fiscal sociology. We will conclude this session by discussing a writing assignment, **which will be due later this evening**, about how fellows plan to revise their proposals in the coming weeks.

### ***Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>***

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

In this final session, we will try to accomplish two goals. First, we will share the writing assignments due today (see above) to see what next steps fellows will need to undertake to prepare their proposals for submission to their dissertation committees. Second, we will discuss how we can continue to build the field of historical fiscal sociology. We will brain storm about what we can do after the SSRC workshops to ensure that our dialogue continues – not only among ourselves but with a broader community of scholars interested in our research topics.

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