

Social Science Research Council

Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship

Spring 2014 Workshop

Oceanic Studies: Seas as Sites and Subjects of Interdisciplinary Inquiry

June 4th-8th, Berkeley, California

Workshop Directors: Dr. Brenda Chalfin, University of Florida and Dr. Gaurav Desai, Tulane University.

This is the first of two workshops designed to help students prepare cogent and fundable dissertation proposals in their chosen fields. The two goals of the first workshop are to map the research field in terms of issues of disciplinarity, methods and sources, and to help prepare fellows for their pre-dissertation summer research.

In this workshop, participants will work together to identify, evaluate and compare the major ocean-centered methods and concepts from across their home disciplines. The facilitators will draw attention to what we take to be the most suggestive examples of cross-disciplinary and cross-regional bridging in Oceanic Studies and will collectively consider what connections might be made in each of the participants' own projects. Some of the questions we will raise are:

- Do contemporary conditions resemble earlier ages of maritime domination and dependence? How are they informed by them?
- Might earlier methods of academic oceanic analysis – such as the strong reliance on cartographic representation -- be replicated or updated in the present?
- How might scholars attend to the assemblage and relative agency of human and non-human species and objects within oceanic spaces?
- Can research into maritime mobility be anchored in specific sites, locations, and installations?
- How do scientific approaches to and findings about the oceanic serve as a model of and model for the socio-cultural realm?
- What is the relationship between research and recuperation when the sea is rendered through acts of salvage or in the aftermath of destruction and calamity?

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Each participant will receive a copy of Stefan Helmreich's *Alien Ocean: Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas* (University of California Press, 2009) in advance of the workshop. You are expected to arrive at the workshop having fully read this book. Professor Helmreich will serve as a visitor with us on the Saturday of the workshop and we will have the opportunity to collectively engage with him on the text.

Additional Readings and other resources will be placed on the DPDF online workspace created for our workshop. Instructions on accessing the workspace and how to post your own assignments there will be provided separately.

By **May 26th, 2014** you are required to post (1) a **4-5 page single spaced** proposal of your project; (2) an **annotated bibliography of 10 key texts** that speak to your project; and (3) a **brief statement (200 words)** of how your research agenda intersects with the turn in Oceanic studies that is the focus of our

workshop. While these three items are required of you, please feel free to use the online space to share any other material connected to your project (such as data sets, maps, audioclips etc.) that might help us better understand your research interests and goals. You should arrive at the June workshop having spent some time thinking through the kinds of data that you anticipate working with so that we can discuss issues of method and data collection at the workshop.

All workshop participants must arrive at the June workshop having read all of each others required materials on the workspace. In addition, you will be grouped in **pairs** in which you will present to the group the research project of your partner during our workshops. The point of the exercise is twofold – to encourage you to write your proposal in such a manner that someone outside of your field can easily understand it and present it in a cogent manner to the group. It is also meant to foster a conversation across disciplines and to experience first-hand both the possibilities and challenges that such a conversation entails. The student pairings are listed below.

Finally, all participants prior to the workshop must post on the on-line workspace 2 examples of media coverage of Oceans and Oceanic matters. These could be news clips, youtube videos, websites, comic routines, newspaper articles, films, rap songs or any other publicly disseminated material. Participants are also encouraged to post on-line what they consider a particularly meaningful non-academic, artistic, poetic, or otherwise critical or conceptual representation of oceanic issues. Both sets of materials will be addressed in the workshop sessions.

SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, June 4th

Evening Opening Reception and Welcome.

Thursday, June 5th

Session I: Articulating the Oceanic Research Imagination.

9 am – 10 am: We will begin this session with an introduction to the thematics of the workshop and our goals. Each Research Director will also speak about their interests in the field and on-going research.

10 am – 11 am: Short Takes (5 mins each) Each student will briefly talk about their project focusing mainly on the kinds of evidence and data they hope to gather and/or work with during their pre-dissertation work over the summer and the scholarly work or theoretical formulation most central to their research. These will be uninterrupted presentations with no room for comments or questions at the moment. We will have an opportunity to ask questions later. Participants will have already met on Wednesday and be familiar with one another's projects from the on-line postings. These 'short-takes' should thus go beyond introduction to address each project's core aims and research materials. We will adhere strictly to time in order to make sure everyone has equal opportunity to speak.

11 am – 11:15 am: Writing and Reflection 1: Students will be asked to reflect in writing throughout the workshop. This is the first of such exercises. The time taken to pause and write about what you have heard from others and the thoughts provoked in relation to your own research agenda and that of the other participants. These reflections will be integral to processing and tracking the various ideas and issues that are raised by your peers and by the moderators. You will be asked to share your writing at a later stage so be mindful of that as you craft your comments. In your reflections, take stock of what you

consider to be the most interesting or important concerns raised, further thoughts on your own project, other participant projects, and any unresolved questions or provocations.

11:15 – 11:30 Break

11:30-Noon: Group Discussion of Short Takes: Our emphasis during this discussion will be on the nature of the evidence that was being discussed and the ways in which different kinds of evidence is related to different disciplinary frameworks. As we head into this afternoon's session, one of the things we want to ask is how much at "home" do you feel in your home discipline? How do you approach interdisciplinarity? What do you consider the promises and perils of interdisciplinary approaches? What insights on the Oceanic does this preliminary interdisciplinary exchange bring to light?

Noon-2p Lunch Break

Session II: The Oceanic Turn in the Humanities and the Social Sciences: Reading Across the Disciplines.

Moderated by Drs. Chalfin and Desai, our afternoon session will be a forum to discuss recent and foundational readings that embody the Oceanic turn across a range of disciplines. In addition to becoming familiar with different disciplinary epistemes, participants will be asked to consider the possibilities and limits of borrowing from outside their home fields. We will also consider if these diverse works map out a common terrain of oceanic inquiry or offer disparate or incompatible agendas. Drawing from their posted **annotated bibliographies** and beyond, participants should be prepared to mention other works they consider most relevant to a 'common core' of Oceanic Studies.

2 pm – 3:15 pm: Part One of the Readings

Matt Matsuda, "The Pacific," 2006. *The American Historical Review*, 111(3), pp. 758-780.

Shanti Moorthy and Ashraf Jamal, 2010 "Introduction: New Conjunctures in Maritime Imaginaries," in Indian Ocean Studies: Cultural, Social, and Political Perspectives, eds. Shanti Moorthy and Ashraf Jamal (New York: Routledge), pp. 2-31.

Nancy Munn. 1977. The Spatiotemporal Transformations of Gawa Canoes
Journal de la Société des océanistes. 54-55 (33), pp. 39-53

Steinberg, Philip E. 2001. Ch 1 "Territorial Political Economy and the Construction of Ocean Space," in The Social Construction of the Ocean. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 8-38.

3:15 pm – 3:30 pm: Break

3:30 pm – 4: 45 pm: Part Two of the Readings.

Steinberg, Philip E. 2013. Of Other Seas: Metaphors and Materialities in Maritime Regions. Atlantic Studies 10 (2), pp. 156–69.

Walley, Christine. 2004. Ch 6 "Pushing Paper: Power, bureaucracy, knowledge within a national marine park," in Rough Waters: Nature and Development in an East African Marine Park. (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 190-216.

Yaeger, Patricia. "Editor's Column: Sea Trash, Dark Pools, and the Tragedy of the Commons," *PMLA*, 125.3 (May 2010): 523-545.

4:45-5pm: Writing and Reflection 2: What works, themes and approaches addressed in the readings and discussion do you find the most promising or provocative? How might they be applied to your own research? What commonalities and disparities are you noticing in group commentaries and discussions? When are disciplinary distinctions most evident? Which concepts, themes and approaches seem to bridge disciplinary differences? Does the conversation spark ideas about new, alternative, or later research projects you might want to pursue?

Friday, June 6th

Session III: Proposal Workshop Each proposal discussion will take place as follows: We will start with a 5 minute overview of the proposal presented by the partner of the author whose project is being discussed. This will be followed by a 15 minute group discussion. We will then devote 5 minutes for written peer feedback and reflection. We will conclude with a 5 minute reflection/discussion on the part of the proposal writer. In order to give equal consideration to all proposals, we ask everyone to keep to the allotted time limits. You will be asked to post your comments on the group's on-line workspace.

Proposal Pairs:

Bhattacharyya (1) & Molyneux (2)
Jesse (3) & Morales (4)
Mendelsohn (5) & Underwood (6)
Vandenbossche (7) & Savala (8)
Rucker (9) & Hardy (10)
Dubik (11) & Sammler (12)

9 am – 9:30 am Proposal 1 - Bhattacharyya

9:30 am – 10 am Proposal 2 - Molyneux

10am – 10:15 am Break

10:15 – 11 am: Media 'Show and Tell': In this hour students will be asked to share and discuss the group examples of media coverage of Oceans and Oceanic matters. Please post as varied a set of examples as you can find about the ways in which oceans enter the public imagination through such media forms as news clips, songs, films, advertising, websites etc. We will collectively discuss how the media shapes the public imagination of oceans and oceanic spaces. You will be asked to consider the main 'take-aways' from media representations of the Oceanic? Do media representations and the public imagination of the Oceanic play any role in your own project? How might your work speak to media representations and the public imagination of the Ocean?

11 am – 11:30 am: Proposal 3 - Jesse

11:30 am – Noon: Proposal 4 - Morales

Noon-2pm Lunch Break

Session IV: Proposal Workshop Continued

2 pm – 2:30 pm: Proposal 5 - Mendelsohn

2:30 pm – 3 pm: Proposal 6 - Underwood

3-3:15pm – Break

3:15 pm – 3:45 pm: Proposal 7 - Vandebossche

3:45 pm – 4:15 pm: Proposal 8 - Savala

4:15 pm – 5 pm: Artistic and Critical Representations : Screening of film and photographic works that critically interrogate the nature of oceans in the age of the Anthropocene? How do these artistic works utilize some of the same techniques, data and devices as scholarly projects? What do they do differently? How does scholarship enter into these works and what might scholars take from them, substantively and methodologically? How might we explain the power and preponderance of aesthetic representations of Oceans and the Oceanic? Do film and photographic representations and the artistic imagination of the Oceanic play any role in your own project? How might your work speak to visual representations and the critical artistic imagination of the Ocean? Feel free to include links to relevant examples on the on-line workspace.

Works to be screened and discussed will include Sekula and Burch film, *The Forgotten Space* (2010); Michael Light photo series, *Bikini Atoll* (2003), and Gabriel Orozco installation, *Asterisms* (2012).

Saturday, June 7th

Session V: Meet the Author: Stefan Helmreich

9 am – 11:30 am: This session will be led by Professor Stefan Helmreich, Professor of Anthropology at MIT and author of the book, *Alien Ocean: Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas*. Professor Helmreich will speak on his own current research and will also allow us to engage with him on his book and the field of Oceanic studies in general and consider the potential intersections of social science, humanities and science studies. All participants will receive a copy of the book to read in advance of the workshop.

11:30 am to 2:30pm: Possible off-site field trip and lunch. Berkeley Marina. 201 University Ave.

Session VI: Proposal Workshop

2:45pm – 3:15 pm: Proposal 9 - Rucker

3:15 pm – 3:45 pm: Proposal 10 - Hardy

3:45 pm – 4:00 pm: Break

4:00 pm – 4: 30 pm Proposal 11 - Dubik

4:30 pm – 5 pm: Proposal 12 - Sammler

Sunday, June 8th

Session VII: Sailing Forth: Charting your Way through your Summer Research

9:00 am – 10 am: Writing and Reflection on Reflections: This is a final writing session allowing you to take stock of the session's discussions, peer feedback and writing and reflection exercises. Where are you now? What have you learned over the last few days? How have the discussions helped re-shape your research goals? What are your next steps in terms of refining your proposal and preparing for research. **You will be expected to post your peer feedback on-line by 8pm Saturday, June 7** so everyone has the opportunity to review each other's remarks prior to the Sunday session.

10am – 10: 15am: Break

10:15-10:45 am: Field Notes: The Research Directors will lead a discussion on research ethics and accountability at various field sites; practical issues surrounding fieldwork and research in archives and other such practical matters that you need to be mindful of as you launch your pre-dissertation research over the summer and plan for dissertation proposal revisions and submissions.

10:45-11:15: Field Notes: Student Q & A

11:15am- Noon: Open Discussion on the Interdisciplinary Oceanic: Can we make a case for an interdisciplinary field of Oceanic Studies? What are its core concepts and concerns? What future departures and directions might we anticipate? What fissures, debates and disagreements prevail? What is the relevance of scholarly interrogations of the Oceanic at the current historical juncture?

**SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP
Hyatt Arlington, Arlington, Virginia
Wednesday, September 17th to Sunday, September 21st, 2014
FALL 2014 WORKSHOP AGENDA**

Oceanic Studies: Seas as Sites and Subjects of Interdisciplinary Studies

Workshop Directors:

Dr. Brenda Chalfin, University of Florida and Dr. Gaurav Desai, Tulane University.

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, the goals of the fall workshop are closely related to the project of mapping a 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 as supportive networks of mentors and cohorts of new scholars within the research field.

WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENTS

1. By September 10th, please upload a revised version of your dissertation proposal. You may write this either as a dissertation proposal for your department and/or committee or as a funding proposal to a major funding agency. Be clear to yourself as to which audience you are writing for and indicate that clearly in your document. The length, form and style of your proposal should clearly follow the norms and requirements of the funding body that you are applying to or the conventions in your department.

Whatever format you follow, include a 250 word proposal abstract, a paragraph on broader impacts and a paragraph explaining your work's contribution to humanistic inquiry. Clear responses to these questions are highly valued by funders and selection committees and we will be taking a close look at them during the workshop. (For more information of 'broader impacts' criteria see www.nsf.gov; for information on 'humanistic inquiry' criteria see www.ssrc.org/programs/idrf)

2. By September 10th, write a short piece (2-3 pages) that reports on your summer experiences, both the successes and the challenges. How has your research project been shaped by that experience?

3. Before arriving at our workshop, be sure to read all the proposals and field experience reports from the group. Take copious notes and bring them along. While we will engage in group discussions of all proposals, you will be asked to the lead the discussion of the same person whose proposal you discussed the last time around so be sure to pay even greater attention to your partner's proposal.

4. This last assignment is optional, but *highly recommended*. By September 12th, read through the thematic descriptions of all the other DPDF workshops that will meet simultaneously with us. Then read through (via google or any other means) the bios of the various faculty leading the seminars. Make a conscious attempt during our workshop to have lunch with one or more of the faculty whose interests and expertise is of relevance to your project. In order to secure such a meeting, you may consider sending an email prior to the workshop requesting an appointment.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 17th

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

Thursday, September 18th

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

This will be our collective opportunity to reflect on how your summer research experiences may have changed your thinking about your projects. What was surprising? What was difficult? What (if anything) was easy? Were the methods that you brought to the project appropriate ones? Could other methodological approaches further enhance or refine your future fieldwork? Have your hypothesis about what you would find in the field changed? Each participant will have a chance to speak for about 5 minutes followed by 8 minutes of discussion. We will take a coffee break during the session when the beverages arrive.

2 to 5 p.m.: **Plenary Session on Proposal Writing and Applying for Dissertation Research Funding**

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 19th

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

In each of the Proposal Reviewing Sessions, we will follow the same format. We will start with a **5** minute overview of the proposal presented by the partner of the author whose proposal is being discussed, followed by a **15** minute group discussion. We will then devote **5** minutes for written feedback to be followed by a **5** minute reflection/discussion by the proposal writer.

9 – 9:30 am Sammler

9:30 – 10 am Dubik

10 – 10:30 am Hardy

10:30 – 10:45 am Break

10:45 – 11:15 am Rucker

11:15 – Noon Small Group Session on ‘Abstracts’ (self-selected groups). 20 minute Individual Meetings with Workshop Directors: 11:15 to 11:35 am Sammler; 11:35 to 11:55 am Dubik; 11:55-12:15 pm Hardy; 12:15 to 12:35 pm Rucker.

In this Small Group Session, you will work on refining your 250 word proposal abstracts individually and with each other. Remember that in some fellowship competitions, it may only be your abstract that is read for the first cut. Writing it as an afterthought is one of the most critical mistakes that unsuccessful applicants make.

2:00-2:30 pm Savala

2:30-3:00 pm Vandenbossche

20 minute Individual Meetings with Workshop Directors: 3:00-3:20pm Savala; 3:20-3:40pm Vandenbossche.

4:30 p.m.: Depart for Group Meeting and Dinner at National Harbor Marina

Saturday, September 20th

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.: Workshop Session #3: Reviewing Proposals

9 – 9:30 am Underwood

9:30 – 10 am Mendelsohn

10 – 10:30 am Morales

10:30 – 10:45 am Break

10:45 – 11:00 am Preface to Small Group Sessions on ‘Broader Impacts’ and ‘Humanistic Inquiry’.

11:00 am – Noon: Small Group Sessions on ‘Broader Impacts’ and ‘Humanistic Inquiry’ (self-selected groups). 20 minute Individual Meetings with Workshop Directors: 11:00 – 11:20 am Underwood; 11:20 – 11:40 am Mendelsohn; 11:40 - Noon Morales.

In this small group session you will discuss and work with each other on addressing the broader reach dimensions of your proposal. Think carefully about the funding body you are applying to and decide how best to frame your response. The SSRC’s IDRF competition, for instance, is interested in the relation of your project to “humanistic inquiry.” The NSF wants a clear articulation of the “broader impact” of your study. You will work with each other to help articulate these dimensions of each of your proposals.

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

2 – 2:30 pm Jesse

2:30 – 3 pm Molyneux

3 – 3:30 pm Bhattacharyya

3:30 – 3:45 pm Break

3:45 – 4:00 pm Preface to Small Group Sessions on Bibliographies.

4:00 – 5 pm Small Group Sessions on Bibliographies (self-selected groups). 20 minute Individual Meetings with Workshop Directors: 4:00 – 4:20 pm Jesse; 4:20 – 4:40 pm Molyneux; 4:40 – 5:00 pm Bhattacharyya.

In this small group session you will focus on the presentation of your bibliography in the proposal. What gets included and what not gives a distinct impression of your proposal to external reviewers. They will assess your own intellectual background, your reading and theoretical dispositions and your sense of adventurousness and promise not only on what you have to say in your project narrative but also in what you bring to the table in your bibliography. Pay attention to how much and which canonically cited literature you are including and how much and which new and innovative scholarship is in your bibliography. What do you cite that is recognizably within your discipline and how much do you venture across disciplines for fruitful conversations? Especially if your work involves an international project, have you taken care to ensure that your bibliography attempts to include scholars from the region that you are studying? These are some of the issues that you should discuss about each other’s bibliographies in your small groups. Think of the exercise not

as one in accumulating further sources from each other (which, of course, is always welcome) but rather as an exercise in the sociology of knowledge.

Sunday, September 21st

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

This session will be the occasion to clarify the steps fellows should take following the conclusion of the program, whether it is sorting issues out with their advisors, calling funding agencies for clarifications, submitting a conference or working paper, not losing sight of the work they did in the program as they prepare for qualifying exams. This will also be the time for discussing field building going forward, and how the group might continue their conversations, and possibly expand their network after the program ends. Responding to participant questions and concerns is an important part of this wrap-up session so please feel free to raise topics for discussion.

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