

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

**Black Atlantic Studies
SHAREPOINT SITE**

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**Radisson Hotel Denver Stapleton Plaza
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.

The Field of Black Atlantic Studies

As an interdisciplinary research field, Black Atlantic Studies combines analytic and interpretive methods ranging from demographic approaches to new slave trade databases to performance-centered phenomenological approaches to gender, race and memory. Ideologies of blackness and Africanity can be pursued in literary texts and historical archives, musical genres and modes of cultural production, and in a variety of political and nationalist projects. Multimedia documents that combine audiovisual clips and spatial dynamics are approached as critical research tools, methods of collecting and organizing data, and as innovative forms of scholarly presentation. Some projects will involve intensive fieldwork on festival complexes and performance genres in bounded sites, others will track the circulation of expressive cultural forms between coasts and hinterlands, within Atlantic regions, and across socially differentiated regimes of value. The challenges of linking the localities of “place” to the translocal dimensions of Black Atlantic history and culture will establish a unifying methodological theme of our workshop sessions.

Workshop Readings and Resources

Research Field resources will be placed on the relevant SharePoint websites. Students will receive separate explanations and detailed instructions about the access and use of the DPDF digital platform.

Workshop Assignments

- **May 11th Due on DPDF SharePoint site:** A 6 page revised proposal/research statement based on what was submitted with the DPDF application. Fellows should be prepared to present, comment upon and evaluate the proposal they submit during one of the workshop sessions. Emphasis will be on revising and fine-tuning sustainable research strategies for summer research. The revised proposal should specify the conceptual, theoretical, and analytical focus of the project, deal with issues of methodology and epistemological concerns, and discuss scholarly literature with which it is engaged. It should also contain a bibliography. You may want to include questions about your research that you would like addressed, doubts, hesitations, and requests for advice. A comprehensive bibliography should be attached.
- **May 11th.** You will be assigned one of the revised proposals/research statements prepared by another member of the group for presentation and critical discussion during the workshop. The assignment will be sent by email. The entire list of assigned presentations will be posted on the sharepoint site.
- **May 16th. Due on DPDF SharePoint site:** Submission of one page presentation and critical discussion of the one or two scholarly texts that have particularly influenced your research.
- **May 16th Due on DPDF SharePoint site:** In view of the description of the field provided above, prepare and submit a one-page exegesis on the relationship of your work to Black Atlantic Studies (one paragraph) and the methodological/epistemological issues that need to be engaged.
 - Complete reading each of the 6 page revised proposals submitted by all of the Fellows as a basis for critical discussion during the workshop.
 - Complete preparation for presentation and critical discussion of the proposal/research statement assigned to you.
 - Complete the reading assignments.

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)

All the required reading must be completed before arrival. They are in PDF format on our SharePoint site. While we have identified the targeted reading for each of the sessions, we expect a familiarity with each of the texts for critical engagement with issues of the field in this session. We have also placed additional recommended reading on the website.

Introduction of Research Directors and Fellows.

Mapping the Field. In this session we will begin to map the field of Black Atlantic Studies through a discussion of the issues with which it has been engaged over the period of its development and in current scholarship. We will pay particular attention to the fundamental questions that are at the heart of the field. We will relate the key positions and debates of the 1940s (and their enduring relevance today) to the innovative directions of contemporary research. Our intention here is to begin thinking about the conceptual and theoretical issues that are at the core of the field's concerns and the methodological and epistemological problems that they raise. After a general discussion, the following Research Statements will be presented by their assigned discussants as a basis for further examination of the issues raised:

Akissi Britton, "From Brooklyn to Brazil: Race, Place, and Religion in the Mapping of Diasporic Blackness"

Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, "Of Youth and Revolution: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation in Contemporary Cuba."

Jamie Davidson, "Embodied Knowledge in the Tambor de Mina of Maranhao"

Targeted Reading:

M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, Chapter one. "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of decolonization: feminism, tourism and the state in the Bahamas". Duke, 2005.

Gilroy, P. *Against Race*, Chapter 2. "Modernity and Infrahumanity".

Stuart Hall, "Negotiating Caribbean Identities" in Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl, *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*. pp 24-39.

Kelly R. D. G. and Patterson, T. R. (2000) "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World" *African Studies Review*, 43 (1). pp 11-45.

E. Franklin Frazier's "The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil" (*American Sociological Review*, 1942),

Herskovits's response "The Negro in Bahia, Brazil: a problem in Method" (*AMS*, 1943) together with Frazier's rejoinder.

Keving Yelvington's introduction to Afro-Atlantic Dialogues: Anthropology in the Diaspora" (2006)

Brown, J.N. (1998) "Black Liverpool, Black America, and the Gendering of Diasporic Space," Cultural Anthropology, 13 (3), pp 291-325.

Session 3: Questions of Method and Epistemology

(Friday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

We will discuss here issues of epistemology and methodology that are raised in Black Atlantic Studies. What is “African” in the African Diaspora? How do we construct the spatio-temporal coordinates of Black Atlantic historical dynamics? How do we reconcile the objectivism of demographic trends with phenomenologies of performance and repressed historical memory? How do we structure the “subjects” and “objects” of our research? How do we identify relevant temporalities and historical trajectories, from the micro-arenas of performance contexts to the macro-perspectives of the “longue durée”? How do we recover the actions and voices of African agency?

After a general discussion, the following Research Statements will be presented by their assigned discussants as a basis for further examination of the issues raised:

Nandini Dhar, “Problematizing the Archive, re-writing Agency: “Neo-Slave” Aesthetics in Museums and Historical Novels of the African Diaspora.

Jamila Moore, “Digitally Mapping the Black Atlantic: Spatial Imagination and the Politics of Re-Appropriation Between Africa and the Americas.

Sharon Kivenko, “Dancing Through “Performance Scapes”: Reflections on Transnationalism, Embodiment, and West African Performance”.

Targeted Reading:

Shalini Puri, *The Caribbean Postcolonial*. Chapter 1 “Theorizing Hybridity: The Post National Moment.”

Ann Laura Stoler: *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial rule*”. Chapter 7: “Memory Work in Java”.

Dreyfus, H. and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structural Analytics*. Chapter 5: *Interpretive Analytics*.

Session 4: Historical Roots and Contemporary Issues

(Friday, 1:30 PM – 5 PM)

Here we will return to the fundamental methods and sources that informed the field during the early period of its conceptualization. The focus was, decidedly, on the issue of the “roots” of Black subjectivity and consciousness. We will then examine the contemporary issues that

inform the field particularly as these pertain to the cultural politics stemming from the circulation of black bodies.

After a general discussion the following Research Statements will be presented by their assigned discussants as a basis for further examination of the issues raised:

Jessica Krug, “Fugitive Nations: Maroon Societies in Kisama, Angola, Sao Tome, and Brazil 1500-1700.

Petra Rivera, “What is Afro-Boricua?: The Impact of Migration and Popular Culture on Understandings of Blackness in Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican Diaspora.”

Carmen Thompson, “Black Womanhood and Slavery: Survival Strategies in the New World and in West Africa, 1665-1863.

Targeted Reading:

Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies*.

Introduction: “Black Britain and the Cultural Politics of Diaspora.”

Session 5: Ethnographies, Strategies, and Sources

(Saturday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)

We will develop a distinction between analytic and operational methods that helps relate the collection of data to the research hypotheses and questions. Can ritual be approached as a living historical archive? How are archival methods incorporated into ethnographic research? How do we relate official texts to unofficial contexts? We will focus here on the specifics of using different types of sources by examining and discussing the three remaining research proposals. We will then follow this with an examination of each of the twelve one-page discussions of the prepared scholarly texts. Here, we would rely on the previously assigned readings.

After a general discussion the following Research Statements will be presented by their assigned discussants as a basis for further examination of the issues raised:

Chelsey Kivland, “Masking Change: Performing Order: The Ritual Histories and Political Arts of Haitian Carnival”

Xelaju Korda, “Sex Tourism in the Brazilian Northeast: Gender Performances Within a Sexualized World Market.”

Matthew Norton, “Ashanti to Gold Coast to Ghana: A Genealogy of the Experience of Documentary Rule.”

**Session 6: From the Field to the Proposal
(Saturday, 12:30 PM – 5 PM)**

A variety of proposal writing strategies will be discussed, from framing hypotheses to securing institutional affiliations with overseas universities and research organizations. Each of the fellows will reflect on the critical discussions of her/his proposal/research statement in view of her/his one-page prepared statement on its relationship to the field and to issues of methodology and tactics.

**Session 7: Looking Forward
(Sunday, 9 AM – 12:30 PM)**

Here we will have a general session on the overall issues raised by the workshop. Fellows will be given the opportunity to clarify field-related questions. This would be followed by a planning session for summer assignments, communication strategies and for the summer workshops. We will hand out summer reading assignments. Finally, we will have a general brainstorming session as to what worked and what is needed to better serve the needs of the fellows.

**Required Readings for Workshop
(Posted on the Sharepoint Website)**

Alexander, M. Jacqui, **Pedagogies of Crossing**, *Chapter one. "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of decolonization: feminism, tourism and the state in the Bahamas"*. Duke, 2005.

Brown, J.N. (1998) "*Black Liverpool, Black America, and the Gendering of Diasporic Space*," **Cultural Anthropology**, 13 (3), pp 291-325.

Dreyfus, H. and Paul Rabinow, **Michel Foucault: Beyond Structural Analytics. Chapter 5: Interpretive Analytics.**

Frazier E. Franklin "*The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil*" (**American Sociological Review**, 1942),

Gilroy, P. **Against Race**, *Chapter 2. "Modernity and Infrabumantia"*.

Hall, Stuart, "*Negotiating Caribbean Identities*" in Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl, *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*. pp 24-39.

Herskovits's response to Frazier "*The Negro in Bahia, Brazil: a problem in Method*" (AMS, 1943) together with Frazier's rejoinder

Kelly R. D. G. and Patterson, T. R. (2000) "*Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World*" **African Studies Review**, 43 (1). pp 11-45.

Mercer, Kobena **Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies.**
Introduction: "Black Britain and the Cultural Politics of Diaspora"

Puri, Shalini *The Caribbean Postcolonial*. Chapter 1 “Theorizing Hybridity: The Post National Moment”

Stoler, Ann Laura, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial rule*. Chapter 7: “Memory Work in Java”.

Yelvington. K. *Introduction*. **Afro-Atlantic Dialogues: Anthropology in the Diaspora** (2006)

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

Black Atlantic Studies

Research Directors:

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Percy C. Hintzen, phintzen@berkeley.edu

ROOM 307

**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.

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 have each student leave with a highly competitive dissertation proposal as a basis both for satisfying their respective university requirements and for receiving research funding. The September 2007 workshop incorporates the students' summer field experiences into working research proposal drafts. Intensive discussion and feedback from directors and students will be incorporated into revisions on the third day, during working sessions organized by sub-groups. These sub-groups will be formed according to common themes, methodologies, and/or areas. For example, students whose projects require microanalyses of ritual performances may group together to compare technologies and techniques; others working on Cuba, urban North America, or coastal-hinterland relations may self-organize around common social and historical developments. On day four, the revised proposals will be subject to final critique by the faculty organizers, as thematic, methodological, and tactical issues (e.g. letters of support and affiliation) are coordinated and fine-tuned. Students should leave the September workshop with robust proposals that can be adjusted for the major fellowship competitions in autumn 2007, and for defense and submission to their home department.

Workshop Readings and Resources

Each of the revised proposals will be placed on the SharePoint website. Additional readings have already been added to those that were required for the first workshop. All other relevant material will be added to the website.

Workshop Assignments

- **September 4th. Due on DPDF SharePoint site:** Fellows are asked to upload a draft dissertation proposal to be examined during the workshop.
- **September 8th. Due on DPDF SharePoint site:** Fellows are asked to work together as a team to present their research fields during the last plenary session on Sunday.

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)

Sessions 2-6: Thursday, Friday, and Saturday

These sessions will focus on student proposals, which have been (roughly) grouped in thematic / methodological clusters.

In Workshop 1, each student was assigned a proposal for critical examination and review and for presentation to the group. In this workshop, we will reverse the order of presentation. Each student will present her/his revised proposal. This will be followed by a critical commentary by the student originally assigned to present the proposal in Workshop 1. This commentary should focus on the changes, additions, and improvements to the original proposal based on summer fieldwork and on the critical feedback received in May. After this presentation, the proposal will be opened up for general discussion and input. This procedure will be followed for each of students. They will be grouped into the original themes as specified in the May workshop and will be presented and discussed, in the same order. While the themes will be used to focus on the broad debates in the field, each proposal must be presented and discussed on its own merit.

Session 2:

(Thursday, 2:00 PM – 5 PM)

List of Proposals up for discussion:

Akissi Britton, “From Brooklyn to Brazil: Race, Place, and Religion in the Mapping of Diasporic Blackness”

Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, “Of Youth and Revolution: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation in Contemporary Cuba.”

Jamie Davidson, “Embodied Knowledge in the Tambor de Mina of Maranhao”

The basis for selection of these three presentations relates to their significance to mapping the field of Black Atlantic Studies and to the conceptual and theoretical issues that are at the core of the field’s concerns and the methodological and epistemological problems that they raise.

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

Session 3:

(Friday, 9 AM – 12:00 PM)

List of proposals up for discussion.

Nandini Dhar, “Problematizing the Archive, re-writing Agency: “Neo-Slave” Aesthetics in Museums and Historical Novels of the African Diaspora.

Jamila Moore, “Digitally Mapping the Black Atlantic: Spatial Imagination and the Politics of Re-Appropriation Between Africa and the Americas.

Sharon Kivenko, “Dancing Through “Performance Scapes”: Reflections on Transnationalism, Embodiment, and West African Performance”.

The basis for this grouping of presentations relate to issues of epistemology and methodology that they reflect and that are raised in Black Atlantic Studies. What is “African” in the African Diaspora? How do we construct the spatio-temporal coordinates of Black Atlantic historical dynamics? How do we reconcile the objectivism of demographic trends with phenomenologies of performance and repressed historical memory? How do we structure the “subjects” and “objects” of our research? How do we identify relevant temporalities and historical trajectories, from the micro-arenas of performance contexts to the macro-perspectives of the “longue durée”? How do we recover the actions and voices of African agency?

Session 4:

(Friday, 2:00 PM – 5 PM)

List of proposals up for discussion.

Jessica Krug, “Fugitive Nations: Maroon Societies in Kisama, Angola, Sao Tome, and Brazil 1500-1700.

Petra Rivera, “What is Afro-Boricua?: The Impact of Migration and Popular Culture on Understandings of Blackness in Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican Diaspora.”

Carmen Thompson, “Black Womanhood and Slavery: Survival Strategies in the New World and in West Africa, 1665-1863.

These sets of proposals focus on issues of the “roots” of Black subjectivity and consciousness and the contemporary issues that inform the field particularly as these pertain to the cultural politics stemming from the circulation of black bodies.

Session 5:

(Saturday, 9 AM – 12:00 PM)

List of proposals up for discussion.

Chelsey Kivland, “Masking Change: Performing Order: The Ritual Histories and Political Arts of Haitian Carnival”

Xelaju Korda, “Sex Tourism in the Brazilian Northeast: Gender Performances Within a Sexualized World Market.”

Matthew Norton, “Ashanti to Gold Coast to Ghana: A Genealogy of the Experience of Documentary Rule.”

These proposals throw light on ethnographies, strategies, and sources. They raise issues of the distinction between analytic and operational methods as well as the relationship between collection of data and the research hypotheses and questions. Can ritual be approached as a living historical archive? How are archival methods incorporated into ethnographic research? How do we relate official texts to unofficial contexts?

Session 6:

(Saturday, 2:00 PM – 5 PM)

Guest Presentation by Dr. John Nunley on Black Atlantic Rim Performance Arts, followed by a visit to the St. Louis Museum of Art (SMART) for collections viewing.

Into the evening: Black Atlantic Studies tour of the Saint Louis Museum of Art with John Nunley.

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.