

**SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP
SPRING 2010 WORKSHOP AGENDA**

**AFTER SECULARIZATION: NEW APPROACHES TO RELIGION AND
MODERNITY**

<https://workspace.ssrc.org/dpdf/>

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**Hilton San Diego, Gaslamp Quarter, San Diego, CA
Wednesday June 2 - 6, 2010**

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. More specifically, we will explore current debates on the question of secularization, the secularization thesis, and the role of a new, post-cold-war geo-politics in revising scholarly approaches to such matters in the social sciences and humanities. Our main objectives in the spring session are both to unsettle the presuppositions about the origins and development of secularization and to begin to suggest some new ways forward. As such, the session will combine responses to the existing literature on secularization with individual discussions of the participants' intended projects. 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.

Workshop Readings and Resources

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

Workshop Assignments

- **May 28th, 2010 (due on DPDF Workspace site):** 1 page revised abstract of proposal submitted with DPDF application. Fellows should be prepared to present, comment 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.
- **May 28th, 2010 (due on DPDF Workspace site):** 3,500-4,000 word version of your proposal (see the longer description in the writing assignment posted to the Workspace).

ARRIVAL, Wednesday, June 2: Reading handouts / packets will be distributed at registration along with other materials.

Wednesday Evening: *Reception, 7-9pm.*

Session 1: Introductions and Mapping the Field

(Thursday, 9 AM – 12 PM)

Secularization as a model for thinking about religious change in the modern age begins in the Enlightenment and tracks the emergence of social and human science disciplines. Our first session will consider the various permutations of the secularization thesis by looking at both canonical theoretical texts, and exemplary historical studies that take this thesis on board. In particular, we will use the assigned essays from *The Hedgehog Review* (2006) as a beginning point for general discussion.

Key Questions:

How did secularization emerge as a model in the social sciences and humanities in the 18th-20th centuries? How do various accounts of secularization map onto claims about modernization, the changing nature of religion, the emergence of secular society, imperialism, globalization, and so forth? Is secularization a specifically “Western” phenomenon? Is it tied to capitalism and/or the nation-state? How do we think about the transmutations of religion in different global contexts?

Session 2: Mapping the Field – Theory and Practice

(Thursday, 2 PM – 3.30 PM)

In this session, we continue the previous conversation, but turning our emphasis toward practical ramifications for your future work in the field.

Key Questions:

How do our assumptions about the history (or inexorability) of secularization manifest themselves in our scholarly work? In what ways are we compelled to respond to a radically revised account of secularization, and can it be done successfully within existing scholarly protocols? How might we rethink these protocols in order to produce new research programs on both religion and secular society? Is something called the “post-secular” possible, and what would it look like? How would it reflect back onto our understanding of religion and our understanding of secular modernity more broadly?

Session 3: The Immanent Frame

(Thursday, 3.30 PM – 5 PM)

Presentation and discussion with Jonathan van Antwerpen, coordinator of the SSRC Blog *The Immanent Frame*. Students will be instructed in the use of the blog as a vehicle for communication during the summer, and afterwards if you want, in special section of the blog entitled “Notes from the Field.”

Session 3: Research Presentations I

(Friday, 9 AM – 12:00 PM)

The next four sessions will be structured around your research proposals. There will be three presentations per session, followed by substantial discussion of the proposal. Each student will talk for approximately 10 minutes about his or her project and planned work for the summer. In particular, students should work to connect their questions to the larger issues in the field. Discussions will focus on the relationship between methodology and research questions, which is at the core of research design and a necessary feature of good proposals. The Directors will send out an agenda the weekend before the conference laying out the respective panels. Every participant should prepare three questions and a short (3-4 minute) response to each paper – we will ask one of you to start the session off by offering your response and questions, and then move to an open format discussion.

Session 4: Research Presentations II

(Friday, 2 PM – 5 PM)

Optional Session: Working with Live Subjects

(Friday Dinner, 7 PM)

Many of you will be conducting research on religion and secularism with live subjects. During this dinner session, which is open to everyone, our guest speaker Brian Silverstein (University of Arizona, specializing in media and religion in modern Turkey) will discuss the challenges, pitfalls, and opportunities of fieldwork. This will be a great opportunity to ask both practical and theoretical questions of someone with substantial anthropological experience.

Session 5: Research Presentations III

(Saturday, 9 AM – 12:00 PM)

Session 6: Research Presentations IV

(Saturday, 2 PM – 5 PM)

Session 7: Looking Forward

(Sunday, 9 AM – 12 PM)

This final session address the practical and the theoretical alike. On the practical side, we will discuss the kinds of challenges inherent in coming out of the field with a mass of notes and moving towards a dissertation proposal. To frame this discussion, we will circulate in advance some examples of dissertation proposals that have emerged from this process. At the same time, we will return to (and take stock of) the research field as it has been presented through the continuing discussion of student presentations. Finally, we will plan our future communications, assignments, and meetings. We will circulate some summer readings lists and assignments, as well as formalize our expectation for the Fall meeting.

**SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP
FALL 2010 WORKSHOP AGENDA**

**AFTER SECULARIZATION: NEW APPROACHES TO RELIGION AND
MODERNITY
WORKSPACE SITE**

Research Director: Vincent P. Pecora [v.pecora@utah.edu]
Research Director: Jonathan Sheehan [sheehan@berkeley.edu]

Philadelphia, PA, September 16-19, 2010

This is the second of two workshops designed to help students prepare cogent and fundable dissertation proposals in their chosen field. The two goals of the workshop are 1) to work with fellows on developing their current research proposals; and 2) to help prepare fellows for their future work in the field. The agenda will therefore include intensive readings and commentary on grant proposals (both in groups and in one-on-one sessions with the research directors) as well as more open conversations about future directions of research.

Workshop Readings and Resources

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

Workshop Assignments

- **September 10th, 2010 (due on DPDF Workspace site):** A 4000-5000-word reworking of the proposal in line with a grant application.
- **September 10th, 2010 (due on DPDF Workspace site):** 500-word summary of the project.

ARRIVAL, Wednesday, September 15th: Reading handouts / packets will be distributed at registration along with other materials.

Wednesday Evening: *Reception, 7-9pm.*

Session 1: Grant Proposal Workshop
(Thursday, 9 AM – 12 PM)

All DPDF workshops will meet as one for this session.

Session 2: Recap of Major Issues and Discussion of Papers by Jonathan Sheehan and Vincent Pecora

(Thursday, 2 PM – 5 PM)

This first meeting of the “After Secularization” fall workshop, will focus on revisiting major themes developed in the spring workshop, and will do this primarily via discussion of two papers posted on the Workspace:

—Jonathan Sheehan, “When Was Disenchantment? History and the Secular Age,” in Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, Craig Calhoun, eds., *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 217-242.

—Vincent Pecora, “Secularism, Secularization, and Why the Difference Matters,” unpublished manuscript (first paragraphs of which appeared on the Immanent Frame).

Session 3: Research Presentations I

(Friday, 9 AM – 11 AM [group]; 11 AM – 12:30 PM [individuals])

The next four sessions will be structured around your research proposals, in group sessions of 2 hours followed by ninety minutes of private meetings. Three members of the group will present their proposals for commentary by the group (40 minutes/proposal). Each student should talk *very briefly* about his or her summer experience and especially areas thought to need additional cogency. Every participant should be prepared to engage both substantively and practically with the proposals. That is, we will be considering both the large- scale issues of theme, argument, and research design, as well as the more narrow questions of presentation and effectiveness. This session will be followed by three 30-minute individual discussions between each student whose proposal had been addressed earlier by the group and both research directors acting as a team.

Session 4: Research Presentations II

(Friday, 2 PM – 4 PM; 4 PM – 5:30 PM)

Session 5: Research Presentations III

(Saturday, 9 AM – 11:00; 11 AM – 12:30 PM)

Session 6: Research Presentations IV

(Saturday, 2 PM – 4 PM; 4 PM – 5:30 PM)

Session 7: After “After Secularization”

(Sunday, 9 AM – 12 PM)

Our last session will be devoted to discussion of the larger prospects of our rubric as an “emergent” interdisciplinary endeavor. As you know, the DPDF program is designed both to assist individual projects and to promote the interdisciplinary field itself to the extent that it encourages innovative approaches not currently available within existing disciplinary structures. The question for us, at the end of this particular program, is whether and how what is now being called the “post-secular”

perspective is indeed emergent, innovative, and capable of sustaining scholarship that might otherwise go unwritten. And if it is not, what still needs to be thought through for this to happen?