



**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**  
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

# **SCHOLARLY PURSUITS**

**A Guide to Professional Development during the  
Graduate Years**

FIFTEENTH EDITION

by Cynthia Verba,  
Former Director of F  
Fall 2021

**SCHOLARLY PURSUITS**  
**A Guide to Professional Development during the Graduate Years**

**Fifteenth Edition**

With sample application essays, fellowship proposals,  
Curriculum vitae, and cover letters from doctoral candidates  
in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Harvard  
University

by  
**Cynthia Verba**

**A Publication of the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences**

Very special gratitude goes to all the graduate students and PhDs who shared so generously their experiences in academe, without whom this booklet could not have been written.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cynthia Verba has served as director of fellowships in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences from 1986 until her retirement in 2020. Prior to that, she was an associate director at Harvard's Office of Career Services, overseeing academic and nonacademic career services for graduate students and PhDs, starting in 1978. Verba holds a PhD in musicology from the University of Chicago and continues to be active as a publishing scholar. She was a fellow at the Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College in 1987 and received a fellowship from the National Endowment of the Humanities in 1983 to further her research in musicology. She also served as chair of the Committee on Academic and Nonacademic Employment of the American Musicological Society (AMS) from 1979 to 1985 and more recently served as a member of the AMS Committee on Career-Related Issues for two years. She taught courses in music history at the Harvard University Extension School for more than two decades, retiring in 2009.

Verba's publications in the area of professional development and grantsmanship include: *Minorities in Academe: The Concept of Becoming a Scholar* (revised version, 1996) and the annual fellowship guides *The Graduate Guide to Grants* and *The Harvard Guide to Postdoctoral Fellowships*. She wrote *Careers for Musicologists*, published by the American Musicological Society (AMS) in 1986, and an adaptation of a Harvard publication for AMS titled *Scholarly Pursuits: A Guide to Professional Development for Graduate Students in the Fields of Music*, published on the AMS website in 2012. She also contributed to *Teaching and Beyond: Nonacademic Career Programs for PhDs*, published by the Regents of the University of the State of New York in 1984.

In the field of musicology she has written two books: *Music and the French Enlightenment: Reconstruction of a Dialogue, 1750–1765* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993; revised edition, 2016) and *Dramatic Expression in Rameau's Tragédie en Musique: Between Tradition and Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). In addition, she has published numerous articles and reviews, and has delivered papers at professional meetings and conferences. Her most recent article appears in *Rameau Entre Art et Science*, eds. Sylvie Bouissou et al (Paris: École des Chartes, 2016).

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On the Art of Writing Proposals  
 The Art of the Fellowship Proposal

## PREFACE

When the first edition of this book was written in the early 1980s (under a slightly different title), the concept of providing a professional guide for PhDs needed some explanation. Graduate students, after all, were surrounded by professors. What better way for a doctoral student to learn about and to prepare for the professional future?

Now, several decades later, the need for guidance in addressing issues of professional development is front and center, including the 15th edition of the present book. It isn't simply a matter that PhD graduates face a highly competitive job market and have for some time now, but also that there is a fuller awareness that career paths for PhDs can be extremely varied, not only from one field to the next (chemistry versus English), or from one individual to the next, but also at the individual level, as people explore different options and make changes over the course of their careers (a study of Harvard PhD cohorts 2003-2006 found that 10 years after receiving the degree, 60% were in academe, the rest were employed in a range of careers; for details on PhD employment see Chapter One: Introduction.) The main thrust of the present guide is to focus on those experiences and skills integrated within the doctoral program itself across fields that can add up to a powerful form of professional development, no matter what career path lies ahead. The task at hand is to identify those key experiences and skills that can enhance career options and to guide students in taking full advantage of them over the course of the doctoral program and beyond. These key experiences are outlined in the following Introduction and then elaborated upon in the ensuing chapters.

The focus of this guide on the benefits of scholarly training for enhancing professional development was determined in large part by the nature of this community. First and foremost, we are a major research university: Engagement with scholarship is what our faculty does best, including the training of new scholars through advising and teaching. Faculty can make an enormous difference in the professional development of students, guiding them to specialize in areas that play to their strengths and interests and helping to assure the highest performance and highest use of their potential. On the other side of the equation, students who choose to enter a doctoral program in a given field surely do so for love of scholarship, love of field, nicely matching the passions of faculty. By now, many students are open to career possibilities in the wider world, but still they come, ready to immerse themselves in the process of scholarly training, often for seven years or more. We believe that it is precisely this readiness to immerse themselves, this love of field, that produces high quality skills and experiences, and these in turn are increasingly valued in both academe and the wider world. (There are, to be sure, other steps to take in preparation for a career outside of academe, and these are best pursued with the help of the PhD advisors in the Office of Career Services.)

Another important feature of this guide is that many of the suggestions and insights on professional development that appear on these pages are indebted to students and faculty who have participated in panel discussions organized by the former GSAS Fellowships Office over the years (reports on panel discussions are labeled as such within this guide). We are also grateful to the students who have shared winning samples and documents that appear in the appendices to this guide. The process of producing this work has thus been a communal one, assembling an amalgam of shared ideas, for which this author is truly grateful.

On the subject of communal efforts, we would also emphasize that this institution has responded to the need for greater attention to professional development in a number of ways. GSAS now offers funding to support students as they engage in professional development activities; it also offers advising services through the the Fellowships and Writing Center and the Office of Student Affairs. In a separate category, the GSAS program Harvard Horizons offers intensive mentoring each year to eight winning candidates for making polished presentations of their research, demonstrated in an annual symposium in Sanders Theater. Closely allied to GSAS are the Office of Career Services and the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning,



which provide invaluable assistance in their respective areas of expertise. Vital assistance also comes from departments, which offer research workshops and a range of courses that help to develop professional skills. A growing number of student groups engage in activities aimed at finding innovative career opportunities for PhDs; and finally, there are the efforts of the Graduate School Alumni Association Council on behalf of expanding opportunities for our students and alumni.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL?

In the simplest terms, professional development for graduate students means engaging in a range of activities that will enhance career and professional opportunities, both within and outside of academe.

As noted above in the Preface, there are key experiences and skills that are an integral part of doctoral training across fields that can play a significant role in enhancing professional development. An important goal in the present guide is to create greater awareness of the potential professional value of these experiences and to assist students in becoming more actively engaged in benefiting from them. Each chapter is devoted to key experiences or skills that will help to enhance professional development. Chapter Two, about getting started, focuses on navigating the graduate advising system, including developing mentor relations with faculty, and also addresses how students may expand professional activities and polish their teaching skills. In Chapter Three the focus is on the dissertation, emphasizing how a thoughtful choice of topic and its implementation, matching your strengths and interests, can have the most profound implications for producing a work of high quality and in turn for broadening career options. Chapter Four is devoted to how to write a compelling fellowship proposal, a skill that has enormous value in a wide range of careers, both inside and outside of academe. Chapter Five deals with the process of getting published, which is essential for an academic career and of value in approaching all potential employers. Chapters Six and Seven deal with strategies for applying for the most common positions after the doctoral program: in Chapter Six the focus is on entering the academic job market; in Chapter Seven the guide concludes with strategies for gaining postdoctoral fellowships or research-related positions more broadly. Several Appendices follow, which provide winning samples of documents, and essays from experts on the fellowship application process. But first, some basic details about the scholarly world.

### SCHOLARS AT WORK, OVERVIEW OF THE ACADEMIC PROFESSION

#### Scholarly Beginnings: The Decision-Making Process to Earn a PhD in a Given Field

This is a process that many people find easier to describe when looking back upon it, rather than while going through it. There is no fixed timetable or clear set of prescriptions for making this decision. What we offer instead is a hypothetical sketch of the probable stages that one goes through in reaching the decision to earn a PhD in a given field. As you recognize yourself in one or more of the stages in the hypothetical model, it may serve as a guide in helping you to interpret or clarify your own experiences as a student and emerging scholar.

#### What is the Nature of an Academic Career? What Scholars Do, and Where They Do It

Academe encompasses a vast array of fields, each with its own distinctive qualities. The focus of the present discussion is not on the qualities that set the various disciplines apart from one another, but rather on the more general characteristics that apply across all fields.

The two most important components of an academic career are teaching and research. The balance between these will vary, depending on the nature of the institution. In large research universities, for example, greater weight will be given to research; in small colleges, on the other hand, there will be a greater emphasis on teaching. Almost all schools will be interested in both activities to some degree. Many research scholars indeed are committed teachers, and vice versa. The combination is found by many to be mutually beneficial.

Faculty members also serve as student advisors and have a number of administrative responsibilities: participating in decisions on curriculum development, admissions, fellowships, honors, faculty recruiting, and other committees primarily concerned with academic matters. In many institutions, faculty members — usually at the senior level — also take their turn as chairs of departments. In addition, many of them are engaged in professional activities in their field: serving on editorial boards of professional journals, or in administrative positions within professional associations.

Academic careers for PhDs are pursued primarily in two types of institutions: a) four-year undergraduate colleges; and b) universities, which offer both undergraduate and graduate-level programs. Within universities, PhDs usually teach on the faculty of arts and sciences, although in some fields they are employed in technological institutes or professional schools within universities. For example, PhDs in some of the biological or medical sciences may be employed in medical schools; PhDs in economics may hold positions in business schools; and PhDs in the applied sciences may be hired by engineering schools or technological institutes. One other type of institution in higher education is the two-year community college, which also employs PhDs.

Colleges and universities may be private or public institutions. In either category, there is a comparable range of quality of schools. Scholars producing significant research and publications are working in a wide range of institutions.

Within institutions, the center of faculty activity is usually the department. Most teaching is organized along departmental lines, as are the numerous administrative responsibilities cited above. In a number of fields, time will be divided between the department and a research center or laboratory. There are also a burgeoning number of interdisciplinary programs and inter-faculty. In addition, faculty members serve on university-wide committees that deal with the overall governance of an institution, and may hold appointments in more than one school within a university.

Beyond the university, faculty members are often active in professional associations in their fields, participating in both scholarly and administrative activities. Professional conferences and meetings take place locally, nationally and internationally. Scholars in many fields also travel and go abroad in order to do research — ranging from brief trips during the academic year, to summer stays, to living abroad for an entire year on leave or sabbatical. Travel is often an integral part of an academic career. In addition, a number of scholars put their training and experience to use in nonacademic settings.

### **What Are Some of the Steps in the Trajectory for an Academic Career?**

In the humanities and social sciences the trajectory may begin with a tenure-track position, also referred to as a “ladder” position, since it can lead to a promotion and eventually to a position as a tenured professor. In tenure-track positions, the number of years before tenure review varies among institutions. One standard pattern is a three-year appointment, renewable for another three years, and then a tenure review. Many entry positions, however, are non-tenure-track, often a one or two-year appointment, with little or no prospect of promotion to the next rank. Some of these are referred to as adjunct positions and may be part-time, with no benefits included. A separate category is the position as a postdoctoral fellow, traditionally held by science PhDs as the first step on the academic ladder, but recently undergoing an expansion to fields in the humanities and social sciences. In the sciences there has been a growing trend of landing in a series of postdoctoral positions, perhaps three or more, often in different institutions or labs, while seeking an entry-level faculty position.

For most of the positions within academe, the PhD degree normally is a requirement. Some hiring departments in recent years have been stipulating “PhD degree in hand”; most require at least strong evidence that the dissertation will be completed by starting date of appointment. Almost all new academic vacancies and job descriptions are publicized — usually in the appropriate academic journals or employment bulletins put out by the various professional associations — in compliance with affirmative action requirements. The search for an academic job thus is highly structured, with announcements appearing early in the academic year, and with the job search basically confined to published listings. Unsolicited inquiries, if used at all, are helpful mainly for obtaining adjunct or part-time teaching positions or last-minute openings of a temporary nature. This path is particularly used by candidates with geographic restrictions or other needs. In academe, candidates apply for available vacancies, rather than seeking out the institutions or geographic areas of their choice. Unsolicited inquiries, however, are common in the natural sciences in seeking postdoctoral positions. (A full discussion of the job application process appears in Chapter Seven below; see also the separate discussion of applying for postdoctoral fellowships.)

### **The Attainment of Tenure**

In some cases, a junior faculty member is offered tenure at the institution of his or her first employment, usually through a tenure review of a candidate in a tenure-track position. In other cases, the candidate moves one or more times before finding a school that makes a tenure offer. The tenure decision — whether it is in the original institution, or after one or more moves — normally gives consideration to both teaching and publications or other professional recognition, although the respective weight accorded to each will vary considerably among institutions. Academic service may also enter into the tenure decision.

The bottom line on the attainment of tenure is that normally it comes no earlier than six years after the commencement of a teaching career, with a common scenario of one or more moves in the period prior to tenure.

### **What are Some Distinctive Features of Life in Academe? PANEL REPORT**

Rather than approach this question in the abstract, we share some answers provided by faculty members at Harvard in a panel discussion devoted to this question. One speaker was an economist, another in history of religion, and the third in marine biology. As rich and as varied as their responses were, they also contained some important common themes.

One theme was a concern with false stereotyping about academic life, especially the notion of a scholar as an isolated figure working in a rarified atmosphere, on nothing but narrow and esoteric subjects. To the contrary, each speaker felt a sense of connectedness with others, and each had diverse interests. The economist, for example, said that her motivation to do research on Jamaica had practical implications. She herself was from Jamaica, and wanted to help solve problems of poverty in that country. Her goal was to be qualified to be able to find solutions. She also had a combined interest in labor and international economic issues, rather than just a single focus.

The professor in history of religion said she had resisted specialization all the way through graduate school. Eventually, she wrote a dissertation that was of sufficiently broad interest to be published by a major nonacademic press. Her main point was that there is room in academe for people who do not have a life of scholarship as a single trajectory from the very beginning — there is a place for people who think of themselves as teachers and as generalists. She herself has continued to have strong interests in the world outside of academe, working as a consultant for the World Council of Churches.

The marine biologist described his connectedness with others as something that is built into the field. Biology is a very social enterprise. Team research is necessary — one cannot work in isolation. It requires people who enjoy working with others, people with a strong social dimension. Like the others, he came to the field of marine biology with very broad interests, including a fondness for California beaches. He started out as an undergraduate working in a lab in order to help pay his way through college. He soon discovered that the quality of the lab work offered a gratification of its own.

The speakers expressed similar views in regard to teaching. Their instruction is not just confined to specialized courses, and they all enjoyed teaching in the core curriculum. They stressed that although lectures have the greatest visibility, the bulk of teaching work is in preparing a course and designing the lectures. They also felt that having rapport with students was the most fun

Academe was also discussed in terms of its pros and cons as a career choice. All of the speakers emphasized that they loved what they were doing — that they were in fact being paid to do something that gave them pleasure. They also felt positive about the flexibility and freedom that characterize academic work, although one speaker not yet in a tenured position said that the absence of structure had disadvantages as well. There is a pressure to publish, but no fixed short-term deadlines. It requires selfmotivation and discipline, a need to be organized in the use of time. On the whole, she thought the pluses outweighed the minuses; having the opportunity to design her own work schedule and to formulate her own priorities was what really counted for her. She could organize her research according to her own needs and preferences, and had the flexibility to travel if work required it.

## **Faculty Salaries**

A survey of academic salaries is conducted regularly by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPS-HR). The figures for the academic year 2015–2016 provide a sense of salary ranges, although some small increases can be assumed year by year (reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Almanac Issue, 2016–2017). The average annual salary for all institutions, public and private, at the level of new assistant professor was \$70,655; at instructor level \$56,500. It should be noted that faculty salaries vary not only according to rank and type of institution, but also according to field. In computer and information sciences the average for new assistant professors was \$84,821, and for instructors \$62,225. In English the average for new assistant professors was \$57,592, and for instructors \$46,893. (In addition, people in the applied sciences are often able to supplement their academic salaries by working as consultants.) While the above figures do not put academic salaries in the same class with professions such as law or business, the rewards in academe are weighed by those who enter the profession in terms that go beyond salary figures. They value the intrinsic satisfaction gained from teaching, the opportunity to make a contribution through original research, the freedom to set one's own agenda, to travel, to seek a change of pace during the summer months.

## **What are Some Things You Should Know about the Academic Job Market?**

From all of the considerations that have been discussed so far, it should be clear that the decision to pursue a scholarly career is a highly individual one and cannot be approached from a statistical point of view. It is nevertheless important to be aware of past trends and projections. The historical background for the current job market goes back to the 1960's, when there was an expansion in higher education — primarily in response to the post World War II baby-boom generation that came of college age in that decade. Expansion, however, was followed by a contraction in the 1970's and 1980's as the baby-boom generation completed their college education. The situation has varied according to field — with the humanities and some of the social sciences feeling the earliest and greatest contraction in demand for new teachers, but with the sciences

eventually experiencing a similar effect. The shortage has been most severe at the level of tenured positions, since the dramatic expansion of the 1960's produced an abundance of tenured professors who were in their forties at the time. Many of these were expected to retire in the 1990's, and the expectation was that a sizeable number of openings would emerge — mainly tenure or tenure-track positions.

Now that the 1990's have passed, it appears that these projections, although based on substantial data and sound reasoning, have not materialized. Other factors influencing academic jobs were not foreseen or were overlooked — economic factors, for example or the end of mandatory retirement, which now applies in academe (under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act). A principal lesson learned by forecasters is that it is very hazardous to make predictions. There is, however, one item of certainty:

**THERE WILL BE A NEED FOR NEW GENERATIONS OF SCHOLARS.**

**GSAS PhD Employment Project – Trends from 10 Years out Study, REPORT** (from the Harvard University Office of Institutional Research)

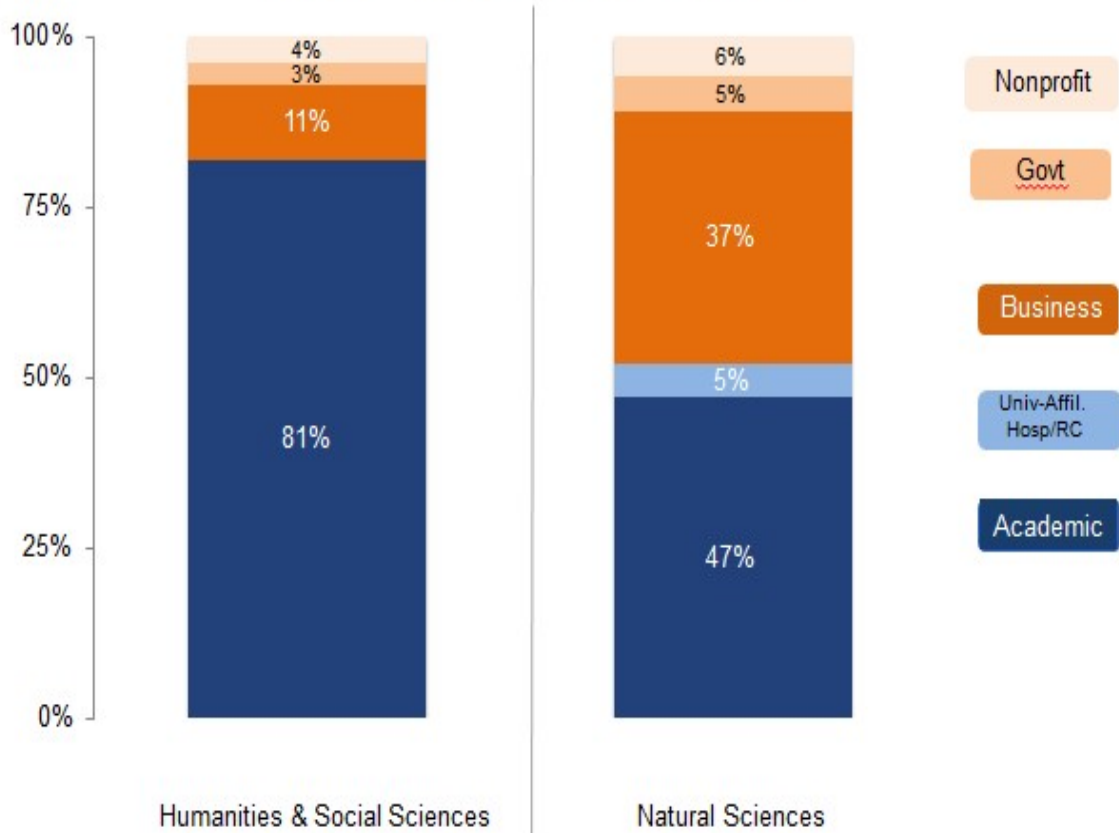
Data on what students do after graduation is hard to come by, yet is perhaps one of the topics of most interest, especially for those training students and students themselves. Stanford recently employed an interesting and simple approach for collecting [post-graduate outcomes data](http://stanford.io/1wZV6Go) (http://stanford.io/1wZV6Go ) — essentially to collect employment data, for a few cohorts of students who graduated 10 years ago, from publicly available online sources, such as electronic CVs.

Modeled on Stanford's work, GSAS collected initial and current placements for three consecutive GSAS cohorts 10 years after graduation, for PhD graduating cohorts 2003 - 2006. Overall, 75% of initial positions (within a year of graduation) and 90% of current positions (since 2015) were located using publicly available online sources. If we keep in mind that online sources provide self-selected information, serving as a highly popular outlet, they do reveal important patterns or trends concerning PhD employment 10 years after receipt of the degree, and these can be as informative as the actual figures. See Exhibit 1.

- By far the largest group in academic positions is from the humanities/social sciences, at 81% of those with employment.
- In the natural sciences, which also include mathematics fields, while academe is still in the lead compared to other sectors, it is a considerably smaller percentage, at 47% compared to the 81% in the humanities/social sciences.
- Within the nonacademic realm, while business is the largest sector for both the sciences and the non-sciences, it is considerably larger in the sciences, at 37% compared to 11% in the nonsciences. For both discipline groups a small percentage is in the nonprofit and government sectors, hovering around 5% or lower.

Exhibit 1

## GSAS PhD Employment Status 10 Years After Degree, Report on Cohorts 2003-2006



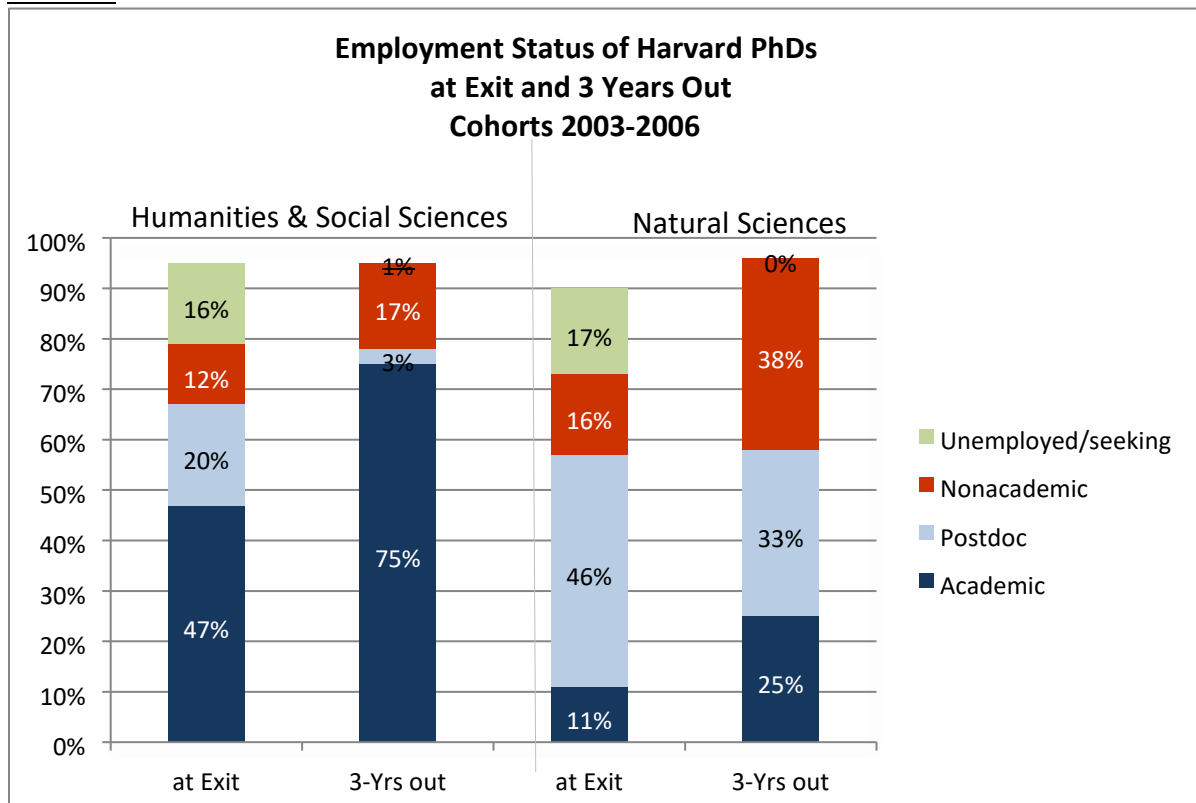
Office of Institutional Research

### GSAS Exit Survey – Time Series Trends, 2002–2015

#### Employment Goals

- By graduation, around 80% of those in the humanities/social sciences have goals to work in academic teaching and research positions.
- Roughly 10% of those in the social sciences and less than 5% of those in the humanities have goals to work in the business, government, and nonprofit sectors.
- Of graduates in sciences and mathematics fields, approximately half have goals to work in academia, while a quarter have goals to work in business, government, or nonprofit, while the remainder were uncertain.

Exhibit 2



Note that percentages from the GSAS survey at exit time are based on the total number of respondents and include the unemployed, while the percentages after graduation are based on the total who indicate employment. The use of total respondents as denominator tends to lower the employment or postdoc percentages at exit time, since the response rate is close to 100%. At three years out, which tends to have a lower response rate, there is an upward tilt in the percentages.

- With an almost 100% response rate at exit time, the combined humanities and social sciences figures reveal more than half of the respondents were in academe, at 67%. This figure includes postdoctoral fellows as well as faculty positions. In the natural sciences and mathematics fields the academic figure was somewhat lower, at 57%. Within academe, the natural sciences had a higher proportion of respondents in postdoctoral positions than in the combined humanities/social sciences, 46% vs 20%.
- At the juncture 3 years after the degree for these same cohorts, the figures for the combined humanities/social sciences show an improvement in academe, again, including postdocs, at 78% vs 67% at exit. The improvement in the academic figure also includes a big increase in faculty positions, from 47% to 75% and a big drop in temporary postdoc positions, from 20% to 3%. The natural sciences hold steady in academe, at 58% vs 57% at exit. However, we see an increase in faculty positions, from 11% to 25% and a corresponding decline in temporary postdoc positions, from 46% to 33%.
- In nonacademic positions we see a small jump in the humanities/social sciences at 3 years out, from 12% to 17%, while in the natural sciences there is a much bigger jump, from 16% to 38%. It should be noted that “unemployed and seeking” is a double-digit figure at exit, with 16% in the



humanities/social sciences and 17% in the natural sciences. Three years after the degree that figure disappears (but perhaps is buried in the drop in response rate at 3 years out)

Exhibit 3

A More Detailed Comparison Table at Exit and 3 Years Later, PhD Cohorts 2003-2006

Employment Status of Harvard PhDs at Exit and 3-Years Out  
[Grad\_Year] IN ('03-04','04-05','05-06')

SOCIAL SCIENCES	At Exit		3-Year-Out	
	#	%	#	%
Employed (not including postdocs)*:	229	62%	331	94%
Academic:	163	44%	250	71%
**Tenure Track/Tenured:	117	32%	200	56%
Nonacademic:	63	17%	78	22%
Academic Administration:	2	1%	3	1%
Postdoc:	79	21%	13	4%
Student / Residency:	9	2%	0	0%
Unemployed / seeking:***	49	13%	6	2%
Unemployed / not seeking:	3	1%	3	1%
Other:	0	0%	1	0%
Total Percentages:		100%		100%
Response Rate:	98% ( 369 / 377 )		94% ( 354 / 377 )	

HUMANITIES	At Exit		3-Year-Out	
	#	%	#	%
Employed (not including postdocs)*:	139	60%	181	93%
Academic:	122	52%	160	82%
**Tenure Track/Tenured:	70	30%	117	60%
Nonacademic:	12	5%	16	8%
Academic Administration:	3	1%	3	2%
Postdoc:	39	17%	5	3%
Student / Residency:	3	1%	2	1%
Unemployed / seeking:***	50	21%	2	1%
Unemployed / not seeking:	2	1%	2	1%
Other:	0	0%	3	2%
Total Percentages:		100%		100%
Response Rate:	97% ( 233 / 240 )		81% ( 195 / 240 )	

NATURAL SCIENCES	At Exit		3-Year-Out	
	#	%	#	%
Employed (not including postdocs)*:	197	28%	410	64%
Academic:	78	11%	162	25%
**Tenure Track/Tenured:	22	3%	90	14%
Nonacademic:	112	16%	242	38%
Academic Administration:	2	0%	5	1%
Postdoc:	328	46%	213	33%
Student / Residency:	62	9%	5	1%
Unemployed / seeking:***	119	17%	3	0%
Unemployed / not seeking:	9	1%	2	0%
Other:	0	0%	5	1%
Total Percentages:		100%		100%
Response Rate:	98% ( 715 / 727 )		88% ( 638 / 727 )	

**Notes:**

\* In a few cases, those who check "employed" do not specify type of employment; and thus the types do not always add up to the same figure as the "employed" total.

\*\* At 3-years out there is less complete information on tenure track and non-tenure track status, where there is a lower response rate to that question.

\*\*\* The tendency for almost zero unemployment at 3-years out is probably an under-count. Those for whom we have no employment information are likelier to be unemployed.

## PhD Relevance to Employment and Satisfaction

Consistently over the last 10 years...

- Nearly 90% of graduates have reported their PhD as necessary to their employment and around 10% found it useful. Almost no one reported their program was not relevant to their employment.
- Approximately 97% reported being satisfied with their primary initial employment.
- Almost 75% said they would do their PhD again in the same field and same institution.

## **Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities**

In a *Survey of Earned Doctorates* (from the *SED Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities, Summary Report*, National Science Foundation, December 2015), the report stated: “The number of doctorates awarded each year shows a strong upward trend over time — average annual growth of 3.4% — punctuated by brief periods of slow growth and even decline. In every year of the SED, the number of doctorates awarded in science and engineering (S&E) fields has exceeded the number of non-S&E doctorates,” with the gap widening between S&E fields and non-S&E fields, reaching the high proportion of 75% of S&E doctorates in 2014. Trends for specific groups was also reported.

## **Women**

The situation for women in academe is instructive when looked at from a historical perspective. According to the publication, *In Pursuit of the PhD*, by William G. Bowen and Neil L. Rudenstine (Princeton, 1992), the gender gap in doctoral education closed significantly in the period between 1966 and 1989. There was a steady and rapid rise in the overall percentage of doctorates awarded to women, starting from a low of around 10% and more than tripling during that period. Much of the growth occurred during the post-1970 period, but leveled off in the late 1970s. The scale and timing of increases varied considerably by field, with the largest gains made in English, history and political science — and especially English (almost 60% in 1988). In mathematics, engineering and most of the physical sciences, however, the supply of women doctorates remained relatively low (in physics, which was the lowest, less than 10% of all doctorates awarded to U.S. residents in 1988 were received by women).

The figures of earned doctorates (from the *SED Summary Report*, December 2015), indicated the following: “Women are becoming increasingly prevalent in each new cohort of doctorate recipients, earning a majority of all doctorates awarded to U.S. citizens and permanent residents each year since 2002 and earning one-third of all doctorates awarded to temporary visa holders over that period. Overall, women earned 46% of all doctorates in 2014. The total number of doctorate recipients increased for both men and women every year since 2010. The *SED Summary Report* also reveals some important developments in terms of field of study: “The growth in number of S&E doctorates awarded to women over the past 20 years has exceeded the growth in male S&E doctorates by a substantial margin.” In the period from 1994 to 2004 men had an increase of 26% in the number of S& E doctorates, while the number of female S&E doctorates nearly doubled over that same period. In the non-S&E fields “women’s share of non-S&E doctorates increased from 52% in 1994 to 57% in 2002, and has remained near this rate since that year.”

There is additional cause for concern related to the timing of the expansion of doctorates earned by women. Bowen and Rudenstine note that the first wave of expansion took place “during precisely those years (since

1970) when graduate education in general was contracting.” They add that “these women entered graduate school and worked toward their PhDs during years (primarily the 1960’s) when the women’s movement and other broad social and cultural forces were expanding opportunities for women. These developments took effect at a time when other forces (the weakening of the academic labor market, for instance) were pushing in the opposite direction....” (p. 34). What this means is that while the presence of women in academe is much greater than it was before the expansion of women doctorates, the opportunities for women still have failed to live up to expectations. There is still a sizeable gender gap, especially at the associate and full professor levels, that persists in many fields.

## **Citizenship**

The figures of earned doctorates (*SED Summary Report*, December 2015), indicated the following: “Over the period 2004 to 2014, 85% of the doctorates earned by temporary visa holders were in S&E fields.... Ten countries accounted for 70% of the doctorates awarded to temporary visa holders from 2004 to 2014, and the top three — China, India, and South Korea — accounted for more than half.”

## **Minorities in Academe**

According to the same *Survey*: “Participation in doctoral education by underrepresented minority groups who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents is increasing, as evidenced by a 70% increase in the number of doctorates awarded to blacks or African Americans over the past 20 years and a more than doubling in the number of Hispanic or Latino doctorate recipients....the proportion of doctorates awarded to blacks or African Americans has risen from 4.1% in 1994 to 6.4% in 2014, and the proportion awarded to Hispanics or Latinos has risen from 3.3% in 1994 to 6.5% in 2014.”

Increased minority enrollment holds the key to a better learning and research environment for all. Despite the improvement in minority participation in doctoral education, under-representation of minorities in the academic professoriate has been and continues to be a problem, as indicated in a report on race and ethnicity by academic rank in 4-year institutions, published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Almanac Issue, 2016–2017, based on U.S. Department of Education data, At the full professor level 81.8% are white, and 16.1% are minorities. Within the minorities group there is the following breakdown: American Indian at 0.3%, Asian at 9.1%, Black at 3.3% Hispanic at 2.9%, Pacific Islander at 0.1%. The minorities figures are somewhat higher at the lower ranks: At the associate professor level 75.3% are white, and 21.1% are minorities, with the following breakdown: American Indian at 0.4%, Asian at 10.2%, Black at 5.5%, Hispanic at 4.2%, Pacific Islander at 0.1%. At the assistant professor level 64.8% are white and 22.9% are minorities, with the following breakdown: American Indian at 0.4%, Asian at 11.2%, Black at 5.8%, Hispanic at 4.4%, Pacific Islander at 0.2%.(See back Appendix to this Prologue for a discussion of the experience of minorities in academe.)

## **Academe from the Minority Perspective, PANEL REPORT**

The panel consisted of speakers who were current graduate students at Harvard or recent PhDs. They were asked to share their experiences as minorities in academe. A number of important points were made:

- One speaker described a somewhat circuitous path into a doctoral program. He spoke of a desire not to feel left out that led him to law school after college; it was like a strong gravitational pull for those who were undecided. When he got to law school, he discovered that he did not know why he was there and that there were too many bright talented people in law school who did not belong there and were

unhappy. In his own case, he enjoyed his law education. He then entered a doctoral program in philosophy at Harvard, and still remains interested in the philosophy of law and public law.

His experience in the doctoral program includes both negatives and positives. In the former, there is very little structure, so that a student must be very clear on goals. This can be harder for minorities to do, since there are fewer people with whom to identify. Thus, the typical problem of graduate school becomes more acute for minority students — making it more important for minorities to be sure what they want to get out of the program and why they are there. On the positive side, graduate study is stimulating and rewarding. It is a luxury to spend one's time studying a subject that one really cares about as a principal and legitimate activity. He noted that professionals such as lawyers or doctors often think of their undergraduate education as an oasis in their lives, where they could pursue their interests. He added that graduate school offers an extension of that opportunity.

Looking at the decision from still another angle, the speaker also stressed that it is important for more minorities to become scholars and role models. Having models in educational institutions is crucial, since education exercises the most profound influence on people's lives. If faculties are not integrated, then they cannot serve the goal of helping to create a more integrated society. At the same time, he added that a deficient pool for faculty positions is not the only problem, nor will increasing the pool be the sole solution. Instead it should be thought of as an important first step that is part of a long and historical struggle.

- A second speaker also emphasized the importance of clarifying goals. She had entered a doctoral program in science at MIT, but soon realized that she was not happy in that program. She got her M.A. and then went to work for a few years in computer consulting. She then decided to finish her PhD, but chose to do it in the history of science rather than science and entered the doctoral program at Harvard in this field. This decision was based on her realization that she would be less happy working in a science laboratory, and more fulfilled in teaching and working with people.
- A third speaker focused still further on the issue of minority representation. In regard to the Latino population in academe, the statistics are somewhat misleading, and are actually even more distressing than they seem. She noted that the Latino population keeps growing, but the number going to college or beyond does not reflect that growth proportionally. Other groups, and especially Black males, have actually lost ground.

On the intellectual side, there is also an exciting challenge for minorities — a need to re-examine the canons, perhaps to retell history. Her advisors tried to discourage her from specializing in minority issues too soon, warned her that she would be labeled exclusively as a minority specialist, that it would be disadvantageous to her career, and that it was best to wait. She nevertheless went through an intellectual evolution in her field of Romance languages, from studying the literature of the Golden Age of Cervantes, to Latin American literature, to Central American and Caribbean literature, and finally, to U.S. Latino literature. The warnings against doing the dangerous “Chicano stuff” only whetted her appetite. She said that a dissertation must be about what really moves you. Minorities also need to learn about themselves, to appreciate themselves, to have ethnic studies and courses about themselves, and to have mentors. In dealing with the present, where there are still few minority role models, she said that minority students must take a role and work with one another for improvement, which in turn makes graduate school even more demanding and challenging for minorities. The university can be used for support and to facilitate action by minorities. Fellowships and financial support are particularly important, since there are so many extra demands and pressures on minority students. She considers the challenges enormous, but exciting.

- With a view to the future, the fourth speaker offered a preview of what it is like to become a minority faculty member. As might be expected, she noted that it compared very favorably to her experience as a minority graduate student, and that it provided far more personal autonomy. She added to the discussion on choosing a dissertation topic related to race, and observed that in her experience it did not hurt her career. In fact, in her application essay to graduate school she wrote that she would study Blacks. She was admitted to the school of her choice, but she too was warned that her study might be too “narrow.”

Some of her difficulties in graduate school also involved her family, since they had very little education and had difficulty understanding what she was doing. In the end, she kept in very close touch with her family, and found them an important support. She stressed that it is very important to develop friends and support outside the department, outside the University — especially since minorities cannot find greater numbers within the University. Because of this, there is a visibility problem — a constant feeling of having to meet someone else’s standards. Minority students have described to her a feeling of having to learn a new way of communicating, a new way of thinking, and yet be expected to produce their own original scholarly ideas. It involves extra efforts, extra steps, that other students might not have to make. On a positive note, she concluded that teaching offers an enormous joy of sharing with students, and that this is a compelling reason for entering academe.

- Another student speaker pressed the issue of whether she risked being labeled exclusively as a scholar on minority issues if that was the focus of her studies. She believed she would perform best if she worked in the field of her choice. She noted that the issue of minority topics will not go away — even when minorities choose not to focus on minority issues, it is always assumed that they are specialists in that area. They must therefore be strong in areas in the political mainstream and in minority concerns.
- The speaker on the Harvard faculty said that when she interviewed for jobs — and her topic was on minority issues — she did not find her specialization harmful to her career. The challenge and the difficulties cannot be denied, but that only makes the whole enterprise important and exciting.

## CHAPTER TWO

### NAVIGATING THE ADVISING SYSTEM, EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES, POLISHING TEACHING SKILLS

As noted in the Introduction, professional development for graduate students means engaging in a range of activities that will enhance career and professional opportunities, both within and outside of academe. A central theme in this guide is that there are significant overlaps between the skills and experiences that are valued within academe and those valued in the wider professional world. An important goal in this guide is to highlight those overlapping values and to suggest ways for students to pursue them more actively during the graduate years. This chapter focuses on one of the earliest and most important skills worth developing, which is how to take optimal advantage of the rich advice that is available, both through the formal advising system and through the many informal advising opportunities that need to be recognized as such, including the importance of establishing mentor relationships with faculty. The chapter then highlights how students may expand professional activities and polish teaching skills.

#### **Roadmap to the Advising Process in Graduate School: The Various Stages in the Formal Advising Process** (see below for the Informal Advising Process)

**The early stage in the humanities and social sciences advising process**, leading up to General exams and dissertation approval, normally entails the departments assigning a faculty advisor to assist students with planning a program of study, fulfilling department requirements, preparing for Generals or Qualifying Exams. This stage in many departments lasts two years, although in some cases, it is longer. Even at the early stage many students in the humanities and social sciences engage in exploring dissertation topics or doing preliminary dissertation research. In planning your graduate program, and especially in exploring potential areas of specialization and potential advisors with whom to work, you should consult a wide range of faculty members and also advanced students in your department. Asking faculty about their current research, making them aware of your interests and concerns, getting them involved in your plans — all these are useful and appropriate steps to take. Whatever you finally choose, you will find it beneficial if you can establish ties with a number of faculty members, junior as well as senior.

**Departmental requirements and individual choices:** In most departments, students are asked to choose a major field for concentration and a minor or sub-field. These choices will partially determine course requirements and also the fields that will be covered on the General Examination. Most departments in the humanities and social sciences also have a required language competence test, and in some cases, a quantitative methods requirement. Science departments have analogous requirements related to the skills and training needed for particular areas of research.

Within the general framework of departmental requirements there are also individual choices to be made, and here it is wise to choose courses that may point to prospective dissertation topics. In the sciences, the critical decision concerns which lab or research group to join. Some students enter graduate school with a definite idea of their intended topic; others have only a tentative plan. Whether you are in the first or second category, course choices—or lab rotations in the sciences—should provide you with sufficient exposure to your potential area of specialization to enable you either to confirm or possibly to reassess your original plans. Such choices should also provide an opportunity for exploring new areas of potential interest and for developing alternative possibilities as you continue to assess your plans. In most cases, the department program is designed to permit exploration — including interdisciplinary possibilities — prior to commitment to a single area of specialization or specific topic. It is especially important to use the course work stage as a period of self-assessment.

Also to be noted is that teaching is expected of graduate students in many departments, which is a very important aspect of professional development. Participating in teacher training or teaching practica is often

a department requirement that needs to be incorporated into the overall planning process. See Chapter Five for specific advice on gaining teaching experience and using the Derek Bok Center to improve your teaching skills.

**The early stage in the natural sciences advising process** is the period during the first year when students are expected to gain admission to a lab or research group during, preferably by the beginning of second semester, but no later than the end of the second semester. Many science departments offer lab rotations during the first semester in order to assist students in choosing a lab. Making this choice is such an important matter, that in departments where rotation is not offered, students have organized sessions to help inform first years on the qualities of the various labs or research teams. Eventually science students settle into a lab where they will engage in independent research that forms the basis of the dissertation, with the faculty head of the lab typically serving as the main dissertation advisor.

Science students who have gone through the selection process report that in choosing a lab for dissertation research it is important to consider the research environment that is fostered by the faculty member who heads the lab, and that this can be as important as the particular subject matter (although subject matter may also determine the nature of the environment). Students cite the following factors to consider:

- Are you looking for a high-powered lab that seeks to compete with the corresponding labs at other major research universities, or would you prefer a more low-keyed lab?
- Are you looking for a lab where the faculty head provides lots of feedback and support over a range of issues related to professional development and future plans?
- Are you looking for a lab where you will be able to propose your own thesis project and a lab with flexibility about switching projects?

As you can see, the selection process for a science lab also requires self-assessment, being conscious of which type of research environment would work best for you. Whichever lab you choose, when conducting research as a team it is important to carve out some segment of the overall project that you will be able to identify as your original contribution.

**The second stage in the advising process becomes more focused on the dissertation:** formulating a topic, working on getting an approved prospectus, and then researching and writing the dissertation. The dissertation is expected to be a mature piece of scholarship that makes a contribution to the field. At this stage the advisor is typically a specialist in a field related to the dissertation. (See Chapter Three for a detailed discussion of the dissertation process.)

Ordinarily in the sciences, as noted, the dissertation grows out of research done in the research lab. It is usually a series of papers or write-ups of lab results that have been undertaken as original research, often required for qualifying exams. For the original research, it is wise, as noted, to clarify the particular segment of the overall project that has been carved out as your contribution, doing so in consultation with the head of the lab, who typically becomes your dissertation adviser. Science students almost always have such a segment, but they are not fully aware of it or do not articulate it clearly.

In all fields, students are required to have three faculty members sign off on their completed dissertation, and two must be members of the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

## **The Informal Advising Process**

Not to be overlooked is the more indirect and ongoing process that can be thought of as an informal and less explicit advising process. It occurs in a variety of contexts, whenever a student seeks or is offered advice by a faculty member: graduate seminars, courses in which graduate students serve as Teaching Fellows, jobs as Research Assistants, and even briefer encounters in which graduate students request letters of recommendation — as for example, for fellowship competitions. The faculty members are not necessarily confined to the graduate student’s own department (and in some cases, the contacts may occur outside of a student’s own institution).

Once you recognize these situations as opportunities for gaining advice, you can play a more active role in seeking it and in making the most of the advice that you receive. Here are some examples:

- Getting feedback on a seminar paper can lead to the identification of a dissertation topic; or it can lead to a scholarly presentation or publication.
- Similarly, getting feedback on teaching sections from the professor of a course can lead to improved teaching skills.
- Still another opportunity occurs when students apply for fellowships and request letters of recommendation from faculty members. Many students seek advice specifically on their proposals in making this request (this is over and above ongoing discussions that normally occur as students consult with advisors in selecting and formulating a research or dissertation topic). Students find that professors become more invested in the fellowship application process when their advice is sought specifically on fellowship proposals.

The more that you engage in these encounters and recognize them as a form of advising, the likelier that good mentoring relationships will develop — ideally with even two or three faculty members, depending on the size of your department.

## **Developing Close Faculty Ties, What to Seek in a Mentoring Relationship: PANEL REPORT**

Speakers represented a wide range of fields and an equally wide range of stages along the academic ladder, from graduate students and graduate alumni/ae, to current postdoctoral fellows, to senior faculty. The alumni/ae were unanimous in feeling that close faculty ties had played a crucial role in their professional development, both during graduate study and beyond. They observed that it requires some effort on the student’s part, but made it their strongest recommendation. Two contrasting approaches were presented:

- In one case, a mentor relationship was established through a kind of apprenticeship — the speaker had joined a team research project run by a faculty member. It not only helped in getting to know the faculty member, but eventually provided a thesis topic and area of specialization as well.
- In the contrasting case, the speaker approached it in a more personal way. She took the initiative to engage in fairly sustained intellectual dialogues with faculty members. As she looked back on them, she found that she could evoke or “replay” these conversations in her memory, and that they had a greater impact on her intellectual development than reading alone had ever done.
- A faculty member noted that the benefits were not all on one side: most faculty members find a sense of accomplishment not only in the books that they write, but in their students, who ensure continuity for the future.



The following are suggestions made by the speakers for developing mentor relations with faculty:

- Take an active stance, rather than simply waiting for the right mentor to come along: Be alert to positive experiences with faculty or other members of the larger scholarly community, and try to follow up and build further on initial exchanges that were rewarding. It is extremely helpful to get to know several faculty members really well.
- Attend professional meetings as well as talks at Harvard with guest speakers, exchange ideas with people on panels where the topic is one you have been pursuing or perhaps are planning to pursue. Engage in follow-up correspondence. Scholars are usually pleased when interest in their work is expressed. Keep in mind that asking thoughtful questions is not a sign of what you don't know, but rather, how interested you are in becoming better informed. One panelist emphasized that a state of uncertainty is part of the very nature of research; there is a need to develop a tolerance for this state.
- Be aware that it is highly appropriate professional behavior to ask for feedback on work that you have written and that you plan to pursue further. Many scholars prize a mentoring role. One faculty panelist went even further and said that he felt sorry for those faculty members who are not interested in mentoring; he finds it truly a privilege. He added that serious researchers take their teaching and mentoring seriously; they learn by seeing things through the eyes of new students. All panelists agreed that making use of faculty office hours was one of the best ways of approaching faculty. They also suggested that it is helpful to find a happy medium, between sounding too desperate or too casual as you seek faculty advice. Best of all, try to avoid getting to a point where you feel desperate; don't wait too long before seeking advice.
- A panelist at the postdoctoral stage said that she found accessibility to be one of the most important traits of a good mentor, someone willing to help with all kinds of needs. She also said that it was important to help the mentor with the process, even if it means openly confessing that you don't know what you are doing. She noted that she tried to be patient with herself, to accept where she was, even if she was stalled.
- A faculty panelist noted that you can even get some degree of mentoring or acquire role models just by observing people, both those whom you admire and those whom you don't.
- Still another faculty panelist emphasized that a good mentor must be prepared to give good strong honest advice across the board, adding that the best advice is the tough advice. All the panelists were quick to add that it is important first to say something positive; a negative tone prevents the mentor from getting the point across. One panelist noted that if a research problem is not working, he tries to help the student to find a new problem as quickly as possible, adding that a quick initial success is great for morale; it helps to develop a sense of competence.
- Finally, an interesting paradox emerges from all the comments on mentoring: If it goes very well, then the mentor comes to think of the student as a colleague, which in a sense cancels the mentoring relationship.

**Special Issues on Mentoring for Students from Under-represented Groups: Women in Many of the Sciences, Students Who Are First-Generation College Educated, Students With Non-binary Sexual Orientation**

Mentoring can be viewed as going beyond advising in two significant ways: one, it entails the concept of mentor as role model; and two, it entails the concept of mentor as someone who connects academic advising with the overall needs and commitments in a student's life. It also means offering encouragement and support. Students from under-represented groups face the special challenge that potential role models are scarce; in addition, on a personal human level they may find it more difficult to have a sense of belonging, and, in some cases, they may be unfamiliar with even some of the most basic resources available or how to benefit from them. Below is a sample of how women in science have sought to attend to the needs of the under-represented.

### **GSAS Women in Science**

- Since mentoring, as defined above, has several facets, many women have found ways of satisfying their mentoring needs by taking a composite approach, identifying particular faculty who provide encouragement and support, and others whose strengths are in providing academic guidance, and still others, perhaps outside of their specific field, who can provide inspiration as role models. Not all of these needs are gender-specific, and graduate women have found male faculty members who have served as mentors as well.
- They have also found it useful to come together as women and share ideas for improving the environment for women. It was in this spirit that the GSAS Women's Group was originally formed several decades ago. In more recent years, a new group was formed, Harvard Graduate Women in Science and Engineering (HGWISE), focusing on the special needs of women in these fields. Of particular relevance is the mentoring program they have created: they actively recruit more advanced women scholars who volunteer to serve as mentors to women students in science, and they provide a framework for achieving effective mentoring relationships. To keep up with the efforts of this very active group, see their [website](http://www.hgwise.org) (www.hgwise.org).
- Another way of expanding the potential pool of role models is for women to make contact with alums in their field. The Harvard Alumni Association offers a university-wide database of potential career advisors. The PhD counselors at the Office of Career Services can assist in making effective use of the database.

### **Expanding Professional Activities**

Some fields lend themselves more readily to broader career options, typically fields in the sciences or quantitative social sciences, where technology and computer skills are foregrounded. An important challenge for those in technical fields who are exploring broader options is the need to learn how to communicate effectively with non-science audiences. Courses are cropping up for science writers to develop these skills, and it is important to be aware of them. Seeking the services of the new Center for Writing and Communicating Ideas will help to get you started. Another new development is Harvard's creation of an Innovation Lab, designed to provide students the opportunity to put their research skills to use by engaging in entrepreneurial activity. For fields in the humanities and social sciences, there is an expansive movement in the direction of technology. We see this in an innovative use of media and imaging. We also see it in the emergence and growth of the digital humanities and its focus on Big Data. Harvard now has a Digital Scholarship Support Group (through Harvard University Information Technology, HUIT, which offers digital teaching and research methods. Even within the "softer" fields, research tends to be highly specialized, and there is a need to develop ways of communicating in a more accessible fashion to a broader audience. The GSAS Fellowships and Writing Center offers help in a variety of writing contexts. In addition, the Harvard Horizons program offers intensive mentoring on oral presentations, choosing eight GSAS candidates each year who make polished presentations of their research in a symposium in Sanders Theater. Closely allied to GSAS are the Office of Career Services, the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and

Learning, who offer specialized services that help in communicating with a broader audience. Beyond the issue of communication, there are a number of activities that help to enhance professional development and are highly recommended.

### **Acquiring Teaching Experience and Improving Teaching Skills**

The range of teaching opportunities for graduate students tends to vary according to field. In preparing for a teaching career, it is in your best interest to be a Teaching Fellow in as broad a range of courses as possible: introductory and advanced-level courses in your department, including small tutorials where you can develop your own syllabi and reading lists; or courses outside of your department, especially in the non-concentration courses of the core curriculum. You may also want to broaden your teaching experience even further by seeking to give a guest lecture or to teach a course in another college or university in the local area or in the Harvard Extension Program. Candidates who enter the job market report that some hiring institutions express concern over the elite nature of this institution (see below, the section on job interviews and dealing with “the Harvard mystique”). We would also emphasize that good teaching is about good communication, and this is something valued in the wider world as well.

It is important to get feedback on your teaching and to polish your skills. In some courses — especially large lecture courses — it is standard practice for professors to observe and critique their section leaders. If this is not done, you can take the initiative and invite the professor to do so. Assisting in lecture courses also provides the reverse opportunity — that of observing and learning how others teach. (Both positive and negative examples can provide insights.)

### **Acquiring Letters of Recommendation**

In acquiring letters of recommendation on your teaching performance, it is best to do so shortly after your professor has observed your performance, while memory is still fresh, rather than waiting several years until you actually go on the job market. Similarly, if a professor has greatly admired a seminar paper, perhaps recommending it for publication, it is best to get a letter while the details on the paper’s merits are still fresh in memory. The Harvard Office of Career Services (OCS) has partnered with Interfolio, a portfolio management system that provides an electronic platform for [Harvard’s dossier system](https://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/dossier) (<https://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/dossier>). You receive a 3-year membership and a one-time subsidy of \$100 for delivery fees. The dossier service is very important for letters of recommendation, which you will be able to store electronically in your Interfolio account. When you eventually enter the job market, hiring departments typically require confidential letters, and many are increasingly asking for electronic submissions. The management system, in addition, gives a large number of options of what else you can send through the system as part of the application packet, either in electronic form or on paper.

### **Using the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning:**

The Center is another important means of improving teaching skills and of showing your commitment to good teaching. It provides a number of services, including the opportunity to teach class sections in the Video Laboratory and have them critiqued. The Center will also give you advice on preparing an effective teaching portfolio. Briefly, the portfolio consists of the items listed below. For a complete description of a teaching portfolio, see the [Bok Center web site](http://bokcenter.harvard.edu) (<http://bokcenter.harvard.edu>).

- Statement of your teaching philosophy
- Description of past teaching and advising responsibilities
- List of courses taught (as a course head, Teaching Fellow, or Tutor)

- Objective and subjective evaluation of teaching skills. A list or chart of your Q scores. You may also include student commentary about your teaching (solicited or unsolicited)
- Description of efforts to improve one's teaching
- Letters of recommendation (by a course head who can comment on your teaching, advising and administrative abilities)
- Prospective syllabi (for courses you have designed and taught or for courses you are prepared to teach)
- Video clips documenting teaching (which the Bok Center will assist with)
- Sample student work with your evaluations (for example, a photocopy of a student paper that you have evaluated)

One important aspect of the teaching experience is when the Teaching Fellow receives requests from students in the class to write a letters of recommendation. For a discussion of this important task, see Appendix D.

In some of the science fields, there are few teaching opportunities and no teaching requirement (in virology, for example). Even in such cases, however, there is an opportunity to train younger grad students (and even undergraduates doing summer projects), which can be viewed as an integral part of graduate training. It also helps with managerial skills, which are crucial for eventually running one's own lab and mentoring students and fellows.

**Submitting a GSAS Research Workshop Proposal:** The GSAS Research Workshops Program, initiated in the fall of 1993, now has roughly 75 research workshops that bring together graduate students, faculty members, and occasional visiting scholars to discuss shared scholarly interests and individual work in progress. The aim of this GSAS program is to encourage the establishment of ongoing collegial settings for graduate students who are learning to conceive and write scholarly articles, thesis prospectuses, and dissertations. The workshops also offer faculty an opportunity to share drafts of their scholarly work with others in the field. Applications for workshop funding are welcome from sets of faculty and graduate students within a single department or from inter-departmental groups of faculty and students. Full details and application form are available at the [GSAS web site](http://www.gsas.harvard.edu) (www.gsas.harvard.edu).

**Attending or Organizing Conferences, Delivering Papers:** There are a number of scenarios that lead to delivering a professional paper.

- A seminar paper or a paper on a lab experiment may be suitable for delivery at a professional conference and possibly for eventual publication in a professional journal. (For the latter, see the more detailed discussion in the chapter on publishing.) If you have received positive feedback from a professor on a seminar paper or a lab report, you should seek advice on how to revise it and where it might possibly be presented as a paper or submitted for publication.
- Another option is to organize a panel discussion to propose for a professional conference, choosing a theme related to your paper. In this case, you would have to recruit colleagues close to your field and then submit a proposal that incorporates the proposed papers of all the participants.
- Professional meetings provide scholars with the opportunity to share work that is still in progress. The ideas have to be well thought out and clearly presented, but they need not be a final statement representing a fully completed project. A graduate student who recently delivered a paper at a professional meeting observed that scholarly audiences tend to be gentle with graduate students; they are pleased to see students make this effort, and are pleased to welcome them into the scholarly profession.

- Whether or not you are delivering a paper, it is beneficial to join the professional association in your field and to attend a meeting in order to become accustomed to this milieu prior to the job search. It allows you to meet people with similar interests to your own — at panel discussions, at meetings of various interest groups, at any of the receptions thrown by departments or publishing houses, and at other similar gatherings that occur at professional meetings — entry is often quite open. The exchange of ideas need not end with the meeting's end; it is increasingly common for scholars to stay in touch via e-mail. The sooner you become professionally active in this way, the likelier you will keep abreast of the latest developments in your specialized field.
- You can gain more frequent exposure to the profession at relatively little expense by attending on campus or local conferences in your field, or local chapter meetings of the professional association. These are especially suitable forums for delivering papers initially, allowing you to proceed gradually to presentations for a wider audience. Keeping well-informed about campus or local events should become an important part of your professional agenda.
- If you wish to submit a proposal or abstract for delivering a paper or organizing a panel, it is important to follow the required procedures for submission and to observe deadlines. These normally are described in the Bulletins sent to members of the professional associations — another reason to join.
- Finally, it is important to realize that pursuing any of the above avenues for sharing research with others in the field does not imply immodesty. It is an appropriate professional attitude.

**Acquiring Language Skills in Relation to Research:** Over and above specific language requirements that exist in many departments, candidates in the humanities and social sciences often find that they need language skills for their dissertation research. In some cases, candidates are aware of these needs well in advance and take the necessary steps to acquire sufficient language skills. It is not uncommon, however, for students to discover that their research requires language skills that they had not originally anticipated — perhaps a need for greater fluency, or a need for an additional language. Many seek to go abroad for a summer of intense language study.

GSAS helps to address these needs through an arrangement with the Harvard Summer School whereby entering doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences may apply for tuition waivers for language study, and in a separate process continuing students in the humanities and social sciences may also do so. In addition, GSAS has a number of Graduate Society Summer Fellowships for continuing students to engage in language study and/or preliminary dissertation research. Another source is the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS), which is specifically aimed at students undergoing advanced training in modern foreign languages and related area studies — East Asia, East Europe, and the Middle East. In addition, a few departments have funds available for summer research or study abroad, making it worthwhile to inquire. Finally, several research centers at Harvard that specialize in areas of the world offer assistance for language study. For full details on fellowship opportunities for language study, see the Fellowships web site, <https://gsas.harvard.edu/financial-support/fellowships>

Another possibility is to enroll in language courses at Harvard during the academic year, as soon as you have identified language skills required by your research. Once again, the earlier you can anticipate those needs, the better.

**Participating in Department Activities:** There are many opportunities for graduate students to become involved in departmental activities: attending or helping to organize colloquia, joining student-faculty committees, helping with the orientation of new students to the department, and participating in all informational meetings that are offered for graduate students. This allows students to interact with faculty members in a non-teaching situation. It is also a way of keeping informed of departmental policies of concern to graduate students and providing input on those policies. Most of these events are announced on department bulletin boards and on flyers posted around the department; another excellent source of

information is the department graduate administrator. Try to make it a habit to keep well informed of events; faculty members sometimes get discouraged from offering further assistance or sponsoring events if students fail to respond. If you think that there are too few departmental events, you can suggest some that you think would be useful. The more you participate, the more you will have a chance to make suggestions for improvements and to work for them. One graduate student noted that she tends to keep in touch with fellow students after they finish the program, and in that way she has extended her contacts network to other schools as well.

**Seeking a Position as House Tutor, Freshman Proctor, or GSAS Resident Advisor:** These are further means for broadening your exposure to university life and becoming actively involved; they are also a means of acquiring academic administrative experience, with financial benefits as well. Responsibilities in these positions vary according to the needs of the different populations in the respective housing groups. Selection committees in general will choose applicants who can show that they have the ability to deal effectively with people in close living situations, are reliable, have varied interests or hobbies, and who have been active in community or extracurricular activities in the past. Information about applying is available in the GSAS Office of Student Affairs, Smith Campus Center, third floor; (617) 495-1814. Applications usually are due in midwinter.

### **Combining Personal Life with Professional Life, PANEL REPORT**

An underlying premise in this discussion was that the quality of personal life has an important influence on the quality of professional life. It is noteworthy that those who chose to attend a discussion of this topic were mostly women.

The married speakers or those with partners discussed the two-career issue and the frequent need to juggle competing demands. Interestingly enough, the speakers felt that few of the problems came from their spouses or partners, but rather from the pressures and demands of the outside world, or from family members. Couples, it would seem, are ready to make compromises in order to achieve a balance. It is employers and the career ladder itself that make it hard to do so.

For those who have children or are planning to have children, the juggling and dilemmas are compounded. Starting too early can delay finishing the degree or slow down the publications necessary for a chance at gaining tenure. On the other hand, waiting until tenure is secured is too long a postponement for many. The speakers suggested that since there is no such thing as an ideal time, one that will work for everyone, the best thing to do is work this out on a highly individual basis. Perhaps there comes a time when you simply feel that you are as ready as you will ever be.

Single people were equally concerned about these issues. All agreed that at some point the pursuit of a career could pose a challenge to personal fulfillment, and that choices would have to be made.

The issues were given an added perspective by one of the speakers who is from Japan. She found that Japanese society is more rigid and that females have fewer choices — although there are some signs of change, and also somewhat greater flexibility within academe. On the other hand, the greater freedom in American society does not always produce liberation. One member of the audience described the restraints as coming from within; she had many exciting opportunities, but they were a source of both pleasure and pain.

By the conclusion of the meeting, the participants all knew that they had not solved any of these problems, but that talking and sharing seemed to be an important thing to do.

For information on GSAS provisions for expecting parents see Parental Accommodation and Financial Support on the GSAS web site; see also Family Resources.

### Tips for Entering Graduate Students from a Graduate Dean at Orientation, REPORT

In her welcoming speech to a new group of entering graduate students, the incoming Dean of GSAS, Theda Skocpol, Professor of Government and Sociology and Director of the Center for American Political Studies, offered four tips that have an important bearing on professional development. Here is a somewhat shortened version of her advice that she tells us is based “on what I learned back when I was a graduate student at Harvard, and based on thirty years of working in partnership with wonderful students in political science and history and getting to know others in many fields.” She has generously agreed to share them for the present publication.

**GET TO KNOW AT LEAST THREE OR FOUR FACULTY MEMBERS REALLY WELL — AND LET THEM KNOW IN SOME DEPTH ABOUT YOU AND YOUR WORK.** Of course, you will want to develop a close relationship in due course with one primary mentor – with your lab director or your thesis advisor. But do what you can...to get to know more than one of Harvard’s remarkable scholar/faculty members really well. You can only gain by learning from multiple people, and discovering your own way to put together the many insights they have to offer. And, of course, you do not want to be completely dependent on one person for your future.

**REMEMBER THAT MUCH OF WHAT YOU LEARN WILL BE FROM — AND ALONG WITH — YOUR FELLOW GRADUATE STUDENTS.** You are not in zero-sum competition with one another. Some graduate schools bring in hordes of students and expect 50% or more to fall by the wayside. That is not how we do it here. You have all been picked as people we are sure can earn the degrees you have signed up for. We expect all of you to succeed. So team up with other students in your program to study for classes, prepare for general exams – and gossip about the foibles of the faculty! The friendships you make will buoy your spirits, and last a lifetime. You are getting to know the movers and shakers of the future. And you will learn a great deal from each other as well as from the faculty.

### **HARVARD HAS LOTS OF FOOD — FOR THOUGHT, AND ALSO FOR THE STOMACH!**

Colloquia, workshops, dinner-discussions, departmental and special interest gatherings are ubiquitous — not just in your department but all over the university. Pace yourself, but regularly attend some of them — including events outside of your immediate specialty. You will learn a lot, and meet key scholars and public figures from all over the world, because everyone who is anyone visits here sooner or later.

Not just that, but you will also find good food and drink at most of these events....I learned this over the years watching grad students — and people from the Cambridge community — attend all kinds of events in the Government Department, eating their way eagerly through delicious sandwiches, nice fruit and cheese plates, healthy vegetable platters, sinful dissert trays – all while drinking good wines! ...you can definitely save some money, avoid cooking all the time, and eat pretty well around here — while learning and meeting and greeting at the same time. So dig in to the intellectual fare and chow down, too.

Finally, on a more serious note, realize that while your graduate years should be a wonderful time — as well as a strenuous time of learning and achieving — they are a prelude, not a lifetime. In June, I will stand before new MAs and PhDs in this same theater — at a time called “Commencement.” It is called that for a good reason: the receipt of the advanced degrees you have come here to earn is the **BEGINNING** of a mature life of achievement in the many careers for which you are preparing — in universities and colleges, in research laboratories and think tanks, in government and private agencies.

Before you get to the end of this first year of graduate studies — which may seem overwhelming at moments — step back and make a plan for yourself. Set out goals and guideposts to help you move STEADILY through your basic classes and examinations promptly, so that you can get into doing actual research and prepare ASAP to define your own thesis project. Keep in mind that absolute perfection is not your goal, but working hard and doing “well enough” at each step along the way. You are all so smart, that your “good enough” is going to be just fine.

Don’t be afraid to demand that your faculty advisors help speed you along the way. Don’t wait for them to ask you to meet milestones — set your own deadlines, along with your peers, and take the initiative. As soon as you can — by the second year or third year if possible — get involved in actual research and in writing papers to present at workshops and professional conferences. Make the papers you write for courses into realistic research contributions whenever you can.

**BOTTOM LINE:** You are here, not to study forever, but to become front-line contributors to the advancement of knowledge. And you want to have your degrees in hand as soon as possible. Graduate school is the road to commencement, not an end in itself — always keep that in mind!



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE DISSERTATION: MANAGING ITS DIFFERENT STAGES, FROM CHOOSING A TOPIC TO FINISHING IN A TIMELY FASHION

The dissertation is the centerpiece of doctoral training. Students are expected to produce an original piece of scholarship that makes a contribution to the field. For many graduate students, it seems like an intimidating assignment, a larger piece of work than has been undertaken before, and also a work that will be a major part of their identity for some time to come. It is best to avoid thinking of the dissertation in overly grandiose terms, seeking to produce the definitive work on a given subject. The dissertation is a special scholarly genre, a piece of work that must fit within the context of the graduate program, proceeding within an expected timetable and available funding resources. We would argue that it is possible to write a highly polished and professional piece of work that makes an original contribution, while appropriately limiting its scope. Working closely with advisors can help to achieve that goal. (See below on choosing a topic and advisor.)

In the science fields the situation is somewhat different: the dissertation research grows directly out of research projects conducted in the lab or as part of a research team. Typically, the dissertation is an assemblage of a series of reports on independent research conducted by the student within the lab, and is perhaps less intimidating.

#### **After the General Examinations, Maintaining Momentum, Getting to Work on the Dissertation**

During the more structured part of the doctoral program, when students are fulfilling course and examination requirements, problems of timing and maintaining momentum are more manageable, especially in departments where a timetable for exams is clearly defined. The dissertation stage for students in the humanities and social sciences is another matter: with little structure and few deadlines, students often flounder — in some cases, adding several extra years to the time to the degree. There is a growing recognition of the need to improve the time to the degree in the humanities and social sciences, with a special emphasis on the dissertation as a critical factor. Many departments are engaged in a search for new ways to tighten the advising and supervision of the dissertation process.

#### **Stages of the Dissertation Process in the Humanities and Social Sciences**

It is helpful to think of the dissertation in terms of the different stages in the process: one, the stage of choosing a topic, in many departments this begins even before Generals; two, the stage of research and writing; and three, the stage of completing the project (followed by the dissertation defense).

**The stage of choosing a topic and an advisor:** The goal is to find a topic that is well-defined and feasible, one that matches your interests and aptitudes and at the same time addresses important themes in the larger scholarly discourse. While some students enter graduate school with a topic in mind, these interests often change and grow in a healthy way through exposure to new ideas that is a crucial part of graduate training.

- At the dissertation exploration stage students often find a need to talk to people in a range of fields. Experienced scholars are conscious that it takes a lot of discussion and airing of ideas before a viable project is launched. It is wise for students to do so, consulting with a number of different faculty and eventually identifying those with whom you are able to establish a rapport and who work in fields close to your interests.

- In some cases, a dissertation topic grows out of a seminar paper or out of a research project in which a student is assisting or collaborating with a faculty member. Many faculty members are alert to this possibility, and can often help to identify a seminar paper or research project that has this potential.
- Thoughtful reading can also yield a dissertation topic. As you read books and articles in your field, it is well worth noting your reactions: Is there a work that excites you and makes you want to know more about the topic? or a work that is so compelling that you wish you had written it? or a work with enormous potential, but that you find misses the mark and begs for further investigation? You are well on your way to a topic with any of these reactions; the important step is to pay close attention to your responses.
- Most departments in the humanities and social sciences require a dissertation prospectus. The need to write one helps to get people started earlier in searching for a topic or solidifying a topic as the exploration stage heads to at least some conclusion.

**Note:** Once you have developed a dissertation topic, it is also time to start preparing to apply for fellowships, since most fellowships must be applied for during the academic year prior to when support is needed — with many fellowship deadlines occurring during the fall of the previous year. (See the more detailed discussion on applying for fellowships in Chapter Four.)

**The stage of research and writing:** Once you have chosen a topic and an adviser with expertise in relation to the topic — and possibly other mentors as well, including some outside of the department — it is wise to try to get feedback on a regular basis. At this stage, students often find themselves isolated, both from peers and professors; many also continue to struggle with the problem of maintaining momentum in such an unstructured situation. The following are measures that departments employ to assist at this stage:

- A growing number of departments have students and faculty participating in the GSAS Research Workshops Program which provides collegial settings for graduate students who are learning to conceive and write the dissertation prospectus, as well as scholarly articles. While group sessions are not meant to replace advising on an individual basis, they are a helpful supplement.
- For advising on an individual basis, a number of students and advisers find it effective to schedule fairly frequent advising sessions in advance, regardless of the advisee's progress in the interim period. This may mean submitting work that is a very rough draft, if it exists at all; but at least it assures some communication on a regular basis. Other students and advisers prefer to meet mainly when the students feel ready to show something. This probably means submitting more highly polished work, and some students prefer this arrangement for this very reason, but it also runs the risk that there will be very little contact or monitoring of progress. It may also mean that students waste a lot of time and energy by making fairly lengthy excursions in unfruitful directions that might have been avoided with more regular adviser contact.
- Experience shows that there is probably no single correct advising system; students and advisers often experiment with various scenarios until the right one is found for the individual student. Whatever system is used, advisers find that they can provide the best feedback if they receive new written work sufficiently in advance of an advising session so that they have a chance to give it a careful reading.

### **The Dissertation Process in the Natural Sciences**

As noted in the preceding chapter, students in the natural sciences are expected to gain admission to a lab or research group during the first year, preferably by the beginning of second semester, but no later than the end of the second semester. Many science departments offer lab rotations during the first semester in

order to assist students in choosing a lab. Making this choice is such an important matter, that in departments where rotation is not offered, students have organized sessions to help inform first years on the qualities of the various labs or research teams. Eventually science students settle into a lab where they will engage in independent research that forms the basis of the dissertation, with the faculty head of the lab typically serving as the main dissertation advisor.

**Having A Dissertation Plan B Should the Need Arise: Moving in a More Modest Direction While Preserving Key Questions** (This passage was written in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, but many of the suggestions are applicable in other contexts, such as lack of sufficient research funding for the original plan.)

**Be ready with alternative paths to reach your goals.**

The good news is that you can and **MUST** continue to ask the research questions that matter most to you and, hopefully, to the field as well. What you may have to adjust is how you go about addressing the questions that matter, especially if traveling abroad is a central part of your current plan or if your plan entails high costs to accomplish. Before you decide that you must jettison your topic, take a fresh look, working closely with your advisors, to see if you can get at the favored questions from another direction, relying on resources many of which have come into fairly common use during the recent decades.

In all probability your alternative plan will be a more modest one, but with the possible advantage of reducing cost and time spent. I would quickly emphasize that this reduction does not have to mean a less significant set of questions for your potential dissertation. It is possible and even desirable to approach questions with a new sharper attention to feasibility, keeping the scope within more reasonable and modest bounds. It can well lead to a more highly polished finished product that is more compelling in its findings, precisely because of the more reasonable bounds.

There are positive developments that facilitate alternative research plans. Hand in hand with the digitization of resources, there is a new spirit among scholars, even prior to the pandemic, of sharing research data that they have acquired. Typically, scholars collect more data than they can use for their own projects, data that often can be used for other purposes. Harvard scholars have already been engaged in this sharing, using a newly created computer platform that facilitate this sharing in a highly efficient and economic manner.

Going beyond working closely with your advisor, you can consult with other experienced scholars who have had ample and recent experience in those countries that are integral to your project, not necessarily confined to the Harvard faculty. Above all, be sure to avail yourself of the splendid services of Harvard research librarians, who can make you more fully aware of resources relevant to your project and also guide you in how to use them. (Note that since research practices are often discipline-specific, find your liaison librarian at <https://fasliaisons.library.harvard.edu/gsas> or send an inquiry to Ask A Librarian at <http://ask.library.harvard.edu> and request an appointment.) Finally, and this may lie in a more distant future, hopefully we will see a reorientation of present fellowships to match the new realities, placing less emphasis on travel per se, and recognizing that “field work” may have a new meaning.

**Whether it’s plan A or plan B, don’t neglect the more timeless aspects of how to articulate the importance of your proposed project**

This chapter on the dissertation emphasizes the importance of posing research questions that can make a contribution to the field. The next chapter, on how to write a winning fellowship proposal, offers more timeless suggestions for articulating the importance of your proposed project in a polished and compelling manner. These suggestions acquire special force where there may be required shifts in implementation.

### **The Dissertation Acceptance, Followed by the Defense**

Once the dissertation is completed and is considered ready for acceptance by the dissertation advisers or committee members, they normally schedule a dissertation defense. While the defense can be considered as a formality, a number of departments do use this session to ask probing questions about the dissertation. This final step varies considerably among departments.

### **The Dissertation from the Student Perspective, PANEL REPORT**

The dissertation is probably the single most important and far-reaching undertaking in the entire doctoral program, having an impact that extends well beyond the program itself. At a panel discussion entitled “Surviving the Dissertation,” the graduate students on the panel, all in the final stages of writing the dissertation, offered variations on the survival theme, such as, “Don’t Be a Perfectionist — YET,” or “Don’t aim for the Nobel Prize.” Beyond the general theme of “survival,” the speakers did their best to put people at ease, mainly by emphasizing that the activities of research and writing are familiar ones that students commonly encounter throughout their education. Beyond the general theme of “survival,” the speakers offered the following helpful practical tips, maintaining a remarkable balance between candid realism, on the one hand, and reassuring optimism, on the other.

**Choosing a Dissertation Topic:** Focus energies early on a potential topic, even if you arrive at only a rough idea of the topic. The speakers provided reassurance to those still engaged in the search by suggesting to them that they probably had a topic — at least a rough idea of topic — but didn’t realize that they had one. What the speakers meant is that when they looked back on their own selection process, they realized that many of their early seminar papers and even their undergraduate research projects tended to form a pattern, hovering around particular themes. In taking stock of what consistently interested them, what gave them pleasure, they eventually singled out a topic that seemed to promise to be the most engaging and one most likely to bring out their strengths. In this manner they capitalized on all of the work they had done so far; choosing was a form of self-identity.

One speaker placed particular emphasis on the positive aspects of the dissertation: if you choose something that truly engages you, then you can think of it not just as fulfilling a requirement, but as a privilege to be working on it. She also likened the ups and downs of the dissertation process to the ups and downs in entering a long-term personal relationship: at first you fear that you will never find that someone; then, when you do, you experience qualms and fear of commitment; then you readjust and make compromises; then you affirm your commitment.

She also offered the valuable suggestion that choosing a topic should be thought of as choosing a central question that drives your research, rather than a “topic” per se. She emphasized that this is an important distinction. Scientists automatically think of the dissertation as a question or a puzzle, but it is more difficult for humanists to do so. Once you have a question, then you have to answer it; you enter an active rather than a passive mode in your reading and research. A central question also generates sub-questions, allowing you to see a structure. The dissertation as a whole is one large question, while the chapters are the answers to the sub-questions. Without formulating a central question, as well as subsidiary questions and a structural outline, you really don’t have a single do-able topic, but probably many do-able topics. The central question may not leap out at you immediately; but be aware that you are searching for that question. This can be one of the biggest pit-falls for dissertation writers, so be sure to set limits and recognize that you can never

exhaust a topic. Formulating a central question is a way of setting boundaries. Be practical and pragmatic in scope and planning: don't bite off too much, nor too little; allow yourself plenty of wiggle room during research and writing.

Other speakers emphasized the more subjective or personal aspects of choosing a topic. One advised that you should follow your passion even if it doesn't fit comfortably into a field. He added that in any case, it's impossible to predict what the external world will favor in the future. Another emphasized that you should not just focus on what is a good dissertation topic, but rather on what is a topic that is a good fit FOR YOU, balancing strategic selection and personal interest. Being strategic means finding a niche, or finding an angle on a familiar topic, or giving a more comprehensive treatment of a familiar topic, or juxtaposing a few approaches and topics to make your research more broadly marketable or possibly unique. A good fit for you means building on your strengths and avoiding your weaknesses, pushing yourself and avoiding boring yourself with material you are tired of, finding something new and interesting. He added that it is important to balance novelty or topical "sexiness" with the known parameters of the discipline: position yourself INSIDE the field, not out of it, so that you can still be hired to represent the field and teach classes in the field. Finally, he advised, treat yourself well: choose a topic and location of research that you will enjoy (if you have a family, they need a vote as well).

**The Research and Writing Stage:** Since the dissertation is about communicating, start writing as early as possible, once you have identified a central question as topic. One speaker emphasized that writing and research should not be thought of as separate processes: the dissertation is about communicating your ideas. Each attempt at putting an idea on paper may make the next research step far more efficient, since you will have a better notion of what you are looking for, a better notion of the questions you wish to pose, a better sense of the central question versus the subsidiary questions. She advised students to imagine an audience, imagine that you are teaching about what you have found. If you think of it as implicitly engaging in dialogue with others, this can help to overcome the feeling that it is an isolating experience. She also noted that it takes many drafts to create one long argument and that most writing is actually re-writing and revision. The idea of thinking out the whole argument and even writing a very rough draft or diagram of the whole was strongly endorsed by another panelist; she found that this helped to avoid a complete re-write of earlier drafts of single chapters which might have been necessary had she not allowed the subsequent development of ideas to come into clearer view. Another speaker reinforced this idea, suggesting that you start with just bullet points to outline chapters, then return to each point and write it out in prose; this is an easy way to jump into writing when you only have a couple of hours or don't know what to do — just turn a bullet into prose; once a lot of prose is written, step back and reorganize the outline, then reorganize the prose, then edit to make sense. The main point is to write first, edit later.

Another speaker noted that at times she became absorbed with questions that didn't seem to fit with the rest. This absorption, however, is often an indication that a place needs to be found for the idea, which may require reformulation of the central question. On the other hand, it also can mean that it is necessary to discard an idea that no longer fits, even if it's an idea that you cherish. One speaker said she is making a collection of her favorite discarded ideas.

Another speaker suggested that keeping a notebook or journal and writing down ideas as they occurred was a great help in getting started with writing. It can also stem panic when you are stuck in a writing block by providing an alternative outlet. Another suggestion was to work on a small section at a time to avoid being overwhelmed. Keep in mind that you don't need to start at the beginning — start at an easy place and rearrange later. The speaker also suggested that to make writing as concrete as possible it was helpful to look for models in other dissertations. They don't have to be specifically in your field, they can still enable you to get an idea of the dissertation as a genre. It is also helpful to set deadlines and to avoid unmanageable hundred-page chapters. Map out on paper a vision of what your progress will be for the next year and have the end in sight.

**Don't wait until you have read everything that you think you need to read:** Again, this means avoid being a perfectionist; avoid a paralyzing “ideal.” A small fraction of the research that you do will make it into the dissertation. In order to avoid becoming overwhelmed by the secondary literature, one speaker suggested that it is important to skim and not immediately engage in taking copious notes. Once you have gotten a sense of what is relevant, you can go back and do a more careful reading and more thorough note-taking, which then becomes a form of writing. In a similar vein, she called for a separation between the creative process, which comes first, and the more careful process of carefully shaping your ideas on a page. In time it will be necessary to self-critique what you are doing, but some separation is essential. Being too critical can put a damper on creativity.

In connection with note-taking and handling the smaller details, one speaker emphasized that he wished he had paid attention much earlier to the importance of finding the most helpful software and being more systematic in entering data and recording bibliographic information.

**Don't wait too long to get feedback; figure out how to make that happen:** One speaker warned against falling into the trap of putting off meeting with your advisor until you have something to share; it is a fallacy that many students share, that not having something to show is shameful, leading to avoidance of contact with advisors (what the speaker termed “a long-distance relationships”) when the opposite is what is needed: he in fact found that the meetings themselves could be generative, even producing a kind of high. In dealing with your advisor, be pro-active. Some advisors micro-manage; others can seem to be negligent. Try to elicit the help that you need; submit a cover letter with specific questions along with your chapter; suggest a meeting date. Don't allow progress to be tied into your advisor's timing for response. Don't allow yourself to get paranoid and think the worst if your advisor does not respond; it seldom has anything to do with you. If you have trouble getting your advisor's feedback, consult others; don't stop working. When you do get feedback try to push advisors to articulate the problem as clearly as possible, distinguishing between fundamental structural problems versus a problem of grammar. One speaker offered the further suggestion that it is helpful to keep a record of dissertation meetings with faculty members. It can serve as a reference for the student in implementing suggestions, and also as a reminder for the advisor of earlier advice. The importance of communicating about the dissertation and maintaining momentum has been recognized by departments as well. Some have instituted colloquia in which students discuss dissertation ideas and progress with fellow students and faculty members on a regular basis. Several speakers strongly recommended joining a writing group; it makes you produce small pieces with regular deadlines, and then you will have something to share.

**Don't follow a strict order in writing chapters:** You don't have to write your first chapter first; you can start with the chapter you feel most prepared to write. However, when you are ready to assemble what you have written, your first chapter should present your main point, your main contributions to the field, your best examples, and your theoretical framework and interventions. Then all the other chapters will follow as elaborations on points made in the first chapter. Take a similar approach in each of the subsequent chapters: start with your juiciest examples and ask what chapter-length points each of them could introduce and support. It is important to give the structure of your argument, rather than to give the order in which you made your discoveries (which many people tend to do), even if the discoveries came later in the game. Similarly, don't start the chapter with background information; provide background only when necessary and only as much as is needed; otherwise you'll spend years writing background information and never get to the point; think of the dissertation as a James Bond movie, keep the audience absorbed.

**Be flexible and even take a playful approach when confronting surprising research results:** The speakers noted that research always entails the unexpected: if all the findings were fully predictable, after all, then the topic probably wouldn't be worth doing in the first place. You may know the big questions, but you cannot know all the questions in advance, and you will surely discover new questions that are suggested

by the archival material or other sources of data. The formulation of the topic could be expected to change many times, since it is necessary to follow research findings where they lead. It is a good idea to think of the prospectus as a “proto” prospectus, rather than a definitive statement. One speaker in fact subsequently cut his topic in half, with the positive take that now his dissertation has become “more focused.” Another positive take on changes that have to be made is to call it a “fruitful mismatch” between the prospectus and the dissertation.

**Don’t wait too long to apply for fellowships:** The speakers strongly encouraged students to apply for fellowships, seeking help from the faculty and the GSAS Fellowships Office. They noted that winning a fellowship can make your own advisor look at you differently, and that once you win your first fellowship, that starts you on a good path to winning other fellowships. (More details on writing the fellowship proposal can be found at this site.)

**Treat the dissertation as your current job:** The speakers noted that being a PhD student could be an infantilizing experience — many of your nonacademic peers are already out in the “real world.” In thinking of your dissertation as a job this means keeping on track, keeping procrastination to a minimum, even though all the speakers confessed to having engaged in various forms of procrastination. It is helpful to write in small chunks, since it is easier to think in smaller sections rather than chapters; then make them flow together. Create deadlines, make a schedule. Interestingly, while the speakers said that conference talks could be helpful in creating deadlines that have to be met, they warned against becoming a “conference junkie.” They explained that conference talks are NOT dissertation chapters and are usually considerably shorter. It is thus easier to convert a chapter into a conference talk than vice versa (an ideal dissertation chapter is around fifty pages, according to one speaker.).

**Choosing Dissertation Advisors:** Work to your own strengths, know your own needs, and recognize that usually one person can’t fit all your needs. It is now a requirement in any case that three people serve on the dissertation committee. While it is helpful to have a famous senior faculty member on your committee, it is also important to have someone who can serve as a “cheer-leader,” and this might point to a junior faculty member. Talking to more advanced students in your department can give you an idea which advisors have a reputation for getting students out in a timely manner, which ones have a good student placement record, which ones are flexible and realistic enough to give students room for their own ideas. It is also important to know if the potential advisor plans to stay at Harvard, at least for a while. The speakers strongly recommended supplementing the advising process by finding a peer group of dissertation writers who are basically at your stage — it can be as small as just two people. All of our speakers had in fact found peers who really got to know their work, and noted that they felt it was less risky to share a rough draft with a peer.

**On Getting a Life:** During the dissertation writing stage, it is important to have social activities built into your life and to be in contact with other people. Finally, when all practical tips had been exhausted, the speakers were unanimous in the feeling that it takes a huge amount of faith that you will prevail and finish the dissertation. We are all grateful for the many words of wisdom, especially from people who are truly in a position to speak from experience. Good luck on the dissertation to people at all stages.

## **The Dissertation from the Faculty Perspective, PANEL REPORT**

Additional insights for choosing a dissertation topic were offered at a panel discussion by faculty members (entitled “What Makes a Good Topic and How to Find It”). The professors were able to approach the subject from their experiences both as dissertation advisors and as scholars who have gone through the process of choosing research projects themselves. The speakers acknowledged that choosing a dissertation topic is a challenging process that can produce considerable anxiety. A student’s ego and identity are involved — it’s almost like choosing who you are.

They then devoted themselves to dispelling anxiety by offering a series of practical suggestions for choosing a good topic. They stated at the outset that they could not provide a strict set of rules. Topics are as wide as human knowledge; different fields have different criteria, different paradigms, and different methods. In the absence of a clear set of rules, the speakers proceeded instead to apply common sense and experience to arrive at helpful advice.

Originality is a principal criterion of a good topic. You can be original in diverse ways. You may examine material that has never been studied before; or you can examine well-known material, but provide a new interpretation.

Another way to view these different concepts of originality is to recognize that some topics are central to the field and that there is always new work being done; other topics are on the periphery and have been neglected.

It is important to choose a topic that is congenial to you, that you think is worthwhile not only within the framework of the discipline, but on a personal level. It is not at all irrelevant to consider how much you like interviewing, computers, dealing with insects — or whatever it is that a topic demands.

The specific topic that you study may have a personal and idiosyncratic origin. It is no accident that research on certain groups is likely to be pioneered by people of that group: women have often led the way in women's history, Blacks in Black history, immigrants in the history of immigration.

You should have a doable thesis that has boundaries; you have to be able at least to imagine where and when it would end. If it is hard to start a thesis, it can be even harder to end one.

This means that you should be ambitious intellectually, but not too ambitious, think of it as a task that will enable you to get on with your career. Students sometimes ask if their dissertation should include A, B, C, and D. One speaker suggested first doing A and then see if that makes a dissertation. Students can then go on to B, C, and D after the dissertation is finished.

One speaker put this idea in a different way. He suggested that instead of writing a dissertation prospectus it is best simply to write a dissertation chapter. He explained that what he really meant was that it is best to do a little piece of research, think small. If it is interesting, it will lead to a bigger problem. The best proposal is a pilot project; once you have picked a path you can add on different forks as you go along. He observed that everyone knows the BIG IDEAS, it is harder to do the little ones.

Modesty is also helpful in choosing a manageable topic. Some students set out to write a dissertation that will change the world; others just want to write a dissertation. In terms of results, there seems to be no correlation between the quality of the dissertation and the ambitious nature of the topic.

They noted that it is useful to make the dissertation separable into parts with short-term goals. Work on the dissertation often competes poorly with other tasks that offer more immediate gratification. Confronting the dissertation as a whole can lead to endless postponements.

There was also a warning that dissertations seldom turn out as planned; it is important to hedge your bets and be prepared in case you do not find data that speak to the issue.



A good dissertation topic should also allow you to say something that is convincing to other people. Each field has its own rules as to what is compelling evidence. There is always a logic of explanation and there must be interpretable results.

One speaker suggested that topics that involve comparisons provide a more structured framework than studies of individual subjects. He also recommended building on the work of others. This does not mean replication, but rather looking for gaps or for ways to extend other investigations. He stressed that very few things start *de novo*. Having a framework, testing things that others have done is very helpful.

To find out what it is you would like to do, it is helpful to be attentive to your reactions in your scholarly reading. If you find yourself saying “I wish I had written that,” you can use that as a key to finding something similar.

Preparing a research design also requires conversation. Research is often a solitary activity, but designing research is an activity that should be carried out collaboratively. Decisions made at the stage of research design are so crucial to the value of subsequent labor that issues must be talked out thoroughly at the outset. Even highly experienced researchers often collaborate with colleagues, teach courses on methodology with them, or pop into each other’s office with a query twice a day. Rule number one for graduate students beginning their first large research projects is: engage in an extended conversation with your advisors. Even Jove, with his legendary powers, could not generate a good research design fullblown from his head.

Looking to the future, the speakers addressed the relationship between the dissertation topic and job prospects. Both agreed that job considerations should be subordinate to intellectual interests. In any case, predicting the market is like “guessing in the dark.” A topic that is in the mainstream of the discipline might appear to be safer, but it may be in an overcrowded field. That problem is not completely solved by choosing a more peripheral topic, since there may be less demand. In general, you should avoid choosing a topic because you think it is fashionable. They also added that the dissertation topic does not necessarily identify your field that precisely — hiring departments tend to work by broad fields.

The speakers tried to reassure students that most professors care about their dissertation advisees — indeed, professors often find it a source of personal pride to be an active part of the process of training a new generation of scholars. They added that the faculty have an obligation to teach and advise graduate students — that it is what they are paid to do. The speakers urged students to be more active than passive in seeking an advisor, to be more aggressive in their outreach to professors. They strongly recommended that students work hard during their first year or two in getting to know the faculty beyond their classes — interviewing professors, and attending lectures or seminars.

For further views from the faculty, Professor Gary King, Department of Government, has been a regular contributor to panels on this topic; he articulates the issues in a particularly insightful and encouraging manner, based not only on his experience as a faculty advisor, but also recalling his own experience as a student. Below is a summary of his major points.

- Everyone thinks in terms of 250 pages for the dissertation, which is something you THINK you have never done before; thinking in terms of 250 pages is irrelevant.
- What is needed is to re-orient your life, make a transition from being a student doing what you are told, into becoming an expert in your field; this is a very hard reorientation to make; it entails effortful study, pushing yourself beyond where you are;
- On the prospectus: he considers it speculative and deeply irrelevant; no one will ever ask whether you did what you said you would do in your prospectus; instead, do research and write the first chapter, making it sound like a prospectus;

- When you finish your dissertation, it does not count as finished until it is published; don't ever use the word "dissertation."
- The goal of the dissertation is to answer one question: "Whose mind are you going to change about what?" A dissertation is about a new argument; you also need to know who is your audience.
- The goal also requires rigorous organization, focusing on answering the question; have a table of contents that shows the structure of your argument; everything in your dissertation must support the argument; don't write a literature review, but cite works that support your argument;
- While writing, test market your ideas, keep sharing your work with friends and overcome the fear of being embarrassed;
- When you feel ready, make it clear to your advisor that it's time to graduate, taking that initiative and then bringing your advisor around to that position.
- Recognize that for those who love scholarship, it can be more intoxicating than anything else you might do; in this sense, it's a great privilege.

## CHAPTER FOUR WRITING A WINNING FELLOWSHIP PROPOSAL

### A Crucial Skill and Investment

As many students will attest, the process of writing a compelling and highly polished fellowship proposal for a fellowship competition can be a demanding task, but one that greatly enhances prospects of winning a fellowship. Of equal importance, it helps students to identify for themselves and to communicate to others what is most compelling about their project, typically for dissertation research or writing. What is less well recognized is that this process is an investment: Once a polished statement is achieved, students are able to put it to good use at further junctures in the graduate program and beyond; it becomes a vital form of professional development. There is in fact a significant affinity between the world of fellowships and the academic job market: both are highly competitive, demanding highly polished skills at every step of the way; both will give considerable priority to the strength of the dissertation as it is presented. Typically, we tend to treat these skills in separate compartments. All too often a strong fellowship proposal is tucked away after the competition is over when it could be put to good use, with modifications, for the job market or for outreach to a publisher (see more on this in Chapters Five and Six). There is a need to have a greater awareness that the hard work of writing a strong dissertation proposal is an investment, an important head start for building a career, whether in academe or in other arenas.

### Applying for Fellowships for Dissertation Research: A Question of Timing

Closely related to maintaining momentum is the issue of timing for fellowship applications or the cycle of the application and awards process. In most cases, fellowship candidates must apply for research fellowships during the academic year prior to when support is needed — with many fellowship deadlines occurring during the fall of the previous year. Fellowship tenure roughly coincides with the academic calendar. (For some science fellowships, there are rotating deadlines during the academic year.)

For many students, the task of writing a fellowship proposal that far in advance is a problem — even for those students who have chosen a thesis topic and done some preliminary research. (Indeed, most researchers will confess that the best time to write a truly accurate description of the project is after the project has been completed!)

One way to deal with the problem is to recognize it as such, and to start planning fellowship applications as early as possible—as soon as a topic has been chosen and some preliminary research has been done. This also means becoming informed about possible sources of funding and fellowship deadlines as early as possible. The GSAS Fellowships web site maintains information on [predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowship opportunities](https://apps2.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/carat/applicant/browse?type=G) searchable through the CARAT database (<https://apps2.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/carat/applicant/browse?type=G>).

Equally important in dealing with the timing issue, is to recognize that a fellowship proposal is a projection of what you expect to accomplish, made on the basis of preliminary research. It is not meant to offer definitive conclusions. The task in the proposal then is to offer sufficient reason as to why the project is promising — why you think the project will make a significant contribution to the field.

### Applying for Fellowships in the Early Stages of Graduate Study: The Predissertation Proposal (See samples of winning pre-dissertation proposals in Appendix A)

There are fellowships, such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Fellowships, which are intended for students at or near the beginning of their graduate study. At this early stage, fellowship

application materials — letters of recommendation, transcripts, and Graduate Record Examination scores — will closely overlap those used for graduate admission. Writing the NSF Proposed Research Project, however, can be a more challenging task. First-year graduate students generally are not yet ready to write a detailed research proposal, and yet they must be prepared to write an informative and focused essay about their research and study plans and future goals. The question is how to do so — sounding focused and professional, conveying interests in a concrete way — while still having perhaps only tentative ideas.

Much of your knowledge at this early stage may still be related to undergraduate research, or other research experiences in between college and the graduate program. It is considerably easier to present a focused and well-informed discussion on what you have already done, than on what you are about to do (a condition common to all proposal writers). In using past experiences in a Proposed Research Project, however, it is essential to present them in terms of their impact on your future direction. A discussion of your senior thesis or major seminar paper, for example, should focus on what you learned from them that influenced or shaped your future research plans. The past experience may have directed you towards new methodologies and issues; or, alternatively, it may have encouraged you to continue working on similar issues, using your graduate training to expand your expertise. Using concrete examples from the past is primarily of value in allowing you to talk about the present or future with greater assurance and precision.

The NSF application has a separate question that asks for personal experiences and past research, so there is likely to be some overlap with your proposed research if it is based on previous research, as suggested above. The emphasis in the personal essay is on you as a whole person, what your interests and goals are and how your research fits within that picture. NSF is especially interested in any activities you have engaged in that entail outreach to under-represented minorities, so be sure to put those activities early and prominently in this essay. They also invite you to discuss nonacademic activities, such as sports or hobbies, which indicate a degree of well-roundedness.

When discussing past research, it can be more effective to start with your most important or culminating experience, often the senior thesis, but possibly research conducted in an interim position between college and graduate school, or possibly a paper that has been published. (Starting with your highest achievement and proceeding in reverse chronological order is typically favored in preparing a curriculum vitae.) You can then switch to chronological order and describe the research steps leading to this culminating work.

A final point about either essay is that it is also an important display of your writing skills. You should be sure that it is a highly polished piece of work. When you have completed a draft, read it over and have others read it. With a final draft, be sure to have someone else read it for typographical errors. (See the end of this chapter for sample pre-dissertation proposals and accompanying NSF essays.) Another important point is that each essay should be self-contained; you should not count on the reader to remember what you said in response to the research question when you are answering the question on your study plans.

### **Writing the Dissertation Fellowship Proposal**

(See samples of winning dissertation fellowship proposals in Appendix A.)

Learning to write an effective fellowship proposal at the dissertation stage has implications that go well beyond the process itself; it is a skill that is essential to a scholar throughout his or her career and also valued outside of academe. Ordinarily, students in the science fields, as noted, are asked to submit an original research proposal for their qualifying exam, which then serves as the basis for the dissertation. Typically, the science dissertation is a series of papers or write-ups of lab result; it grows directly out of research done in the lab or on the research team. Most of the points below apply to the natural sciences as

well as the humanities and social sciences, but with the important difference that in the natural sciences you must choose among the multiple papers that comprise your dissertation, and single out the one that will form the basis of your next research project. This format is used at times in the social sciences.

### **The Nature of a Proposal: How a Dissertation Fellowship Proposal Differs from a Dissertation Prospectus**

There is a crucial distinction between the proposal and the prospectus that frequently gets overlooked or misunderstood: that they are addressing potentially opposite audiences. The fellowship proposal must be written to communicate effectively about the importance of the project to an anonymous selection committee typically made up of scholars in a wide range of fields and thus generalists for your topic; in contrast, a dissertation proposal must be written to satisfy the often stringent demands of department specialists in your field. Accordingly, the fellowship proposal must make a highly polished and compelling argument of why your proposed project matters, how it may change the way of thinking about your subject, including an explanation of methodology written for the generalist. In contrast, the specialist readers of your prospectus are in most cases already aware of the importance of your topic – you are essentially preaching to the converted – so the contribution argument must engage in precise and often technical detail how you will implement your project and how it will relate to what has already been done – again in precise detail. Thus, while both documents deal with the same project, they part company in how it needs to be presented.

Another important difference is the highly competitive nature of the fellowship competition versus the absence of competition in the prospectus. There are only a finite number of available fellowships and a sizable applicant pool in any given competition, and the goal is to win. In the case of the dissertation prospectus, it is not a matter of winning, but rather of having your project accepted. There are no limits to knowledge and the number of acceptable topics. Thus, the contrasting approaches described above also match the contrasting purposes of the proposal versus the prospective: a compelling argument in the proposal for the non-specialist versus a detailed and often technical account in the prospectus for the specialist. Many departments have their own rules as to what a prospectus should be — how long, what to include, what format to use, and other requirements. Fellowship competitions also have their own rules and requirements; paying close attention to those differences is also important.

Finally, there is the question of timing. Applications for fellowships typically have a deadline a year in advance of when the proposed research will be conducted. For many students this means that the fellowship proposal is being written in advance of when they will have an approved dissertation prospectus. Thus, students may be writing a proposal about what they really hope to accomplish, but the main message must be more than a matter of hope; the proposal must be written as a projection of what you believe will be accomplished, presented in concrete terms and as focused as possible.

### **Constructing a Polished Argument on the Project's Contribution to the Field: Three Possible Paradigms**

Before you can construct a tightly-knit argument, you must first decide what your contribution argument will be. There are three possible paradigms — or three logical possibilities — for defining how a study will contribute to the field

**Paradigm One:** The project is a research topic that never has been done before. Almost by definition it will contribute to the field. The burden in this argument, however, is to show that the topic is indeed significant despite its neglect by scholars. Perhaps it has only recently acquired significance through

scholarly developments, or perhaps there are other factors that that you have discovered that explain its importance. The main point in this paradigm is to show that the topic no longer should be neglected.

**Sample Argument, Paradigm One:**

“While thirteenth-century Venetian art has been studied in depth, the story of the fourteenth century remains to be written. Not only was this a period of extraordinary political and economic expansion and turning westward, but it was also a period matched by artistic transition, moving away from the prevalent use of Byzantine cultural models — once again in the direction of the West.”

**Paradigm Two:** (This argument is the opposite of Paradigm One.) The project will study well-known material that has been examined many times before, but you are making a reassessment of that material by looking at it in a new way, which will be your contribution. The challenge in this paradigm is to make a strong argument for the need for reassessment without denigrating all previous work. (The selection committee may well include an author of one of those previous works.) The wisest approach is to stress that you are adding a new dimension, thanks to the work that has already been done.

**Sample Argument, Paradigm Two:**

“The rapid turnover in population in nineteenth-century cities and the chaotic ordering of their neighborhoods has led many historians to focus almost exclusively on the social dislocation and uprootedness that they felt urban life brought. This dissertation seeks to re-examine these assumptions ...”

**Paradigm Three:** (This argument logically falls between Paradigms One and Two; it is where most research projects fall as well.) In this case, the project will contribute by exposing some new material, which in turn will call for some reassessment of what has already been done.

**Sample Argument, Paradigm Three:**

“While there have been some studies done on the Alliance’s activities in North Africa, there have been none on its work in the Ottoman Empire where most of its schools were located...By studying the activities of an organization which channeled Western values directly to a broad mass of young students, I hope to shed some new light on the process of Westernization at the local level.”

**Samples of Compelling Statements of the Larger Significance of Your Project, Building on the Contribution Argument:**

- “My work on the state of Veracruz, the first properly historical study of Mexican agriculture after 1940, will test the explanatory possibilities of this novel perspective, and will contribute new sources and fresh approaches to the fields of modern agrarian history and rural development.”
- “I could say, then, that my project is justified in that working out the intricacies of the Old Norse verbal system constitutes a formidable intellectual challenge. But I feel that much more is at stake than that. First, if the facts are as intractable as they seem . . . then they must provide a significant test case for the descriptive and explanatory power of current linguistic theory, and bring issues into clear view which have hitherto lurked in the background.”

**Do’s and Don’ts in Writing the Dissertation Proposal**

The dissertation proposal for a fellowship application, which is often an initial version of a dissertation prospectus, is a very special form of writing, a genre in its own right, with its own special context. Typically the committee reader of proposals is faced with the task of reading between 50 to 100 proposals, a strict

deadline for selecting potential winners, and the reader is probably not a specialist on the proposal topic but qualified mainly as a skilled scholar. In this context, it is imperative to make a clear and compelling argument for why the project should be funded, and it must be “reader friendly,” which means sparing the reader the hard work of figuring out the major points of the topic and why it is important.

In choosing what to say and when and how to say it, try to imagine that in all likelihood the committee reader will only absorb or retain approximately five major points from each proposal that she reads. The tips below indicate how to choose and treat approximately five major points about the dissertation; the tips also indicate some common tendencies that weaken a proposal and how they may be avoided. Also see below for **writing a fellowship abstract**.

**The Importance of Structure:** The structure of the proposal plays an important role in the strength of the proposal. The order in which you present your points should be a hierarchic order, with the most important items placed first, as early as the opening introduction. The reader is likely to be grateful to learn sooner rather than later what the project is all about, and is likely to attach greater weight to what comes first. This means having a strong but succinct opening paragraph(s), in which all the major points of the proposal are presented in a concise nut-shell fashion, with further elaboration postponed for subsequent paragraphs. The major points include: a statement of the topic, which should be framed in terms of a central question or two; the methodology, stating how and also where you will conduct the research if away from Harvard; how it contributes to the field(s) and why it is important.

**Identifying the Main Topic:** In terms of effective hierarchic order, it is important to pin down the topic as early as possible, at the very opening of the proposal. This should include a central argument or question which is an essential aspect of defining a topic. There is common tendency to postpone stating the topic and engaging instead in preliminaries, often providing extensive background material, and saving the actual topic for last. This deprives the background of its meaning or relevance, which only becomes clear when the topic is reached (sometimes as late as the second page of the proposal). The comedian may well postpone the punchline until last; this is not a good idea in a fellowship proposal.

**Communicate Your Intention Up Front:** When stating the topic, recognize that the reader’s main interest in the proposal is to find out what you intend to do with the topic, what central question you intend to explore. The proposal is essentially a story about yourself and your intentions. There is a common tendency for the writer to hold back, avoiding a direct statement of intent, avoiding the use of the active voice. It is far better to state what you will do rather than to state what needs doing. For example, you might say, “I will address the question of...” rather than just throwing out the question, without ownership. Note that in the sciences, the preferred mode is the use of “we” rather than I, and of course many science projects are about team-work.

**Distinguish Between the Main Central Question(s) and Subsidiary Ones:** There is another common tendency for the writer to present a multitude of specific questions in neutral fashion, scattered throughout the proposal, without distinguishing between the main central question and those that are subsidiary. Bringing these dispersed questions together under an umbrella central question benefits not only the reader, but also the writer. It can often lead to a clearer formulation of the topic and help to assure that it is a workable topic, with central and subsidiary questions that can be documented. In any case, it is not a good idea to leave it for the reader to do the hard work of figuring out what is central and what is subsidiary. Similarly, if the topic deals with a specific time and place, it’s not a good idea to postpone giving these crucial features which help to orient the reader.

**Be Concise:** It is also important to make all statements concise and compelling. The use of fewer words is the best path to clarity. There is a common tendency of adding clause after clause, burying the main point of a statement and making it unmanageable for both reader and writer.

**Present One Version of the Topic:** Another common tendency is to present the main topic in multiple versions that are just different enough from one another to leave the reader confused (all too frequently, there are even versions that contradict one another); once a topic is clearly and concisely presented at the opening, there is no need to repeatedly tell what the topic is. When further elaboration is presented subsequently, stay as close as possible to your opening formulation and then elaborate. There is a tendency to turn to synonyms or pronouns to avoid too much repetition of the same words when referring back to the topic. Since clarity must be the highest priority, it is far better to avoid synonyms or pronouns; they seldom are a perfect or clear match for the original noun; they make life harder for the reader.

**State the HOW, Make it Match the What When Discussing Methodology:** Your concise opening statements will also need a concise description of methodology, how you will document your arguments, what types of principal sources you will use to support your arguments (but without giving a long list of every item you will use), where they are located, and what theoretical framework, if any, that you will use for analytic purposes. Some proposals create a disconnect between the WHAT and the HOW in the proposal: a topic is presented, but the method for implementation is poorly matched with the stated topic. Often the HOW is in fact the truer version of the writer's intent and the topic needs a more accurate formulation. You may need to elaborate further on the methodology after the opening, so continue to make sure it matches the stated topic; keep looking back at the opening. When elaborating, you can specify some of the principal sources, but avoid long lists (which the reader will surely skim).

**Contribution to the Field** (see the paradigm arguments above): Once you have accomplished the difficult task of making a concise and compelling statement about your topic and your methodology, your opening should present a concise statement of how the project will contribute to the field, emphasizing how the project will make a difference in how we think about the subject. This is the single most important aspect of the proposal, and needs to be stated early. In most cases, you will need a subsequent paragraph that deals at greater length with the existing literature. This subsequent elaboration needs to present a well-organized and coherent picture of the relevant literature, making sure that you cover all the scholarly areas to which your project will contribute, since projects often contribute to more than one field. Here too there is a common tendency to scatter references to the literature throughout the proposal, which makes it harder for the reader to get a complete grasp of your contributions. A unified treatment of the literature is the most effective. (State major works; avoid long monotonous lists within the proposal, especially if a bibliography is required.) Another common tendency when describing the existing scholarship is to point out how each work fails to do what you propose to do. Keep in mind that the reader will already know from your introduction what your topic is and what is new about your topic. In this section all you need to do is discuss the literature in the field(s), noting, if not self-evident, how particular works are pertinent for your project; no need to repeat what these works have not done, which is your project. Best to note that you will add a new dimension to the rich existing literature in the field, unless little or nothing exists. (You want to be on good terms with authors in your field.)

**Contribution Argument Makes More Sense if it Follows Rather than Precedes Topic Statement:** Another tendency is to present the gaps in the scholarly literature before telling what the topic is. In many cases, the best presentation of the topic is found in a statement of what is missing in the literature. It is far better logic to state what you are doing and then to note it is missing in the literature, rather than have the reader surmise that what you identify as missing is what you will be doing.



**Providing Background, if Needed, for Clarifying the Main Topic:** There are times, especially with an obscure topic, when some lead-in is needed before stating the topic. Make the background lead-in as brief as possible, avoiding a prolonged delay before getting to the topic. If a longer background passage is needed, then do so after giving all the opening main points cited above. Present the background material in a separate paragraph and identify it as background: “By way of further background....” There is a common tendency to present a long introductory background passage before stating the topic. The reader will be far more interested in the background facts after knowing the topic; this allows the reader to know why the background matters.

**Elaboration of the Opening Points, How to Structure the Rest:** Once you have written a strong concise opening paragraph (in some cases, two opening paragraphs, including background if needed), you can elaborate in subsequent passages of the proposal. In fact, once the opening paragraph(s) is structured in hierarchic fashion, as suggested above, the opening can then serve as an outline for the rest of the proposal; just follow the same hierarchic order. Make sure that your subsequent elaborations clearly identify at the opening of the paragraph which major point is the subject of the paragraph, and be sure to stick to that subject without mixing in a lot of extraneous matters.

**Don’t Have a Project That Tries to Do Too Much:** There is a tendency to present a project that has too many goals to be feasible, often too many countries to visit, too many repeat visits required, or too many years needed to complete the proposed research. Working closely with the dissertation adviser can help to avert that problem. The dissertation need not be the definitive work on the subject; it is possible to do a significant piece even while limiting the scope of the topic.

**Writing the Fellowship Abstract:** Many fellowship applications also require an abstract. The stipulations of length requirement vary — ranging between 150 and 500 words. All the principles described above should be followed in writing the abstract. There might be a close resemblance between the introduction paragraph and the abstract, but repetition is perhaps inevitable when presenting the same project in two different formats. The abstract is likely to be more complete than the opening paragraph since it stands apart from the proposal, while the opening leads into the rest of the proposal.

The following items should be included in the abstract, and can also serve as a checklist, to see that the essentials have been covered in the proposal:

- A concise statement of the purpose of the project and its methodology and how it will contribute to the field (much can be drawn from your introduction)
- Significance of the project in broader terms (this too from the introduction) • Personal background of relevance

It is important to prepare the abstract carefully, since members of the selection committee typically use the abstract as a reminder of the project after reading a huge pile of proposals. In addition, the abstract, along with the title, may be used in the various national computerized information systems, so major reference terms should appear in the abstract.

**Further Details on Organizing the Parts of the Proposal:** As noted above, once the introduction presents a concise and carefully structured articulation of the major points of your project, then the introduction can serve as an outline for the rest of the proposal, which elaborates on the major points, as needed: further elaboration on the central argument, on the methodology, on the contribution to the scholarly literature, on the project’s significance in larger terms. Following the outline of the introduction helps to assure a highly

polished and structured presentation throughout the proposal. As each new paragraph picks up a major point of the introduction for elaboration, be sure, as emphasized above, to have an opening sentence for the paragraph that identifies which point is being elaborated, and then be disciplined and make sure the paragraph indeed sticks to that point. With this approach each paragraph makes a clear point that is identified at the outset; it helps to strengthen the whole.

**Elaborating on the Scholarly Literature and Incorporating It into Your Contribution Argument: Should You Include Footnotes and a Bibliography?** You will note that all three contribution paradigms have the advantage of allowing you to discuss the scholarly literature in the field, which is an essential part of a winning fellowship proposal. However, they avoid the potential monotony of simply describing a long list of works; instead they make the discussion of literature an integral part of your contribution argument. When you get to the paragraph that provides a more thorough discussion of the literature, it is important to organize this discussion tightly, grouping the relevant works by field, if more than one field comes into play, and concentrating the discussion within a paragraph or two. All too often, as noted, the applicant tends to scatter citations throughout the essay, which only makes it harder for the reader to locate the exact nature of the contribution and how your original ideas fit within the field or fields. In this more detailed paragraph where you cite specific works or authors, the general and recommended practice is to present them in abbreviated form — author’s last name and date of publication — and placed within the text in parentheses, rather than in footnotes. This is especially recommended when only a brief fellowship statement is required (of no more than six double-spaced pages).

In some competitions, usually when a longer and more elaborate proposal is required (around ten double-spaced pages), you will be expected to have references and a bibliography. Cited works can still be presented in abbreviated form within the text, or you may use footnotes. In either case, this type of proposal should be accompanied by a bibliography, even if not specifically required. Even here, the bibliography should be limited to selected works that are central to the proposal.

**Elaborating on Methodology, Developing Specific Objectives:** In the many cases where methodology needs further elaboration, an essential step is to translate your central argument or hypothesis into a series of well-defined objectives that will support your central argument, making sure that the steps are a logical outgrowth of the major argument or hypothesis. There is a tendency at times for the methodology discussion to veer off course, so that it does not closely match the stated objectives. (In extreme cases, the methodology discussion is so disconnected from stated goals that it sounds like it is describing a completely different project.) Again, it is important to keep checking back to your stated goals, making adjustments as necessary, so that the WHAT you are doing and HOW you are doing it are perfectly matched. If you find you are making an important new point in your methodology, then you need to insert it into your introduction. Similarly, it is important to state all of your specific steps or objectives in a single place in an orderly fashion. If they are scattered, then it is impossible for the reader to know exactly what is being proposed, and how or why it fits with the major goals or contribution paradigm.

**Candidate’s Relevant Background or Qualifications:** Often the application includes instructions for discussing the applicant’s qualifications as part of the proposal, or there is a separate essay question asking for relevant personal background, or a curriculum vitae is required. If there are no specific questions or requirements, it is nevertheless important to include some of your strongest qualifications or preparation for the project in the proposal itself, once you have described the project. This discussion also gives you the opportunity to convey a sense of your commitment and enthusiasm for the project. (Conveying your own enthusiasm may well generate a corresponding enthusiasm from the reader.) If there are no instructions, the following items should be addressed:

- Special background or skills or preparatory work for the project (languages or other skills mastered, prior fieldwork or research related to topic, etc.)
- How the project fits in with your long-term career goals
- Any other evidence of your promise to carry out the project successfully.

Some applications ask for a CV or seek a more extended biographical essay — for example, the Fulbright Institute of International Education application includes a CV in essay form that asks for such personal history as family background, intellectual influences, enriching experiences and how they have affected you. Whether it is a standard CV or a biographical essay, it is important to be selective and to present those aspects of your background that emphasize how well qualified and well suited you are for the particular project and fellowship. The essay is not the occasion to “tell the story of your life.” A good idea in preparing to write the essay or CV is to make a list in hierarchic order of what you think are your most outstanding qualifications and then work them into a personal essay or a CV. In organizing a CV, it is common to list things in reverse chronological order, since your most impressive qualifications or experiences are probably your most recent ones. For the same reasons you might even want to organize your biographical essay in that fashion: you need not start from the beginning—it is possible to work backwards. (Samples of fellowship CVs, as well as biographical essays for fellowship purposes are included at the end of the present chapter; job application CVs will be discussed in chapter six.)

**Paying Attention to Fellowship Descriptions, Adapting the Proposal When Applying for Several Fellowships:** It is wise to apply for as many fellowships as possible, as long as they are appropriate for your project. Most fellowship announcements include a description of the fellowship, stating selection criteria and providing some details about the type of projects that the granting agency seeks to support. You may find that there are a number of fellowships, which are appropriate for your project, but that the fellowship descriptions vary, both in large and small details. While it is important to pay close attention to the wording in the individual fellowship announcements, it is also important to write a fellowship proposal that presents the most persuasive and logical argument in support of your project, following the principles outlined above. How can you write a proposal that does this and at the same time pays close attention to the wording of fellowship descriptions?

We would suggest that you first construct a “generic” proposal that presents your project in the strongest light. You can then adapt it, if necessary, to create individual versions that match individual fellowship announcements as closely as possible. This process involves, above all, careful choice of wording in order to incorporate key terminology from individual fellowship announcements. In some cases, it may also involve adding paragraphs that address specific questions asked by individual granting agencies.

Most projects can be described with a subtly different choice of wording, without distorting the true nature of the project, and without disrupting the basic logic of the contribution argument. The main point is to get your arguments in place. Once that is done, then any tinkering with surface details will not weaken the basic structure of your arguments, which is ultimately what counts.

**The Final Draft:** When you have a draft completed, it is important to seek the advice of faculty advisors and colleagues in the field. As noted below under Fellowships Office services, advice is also available from the GSAS director of fellowships (Smith Campus Center, third floor, (617) 495-1814).

## Related Issues

- **Who Serves on Fellowship Selection Committees—Will Your Proposal Be Read by Specialists in the Field, or by Generalists?** Most people want to know the answer to this question so that they can

address their proposal to the appropriate audience. The problem is that even in competitions that are judged by people in your own discipline, you cannot or should not assume that they are fully knowledgeable about your own specialized topic. Indeed, even specialists need convincing, and may in fact view your proposal with a more critical eye. The safest course is to provide enough background in making your contribution argument, so that both generalists and specialists will view the background as a necessary and logical part of your contribution argument. It is also wise to avoid jargon or unnecessary technical terms.

- **How and When to Include Background Information of a More Personal Nature That May Have Affected Your Work:** If some event or circumstance in your personal life has visibly affected the progress of your work, you might want to address that issue directly, rather than leaving it to the reader to speculate (child birth, illness, family needs, etc.). One possibility is to ask a recommender to mention it, or you could bring it up yourself. Should you choose the latter, my main suggestion is to keep a clear line of separation between the proposal, which should focus exclusively on explaining the merits of your project, and your inclusion of personal information. You could accomplish this separation between the professional and the personal, either by adding a brief cover note, or by adding at the end of your proposal a transitional sentence that indicates you are shifting gears, such as: “On a more personal note ....” Whichever you choose, you should try to emphasize that you are now basically back on track, and in fact have acquired considerable expertise at time management, now that it is such a compelling issue.
- **If a Budget Is Required:** In some fellowships competitions, you will be required to include a budget. This can be thought of as a representation of the project expressed in dollar amounts of estimated expenses. Some government funding agencies have their own budget forms; most foundations do not. In addition to the budget itself, you may want to attach budget-explanation notes. The following are major budget categories for most research projects:
  - Personnel costs — technical assistants, translators, etc.
  - Travel
  - Subsistence or *per diem* — housing and food
  - Supplies and equipment — paper, tapes, notebooks, film, etc.
  - Printing, postage
- **Acquiring Letters of Recommendation in Support of the Fellowship Application:** When the time comes for seeking letters of recommendation — most competitions require two or three letters — you should be prepared to show the recommenders a fairly polished draft of the proposal. A good letter of recommendation not only makes a statement of support about a candidate, but also presents a well documented and informative evaluation. It also addresses the specific purpose for which it is written. When you seek letters of recommendation for a fellowship application, be sure to provide the letter writers with a close to final draft of the proposal and any other items that might prove helpful — for example, a curriculum vitae or a copy of the fellowship announcement.

**Preparing to Conduct Research Abroad:** Fortunately, most of the steps or qualifications needed for the effective implementation of research abroad are the same as those for becoming a strong applicant for a traveling fellowship in the first place: thorough knowledge of the country and its culture, the necessary language skills for conducting research, familiarity with the archival holdings or other forms of data that will be required for your project, as well as having feasible research goals. The following are further considerations or steps that will enhance the research experience abroad:

- **Attitudes and sensitivities that can make a difference:** One attitude that can greatly enhance your research experience abroad is to have a flexible mindset, a readiness to expect the unexpected and to take everything in stride. One speaker at a recent panel went further and suggested taking a creative and even playful approach to the many surprises that are likely to come your way.
- **When you go abroad, you represent the country and/or institution that sponsors you.** The Fulbright and other similar programs make US citizenship a requirement, and consider the program participants as playing an ambassadorial role. However, at a recent panel a speaker gently reminded the students that many who go abroad to do research are non-US citizens. Research universities are increasingly international communities. The issue of representation and identity is thus a complicated one: The best attitude, regardless of citizenship, is to be sensitive to cultural differences and to try to imagine how others may view you and how they may view the research that you seek to do. There are, in addition, some crucial steps that will further facilitate doing research abroad.
- **Procuring a research affiliation or making scholarly research contacts:** For some fellowships a research affiliation is a requirement, and in some cases, the granting agency actually arranges this. But even if an affiliation is not required, it has proven to be so helpful both in making a stronger application and in implementing a research project abroad, that all candidates are urged to start as early as possible in the application process to procure affiliation or at least scholarly research contacts in country. Once you do so, it is important to obtain in writing an invitation or an agreement for scholarly affiliation or participation and to include this invitation as part of your fellowship application even if it is not a requirement. Students often ask how they can go about making these contacts, which leads to the next step.
- **Utilizing the rich resources at Harvard, including the various area research centers and Harvard faculty members who specialize in areas of the world, as well as the many visiting scholars who come from abroad and then return to their own universities:** All of these people are in an ideal position to help arrange an affiliation or to put you in touch with someone who can do so. Students who are specializing in an area, almost by definition, are already working with Harvard scholars who can help with such arrangements, but all students planning research abroad should treat this as an essential step while they are still on campus and still in the application stage, doing so as early as possible. Be sure to make it clear in your communication with scholars abroad that you are not asking for funding, but simply an affiliation or opportunity to participate in scholarly discussions.
- **Procuring research permits and visas, as required:** Here again, students often ask how. Once again, the best course is to consult with those who have recently gone through the permission process for the country that is your destination – either students or faculty. Some fellowships make the necessary arrangements for their fellowship recipients; others do not. Be aware that these steps take time and that you should begin them as early as possible. In most cases, however, and especially in countries that have particularly intrusive bureaucracies, it is impossible to begin the permission process until you have been granted funding and can seek permission under the auspices of a particular granting agency — the Fulbright Program, for example, or other sponsors of fieldwork abroad. All you can do is wait until the award is official and then proceed immediately in making the necessary arrangements. A striking example of practical advice given by someone who had recently gone through the permission process for a particularly difficult country was that it was easier to go to New York for the necessary advance paper work, since the Boston office was impossible in its dealings with people! Another crucial step when you get to country — often a requirement — is to touch base with the American embassy or consulate.

- **Getting a thorough up-to-the-minute briefing on political conditions in country:** Conditions change so quickly that last year’s information, or even last month’s or last week’s, might be outdated. So be sure to use the rich array of research scholars on the Harvard campus and to get a thorough briefing on the current situation. If the political climate in a country is particularly volatile, extra precautions are needed. One area specialist on China, for example, recommends that you write out a summary of your research issues in the country language, being completely forthcoming about the topics of your inquiry, and present them to your potential informant before you ask for a commitment. This will allow the person to evaluate potential risk. Maintaining the anonymity of the informant is essential in writing up research once the interview is conducted.
- **Some smaller details that can make your life in country more comfortable and productive:** One of the best suggestions for productivity came from a student who not only kept in close touch with her dissertation advisor while in the field, but actually used each progress report to the advisor as an embryonic version of a dissertation chapter. In this manner, she had already started writing her dissertation before she had returned home. Another valuable suggestion for those doing fieldwork is to be sure to take thorough field notes that are legible, especially in contexts where it is not possible to use a tape recorder or a laptop. A number of miscellaneous suggestions as to what to bring along when doing research abroad include the following possibilities: copies of journal articles that would be of interest to particular scholars whom you plan to contact; Harvard Dean’s letter attesting to your status; letters of introduction from professors that would help you gain access to libraries or collections or other scholarly resources; Harvard fellowship applications for the following year. These are only some possibilities. As you can see from these ideas, people are more than willing to share what they have learned from their research experience abroad. So be sure to take advantage and learn as much as you can about the current situation.
- **Harvard Travel Assist:** It is strongly recommended before you leave that you register with Harvard Travel Assist. This is a Global Emergency Response Program that provides 24-hour worldwide emergency medical and evacuation assistance to all Harvard students, faculty, and staff who are traveling abroad for University business or a University-related activity. Check out their [website](https://www.globalsupport.harvard.edu/travel-tools/harvard-travel-assist) (<https://www.globalsupport.harvard.edu/travel-tools/harvard-travel-assist>).

**Project Review for Research on Human Subjects:** Research projects that deal with human subjects, where there might be even a slight element of risk to the subjects, must be reviewed by Harvard’s Committee on the Use of Human Subjects, the Faculty’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The review procedure is kept fairly simple and swift in borderline cases, which would probably apply to most student projects. Information about the committee, its fairly broad definition of “risk,” its meeting schedules, and the [committee application form](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~research) (<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~research>) can be found on the Web by following the link on the use of human subjects.

### **Services of the GSAS Fellowships & Writing Center**

The Center offers a range of services related to writing and professional development. Check the GSAS web site for a complete description.

### **On Fellowship Outcomes: An Important Message**

It is important to realize that the line between winner and non-winner in a fellowship competition is often very thin. So the primary message for those who did not receive a fellowship is that there is absolutely no

reason to doubt your abilities, no reason for a sense of failure. As an applicant, you have been part of a distinguished group of graduate students, and you have reason to be proud of the efforts that you have made.

Above all, you should not give up — keep working on your project and your proposal, and try again in the next round of fellowship competitions. For most fellowships, it in no way counts against you to be applying for a second time. With further progress on your project, your proposal should improve, and your chances of winning next time should be considerably improved as well — just be sure that you do submit a new proposal. (You may also want to see if the fellowship sponsors will provide you with feedback from their readers; some make this a practice, but others do not.) **MANY STUDENTS DO WIN ON A SECOND TRY.**

## CHAPTER FIVE PUBLISHING SCHOLARLY WORKS

The discussions below are composite summaries of the main points of several panel discussions on getting published. Speakers included an editor from a university press, members of the faculty, as well as students who have published.

### **Publishing Journal Articles, PANEL REPORT**

One point that was agreed upon by all the speakers on the publishing panel is that it is well worth trying to get an article published as a graduate student. A published refereed article is a powerful entrée into the field. And all agreed that a seminar paper, or in science, a research write-up, is a good starting point. One faculty participant said he makes it a practice to urge students who have written a strong seminar paper to try to rework it for publication.

Other speakers offered further advice on how to convert a seminar paper into a journal article. They stressed that the process requires reshaping and revision. An article must make an explicit and pointed argument; it must be a complete argument in itself. One speaker observed that seminar papers often convey ideas by indirection; a seminar has a shared sense of what the question is, and a communal vocabulary. For an article, the hidden “gems” of a seminar paper have to be brought out and polished. It must have better signposts as to where it is going and must locate itself very carefully as part of a larger discourse, making its claims very clearly. A dissertation chapter may work less readily as an article. It is a good idea to try to look at it from the reader’s point of view to see if it will work, but that can be very difficult for an author to do.

Another speaker was even more emphatic about the need to give an article a clear focus. He suggested two rules: a) an article should make only one major point, and b) an article should make at least one major point. He observed that learning how to shape material into one point is very difficult, especially because the early stages of research involve dealing with the unknown. He stressed the need to marshal arguments, to force issues to a point, to develop a sense of logical progression — so that the result is not just a series of loosely connected sentences, but an argument with a profile, a shape, a contour.

All the speakers suggested that before making revisions on a seminar paper or thesis chapter the student should let it sit for a while. It is important to be able to externalize this piece of work, to allow some distancing, rather than having your ego completely involved. This is especially important if cutting is required; otherwise, it’s “like doing surgery on your own arms.” When you pick up the writing again, work on it as if you have never seen it before. Then, after a few drafts, get criticism from advisors and colleagues. Don’t go too far without feedback; early help is best. Most professors will be supportive and actually enjoy this kind of participation. Finally, before you submit the article to a journal, get one last reading from a specialist in the field, preferably someone who does not know you personally.

Another point that was emphasized by all the speakers was the importance of selecting the appropriate journal — understanding the journal’s mission, its audience, and what is expected of an author. They agreed that graduate students have a better chance of getting published if they avoid the major or high prestige journals in their field. They suggested choosing some of the smaller and more specialized journals, finding the special niche that might be closely matched with the work that the student was submitting — a journal that may have been used in the student’s own research. One speaker stressed that there has been a proliferation in the number of scholarly journals in the last few decades. He noted that this was both good news and bad for students. On the one hand, students had more outlets for publishing; on the other, there



was a greater expectation that students would publish which was accompanied by greater competition among students who were submitting articles.

The process of choosing journals for submission should involve asking professors and specialists in the field. It should also involve reading through the last several issues of potential journals, noting who the authors were, and the likely audience as well.

The speakers also gave practical advice on how to submit an article, and what steps occur after that. They all agreed that in submitting articles, it was best to send the whole article at the start, rather than an outline or synopsis. They also felt that cover letters can be used, but are not very helpful; nor is a CV (this is in contrast to book submission where a cover letter and CV and synopsis are advised — see the summary below of the book publishing seminar).

They suggested that an appropriate length for an article is between 30 and 35 pages double-spaced. They noted that each journal has its own written style sheet and guidelines for the format of a submitted article, so be sure to learn those before submitting. Another point that was emphasized was the importance of the initial impression of the manuscript; it is essential to avoid spelling or grammatical errors. One speaker said that a well-written paper is much more likely to be accepted than a poorly written paper even if the contents were the same.

The speakers were all emphatic that authors should not submit an article to more than one journal at a time. The production of scholarly journals is a service to scholars — in contrast to book publishing, which is a competitive business. Multiple submissions of journal articles would be considered unprofessional, and could be harmful to an author's reputation. (The speakers noted that many book publishers also object to the practice of multiple submissions, and authors who wish to do so should first inform publishers, who in turn may not wish to consider the manuscript under those conditions.)

Once an article is submitted, there are variations in evaluation procedures among journals. Normally, an article is read first by an inside reader and then submitted to outside readers for peer review — usually two readers who are specialists in the appropriate field. Many journals — especially the larger ones — have an Editorial Advisory Board; articles are assigned to the appropriate Board member who then solicits outside reviews. Members usually serve on a Board for a specific term. In most cases, the author of the article remains anonymous; the outside readers may also remain anonymous, but need not be. If the peer reviews are encouraging, revisions will be suggested. The author then revises — it can be extensive, or just minor changes — and then the author resubmits. Outright acceptance is rare. Speakers warned that doing extensive revisions may not guarantee publication. You can try to find out what your chances are, but you may have to decide whether it is worth doing the work and taking the risk.

The speakers were candid that during the revision process, the relationship with editors was less favorable for students than for senior scholars; students in all likelihood would have to make suggested changes. One speaker gave the wise advice that even if a student strongly disagrees with suggested revisions, the student should keep in mind that the readers are part of the audience that has to be addressed. It is best to read negative comments constructively. Why not try to figure out what is really bothering the readers? There may be a need to restate a position in order to be sure it is correctly understood. After all, if one reader has had a misunderstanding, others might well do the same. Worded another way, the suggested strategy was that instead of meeting the objectionable force head on, go with the criticism some of the way — try to deflect it.

Timing for the reviewing process can take two months, but is usually longer; instant gratification is rare. For any journal, if there is no response after two or three months, it is acceptable to inquire — in all

probability, a reader has unintentionally caused the delay. Once an article is accepted, it can take quite some time before it actually appears in print. Many journals, although not all, have a backlog, which causes further delay. If an article is rejected, an author can ask for the readers' comments. In most cases, a student will also have discussed the article with a faculty advisor, and it is helpful to return to the faculty advisor for further consultation. One speaker observed that chance has a lot to do with whether or not an article gets accepted. It depends on who the readers are, the competition for that issue, and how the various submissions balance one another.

On the subject of what to do if an article is rejected, two views were offered. One was to send it out to another journal immediately, operating on the assumption that you have done the best you can with the article. An alternative is to try to learn from the experience and to assume that you need to re-write and to make your point more clearly. Reviewers often can see what you meant to say, or what was in the back of your mind. Make sure that your article is not a "mystery novel;" set all your results up front, organize so clearly that even readers who have fallen asleep momentarily will know where they are when they awaken.

The speakers also addressed the possibility for students to publish book reviews. In most cases, senior scholars are asked to do book reviews, but senior scholars may suggest appropriate students for the assignment. Editors sometimes know of students working in particular fields and approach them directly. It is also possible for students to send their CVs to editors, so they might be kept in mind for the appropriate review. Submitting unsolicited book reviews to scholarly journals is not done — once again, because the journal normally chooses the book reviewer well before the book has appeared in print. One student asked how a student reviewer could deal with a book that deserved a negative review. The speakers concurred that doing negative reviews is a highly delicate and complicated matter throughout one's career. It can be just as difficult to write a negative review for a close colleague — and one acquires many close colleagues — as it can for a scholar who is more senior. It is possible to decline to do the review. In any case, a negative review should be honest, but never vicious. Reviewers should avoid being rash or intemperate.

Another student asked if publishing a number of dissertation chapters as articles would jeopardize eventual publication of the dissertation as a book. The speakers agreed that if these chapters were good enough to appear as articles, then the dissertation would be viewed in a favorable light as well. They ended by urging the students once again to keep writing, to give conference papers, to be active as professionals in the field. They added one bit of cautionary advice — that time is scarce and that students should not interrupt their doctoral work for too long while trying to get published. One refereed published article was sufficient as a powerful entree into the field.

**Note:** Journals that publish articles normally supply the author with a number of article reprints. If you publish an article, it is especially helpful to send reprints to scholars with similar interests to your own, enclosing a brief cover note to express this shared interest. (Your list may include scholars in other disciplines, or who for other reasons, may not have seen the article.) Reprints are also valuable to use when applying for academic jobs.

**Also to be Noted:** In the science fields, where publishing is by and large confined to journal articles, the submissions tend to be a team project growing out of work done in the research lab or a research team. Thus, it is more common to publish in the sciences while still at the graduate student level. Typically, the order in which authors are listed for a team project follows the well-established convention of putting the name of the principal contributor first and the head of the research lab last. A work that was recommended by a speaker was by Richard M. Reis, *Tomorrow's Professor: Preparing for Academic Careers in Science and Engineering*, which can be purchased online at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com or directly through IEEE Press.)

## **Tips from a Student Successful in Getting Multiple Articles Published: REPORT**

**Am I ready to engage in trying to get published?** This is a question often posed by graduate students. They tend to think their research is not good enough or that it is too early for them to be publishing their work. Try not to sell yourself short; let the peer review process do its work. Seeking to publish can make you a better writer and teacher.

**Coursework essays as publications:** Each term paper should not be viewed as the completion of a course but as the beginning of a publication. Look at the comments you received on each paper, and begin the process of revision for publication. It is important to get help — from your advisor or the professor who read and graded the paper, but also from any classmates who might share your interests, and from anyone in this field. Engage in correspondence with faculty working on related topics, especially if you cite their work. Moving beyond the comments you get on a course paper, getting a more representative response than only your professor, is really vital.

**Conference papers as publications:** Delivering a paper at a conference provides an opportunity to receive feedback on your work from specialists in your field *and* a valuable opportunity to network with other graduate students and professors with whom you may be able to collaborate. Smaller conferences may result in conference volumes. Presenting at a conference may lead directly to publication. Editors of special issues of journals, of new journals, of forthcoming edited volumes, may attend conference panels to find extra articles. Editors will also examine a conference program and may email you with an invitation to submit an article based on your presentation.

**Book chapters:** Top-tier, peer-reviewed journals will earn the biggest points for the job market, but chapters in book volumes matter too. They offer the important experience of working with editors and help establish your credibility and public voice. Many academic associations have mass email lists, listservs, newsletters, and websites where calls for papers in book collections (and sometimes journals) are posted and archived. Don't forget book reviews and encyclopedia articles too. Book reviews in particular are good training ground. Try sending an e-mail to a review editor, asking to review a book for the journal.

**Collaboration:** Seek opportunities to collaborate with professors; the worst that can happen is that they say no. You could approach the professor of a seminar for whom you wrote a paper, or a professor for whom you've worked as a research assistant, or a professor on your dissertation committee, and ask if they would like to co-write a paper with you for publication. They may help you to organize the article better, develop the argument more convincingly, and see how to extend the work.

**Choosing the right journal:** Look for special opportunities in themed issues, as your chances of acceptance will be higher in a regular journal submission. Look at up-and-coming new journals, which will receive fewer submissions. Begin with peer-reviewed graduate student journals (which are often online publications rather than print). Beginning in this way with graduate student run or new journals helps you to learn what a publishable article actually looks like. By the time you submit to a top-tier journal in your field, you will know how to self-edit and how to make the most of reviewers' criticisms in revision. It can

even lead to editors of book collections and editors of special themed issues of journals inviting a chapter or a journal submission from you on a related topic.

**Journal Publishing: submission process:** Be deeply familiar with the journal; the kind of articles it publishes, its preferred tone. Don't submit anything that doesn't fit. The journal's website will have instructions for authors, including style preferences, length of manuscript. Follow their style guide closely. Make sure to cite recent scholarship on your topic that was published in the journal; placing your work in the context of the journal's previous articles will help make it a better "fit." As you revise for submission, consider being someone else's editor. This will help you learn how to self-edit. Consider offering yourself to a graduate-student journal as a manuscript reviewer. This will also demystify the publishing process.

**Journal Publishing: post-submission process:** Expect to wait at least 12 weeks for a decision after submission, and around 15 months for the article to appear in print. Submit at least a year in advance of the job market. You can decide to withdraw the piece during the decision-process, but never send it to another journal without withdrawing it from the first one. The article will either be accepted as-is, sent back to you for "revision and resubmission" category, or outright rejected. A request to "revise and resubmit" may mean substantial revisions. Don't be defensive when reading the reviews by outside readers. Try to implement as many recommendations as you can, and write a separate document in which you go through the referees' comments one by one and explain what you did to address them. Outright rejection does not necessarily mean the manuscript is unpublishable. It may need a lot of revision, and it may need to be sent to another journal. Look for the constructive and encouraging comments in the reviews, and begin with what they *liked* — which may be where your article should focus entirely. If the rejection feedback includes some "So what?" comments, then you need to revise so that your article is more convincingly a contribution to your field; more clearly relevant to an audience and to the discipline. Competition is fierce; rejection is a natural part of the process. For every article accepted, about seven are rejected. Don't assume that your work has been judged substandard if it was rejected; editors might have rejected it on grounds of "fit." If you try to get something out of the reviews you receive, and if you keep sending your work out to journals and book collections, you *will* publish.

## **Publishing Books PANEL REPORT**

A principal point that was agreed upon by all panel speakers is that publishing is a business; publishers want to sell books. Presently, the climate is grim for scholarly publishers, and this is a trend that has been growing over the last 20 years. Thus, in your cover letter, be sure to highlight how and why your manuscript matters, how it can make a difference in the way people think about the subject. This of course has important implications for how to submit a manuscript and where to submit it. Above all, it means that you cannot submit your dissertation as it is to a publisher — a dissertation is not a book.

A dissertation and a book serve very different purposes and have different audiences. A dissertation is your passport into the profession. You need only convince a small body of people that you "know your stuff." A book assumes that you already have that knowledge; it requires a different tone. You don't have to prove that you have read everything. In fact, you should streamline the book, omitting much of the scholarly apparatus and literature review of the dissertation. Condense or eliminate footnotes, using endnotes instead. Make your style accessible to as wide an audience as possible, avoiding the formal tone or technical jargon or other characteristics associated with a dissertation. For a book that deals in greater detail with the traditional distinction between the dissertation and a book, see *The Thesis and the Book*, edited by Eleanor Harman and Ian Montagnes (originally published by Toronto University Press, 1976, with subsequent updated editions).

One speaker presented a hierarchy of types of publishers in terms of the size of their potential markets — starting from the smallest market: 1) subsidized series, 2) small university presses, 3) major university presses, 4) small trade houses, and 5) major trade houses. In submitting a manuscript, you should keep this hierarchy in mind and assess the nature of the manuscript in terms of the potential size of the market — i.e., consider how many people will care about the subject of your particular manuscript.

There are a large number of university presses, plus several international ones. Since most presses are inundated with proposals by scholars, your chances of capturing attention will be enhanced if you do your homework and choose the most appropriate publishers for your particular work. You can start by asking faculty specialists in your field for suggestions. For a more systematic search for the appropriate university press, see [The Association of American University Presses \(AAUP\) Directory](http://www.aaupnet.org) (www.aaupnet.org). It contains a grid by subject matter and press. It contains the names of editors and their departments or fields, plus contact information. Another source is the [Literary Market Place \(LMP\)](http://books.infotoday.com/directories/lmp.shtml), an annual publication (http://books.infotoday.com/directories/lmp.shtml). This source lists every publisher in this country, and includes an international version (ilmp). It gives skeletal breakdowns about the publishers, geographical location, and subject breakdowns as well. You can then follow up by browsing in online catalogues of the presses that seem most promising, noting the titles published in your field.

Visiting publishing exhibits at professional meetings is another way to browse, since most major scholarly presses are represented. Pay attention to their published books on display, noting overall appearance and quality of their products. If you have already identified presses that would be appropriate for your potential manuscript, it is increasingly common to make an appointment with the editor of the press in advance of the professional meeting to discuss it.

Aside from professional meetings, submitting unsolicited proposals to publishers is commonly done, and it is possible to submit proposals to more than one publisher at a time. If you receive an invitation from more than one publisher to submit your manuscript, you must inform each publisher before you make a multiple submission. Many publishers will not want to invest the time and energy required for reviewing a manuscript unless they have an exclusive option, and you need to know each publisher's policy before you take any action. One thing to avoid is submitting an unsolicited manuscript. An unsolicited proposal is all that is appropriate for an initial contact, whether it's at professional meetings, or sent directly to a press editor.

The proposal consists of four items: a cover letter, a table of contents, a small sample from the manuscript, and a curriculum vitae. It is important to personalize this packet and to address it to a particular person. Anything that looks like a mass mailing will not have a good chance of being considered. The sources cited above will help you to identify the editor's name. You can also telephone a publishing house and ask for the appropriate name.

The cover letter should give a brief description of the book — a “one-liner” that presents the essential core of the work. The letter should be concise and confined to two or three pages, single-spaced. It should emphasize what is new and unique about the work, who is the potential audience, and basically why it should be published and why you think it will sell. Bear in mind that editors are not specialists; be sure that your description is written in an accessible manner — above all, avoid jargon or technical terms that will discourage an editor from reading it. A good proposal will get read. It is increasingly common to send the cover letter via email. Advice on email format, provided at the OCS web site, notes that the email omits both your and the addressee's contact information, as well as the date. Simply start with the salutation.

Your letter should also indicate the length of the potential manuscript, making it clear that you are willing to condense if it is too long — and anything over 400 pages, double-spaced, is long. If there are graphs, tables, or illustrations, indicate how many — once again, making it clear that you are willing to limit the number, if necessary. You should also include a copy of a few illustrations, and offer to provide a camera-ready copy of illustrations. This is the author's responsibility — including getting permission for reprints and paying the fees.

Your letter should stress that the manuscript is not your dissertation and that it has been heavily rewritten. Avoid calling it a dissertation. You should show that you are aware of the distinctions between the two and indicate how your book differs from your dissertation. Dissertations, after all, are already available in libraries and on microfilm.

You might try to have well-established figures read the manuscript and note in your letter if they have responded positively. If any of the material has already been published, this should not be emphasized, since it would not be considered an added attraction for publishers (and in fact you will have to do some revision before it could be included in a new publication). In general, publishers will not want to publish it as a book if more than 50 percent has already been published, especially if published articles have appeared in well-known accessible journals.

It also pays to show the publisher that you have given a lot of thought about why you have chosen this particular press; show that you know what they have published in your field, and then stress how your work fits in with their listings, noting how it differs from what they have already published in your field. Note that many publishers have a web site.

Finally, the cover letter should look as good as possible, using letterhead stationery and a good printer. Another option commonly taken is to send a cover letter via email. Whatever path you take, be sure to address the editor by name.

For the table of contents in the proposal, you can use an expanded type of contents, which includes a few sentences describing the content of each chapter. Avoid long chapter titles with many colons.

A writing sample involves an important choice — you should not submit an entire manuscript. Like many writers, you may have left the introduction and conclusion for last, and thus cannot submit them as samples. You can either choose an attractive and fairly self-contained chapter, or write an overview essay — between 20 and 40 pages. The sample should be double-spaced, done on a letter-quality printer. Once again, a polished appearance is essential.

Submitting a vitae is a common practice. It is not essential, but it can be helpful.

If an editor likes your proposal, you will be asked to submit your manuscript. You should receive a message or note acknowledging receipt of your proposal almost immediately, and you should hear within a few weeks if the publisher wishes to see your manuscript. Trade publishers often accept a book on the basis of a proposal — in many cases, before a book has even been written. This practice, however, applies mainly to authors with a strong track record.

For the review process, you are entitled to ask for a quick response, which is roughly within two or three months. Normally, there will be two or three readers for a manuscript. Some publishers send it out to all their readers simultaneously, which speeds up the review process; others prefer to see an initial review before sending it any further. A good editor tries to avoid sending a manuscript to an unsympathetic reader.

You can suggest names of appropriate readers, omitting of course personal friends; even if none are selected, your list gives the editor an idea of who might be a sympathetic reader.

If the review is positive, the manuscript will go to the editorial board. Sometimes revisions are suggested and the decision is postponed. The reviews are submitted anonymously to the author, who is also given a chance to respond.

The next step is a committee meeting to decide on your book. If it passes that stage, the last hurdle is the Board of Syndics or Directors. At his level, they often do not read the manuscript, but simply the package of readers and editors' reports and author's response. A book cannot be published without their approval.

Finally, the manuscript is back in your hands for producing a final acceptable version.

If your manuscript is rejected by a publisher, do not be discouraged. All of our speakers stressed that this is a very human and subjective process, rather than a scientific discipline. Many rejection decisions are made apart from the intrinsic quality of a book. It could be a business decision; a similar topic may have done badly the previous year. Be persistent and try other appropriate publishers.

In some cases, there is an overlap between trade and scholarly presses — Norton or Basic Books, for example, are similar to scholarly presses. It is unlikely that scholarly credibility will be hurt if a scholarly press is not used. A number of scholarly works with broad appeal and an accessible writing style have been published by trade publishers. It is possible to write in an open and accessible style, without lowering standards or popularizing a work.

Textbooks are another type of publication. They were described as the most profitable part of the business. In talking to textbook publishers, you should focus on course adoptions, indicating why it's appropriate for various courses, and discussing its advantages over its competitors.

Another speaker observed that while publishing indeed is a business, publishers are very committed to their author and publication lists. This is a commitment despite the fact that 80 percent of published books are unprofitable, with many unsold books landing back in the publisher's warehouse.

Also on the positive side, there has been much growth in the world of scholarly publishing through electronic publications, and increasingly entailing peer review. The more common this becomes, the more likely that hiring departments or tenure votes will give these similar weight to a hard copy publication.

In the area of trade publishing, one speaker emphasized that you will need a literary agent. There is a paradigm shift taking place, and agents have almost become first readers for editors. Agents are a good source of literary and editing advice — once again, replacing a role that editors used to play. They also know how to read publishing contracts. However, getting an agent is not an easy task — it is almost like getting a publisher. The agent paradigm applies mainly to trade publishing, and is seldom used for university presses. You can find a list of agents in the *Literary Market Place*, although names suggested by published authors that you know are an even better source.

The normal financial arrangements in a trade publishing contract include an advance when the contract is signed, and then the remainder when the complete manuscript is submitted. Additional payments depend on the number of copies sold. You can only make a living on advance royalties if it is a trade book; it is out of the question with royalties from university presses, which pay relatively little. There is also not much point in negotiating royalties with a university press; they are fairly standard.

For further reading, see William Germano, *Getting It Published*; and Beth Luey, *Handbook for Academic Authors*, both popular works that have appeared in several updated editions.

### Sample Letter to a Publisher

Taking advantage of my good fortune in having a book manuscript accepted by Oxford University Press and a second one by Cambridge University Press, I offer my own cover letter to the latter press. While a considerable proportion of the book is quite technical and thus could be viewed as having only a narrow appeal, the letter circumvents this potential problem by first laying out the broader issues at stake in the book and only then proceeds to turn to the technical, making it an integral part of the broader discussion. I did make initial contact with publishers at the professional meeting for music scholars, but never heard back until I initiated further discussion, as illustrated in this letter. Note that it is also common practice to send a cover letter via email, in which case omit date and address needed in a letter.

December 2, 2009

Dr. X, Senior Commissioning Editor, Humanities  
Cambridge University Press  
Shaftesbury Road  
Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Dear Dr. X:

I am following up on our very brief conversation at the musicological meeting in Philadelphia. The manuscript I am proposing for your consideration is tentatively titled *Dramatic Expression in Rameau's Tragédie Lyrique: Between Tradition and Enlightenment*. It deals with a still unwritten part of the story of the French musical Enlightenment, having to do with the music itself. Specifically, the study focuses on the lyric tragedies of Jean-Philippe Rameau and how he engages, through his musical settings, in a search for reconciliation between reason and feeling in his concept of musical expression, making this a critical shaping factor in the dramatic scenes of his tragedies. It was by no means a simple duality, nor was there a fixed terminology that could convey the varied meanings that were current at the time. Since Rameau was a leading composer of French *tragédie en musique*, as well as a leading theorist and central figure in the musical debates of his time, his operas provide an important opportunity to consider the critical and complex tension between reason versus feeling (and its many fertile variants) from a primarily musical perspective; they also provide an opportunity for closer observation of the interaction between theory and practice. The study marks a shift in emphasis, from what has been a strong preoccupation with the Enlightenment discourse about music to music itself. (This previous focus on discourse includes my own study: Cynthia Verba, *Music and the French Enlightenment: Reconstruction of a Dialogue, 1750-1765*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

The study's contributions are in two main areas. One is captured in the work's title and its notion of opposition between tradition and Enlightenment. The French operatic genre in Rameau's era was still thoroughly immersed in the past, governed by outmoded conventions and corresponding beliefs that were essentially inhospitable not only to the spirit of the Enlightenment, more generally, but to Rameau's innovative views on musical expression, in particular. An important argument in the present study is that Rameau's enlightened views never led to the abandonment of the traditional operatic model, which was emblematic of the splendor of the once powerful ancient regime; he sought instead to adjust the model with each new opera that he wrote, finding inventive ways of making it more accommodating to his views on expression. An equally important finding is that this process of accommodation led to a corresponding series of adjustments related to traditional gender stereotypes in lyric tragedy, resulting, in particular, in a more nuanced portrayal of the feeling heroine. Issues of gender, then, become an integral part of the story.



By tracing the trajectory of Rameau's modifications over the course of his career, the study calls for a reassessment of the commonly held view that there is little that changed in Rameau's treatment of the basic model from one new opera to the next.

The other principle contribution concerns the relationship between theory and practice for Rameau. There is considerable consensus that Rameau's practice closely corresponds with his theoretical insights. While this is strongly confirmed in the present study, it further argues that this closeness between theory and practice occurs in two distinct ways, and both need to be taken into account for a more complete picture of Rameau as theorist-composer. The first, and more obvious, is that there is a direct correspondence between Rameau's explicit theoretical formulations and the actual harmonic progressions that he tends to favor in his practice. These favored progressions, strongly promoted in his theories, are an essential source of musical expression for Rameau in his dramatic settings. The second, more far-reaching but less well recognized, is that there are harmonic strategies employed by Rameau in his dramatic scenes that are never explicitly stated. They are, however, an indirect outcome of his explicit statements, almost necessitated by his theoretical formulations. I refer to these as "tonal anchoring strategies," since they help to articulate a clear tonal context for the expressive harmonic progressions that Rameau favors for dramatic purposes, giving shape to the scene as a whole. This is one of the more progressive or enlightened aspects of Rameau's musical practice that will be highlighted in the present study: that Rameau takes great pains to provide tonal orientation for the listener, doing so in highly varied and inventive ways, but always in a manner that serves both drama and music, thus enhancing the aesthetic experience for the listener. And while Rameau as theorist and composer may be a special case, the two distinct aspects of the relationship between theory and practice – the more direct correspondences and the less explicit but more far-reaching impact that theory may impose on practice -- suggest a way of looking at the relationship between theory and practice more generally. Keeping the listener in mind is an important goal of the present study. The plan, which I believe is feasible, is to create an accompanying web site for the book, which will provide a recording of all the scenes and individual pieces that are subject to detailed examination in the book. Having a web site for such purposes is becoming a common practice in other fields – I will of course seek the necessary permissions to do so.

Given its combined concern with theory and practice, the study forges a special and perhaps unusual bond between two critical fields in music: the history of opera, and the history of music theory. At the same time, it adds a new dimension to our understanding of the French Enlightenment from a more purely musical perspective. The potential audience thus goes beyond the musical scholarly community; the study is also aimed at those with a music background who may be serious lovers of opera, or scholars in history and related fields, who are interested in gaining a fresh understanding of the era of Enlightenment.

Still another potential audience are the growing number of music directors and performers who venture into the somewhat challenging territory of the French Baroque, as well as the new audiences who flock to their performances and buy their recordings. The extraordinary strategies employed by Rameau to help orient the listener have an important bearing on how a work is performed. For example, if a performance were to artfully highlight these critical moments of articulation, then the listener would have a richer and more complete experience of the music's expressive qualities.

It is time now to turn to this unwritten part of the story of Rameau and the French Enlightenment, shifting from an almost exclusive emphasis on the intellectual and cultural context of his musical practice, to a close study of the music in his lyric tragedies. This is a propitious moment. We now have ample opportunity to attend performances and hear recordings of Rameau's major tragedies (in some cases, we can choose among multiple recordings and variant versions). A new scholarly edition of Rameau's works has gained considerable momentum in recent years, with all of his tragedies now available (see *Opera Omnia Rameau*, editor in chief, Sylvie Bouissou.)

The manuscript is near completion, and I would be happy to provide a chapter or more, should you wish. I enclose the Table of Contents and also a curriculum vitae.

Sincerely yours,

## CHAPTER SIX STRATEGIES FOR THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET

### Entering the Academic Job Market: The Dissertation as a Key Factor in the Decision

The dissertation is the item of greatest interest to most hiring departments, serving as the most important means of distinguishing among candidates. It is therefore essential to be far enough along on the dissertation when entering the job market so that you will be able to communicate about it effectively in all contexts that are connected with the job hunt: the dissertation abstract, the cover letter, the interview, and the job talk. Although the progress of the dissertation can be unpredictable, if you really feel on top of your material, and if there is a chance that it would be finished in time for a June degree of the academic year of the job hunt, or even in time for a November degree in the following fall, then you should seriously consider becoming a candidate and discuss it with your advisor and with other key people. Most hiring departments will want assurances and strong evidence that you can complete the dissertation before the start of the new position. At the very least, you should be able to prepare a polished chapter to offer as evidence of good progress — which many hiring departments request in any case, and which could also serve as the basis of a job talk. Having a polished chapter can also be helpful to your advisors in writing strong letters of recommendation — more on that presently. Some hiring departments are even more demanding, and will not even look at a candidate without “completed dissertation in hand.” There is no hard and fast rule about the best timing for entering the job market; close consultation with your advisor and with others who know your work and who also know the market in your field is your best bet. In fact, entering the job market is something that must be done with the support of your advisor and your other recommenders as well, so keeping them well informed is important.

### Steps to Take Once You Decide to Enter the Job Market

Once you decide to enter the job market — again, in consultation with key advisors — you will need to get application materials into highly polished shape as early as possible: the curriculum vitae (CV), cover letter, recommendation letters, and supplementary materials — such as a polished dissertation chapter, a syllabus from a course or two, teaching evaluations, article reprints of any published articles. Hiring departments may ask for specific supplementary materials, but you also may volunteer them. If all goes well, you will be invited to give a job talk or teach a class, so you must prepare that in advance as well.

If you have not already done so, arrange to set up a file for assembling requested letters of recommendation through the [Dossier Service](https://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/dossier) at the Office of Career Services (<https://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/dossier>). As noted, the Service provides direct access to Interfolio, which is one of several online services for graduate students and alums to manage their job search documents, including confidential letters of recommendation. Letter writers should be faculty members who know your work well, including your dissertation advisors, as well as professors of courses where you served as Teaching Fellow, or who know your work in some other capacity, such as a research assistantship. The PhD counselors at the Office of Career Services are available to discuss all aspects of your job search. Be sure to consult the Office’s web site, which contains further examples and advice on the documents needed for the job search: Office of Career Services web site, [GSAS Advising](http://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/gsas-advising) (<http://ocs.fas.harvard.edu/gsas-advising>). Among the large number of published guides to the academic job hunt, one the most comprehensive is *The Academic Job Search Handbook* by Julia Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

While the process of preparing for and entering the job market can be time-consuming and demanding, your best bet is to invest heavily in this preparation and then you need only adapt and refine your materials to fit each specific situation as needed. The job hunt year is typically the year of completing the dissertation, so it is important to take early steps that can save time later.

### **The Dissertation Abstract and the Curriculum Vitae**

The CV and all other aspects of the job hunt have ample treatment, as noted, at the Office of Career Services web site, as well as in a large number of published guides. The focus of the present discussion is how to write a strong dissertation abstract that may be incorporated into the CV. While this inclusion is not a universal or standard practice for the CV, the importance of the dissertation in the hiring process suggests that it would be helpful to the reader to see the abstract as an integral part of your scholarly credentials. The CV samples in the present guide (Appendix A) have been selected to illustrate how to write a strong abstract that succinctly highlights the major points about the dissertation and its contribution to the field. The major points include: a statement of the topic, which should be framed in terms of a central question or hypothesis; the methodology, which should state how you documented the proposed hypotheses, including the principal sources of data used; and finally, how it contributes to the field(s) and why it is important.

Another consideration in writing the dissertation abstract, or in any discussion of your dissertation, is the nature of the potential audience. You should not assume that the members of a search committee will be fully knowledgeable about your own specialized topic, even if they are all in your own discipline — and that is not always the case. Indeed, even specialists need convincing that your project will contribute to the field and may in fact view your project with a more critical eye. It is important to write it in a manner that is accessible for both generalists and specialists; avoid jargon or un-necessary technical terms. (For a more complete discussion of how to communicate about the dissertation, see above, Chapter Four, on writing a winning dissertation fellowship proposal.)

The samples in this guide also illustrate the various options for incorporating the abstract into the CV. In some cases, the project can be nicely summarized within a brief paragraph that can be presented right below the title of the dissertation, early in the CV. More often, the abstract will need at least a page for bringing out the major strengths of the dissertation, in which case the dissertation title should carry the instruction referring the reader to see the abstract at the end of the CV.

Below are further tips on creating a strong CV and utilizing it effectively.

- In preparing a CV, it is important to be aware of the norms in your field — which means consulting closely with key people in your department.
- It is important to pay attention to your own individual strengths and to tailor some of the more flexible categories in a manner that best highlights those strengths, or that best fit the job description. Categories should be arranged hierarchically, with your strongest qualifications first. Note as well that categories can be re-arranged and adjusted for particular positions — for example, in applying to large research universities, you might put research and publications first, while for small teaching colleges, teaching could be earlier.
- Other items to include are:
  - Fields prepared to teach or fields of specialization — an optional category that is strongly favored in some fields
  - Honors and awards

- Publications and papers presented at professional meetings — with the two commonly combined at this stage, especially if there are only a few items (indicating “forthcoming” if it is accepted for publication, but not yet out)
  - Teaching experience, plus any recognition awards for good teaching (more details on teaching to be discussed below)
  - Research experience, such as a research assistantship for a faculty member
  - Academic service — a category which you might label as “administrative experience,” or possibly “related professional experience,” depending on the nature of your experiences
  - Languages and related skills — which can also include special technical or computer skills that are at a level that is worthy of note
  - Pedagogical training — a category common in the foreign language areas, but also may be relevant for others
  - Special categories or experiences that are particularly relevant for certain fields — for example, editing, translating, performances or recitals, museum curatorial experience, published creative writing, newspaper articles, work experience for a government agency, experience abroad, or possibly some special appointment or leadership position that does not fit in any of the above categories.
- Rather than following a rigid rule about length, you should make sure that the first two pages contain the most essential items. With qualifications placed in hierarchic order and entries worded succinctly, the question of appropriate length for a vita is of less concern.
  - In presenting teaching experience there are a number of details that can prove helpful: the departments in which you have taught, including general education courses, which are often of special interest to hiring departments; the subject matter of courses, either using course titles, if that suffices, or naming the subject yourself, if necessary; the nature of your teaching responsibilities, highlighting if you have been a Head Teaching Fellow or if you have designed your own seminar, or have given some lectures. If you have received a commendation from the Derek Bok Center for the outstanding quality of your teaching in a course, note that as well. Terms peculiar to Harvard, such as “Tutorial,” need definition or at least a synonym.
  - If you are beyond the graduate student stage and have already had teaching positions in several institutions, then you will need to summarize further. It might be best to list your teaching institutions first and then courses taught as a separate entry. If the latter is a very long list, perhaps group them in categories, or make it “Selected Courses Taught.”
  - A growing practice is to place the CV on the internet, at [academia.edu](http://academia.edu) ([www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)), for wider dissemination.

## Writing the Cover Letter

While the CV is a presentation of your overall qualifications, the cover letter provides an opportunity to respond more directly and in a more individualized manner to the specific opening for which you are applying. Not only should each cover letter be tailored individually, but you should pay close attention to specific application instructions, whether email is preferred, and what to include or not to include in the

application packet. It is important to address the letter to a specific person, often indicated in the job description or in the application instructions. For sample cover letters, go to Appendix B. Before writing, you should find out as much as possible about the university or college, the department and the position for which you are applying. Many departments have a home page and other materials on the internet, as well as on-line course listings. Check as well with people in your field who may have some further insights into the particular opening and department.

The letter should convey a strong interest in the position, backed up by solid information that shows how suitably matched you are. In developing the theme of suitable match, you should pay close attention to the wording of the job description — and anything else you have learned about the position and department — and then highlight all of your qualifications that are particularly relevant for the position, proceeding in hierarchic order. You should enclose your CV and refer to it as you point to particular qualifications. In this manner, your cover letter can do some of the hard work for the busy hiring committee, helping them to see what is most relevant in your CV for their particular position.

The opening paragraph of the cover letter is the most formulaic: State the job for which you are applying, as described in a particular source, name your department and university, area of specialization, and give the expected date for receiving your PhD (perhaps even indicating how much is completed, if helpful). You should then conclude this paragraph with the main point of the letter: that you are suitably matched for this position through several of your experiences or qualifications (citing those that are relevant): dissertation topic, teaching experience, publications, future research plans, etc.

The remainder of the letter should pursue these points, proceeding once again in hierarchic order and discussing your strongest and most relevant qualifications first. In your discussion of the dissertation, which must be brief, you should work closely with your polished abstract composed for the CV, but highlighting how and why it works well for this position. Do the same for any publications that you may have, and for future research plans. Another paragraph should present your teaching experience, highlighting the most relevant courses. If the job description is very general, try to show the general or broad themes you have dealt with in courses. It's always a good idea to stress that you have versatility. For all positions, not just those in small teaching colleges, emphasize your commitment to students and to good teaching, and offer evidence from your CV and background that shows this commitment.

In a closing paragraph you should reiterate your strong interest in the position. If you have any special affinities with this institution — for example, it's in a region where you grew up, or you have family members who attended, or you yourself attended a similar school — this is a good opportunity to let them know that the job would have a personal meaning for you. Be sure as well in the final paragraph to note that you are having recommendation letters sent (unless requested not to or given other instructions in the job description), and mention any enclosures. Finally, tell them how you can be easily reached, and mention if you plan to attend the professional association meetings. Pay careful attention to the length of the letter; word everything succinctly, and do not let the letter run over two pages single-spaced — keep it shorter, if possible.

### **Deciding on Supplementary Materials to Include in the Application**

In addition to the CV and cover letter, you will of course need to comply with any requests made in the job announcement: They may ask for a writing sample, perhaps a dissertation chapter, a research statement, including future research plans as well as current projects, a statement of teaching philosophy, and teaching evaluations.

An effective way to present teaching experience and skills is to assemble a teaching portfolio. Typically, it consists of a statement of your teaching philosophy, course syllabi and reading lists, and summaries of teaching evaluations. Harvard's Derek Bok Center provides advice on assembling a portfolio. In some cases, a hiring department requests a teaching video, for which the [Derek Bok Center](https://bokcenter.harvard.edu) (<https://bokcenter.harvard.edu>) will also assist. (See also their [Teaching Portfolio](http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/teachingportfolios) (<http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/teachingportfolios>.)

If no material is requested, you may opt to send supplementary material. It is important to be selective, based on the nature of the position and the school. It cannot be helpful to inundate a search committee with too many items. You can also contact the hiring department if you have any questions about their requirements or preferences about what to include.

### **Acquiring Letters of Recommendation for the Job Hunt**

A good letter of recommendation not only makes a statement of support about a candidate, but also presents a well-documented and informative evaluation of performance. We strongly advise that you should not wait until your final year of graduate study in acquiring letters of recommendation; if you are asking for a letter on your teaching performance, the writer will have an easier time while the memory is still fresh. Similarly, if a professor has greatly admired a seminar paper, perhaps recommending it for publication, the writer can provide vivid details if writing shortly after a close reading. These letters can be updated later and also adapted for the specific purpose of the job hunt, with a current date affixed to the new letter. Another important update is needed once you have finished the dissertation, with the writer adjusting an earlier letter to indicate completion.

There is no ideal number of letters to acquire for your dossier. A letter from your dissertation advisor is essential. In addition, the group of letters as a whole should present a complete and rounded picture of your strengths in different areas: your teaching, other research, professional papers or publications, administrative and House activities. For most students, this method of choosing normally means having somewhere between three and six letter writers for the job hunt — any number beyond six may be an overload, unless there is some special reason. In choosing recommenders, you should not necessarily select those with most prestige, but those who know you best and are most supportive.

When making a request for a letter or asking for an update of a letter, it is best to ask in person, using office hours or by making an appointment. In either case, be sure to provide the letter writers with sufficient information to produce a well-documented and informative evaluation of your credentials for the job hunt: your current CV and any other materials that you hope the writers will discuss. Also, make it clear to the potential letter writer that if there is any reservation about writing, you would prefer to know that.

As your career grows, your letters should change and grow as well; it is important to remember that your dossier and portfolio should be kept current at all times. Dated letters or CVs should be removed from your active file — i.e., the file that is sent out to prospective employers — and new ones entered. If you have been out of Harvard for a while and have taught at a number of different institutions, it is important to have a letter from the chairman or other representative of each department where you have taught. In addition, the longer you are out, the more important it is to have testimony from people in your field — those who have read your manuscripts or published works. The main point is that for each application campaign, it is essential to see that your letters are current and relevant for the purpose at hand.

While the use of an online dossier service is by now common practice, some letter writers are prepared to adapt letters, producing individualized ones for specific or special jobs, perhaps also making a phone call

on your behalf to a colleague in the hiring department. It might be worth indicating to your letter writers which jobs are the most attractive and promising and see if that elicits a more individualized response. For all letters it is important to verify that they have been sent — it is your responsibility to see that all required application materials reach their destination by the application deadline.

No matter what path you use for submitting letters of recommendation, it is still very useful to have letters on file in the dossier service as well. Setting up such a file is a form of insurance, enabling you to meet deadlines when your letter writers are away, or otherwise unavailable. It also allows you to apply for a large number of jobs without having to track down individual letter writers every time you wish to apply. In sum, having a dossier file does not preclude having individual professors send out letters, it simply offers an additional option. Above all, it allows you optimal control of your job hunt at all times.

Be aware that most hiring departments simply require the e-mail address of your letter writers, who are then contacted by the hiring university's own portfolio service; in that case, the submission of recommendations is made through that channel (and may include a questionnaire for the recommender to fill out).

### **Keeping Informed of Vacancies and Choosing Where to Apply**

Almost all new academic vacancies and job descriptions are publicized, in conformance with affirmative action requirements. Most disciplines or professional associations now list job announcements online. (For example, historians can go to [H-Net](http://www.h-net.org/jobs/job_browse.php) ([www.h-net.org/jobs/job\\_browse.php](http://www.h-net.org/jobs/job_browse.php)), where each listing is a hyperlink to a detailed description, with links to the university/program application web site.) In addition, letters with vacancy announcements are sent to many departments, or to individual faculty members in the field. These usually are more detailed, and appear earlier than the published announcements. Many departments send emails of these openings to students on the job market. While utilizing all departmental services, it is important for you to be systematic and self-reliant in keeping informed of vacancies.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* is another important source, especially for openings in smaller schools or administrative positions. See their [free service](https://chroniclevitae.com) (<https://chroniclevitae.com>). For subscribers, see “Academe this Week” at: [chronicle.merit.edu](http://chronicle.merit.edu).

In choosing where to apply, it is important to recognize that the academic market is highly structured: announcements usually appear early in the academic year, and the job search is basically confined to published listings. Unsolicited inquiries — if used at all — are helpful mainly for obtaining adjunct or part-time teaching positions or last-minute openings of a temporary nature. For this alternative path, used at times by candidates with geographic restrictions or other needs, you could make inquiries to department chairs, do follow-up calls, and networking as well. If you have no geographic restrictions, it is best to be flexible and open-minded in your consideration of vacancies. Taking a job at a less prestigious school than you had anticipated would not necessarily hurt your chances to move on to a better institution, should an opening arise. The main point is to continue to develop your teaching skills and polish and expand your scholarly research. If, on the other hand, you feel that a given position would thwart that growth; or if for other reasons you know you would not want the job, then it would be unwise to apply.

### **Keeping a Record of Your Applications**

It is important to record all contacts made with potential employers, including telephone calls, and all responses that you receive. You might also want to record your impressions after personal or telephone contacts, and in addition, any activity by faculty members made on your behalf.



## **Follow-up**

If you receive no response or acknowledgement within a reasonable period — around a month — it is appropriate to inquire about the status of your application. Any further contact that you initiate requires discretion and should have a clear purpose. You might want to report to the hiring department on significant developments in your credentials — the completion of the dissertation, or perhaps the acceptance of an article that was under consideration for publication. If you do so, be sure to use the occasion to reaffirm your strong interest in the position and possibly to clarify any remaining questions that you may have.

In one case, a candidate applying for a job in California telephoned the chairman of the search committee to let him know that he would be in the area. The department had already invited three candidates for an interview, but was pleased to take advantage of his presence in the area, since he was number five on their list. The outcome was that they liked him better than their first three choices, and he got the job. In another instance, a candidate telephoned a hiring department to ask if she might submit a late application. She learned that the first competition was indeed closed, but was told of a new opening that was even closer to her field. This kind of contact may not always produce such results, but if you think there is some chance, it is worth a try. Whatever course is pursued for a particular vacancy, it is also important to keep watching vacancy listings and to apply for all positions of possible interest. Announcements of new openings, or of positions that are reopened, appear even in late spring and summer. A flexible and patient attitude can be an important asset.

## **The Interview**

The interviewing process will be discussed in two parts. The first will deal with the shorter interviews that are conducted at the meetings of the professional associations — interviews of around 30 minutes in length. The second deals with the longer interviewing process that is part of an on-campus visit — lasting one or two days.

### **Short Interviews at Professional Meetings**

In this interviewing process, the candidate is still part of a fairly large pool, having made it past the first cut — usually on the basis of the CV, cover letter, and letters of recommendation. In some cases, the interviews are conducted with less prescreening; last-minute sign-up lists for interviews are posted on bulletin boards at the meetings themselves, with just an opportunity to submit a curriculum vitae in advance.

Be sure to find out, as well, which faculty members from your department will be at the meetings, and make sure that they know of your candidacy and special field and that they have copies of your curriculum vitae and dissertation abstract. It is also important to make provisions so that you can be easily reached throughout the meetings. Staying at the convention hotel is the most practical choice, and special rates for students are often available, but be sure to register early to get a room at the convention's main hotel.

In preparing for the short interview, bear in mind that a half-hour is not very much time for persuading an interview committee — generally two or three people — of your suitability for the job. (There is actually less time, since the interview generally begins with some conversational remarks as a warm-up.) In order to assure that you are prompt, try to avoid scheduling two interviews back-to-back in two different places. It is important to prepare in advance, to formulate answers to questions that you are likely to be asked and to rehearse your delivery through a mock interview. A number of departments offer interview practice, which is also available at the Office of Career Services, where you can arrange to have a videotaped mock interview with a PhD counselor. In doing so, it is also useful to try out your handshake as well — a good

strong one is important; so too is eye contact. You might also choose to do a rehearsal in interview clothing. There is considerable range as to what is appropriate to wear, but in general, it should be something that makes you feel both comfortable and that looks professional. Men do not usually wear three-piece suits (sports jackets are perfectly fine), and women usually choose between dresses or suits, either with pants or skirt.

Another part of advance preparation is to decide what written materials to bring to the interview — beyond an extra supply of CVs. The possible items are the same as the suggestions made above for voluntary supplementary enclosures with the cover letter (if you have already made these enclosures, it still cannot hurt to bring extra copies to the interview): a polished dissertation chapter or other writing sample, a teaching portfolio, and an article reprint. Just as it is important to dress professionally, it is also important for all materials to have a professional appearance — keeping them in labeled folders, with sufficient copies to go around.

It is important to learn as much as you can beforehand about the hiring department, institution and position. Look through catalogues, visit department sites on the internet, get information if possible from someone who has had recent first-hand experience with the department. Be familiar with important scholarly works by members of the department.

Bear in mind that this is an opportunity to convey in person your enthusiasm for teaching and research; it is also an opportunity to show that you are articulate, reasonably assured and personable. Your interviewers will not only consider the content of your answers, but also your qualities as a potential colleague.

**Below are some of the standard subjects covered in interview questions and some suggestions for planning your responses.** The interview is essentially a dialogue, and your answers to questions should be presented in as conversational a tone as possible. Nevertheless, you should plan your answers as thoroughly as possible — including keeping brief notes — so that you know in advance the points you think are the most essential to make in the various categories below. The interview questions may not cover all of these categories, so be prepared as well with a strategy for introducing important points. Usually, there are some open-ended questions or some pauses that will allow you to determine the direction you wish to take.

- **Teaching experience:** Often the question has to do with how you would teach a given course — for example, an introductory survey — or how you approach teaching in general. The most important message to convey is that you are responding from the point of view of someone who has had teaching experience, rather than just giving a hypothetical answer of what you would do some day. In order to present yourself in that light, it is helpful to introduce concrete examples that you have selected and prepared in advance: some class discussions that went particularly well as a result of assignments or questions that you devised, or a particular technique that you used in leading the discussion; a course syllabus that you designed or helped to design; or any other positive illustrations from your own teaching. If you have not taught in an introductory course — and that is one of the frequent questions asked — it is even more important to be familiar with some of the major textbooks in the field, or syllabi used in your department. You might also think about introductory units in courses that you have taught, and be prepared to extrapolate from them. Your experience does not have to be exactly in the course they cite, in order to give a knowledgeable response. The main point is to show that you have given the matter a lot of serious thought.
- **Your dissertation:** All of the suggestions we have already given in connection with writing the dissertation abstract apply to the interview: identifying the most compelling points or arguments in your dissertation, explaining how you have documented those points and what sources or data you have

used, how the topic fits into the scholarly dialogue and why it is important to the field, how you are qualified to implement the project. As emphasized elsewhere, mastering these points is a crucial investment for advancing your career, whether in a fellowship application or a job interview. For the purposes of the interview, you might present these points in a more conversational tone than in a formal proposal. Be prepared as well for some exchanges and possibly some rigorous questions about your dissertation; the more secure you feel about the basic lines of your contribution argument, the less likely that you will be thrown even if you are challenged on some aspects of your work. Be gracious at all times.

More than ever, be attentive to the nature of your audience. Do not assume that the interviewers will be fully knowledgeable about your own specialized topic. The safest course is to provide enough background in making your contribution argument, so that both generalists and specialists will view the background as a necessary and logical part of your contribution argument.

- **Future research plans:** For most candidates at this stage of their career, the dissertation is the primary source of future research plans. It doesn't suffice to say that you plan to polish it and turn it into a book for publication; it is important to be prepared to discuss what further research you plan to do — with an emphasis on the amount of original work that would be incorporated. In general, it is best to stay fairly close to the dissertation in answering this question, unless you have a definite project that is fairly well thought out or are already engaged in research on it. Otherwise, you run the risk of talking about tentative ideas, about which you are not very well-informed as yet, and quickly being exposed in that position.
- **Administrative experience and university service:** Interviewers will want to know what kind of a colleague you will make. Any experiences that show good departmental or university citizenship would be helpful: conference organizing, orientation of new students, undergraduate advising — these are just a few of the many possibilities.
- **Open-ended questions — “Tell us about yourself”:** This should not be taken literally — to tell the story of your life — but rather should be used as an opportunity to discuss anything else about your qualifications that you have prepared in advance and would like the interviewers to know. As noted above, the specific questions don't always give you the opportunity to make all the crucial points that you wish to make, so this would be the right moment to do so. For example, if you have some strong secondary specialties that have not been discussed, or some other desirable skills, or some special affinity with the hiring institution or its geographic area, this is the time to introduce them.
- **Asking you if you have any questions:** Even this question should place greater emphasis on conveying information about your candidacy, rather than gaining information. In our view, it is not an optimal use of a short interview to ask about teaching load, salary, housing, or other items that eventually will be of great importance to you. If you do choose to do so, then it is more appropriate to discuss these matters in general terms at this stage — reserving more detailed questions for the final negotiating stage when a job offer has been made. We would suggest that the best thing to do at this stage is to use the interview to ask well-informed questions about the department, its courses and programs, and other information that you have gathered in preparing for the interview. You could also ask questions that reveal something about your values and priorities — for example, about opportunities to meet informally with students, or collaborate in team-teaching, or other indications of commitment.
- **Questions to which you do not know the answer:** The most important thing to keep in mind is that the interview is not a General Examination — your academic credentials are already known to the

interviewers, or can be known, through other more effective means. **How you handle a difficult question — your overall demeanor and self-assurance — are of far greater relevance to the interviewers.** It is helpful to plan a strategy in advance that would make you comfortable in confronting a difficult question. Remember, as well, that you are not being timed for speed; you can pause and give it some thought. With a little extra time, you may be able to think of something that is close to or analogous to the subject being asked about, allowing you to approach the answer through an indirect route. Finally, if nothing comes to mind, you can say — being sure to do it with composure, rather than panic — that you think it is an important question and you would like to give it more thought. Note: Another kind of question that produces discomfort is if the questioner challenges your research. Once again, take your time and keep your composure. Rather than getting defensive, observe that it is a reasonable or good question, and then calmly explain your point of view.

- **Questions that you find inappropriate or illegal:** You may be asked about your age, your religious beliefs, your personal life, or some other question, which is illegal. Once again, it is best to plan a strategy in advance and to be prepared to handle it with composure. You may not want to work in such a department, but it is best to preserve the choice. One recommended technique is to rephrase the question subtly, turning it into a more appropriate one. Women report that they are still asked at times about how they will manage to combine career with marriage or motherhood. Increasingly, they are able to answer that they do so because their spouses share equally in the problem. Individuals will answer differently, but the main point to get across is the seriousness and professionalism of your career goals.
- **Where else have you applied:** This question is sometimes asked and can make candidates uncomfortable. You do not have to give a complete list; you can say you have applied to a number of schools, and then just give as examples those you prefer to mention.
- **Dealing with “the Harvard mystique”:** Hiring departments outside of the relatively small realm of our peer institutions are at times wary about Harvard candidates, possibly creating an obstacle to overcome. The best way to handle this is to be absolutely certain that you yourself are resisting all temptation to look down upon other institutions. There is a vast difference between having confidence, which is a good thing, and arrogance, which is not. You can also emphasize in the interview that Harvard students are exciting and challenging to teach because they come from such a wide range of backgrounds — economically, socially, and in terms of quality of high school education. You may have things in your own background that make you especially well prepared to deal with people from varied backgrounds. The main point is to be sensitive to these issues, which indeed is essential for being a good teacher and colleague.
- **A follow-up thank you note:** An e-mail to the chair of the search committee should suffice. This can provide a further opportunity to re-emphasize important points, to ask for further information, or to enclose additional documents as a follow-up to issues discussed during the interview.

## **On Campus Visits and the Job Talk**

In this interviewing situation, the competition is down to a very small pool — usually between three and five candidates, each of whom has succeeded in making a favorable impression. You may get very short notice and have little time to prepare for a campus visit. Fortunately, all of the above preparations will carry over and be helpful for the campus visit as well, so be sure to read the above carefully for the oncampus interview.

The most important new task is the job talk. In preparing, it is important to find out in advance the exact nature of this event: Will it be a small seminar, or a large formal lecture; will it be for an audience of faculty members, a mixture of faculty and students, or one open to the whole community? Will you be asked to teach a sample class as well? Most invitations for campus visits are accompanied by a detailed schedule of all events — including social gatherings; if not, it is important to ask for one.

Whatever the forum for the presentation, most candidates talk about their dissertation research. In choosing the precise topic of your talk, it is crucial to consult with your advisor and other key people. It is also crucial to rehearse your presentation. Many departments provide the opportunity for a practice talk; if not, you can take the initiative and invite some faculty members and fellow students to hear your talk. After you have received a thorough critique of your talk, it is important to incorporate all helpful suggestions, and to polish the presentation as much as possible (remember that it is better to receive criticisms while you can still correct them, than during the interview itself). Multiple rehearsals are beneficial, so start preparing early; you don't want to read your talk, although you will want to have written notes with you, but barely visible. Many candidates give practice talks in their departments, even before they have received an actual invitation for an on-campus visit. In addition, some departments recommend as a further form of preparation that candidates attend scholarly presentations arranged as part of its own junior faculty recruiting. The experience of watching others go through the procedure can be an important learning experience.

Suggestions for discussing the dissertation have been thoroughly covered above in the section on the Dissertation Abstract and in the earlier chapter on writing a winning dissertation fellowship proposal. We would only re-emphasize — on the basis of feedback we have heard from hiring departments — that it is crucial to maintain a balance between larger themes and specific data: Too much of one without the other weakens the entire presentation. In addition, a good talk should only try to make a limited number of important points — five is perhaps a good goal. Another suggestion we have heard in regard to the presentation of complicated data is that power point or other visual aids are valuable for helping the audience to follow the argument. In Fine Arts and other fields, slides can enhance the presentation. These will require prior arrangements with the host campus. Along similar lines, it is also important to be sensitive to the nature of the audience. A good talk, and indeed good teaching, requires an awareness of how other people may react.

There will probably be a question period; if you have given practice talks, you probably can anticipate some of the questions and be prepared to answer. We would re-emphasize what we said about the short interview: How you handle a difficult question — your overall demeanor and self-assurance — are of far greater relevance to the interviewers than the precise answer that you give. It is helpful to plan a strategy in advance that would make you comfortable in confronting a difficult question. Above all, be gracious at all times.

**The on-campus visit has a number of other important differences from the shorter interview:**

- You will probably make the rounds and visit department members individually. Now it is important not only to know what they have written, but also to have read some of their most recent or important publications. This is not for the purpose of giving them a critique of their work, which should be avoided, but rather to allow you to show how nicely your interests would fit in with current interests in the department, how you would complement their existing strengths. Making the rounds will also probably mean having to answer a similar set of questions multiple times. Each time that you do so, it is important to maintain a lively interest and enthusiastic tone — never letting repetition become mechanical.

- You will also have interviews with administrators, and this usually means a different agenda for discussion — now getting into issues such as salary, other benefits, housing, and, above all, possibilities of promotion and tenure. These will probably be discussed at the departmental level as well. While it is certainly appropriate to ask questions about these issues at this stage, you should still discuss them in more general terms than you would at the actual stage of receiving a job offer, when you would try to pin down the details more firmly (see below Negotiating a Contract). If you have two-career family issues, you might choose to raise them at this point, although many people feel it is best to wait until an offer has been received (more on this issue in a separate section on the two-career family).
- A campus visit offers you an opportunity to take a close look at the department that may make you an offer. In particular, it is an opportunity for you to gage the morale and general climate in the department and the institution, since these can affect your whole sense of well-being in a job: Do colleagues seem to like and respect one another? Do junior faculty members appear to be comfortable — do they convey a sense that they are happy there, that their future prospects seem bright? Are there clear signs of openness and fairness on issues such as minorities, gender, and sexual orientation? At a campus interview you should be able to obtain this information through careful observation and attention to indirect clues. In general, it is unwise to engage in discussions of departmental politics or any potentially divisive issues. Similarly, it is best not to get into discussions about Harvard departmental politics.
- Still another important feature of the campus visit is that the interview is an ongoing process: conversations at mealtimes and other social events, in the hallways in between appointments, and even during transportation. If at all possible, try to arrange some unscheduled time, in order to allow you to replenish your energy.
- You may also be asked to give a teaching demonstration — something more common in the area of language study, where you might be asked to conduct a fairly specific lesson: Get as many details about the nature of the course, the text book, the level of the students, how the lesson fits into the syllabus. Consult with experienced members of your department on how best to prepare. Think back on what teaching techniques have proven to work well for you.
- Alternatively, they might arrange a more informal session for you to meet and talk with students, including perhaps graduate students as well as undergraduates. Here you might want to think back once again on some of your most successful techniques and questions for engaging students in lively discussions and attaining broad participation. The context is undoubtedly different, but some of these successful techniques can carry over.
- A campus visit should also give you a chance to get a sense of the larger community (ideally, a tour should be on the agenda, if time permits): where the junior faculty lives, the cost of housing, the quality of schools, the cultural life, etc.
- Before leaving, it is helpful to ask for a timetable for their decision-making process, and also learn how you will be notified of their decision.
- After a campus visit it, write a thank-you note not only to the department chair and the head of the search committee, but to all individuals who have extended hospitality. The thank-you note, once again, provides a further opportunity to re-emphasize important points, to ask for further information, or to enclose additional documents as a follow-up to issues discussed during the visit. If you have received no word after a reasonable amount of time, it is appropriate to call.

## Negotiating a Job Offer

A job offer is often made by telephone, either from the chair of the department, or the chair of the search committee — with a letter of confirmation to follow. It usually happens shortly after a campus interview (perhaps within a week, although there can be some delay if they have first made an offer to someone else who has declined). It is wise to prepare yourself for this conversation in advance, making a list of further questions you would like to ask, and how you would generally like to respond.

Your response should first of all convey your pleasure at receiving the offer. After that, you will probably want to clarify details about the offer and raise points that are perhaps negotiable. Now is the appropriate time to discuss and negotiate the terms of the position in detail. Your actual answer as to whether you will accept the offer should wait until this part of the process is completed. It is a good idea to say you will get back to the department — even if you are almost positive that you will accept the offer — rather than to give an immediate decision on the telephone.

As for items that can be negotiated, the department may have little or no flexibility on entry-level salaries, but it is important to have done some research in advance, preferably about the entry-level salary range in that department (try asking faculty members in your department what they know about that department, or at least what they believe are reasonable expectations in your field), or about the general salary picture at that level (the annual Almanac issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* publishes data on average salaries by rank and nature of institution). A crucial area that you will also want to deal with concerns tenure promotion policy: the timing before tenure review, the chances of receiving tenure, and the criteria that will be applied when the department makes that decision (unless of course the job description specifies that it is non tenure-track). On this issue, you might even ask specifically about recent promotions to tenure from within the department — how many publications were required, and what consideration was given to teaching.

There are also a number of other items that can be clarified or negotiated: leave policy, special support for junior faculty such as a reduced teaching load for the first year, research and travel funds, office accommodations, support staff, research assistants, laboratory equipment for the scientific fields — including coverage of start-up lab experiments, computer-time, number of teaching preparations (the teaching load may be fixed, but repeat courses can mean less preparation), benefits package, summer support, housing, child care, moving costs, parking and others of a similar nature. Other issues that can be covered in negotiations concern early or a postponed review for tenure if you have special reasons, or issues related to the two-career family — to be discussed in the following section. You might also want to raise the issue of the possibility of deferment in taking the position if you are also applying for postdoctoral fellowships and would like to take a year to do research and publish, in the event that you win one. Clearly you cannot and should not try to negotiate about everything on this list. An important part of your advance preparation for this conversation is to know your priorities, know which items are the most important and reasonable to try for in the negotiating process. The fact that they have made you an offer is actually a form of leverage — they now want you to come, and probably would be prepared to make some extra provisions in order to get a favorable — and swift — answer. Throughout the process, be sure to convey that your questions reflect a serious interest in the job, making sure that your questions are indeed reasonable and that they are asked in an amicable way.

One final part of the negotiating process that often arises is that one school may make an offer early, before you have had a chance to see the results of other applications, including applications for postdoctoral fellowships as well. Some schools, in fact, deliberately make early offers, in order to attract the most desirable candidates. Unless this is your definite first choice, it is best to be honest with the school, and ask

for enough time to allow you to know what other options you will have. You should also contact the other schools or fellowship agencies to which you have applied, telling them of your situation and seeing if you can get an earlier decision from them as well. In many cases, the school making the first offer will give some extra time, but not enough to see all the options. The school may also try to entice you to accept by making a more generous offer, or by adding some of the amenities listed above. At this point, you must view the trade-offs: Is the security of making an early decision more important, or would you prefer to wait and give yourself a chance to see if a preferable offer emerges? Bear in mind that an early offer probably means that you are a strong candidate, and that your application to other institutions also stands a good chance of being viewed positively.

Once you have worked out all the details, it is important to have them in writing. If they do not provide a final written version of the offer, you can confirm them in writing in a letter to the department. Please note: Until you have received a written contract, you should not withdraw your application from any other school. However, once you have signed a contract, you should give prompt notice to others.

### **The Two-Career Family: The Job Search for Two Academic Jobs**

The structure of the academic job market makes this situation extremely complex. Geographic choice is often limited, and there are frequently a number of moves prior to the attainment of tenure. How do academic couples manage? There is no single answer, but most would agree that flexibility and willingness to compromise are essential.

Although each couple must work this out in its own way, there is an approach — with variations — that seems to be preferred by many couples. It involves an independent job hunt by each member of the couple — favoring jobs that are close to one another, but not making that a necessary condition for applying. When one member of the couple receives a job offer — or when both do, but in different places — and it becomes necessary to respond to an offer, then the couple must deal with multiple tradeoffs: Should one member accept, opting for security? Is it better to live apart, rather than to sacrifice job possibilities for the other? If living apart is rejected, then negotiation often occurs with the institution that made the offer to see if there are part-time teaching possibilities for the other. Within the geographic area of the offer, the second job search often becomes even more flexible — for example, consideration of part-time teaching or administrative positions. As difficult as this all seems, a sizeable number of academic couples have managed to keep two careers going in this fashion.

### **Special Consideration for Foreign Students**

Many foreign students who have received their doctoral degree in this country prefer to teach here for a few years before returning home. In preparing for the job search and for an academic career in general, it would be best if they focus on their professional interests, rather than thinking in terms of being foreign. One Harvard professor — having entered this country as a foreign scholar himself — warned against joining an intellectual “ghetto” in which Third World scholars feel that they must specialize in the Third World. In practical terms, this means conducting graduate study and a job search just as any other candidate does, except for the need to explain to an interested employer that visa provisions must be made. Once a department has decided on a candidate — and that decision depends on the strength of the candidacy — then visa arrangements may follow more smoothly. This foreign professor also stressed that ability to communicate reasonably well in English would be taken into account in their applications for teaching positions.



## On Not Giving Up

In this job market, it may well be the case that, after all your efforts, you did not receive a job offer, perhaps not even an interview. The most important thing to do after any professional rejections — whether for jobs, fellowships, or publications — is to make an immediate resolution to try again. The resolution should be made before you have the chance to think that if you did not receive any job offer or have an interview, then it must mean that you do not deserve a job. You haven't come all this way — made it through Harvard's doctoral program — without being highly qualified. Talk only to people whom you can count on to give support and encouragement to try again, to people who will not let you doubt yourself. Just look around, and you will probably find yourself in good company — if that is any consolation. Also, being an experienced candidate, with degree in hand, and perhaps getting something published or accepted before the next round, can greatly improve your chances. And of course, it cannot hurt to review all your application materials to see if you can give things a further polish. In Harvard's annual study of career outcomes of its PhDs conducted 3-years after receipt of the degree, we consistently find significant improvement in results: more people employed, more tenure track academic jobs, more positions outside of academe, etc. Since it takes time for this to happen, you will need to find a means of supporting yourself that will not be so demanding that it will interfere with your job hunt or with remaining active as a scholar. Again, look around, and you will find that many veterans of the job market are doing part-time teaching or doing work as a research assistant right at Harvard. If you take a totally unrelated job, then at least try to get an academic affiliation, perhaps with a Harvard research center or lab, even if it is non-salaried. Above all, do whatever it takes to keep your own sense of identity as a scholar alive. You have earned it!

## CHAPTER SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR APPLYING FOR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS AND OTHER RESEARCH POSITIONS

### Applying for Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Humanities and Social Sciences

As you generate a list of appropriate fellowships, keep in mind that your selection process is closely related to how you formulate your intended research project. It is often possible to increase the number of relevant fellowships by formulating the project in different ways. You can search for [predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships](https://apps2.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/carat/applicant/browse?type=G) through the CARAT database (<https://apps2.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/carat/applicant/browse?type=G>). In addition, the professional associations in your field will list postdoctoral opportunities, especially newly created fellowships. The Academic Jobs Wiki has proven to be a helpful source as well.

Beyond using online fellowship sources, it is important to seek further advice from faculty advisors and colleagues in your field. Those who have gone through the process are a valuable source of information.

A number of postdoctoral fellowships are specifically intended for recent PhDs; they allow applicants to apply during the final year of the doctoral program, but with the stipulation that the degree will be completed by the time the fellowship period begins. Others require applicants to be at least three years beyond receipt of the doctoral degree. Still others are exclusively for more senior scholars.

Postdoctoral research positions can occur in a variety of settings, both academic and nonacademic: government laboratories, private nonprofit research institutes, and private corporate settings as well; in the humanities, most postdoctoral opportunities are in universities, while in the social sciences — especially in fields like business economics, organizational behavior, urban planning, and some other areas of economics and political science — they can occur in more varied settings, which is also the case in the natural sciences.

In any of these settings, a postdoctoral position can provide opportunities for preparing works for publication, gaining further experience in one's area of specialization, developing new areas of specialization, and gaining new mentor relationships.

Before applying, try to learn something about the selection criteria for the fellowships you have chosen; this can be done by contacting the administrators of the relevant fellowship programs; these people are the “experts” and often are willing to give you further insights on preparing a strong application. In some cases, they will even read a draft before you submit a final version.

Most of the listed fellowships on the GSAS web site in CARAT call for direct application. In some cases, however, a nomination is required. This means that a specified representative must act on your behalf. You may initiate the process by actively seeking sponsorship — something that is normally appropriate to do.

### Writing a Postdoctoral Proposal in the Humanities and Social Sciences

For many new PhDs, especially in the humanities and social sciences, the main goal in applying for a postdoctoral fellowship is to transform the dissertation into a book manuscript for publication. A number of postdoctoral fellowships in fact are aimed at recent PhD recipients and explicitly state that the project may be based on the dissertation — although in some cases, and especially those aimed at more advanced scholars, the fellowships require a brand new project. Even if you are applying for postdoctoral fellowships

for further work on your dissertation with a goal to preparing it for publication (and have identified fellowships that will allow this continuation), it is important nevertheless to try to formulate your proposal in terms that emphasize any new and original research that will be entailed as you prepare for publication, rather than simply describing it as a polishing or editing job. For most applicants this does not pose a problem: research never really reaches closure; there is almost always some issue that will benefit from further development. In some cases, applicants expand the dissertation topic by extending the time span that is covered; in others, applicants add additional countries for comparative purposes; still others go more deeply into the cultural background for a given historical or literary movement. If anything, the main challenge is to limit the number of possibilities for expansion, since project feasibility is always an important concern.

As an integral part of explaining the expansion of the dissertation it will be necessary to explain the original topic as well. Almost all of the suggestions for writing dissertation fellowship proposals that have been made above in Chapter Four continue to apply at this stage. Once again, the proposal should be a persuasive and polished argument that your project will contribute to the field. In the case of the postdoctoral proposal, this argument needs to be made not only on behalf of the original dissertation topic, but also to bolster your proposed expansion. Since you will be writing the postdoctoral proposal when you are fairly well along in your dissertation — and may even have completed it — you can discuss the project with greater authority, citing some important findings that have contributed to the field, while also pointing to potential new contributions as a result of the proposed expansion.

A number of postdoctoral fellowships provide support for 2 or 3 years rather than one. In this case, you will need to have an additional project over and above the preparation of your dissertation for publication. At the outset of the proposal you should state that you will be working not only on the dissertation, but on a new project that you are beginning to explore. After you describe your intended work on the dissertation, you can swing into your new project and give your necessarily tentative plans of what you hope to accomplish with fellowship support. Recent PhDs often have an additional project in mind, perhaps a seminar paper that they would have liked to expand, or an article or book that prompted further ideas. It is always best to start from a position of strength, describing a topic where you have acquired some knowledge and would like to pursue further.

When you have a draft completed, seek the advice of friends or colleagues in your field, as well as faculty advisors. Once again, be sure to consult the GSAS Director of Fellowships; for an appointment phone (617) 495-1814.

Direct contact with the granting agency can result in a preliminary evaluation of your proposal, or at least yield some answers to questions.

If you are applying for a number of different kinds of fellowships, the drafts must also be adapted so that the proposal matches the individual fellowship guidelines as closely as possible.

### **How Applying for a Postdoctoral Position in the Natural Sciences Differs from the Humanities and Social Sciences**

Many of the above points apply to the natural sciences as well, with the important difference that in the natural sciences you must choose among the multiple papers that comprise your dissertation and single out the one that will form the basis of your next research project. It is also common in the sciences to develop a new area of expertise after the PhD. If your postdoctoral project entails a shift to a new research area, it is important to explain that shift, citing any experiences or exposure that have led you to this new interest.

And of course, you need to emphasize how nicely your new interest meshes with the particular research lab or team with which you hope to affiliate. Your statement should also try to show how your new interests relate to your past research, emphasizing how your past research experiences and accomplishments are indicative of the skills that you will bring to your new research.

Postdoctoral positions in the sciences and the process of applying have some distinctive features that set them apart from the humanities and social sciences:

- First and foremost, in the sciences a postdoctoral position is typically the first step on the academic ladder; it is not just an option, it is almost an essential step, perhaps like a *rite de passage*. In the humanities and social sciences, on the other hand, there are fewer postdoctoral opportunities (although growing in number in recent years), and candidates are likely to apply for them while also going on the academic job market; it is simply another option, a supplement that expands possibilities for gaining a first position.
- Another important difference is that in the sciences many postdoctoral positions are obtained through networking and an informal market, rather than through a formal posting and application process, which is more typical for postdoctoral positions in the humanities and social sciences — although also true for some positions in the sciences. Candidates in the sciences thus need to learn how to deal with the informal postdoctoral market if they are to land a position, and this means following a number of steps, as outlined below (see as well the REPORT of a panel discussion on this topic).
- The first obvious step in the informal networking process is to discuss your interests and goals with your lab director and other dissertation advisors, and to get a sense of how much they are prepared to do in helping you to find a position.
- In theory, this might be the first and last step: your lab director picks up the phone and arranges a position for you at the lab of your choice. Many students, however, find that even the most conscientious lab directors and advisors may disengage once they see the training process coming to an end; or, if they don't disengage, they simply don't have the connections or influence that you hoped they might have. They may make a few suggestions, but are not prepared to do much more.
- Because of the uneven nature of the kind of help you can expect in the networking process, it is important for you to swing into the active mode as early as possible; it may encourage your advisors to become more active as well if they see that you are doing the steps listed below.
- Expand the list that your advisors may have given you by identifying the labs that are of particular interest to you.
- Prepare a resume that highlights the relevant research you have done, the fellowships you have won, as well as any publications or other forms of professional activity (see below for choice of resume format and samples at the end of this chapter).
- Draft a cover letter that conveys your interests and your qualifications; the unsolicited letter of inquiry is similar to a cover letter for a posted opening in some respects, except that you are asking if there might be a given position for someone with your skills and qualifications; it is even more important to find out about the research lab, since you are essentially proposing how you can be of use to them and how your qualifications would best suit their needs. (See the end of this chapter for sample letters of inquiry.)

- While many postdoctoral positions in the sciences come with a stipend, and are like a “salaried” position, many positions are offered with completely variable guarantees of funding (depending on whether the Principal Investigator or PI has funding or where they are in the grant cycle). The most common scenario is that you get accepted into a lab with “some” guarantee of funding (perhaps 1 year), and then you are expected to apply for postdoctoral fellowships. It is thus highly probable that you will be applying for postdoctoral positions as one process and applying for funding as a separate process, with close timing between the two.
- Some of the big fellowship programs have one, two, or three deadlines throughout the year, so you can apply fairly promptly after getting into a lab.
- For most of the fellowships, you are expected to propose work you are going to do in a specific lab with a specific PI. The PI also writes a letter of support, so that has to be lined up at the time of application. Most postdoctoral fellowships are not very portable, although if a change is desirable and everyone involved agrees to the change, you can appeal to the granting agency. Most fellowships provide three years of funding.
- Many postdoctoral fellowships are aimed at recent PhDs, and only allow you to apply for a fellowship within a restricted time limit after receiving the PHD.
- For non-US citizens there are fewer funding opportunities. PIs know this and may be more inclined to support an international postdoc who comes without funding.
- Postdoctoral positions, especially in the sciences, but in other fields as well, can occur in a variety of settings, both academic and nonacademic: universities, medical schools, teaching hospitals, government laboratories, private nonprofit research institutes, and private corporate settings as well. Networking should seek to do outreach in the wider world.
- In addition, the professional association in your field will list postdoctoral opportunities, especially newly created fellowships. The Academic Jobs Wiki is still another good source.
- Finally, the GSAS Fellowships Office provides a range of services to assist with fellowships, including individual counseling on your proposal.

### **Landing Your First Postdoc in the Life Sciences, PANEL REPORT**

The speakers, both on the Harvard Medical School Faculty, were able to discuss the application process from having gone through the process themselves and now from the perspective as lab directors choosing among applicants. A number of salient points emerged from the combined talks:

The informal nature of the process of landing a postdoctoral position, involves the following steps and considerations:

- The candidate compiles a list of labs that would be of interest, relying heavily on the dissertation advisor for suggestions, but also doing thorough investigation via the internet of research activities and principal investigators at various labs. (For further discussion of the important role of the dissertation advisor and the mentoring process, see the relevant sections above, in Chapter Two.)

- The candidate then writes an informal letter of inquiry, which can be done via email, attaching a resume, as well as a list of recommenders and contact information. Some postdoctoral openings are posted in bulletins of the professional association, but the informal process is paramount.
- Some candidates are looking for a lab that will allow them to continue along their current lines of research, but many others are seeking to shift fields. The speakers strongly recommended the latter, since it enhances career opportunities to develop more than one field. Both speakers, however, emphasized that the most important thing is to choose something that you find deeply desirable, whether it entails a shift or continuing on a present course.
- At the receiving end, the lab director, before deciding to interview a particular candidate, typically contacts the candidate's dissertation advisor by phone to make further inquiries of an informal nature: how well the candidate works with others in the current lab, the particular contributions the candidate has made to lab projects, level of productivity, and any other issues that the director feels a need to address in this informal way.
- The interview often involves a presentation where the candidate discusses current research. Since many postdoctoral candidates are shifting fields, the presentation functions primarily to give an indication of how the candidate has performed in past research and how well the candidate would fit within the new lab. Your talk needs to address these points indirectly, describing work that was done effectively as part of a team, while also identifying your own individual contribution to a project.
- In regard to the value of shifting fields, one speaker noted that once you enter a new lab it makes most sense to take full advantage of the particular strengths of the lab, which also may change over time. Thus, research interests commonly shift, and this is well recognized by the people who are doing the interviews.
- In addition to preparing a strong presentation, an important part of preparation for the interview is to be fully informed on the research activities of the principal investigators of the lab, reading up on their important findings and being prepared to ask some well-informed questions about their research. You should also be prepared to answer some standard interview questions: why you want this particular lab, what direction your future research will take, some important accomplishments to date, etc.
- The issue of a good fit operates on both sides. The candidate who goes on an interview should pay close attention to the morale within a lab, how contented the lab members seem to be, how they interact with one another, etc. Choosing a lab where you think you will be happy was cited as the most important criterion from the candidate's perspective. You will also want to get more precise knowledge about the size of the lab, the opportunities to pursue your own research, access to the lab director, information about the duration of the position, the duration of funding, etc. (This same advice is also important at the graduate student stage; see above, Chapter Two, on choosing a lab as a graduate student.) The speakers both agreed that it is appropriate to inquire about family leave policies, and even to ask about current investigators who are parents.

### **Other Types of Research Positions in the Field of the PhD, Gathering Information:**

The process of identifying other types of research positions is more varied than for postdoctoral fellowships. In some cases, they are listed just as academic jobs are — in the employment bulletin put out by the professional associations in the various fields. For example, the Smithsonian Institution announces openings for historians in the employment listings of the American Historical Association, now available electronically. Others advertise openings in the Education section of the Sunday *New York Times*, or list positions in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Still others send recruiters to university graduate departments and the Office of Career Services. The PhD counselors in the Office of Career Services can offer useful guidance in the process and can help you to identify opportunities.

Going beyond listings and recruiters, candidates may seek further opportunities through unsolicited inquiries or an indirect search, a process that closely resembles obtaining a postdoctoral fellowship position in the sciences. In this case, there is the important step of identifying appropriate research organizations and checking their websites for fellowship opportunities.

### **Choice of Resume Format for Nonacademic Research Positions**

A resume for nonacademic positions differs from an academic curriculum vitae in placing a greater emphasis on actual skills — on what you are able to do as a result of your PhD training and other experiences. In general, there is a greater proportion of action verbs. It is more important to think in these terms when applying outside of academe.

There are three basic types of resumes (each one illustrated in Appendix C):

- A functional or skills resume
- A chronological resume
- A modified chronological resume.

The choice will depend on the nature of your research experience — on whether it has been almost completely acquired within academe, or has involved some nonacademic experience as well. Whichever type you choose, it is important to assemble your research and other relevant experience with succinct headings and in a format that can be scanned quickly for relevant information. Once again — as in the CV — topics should be ordered in hierarchic fashion, with the most relevant ones presented first, and the rest following in corresponding order. Within each category, items should be listed in reverse chronological order, the most recent appearing first.

**A Functional or Skills Resume** focuses on skills rather than on positions held. It can be effective for those whose work has been almost entirely academic. In addition to specialized research skills, other relevant skills that might be included are writing, editing, teaching and administration. As skills are named, documentation should follow of how and where these skills were acquired.

**A Chronological Resume** orders items by date — in reverse order — rather than by category. It is particularly effective for showing a steady or progressive record of achievement. Together with each experience or position, one should include the accomplishments, functions and skills that are involved.

**A Modified Chronological Resume** arranges different types of professional experience in separate categories — for example, research would be separated from teaching or administrative experience. Within each category, experiences are presented in reverse chronological order, and accomplishments and skills for each position are described. This format has some of the advantages of the functional resume. It is especially effective for those with diverse skills and experience.

## **APPENDIX A SAMPLES OF WINNING FELLOWSHIP PROPOSALS**

### **Predissertation Fellowship Proposals**

The fellowships in the predissertation category are intended for students at or near the beginning of their graduate study. Most have the stipulation that first-year graduate students are eligible to apply as long as they have not completed more than twenty semester hours, with some allowing thirty semester hours of study following the baccalaureate degree at the time of application. The National Science Foundation (NSF) in fact allows second-year graduate students to apply. The predissertation winning samples in this Appendix are for the NSF. They include a Proposed Plan of Research and in some cases are accompanied by the required Personal Statement.

The use of names in the samples is a mixture of pseudonyms and real names, depending on preferences of those who shared their samples.



## **Proposed Plan of Research – Ralph Waverly<sup>1</sup>**

In the last several years I have developed two main areas of investigation: One, I am interested in the history of scientific diagrams (including maps) for what they tell us of the history of visualization and theories of representation, and two, I am interested in the more physical spaces of science, including natural history museums, hospitals, and laboratories. Since the last years of my undergraduate degree at Rice, I have been focusing on the intersections of science and architecture. I completed my BA in two major fields – architecture and civil engineering – and thus have a firm background in both the humanities and the natural sciences. Outside of school, I gained experience in both architecture and experimental physics. At no time did I try to separate my practical training in either field from my more scholarly interests in their overlap, and I have continued this inter-disciplinary interest by constructing a dual PhD program at Harvard, enrolling in both the History of Science and History of Architecture & Urban Planning programs. (I will fulfill the course and general examination requirements of both departments, and write one dissertation. My committee will include professors from both fields.)

One topic that particularly interests me is the development of American laboratories in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Laboratories have existed in several contexts – from the work of individual inventors and corporate R&D to academic departments and governmental agencies – and their design has shown several changing influences, including industrial factories, high modernism, traditional campus planning, and even New Urbanism. I am interested in who or what has been responsible for the changing idea of what a laboratory should be: To what extent has laboratory design been aligned with the changing needs of science? How have laboratories influenced what it means to do scientific work and the persona of the scientist? How has their design been determined by changes in institutional and financial support? Have architects' ideas had a demonstrable impact on how scientists view their own work? These questions have no straightforward answers, and one of the goals of my work would be to investigate the overlaps and dialogues that challenge the assumptions of any purely scientific or architectural history.

I have already looked at a specific case in some depth: the design of the new laboratories for the National Bureau of Standards in the mid-1960s. Here neither the Bureau's decision to move to a new laboratory complex nor the specific design of the new buildings can be seen as the product of any one set of decisions. Changing management practices, huge increases in funds and personnel, national policies of industrial dispersion, and the specifically architectural ideas of the laboratory designers all combined in the eventual campus in suburban Maryland. The history of the NBS labs does not lend itself to any kind of internalist history (either scientific or architectural), and I thus became interested in the idea of a larger postwar military-industrial-corporate-academic complex – where “complex” is understood as both an institutional association and a physical place. Not only were the physical sciences expanding and becoming more connected with military funding sources like the Atomic Energy Commission or the Office of Naval Research, but the same architectural firms were designing similar laboratories for corporations, universities, and governmental agencies – I am particularly interested in the work of large firms like Voorhees Walker Foley & Smith or Skidmore Owings & Merrill.

My larger project would continue these kinds of questions, but expand them to include other important moments. In the late nineteenth century, the relationship between the first corporate labs and the development of national systems of standards seems especially important, as does the marriage between the German idea of the research university and the specifically American tradition of campus planning. In

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<sup>1</sup> Note how this candidate is prepared to give considerable detail on one principal project, where he has already done research, but also keeps the door open to a larger project and additional research questions of interest to him, to be pursued in graduate school. This insertion of the larger picture helps considerably to enhance the significance of the more detailed project.

the twentieth century, I want to investigate the appropriateness of an idea like the military-industrial-corporate-academic complex, and explore the connections between funding, scientific pedagogy, specific architectural firms, and the various sites of scientific work. I am also interested in how the fragmentation of science in the 1970s and 1980s is related to an architectural disenchantment with large-scale modernist planning.

Other scholars have approached the question of the laboratory, and my own project would build on this existing work. There is a rich literature in the history of science on experimental practice and the rise of laboratory authority from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. There have also been several studies of the laboratory design of famous architects like Robert Venturi, Eero Saarinen, or Louis Kahn, by both historians of science and of architecture. Detailed histories of specific laboratories, such as the Lawrence Berkeley Lab or the German Physikalisch-Technische Reichsanstalt, will also be important as models of institutional history. Yet almost all of this work has been situated either within either the history of science or the history of architecture, and has thus been divided in both focus and method. Since my goal is to bridge between architectural and scientific histories, my dissertation would involve a great deal of new archival research.

I would mainly use two types of archives: those of individual laboratories or institutions (both governmental and academic), and those of architectural firms who have worked on laboratory design. I will look for planning documents, correspondence between scientists and architects, and architectural drawings showing the evolution of design ideas. Announcements and reviews in the journals of both the scientific and architectural community will also be important. In analyzing these sources, I would use both techniques of textual analysis and the formal analysis used by historians of architecture and urban planning; an important part of my training has been learning to read drawings and photographs for the ideas and arguments they contain. My view of the laboratory as a joint project of both scientists and architects will impact my methodology – both texts and drawings will be important. This dual focus will be vital to understanding the military-industrial-corporate-academic complex as something more than simply a first-order effect of increased military funding: engaging different kinds of archives and types of sources will enable me to understand laboratory history as a larger cultural development with roots in several traditions, and I will be able to trace the consequences of its design into wider social contexts.

## Personal Statement, Previous Research - Ralph Waverly<sup>2</sup>

The most important influence on my decision to pursue scholarly work has been my professors. Several professors at Rice helped me refine my interests and focus my life goals, and since coming to Harvard the faculty have provided me with renewed motivation and a model for innovative scholarship. Both as an undergraduate double-majoring in architecture and civil engineering, and now as a graduate student dually enrolled in History of Science and History of Architecture & Urban Planning programs, my education has allowed me to take cross- and inter-disciplinary interests seriously and to look for nontrivial intersections between different intellectual traditions. And just as my own interests have been shaped by influences from several fields, I have learned how to view these fields (namely physics, engineering, and architecture) as internally diverse and mutually interacting, both in their everyday practices and in their use of metaphor.

At Rice, two professors were especially influential. Sanford Kwinter – whose work deals with architects’ use of scientific concepts, especially complexity theory and theoretical biology – introduced me to a wide range of scientific thought and the philosophy of science, and taught me how to interrogate design as a form of intellectual production. Conversely, Nana Last – who does similar boundary-crossing work between architecture, art, and philosophy (such as Wittgenstein’s design of his own house) – was greatly influential in showing me how architectural thought could lead to a serious study of things like scientific representation. It was in her class on the idea of measurement within architecture that I first became interested both in scientific diagrams and in the National Bureau of Standards. Between governmental science, architects’ ideas, and construction practice lay institutional and cultural contexts: I began to see ideas as embedded in multiple locations and specific institutions. Professors Kwinter and Last acted as two intellectual poles: the one provoking my interest in metaphor and the history of ideas, the other challenging me to situate those interests in design practices, institutions, and social contexts.

These cross-disciplinary interests were also stimulated in my professional experiences. Whether working as an intern for an innovative design firm in Los Angeles (Eric Owen Moss Architects) or as an architect for the well-known firm of Venturi, Scott Brown, and Associates (whose principals have all published influential books), I have been able to pursue my interest in how design fits within larger intellectual and social contexts. For example, working on designs for a laboratory complex at the University of Michigan, I encountered the interplay between the internal tradition of design and the need to satisfy specific programmatic requirements. Likewise, in my work at Caltech and MIT for the Laser Interferometer Gravity-Wave Observatory, I worked on both the physical and numeric sides of experiment, and saw how cosmology, control-system design, error analysis, and mechanical engineering all fit together as part of physics. In both disciplines, I also became interested in day-to-day material conditions: the intellectual work of physics or design was always in dialogue with the need to fabricate parts with a milling machine or make intelligible drawings for use on a construction site.

Since coming to Harvard, I have been influenced by a different pair of professors: my advisors Peter Galison and Antoine Picon. Professor Galison’s interests in the social and cultural embeddedness of physics, including its architecture, have been complemented by Professor Picon’s work on the social milieu of architects and engineers. Even though one looks from the point of view of science, and the other from the point of view of architecture and engineering, both have influenced my interest in institutions and the relationship between a given cultural context and the changing personae of scientists, architects, and engineers. Both have emphasized the importance of rigorous archival work, and led me to ground my interdisciplinary interests in a common historical methodology.

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<sup>2</sup> The essay explicitly states that the research will benefit society, and then points to the multiple ways in which it will do so, including an emphasis on how it will appeal to a broader audience through its broader implications.

My work will benefit society by showing how science and architecture have influenced each other; it will engage broad cultural themes that are relevant to a wide audience. My two main areas of interest – the history of laboratories, and the history of scientific diagrams, maps, and visualization – are an important part of the day-to-day practices of both science and design, and by presenting these topics as relevant to both disciplines I will show how each has influenced a larger history. For instance, several of the questions that interest me in the history of laboratories will reach beyond the immediate topic of my work: How did science come to require its own specially designed space? How has the physical location of scientists been related to their place in society? What role has laboratory design played in the relationship between science and war? Although the fields of the history of science and the history of architecture & urban planning have tried to address these kinds of themes, they have often been blind to the particular strengths of the other’s historiography. A full understanding of “laboratory life” and its broader connections can only come with a deep understanding of both of the disciplines that lay claim to its development.

Beyond the specific example of laboratories, science and architecture have also played important roles in a broader social history of the last two hundred years. In the case of science, the transformation of natural philosophy into professionalized physics in the nineteenth century went hand-in-hand with the development of industry, international standardization, and the technologization of daily life. In architecture, the late eighteenth-century coupling of design, industry, and social reform began a tradition of seeing the design of the built environment as an intervention in society itself, both in urban planning and in individual buildings. By the end of World War II, nearly every important scientific or cultural space had become part of a larger discussion on the goals and structure of society as a whole. Yet the individual stories of science or design have obscured the ways in which they have interacted. One of the benefits of my inter-disciplinary point of view is that it can engage topics that have been peripheral to either science or architecture, yet are important as larger cultural forms – such as the relationship between statistical mapping and governmental planning, or the social nature of scientific work and its relationship to the image of the scientist (or architect) as a lone genius.

This kind of work is thus by its very nature non-hermetic: it will introduce scientific and technical understanding into new contexts and to new readers. Within academia, it will be relevant not only to professional historians of science or architecture, but also to historians in other fields, such as geography or American history. It will also engage a wider audience of practicing scientists and architects who want to understand how the historical development of their own profession has been related to other traditions; in the case of laboratories, it may also help collaboration between scientists and architects in the design of new lab buildings. Finally, general readers have shown an abiding interest in both science and architecture, and my work will provide an accessible account of both fields’ influence in society. My research will deepen the public understanding of science, thus helping to interest people of diverse cultural backgrounds in pursuing careers in scientific disciplines.

My larger project is also by nature a marriage of research and education: I hope to pursue a career in academia, and I will develop my research within a pedagogical context and have it become an important part of my own teaching. This work would be equally appropriate in a department of History, History of Science, or History of Architecture – my specific project could act as a complement to the core teaching competency I will receive in these fields. My work will also engage the relationship of research and education as a historical question: both laboratories and scientific diagrams were important within the nineteenth-century research university, and both remain indispensable to modern scientific pedagogy.

Published Original Work:

“The Reification of Sound: Recording Technology and the Changing Ontology of Music,” in *Trans: A Journal for New Music*, issue #1 (fall 2002).

Acknowledged Contributions to Others' Work:

P. Willems, V. Sannibale, V. Mitrofanov, and J. Weel, "Investigations of the dynamics and mechanical dissipation of a fused silica suspension," in *Physics Letters A* Vol. 297, No. 1-2 (6 May 2002): 37-48.

David Brownlee, David De Long, and Kathryn Heisinger, *Out of the Ordinary: The Architecture & Design of Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, & Associates* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001).

Progressive Architecture Citation for Eric Moss's "The Spa" in *Architecture* 89 (April 2000): 132-133.

## **Proposed Plan of Research – Jack Cao<sup>3</sup>**

### **Bayesian Updating in the Social Domain**

To make the best decisions, we need to change our minds when given new and relevant information. But exactly how is this information incorporated into the decision-making process? Upon learning that a preferred job candidate lacks an important skill, a manager might make an offer to someone else. Once the prime suspect's alibi checks out, a detective could investigate new leads. Sometimes, we change our minds so that the best candidate is hired and justice is achieved. But at other times, we do not, leading to suboptimal hiring and legal outcomes. *My research seeks to understand when and why we fail to change our minds.*

The rational process of changing our minds is mathematically formalized in Bayes' rule. This rule describes how our initial beliefs should combine with relevant information to arrive at updated beliefs. Remarkably, an increasing body of evidence suggests that people accurately perform Bayesian updating in a wide range of situations. For example, when participants guess numerical patterns, beliefs are updated in accordance with Bayes' rule. Participants given the numbers [60 80 10 30] correctly believe that the pattern is multiples of ten, whereas participants given the numbers [60 52 57 55] properly believe that the pattern is the interval between fifty and sixty (1). Similar findings have been observed in more complex cognitive tasks like making predictions about cake baking times (2), learning the meanings of new words (3), and determining whether a tower of blocks is stable (4).

In daily life, we do not just update our beliefs about non-social entities like numerical patterns. We also update our beliefs about people. *Contrary to the rational view of human cognition implied by the work described above, there are reasons to suspect that people's ability to update in the social domain is compromised.* The first reason is that stereotypes are resistant to change. Counter-stereotypical examples (e.g., highly educated African-Americans) are seen as exceptions rather than as evidence that the stereotype should be revised (5). But even when counter-stereotypical information is used to update, updating is insufficient. When employers are given diagnostic information that female job candidates will perform at least as well as male candidates, women are still underrepresented in the workforce (6). People also make the opposite mistake of relying too much on new information. When deciding if an individual is a lawyer or engineer, people dramatically overestimate the probability that the individual is an engineer if he is described as intelligent, neat, and corny (7). For these reasons, we may not be as competent when updating in the social domain as we are in the non-social domain.

There are *two alternative hypotheses* that do not garner strong support. The first is that we update rationally in both the non-social and social domains. Supporting this hypothesis is the notion that non-social knowledge is functionally equivalent to social knowledge in that both help organize a complex world (8). However, neuroimaging work has called this notion into question: non-social and social knowledge activate different brain regions (9). A consequence of this neural dissociation could be that updating in these two domains will differ. The second alternative is that updating will be even better in the social domain. People could be more motivated to update accurately about people than about nonsocial entities. However, people's ability to update about non-social entities like numerical patterns is virtually at ceiling. So even if motivation is higher in the social domain, there is no further room for improvement.

To adjudicate among these competing hypotheses, participants will update their non- social and social beliefs in problems adapted from earlier work on statistical cognition (10). Example problems,

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<sup>3</sup> Note how the first paragraph provides a helpful lead-in to the unexpected research goal of understanding how and why we fail to change our minds. The lead-in makes it clear that this failing has suboptimal hiring and legal outcomes, and thus has important implications for society. As the statement makes clear, the research can play a role in increasing equal opportunity and fair treatment through awareness of its findings.

which are parallel in linguistic and mathematical structure, are in the table below. The left side tests non-social updating, and the right side tests social updating.

<i>Updating in the Non-Social Domain</i>	<i>Updating in the Social Domain</i>
<p><u>Step 1:</u> You come across a large jar of marbles. 50% of these marbles are red. 50% are blue. A marble is randomly selected from this jar. What is the probability that this marble is red?</p> <p><u>Step 2:</u> The marble that was randomly selected has a swirl pattern. 80% of the red marbles in the jar have a swirl pattern. 10% of the blue marbles in the jar have a swirl pattern. Now what is the probability that the randomly selected marble is red?</p>	<p><u>Step 1:</u> You come across a large group of people. 50% of these people are engineers. 50% are poets. Jennifer is randomly selected from this group of people. What is the probability that Jennifer is an engineer?</p> <p><u>Step 2:</u> Jennifer drinks tea. 80% of engineers in this group of people drink tea. 10% of the poets in this group of people drink tea. Now what is the probability that Jennifer is an engineer?</p>

The Bayesian answer is the same regardless of whether updating is about a marble or Jennifer<sup>i</sup> (see footnote for explanation). However, for the reasons described earlier, I predict that the human mind will perform worse when updating in the social domain. The intellectual merit of comparing human performance on social vs. non-social problems is that it will 1) identify the boundary conditions of our ability to update rationally, and 2) reveal possible explanations for why this critical ability does not generalize. Additional studies using this same method will test two possibilities. One possibility is that the presence of any stereotype can obstruct Bayesian updating. This possibility will be tested by introducing stereotypes into a non-social problem (e.g., Given some relevant information, is the reliable laptop a Mac or a PC?). If performance on this problem also suffers, then updating may be compromised if any stereotypes arise. Alternatively, only social stereotypes may interfere with updating. In this case, performance on a social problem without stereotypes (e.g., Given some relevant information, is David more likely to be a photographer or pharmacist?) should be the same as performance on the problem about marbles.

Further underscoring the necessity of this work is its broader impacts. Imagine a female employee who is denied a promotion because her supervisor, influenced by the stereotype that women are more warm than competent, did not rationally update knowledge of her performance. Imagine an African-American with no criminal record who still draws unwarranted suspicion from police officers because Bayesian updating was neglected. To prevent these injustices, we need to correctly update our social knowledge. This research, if successful, will raise awareness about when and why updating is robust or error-prone. In doing so, this research will play role in charting policy prescriptions for increasing equal opportunity and fair treatment.

I am ideally situated to conduct this research. At Harvard University, I am advised by Dr. Mahzarin Banaji, an expert on unconscious bias. Through a close relationship between researchers at Harvard and MIT, I also have the opportunity to work with and learn from Dr. Joshua Tenenbaum at MIT, an expert on Bayesian models of cognition. I am confident that this work will contribute to social psychology and to broader efforts to promote a fairer society where knowledge is correctly updated.

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## **Personal Statement, Previous Research - Jack Cao**<sup>4</sup>

What are the psychological processes that contribute to social inequalities, and how can these inequalities be alleviated? These are the questions that motivate my research. This motivation began with my own personal efforts to help alleviate educational inequality. It then transformed into an urgent desire to pursue graduate training and has since shaped the specific research questions I pursue.

*Personal experience alleviating educational inequality:* As an undergraduate at Cornell University, I sought out ways to improve the educational outcomes of the less fortunate. During my sophomore year, I tutored and mentored underprivileged elementary school children. Building academic and interpersonal skills early showed me one way in which educational inequality can be reduced.

But I quickly learned that many factors contribute to educational inequality, one of which is lack of access to education by convicted felons who are more likely to recidivate without proper schooling. So during my junior year, I co-taught a college-level writing course to inmates at a maximum-security prison. Seeing improvements in my students' writing gave me reason for optimism, but the experience also gave me a glimpse into the many hurdles that need to be overcome: lack of resources, family issues, and racial animosity from predominantly White prison guards.

These two experiences led me to join Teach for America (TFA) after graduating from college. In accordance with TFA's mission, my goal was to provide an excellent education to my students through a holistic approach of working with various groups that positively impact education reform. This holistic approach appealed to me given what I had learned while teaching prison inmates.

During my two years with TFA, I was a full-time biology, chemistry, and earth science teacher to overage high school students at an inner-city charter school in New Orleans. I not only wrote and delivered lessons and oversaw experiments that piqued students' curiosity, but I also partnered with a social worker to help students' personal needs outside of school. Robert was one such student. His emotional outbursts prevented him from making academic progress. He lived in foster care with a large group of other teenage boys, which prevented him from getting individual attention.

While the social worker and I could not bring Robert out of foster care, we were able to develop a system that minimized his situation's impact on his education. We gave him "cool down" passes he could use to step outside of the classroom briefly if he felt an emotional outburst coming. One day, after using one of these passes, Robert returned to a group activity on density. He carefully measured the mass of two cans of soda on a triple beam balance, and together with his partners, he successfully explained why Diet Coke floats in water and why regular Coke sinks. He got an *A* on the next test.

*Decision to pursue graduate training:* As a teacher, I had a general sense that I was making a difference. But the complexity of educational inequality was overwhelming: students need not just academic skills, but also proper nutrition, safe environments, nurturing role models, effective policies, and so much more. The more I engaged with these practical problems, the more I was persuaded that basic research about the human mind would be my path to helping solve them. With a lifelong interest in questions about the human mind and how it perceives others who are different, I decided to specialize in issues in concerning race, prejudice, and discrimination.

It would be impossible to discuss educational inequality without addressing social group membership. Students who are academically behind are disproportionately African-American and Hispanic, and disparities in STEM fields are also based on gender. To address these issues, we need a deeper

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<sup>4</sup> Note how nicely he weaves his personal experience and his scholarly interests. The very nature of his research, which focuses on social inequalities, is a priority for NSF, which seeks to improve diversity through this fellowship program.



understanding of the psychological processes that enable prejudice and discrimination, especially the processes that escape our own awareness.

I learned as a teacher that educators can harbor unconscious biases that might affect how we speak with or how much time we spend with students from certain backgrounds. This lesson was powerful because it exposed the misalignment between my benevolent intentions and my potentially harmful actions. Realigning intentions with actions requires a scientific understanding of how unconscious biases emerge and self-perpetuate. These realizations, combined with my previous research experience, led to me to join the lab of Dr. Mahzarin Banaji, an expert on unconscious bias, at Harvard University.

Previous research experience: Undergraduate coursework with Drs. David Dunning and Dennis Regan at Cornell inspired me to learn the experimental methods of psychology. I learned how real-world phenomena could be brought under experimental control, allowing us to understand them at a deeper level with an eye towards improving society.

One such phenomenon is that people tend to make relatively accurate predictions about someone else's future, but they tend to make overconfident predictions about their own future. I noticed this as a teacher when my students thought they had performed better on a test than they actually did, and yet they showed little surprise upon learning their classmates' test scores. One explanation is that predictions about oneself are based on privileged access to goals (e.g., "I want to do well on this test"), whereas predictions about others are based on observations of past behavior (e.g., "She did well on past tests"), which are often more predictive of future outcomes. Working with Dr. Dunning and a graduate student, I learned how to create a paradigm to test this hypothesis, run participants, analyze data, and interpret results. But most importantly, I learned the rudiments of how to think like a scientist.

Seeking to exercise and improve these foundational skills, I conducted a senior thesis that examined logical reasoning ability in a political context. Oftentimes, opposing viewpoints are misunderstood, which can lead to accusations of illogical thinking. I found that when participants read statements like, "Since the governor entered office, crime dropped 20%," their interpretations depended on partisanship. If the statement was about a Republican governor, Democratic participants accurately saw a correlational relationship whereas Republicans were more inclined to see causality. But if the governor was a Democrat, the pattern of results reversed, suggesting that partisanship can interact with political content to enhance or worsen logical reasoning ability. I disseminated these findings through a Cornell-wide research competition for all fields where I won 3<sup>rd</sup> place out of over 100 entrants. My research skills were further improved when I ran a field study during my time as a psychology teaching assistant for pre-medical students at the Doha, Qatar campus of Weill Cornell Medical College. This field study demonstrated just how big of an impact my research could make. One day in Qatar, two other Asian males and I were denied entry to a shopping mall, supposedly because we were male. There was anecdotal evidence, however, that this was really due to our race. As a colleague put it, "you would've gotten in if you were White or Arab." Wanting to find out if such a bold statement could be true, I designed and implemented my own field study. While Whites were more likely to get in than Asians, Asians were more likely to gain entrance if they were dressed formally, something Whites did not have to do. Based on the results of this study, I wrote an editorial for Cornell's student newspaper, the publication of which precipitated a labor group to protest the maltreatment of migrant workers in Qatar (1).

These past research experiences have influenced my current work as a graduate student. My first-year project examined the influence of a group's size on unconscious perceptions of that group. In many instances, women and disadvantaged minorities face a dominant majority. Consider the handful of women in upper-level physics courses or the small group of African-Americans at elite universities. My results indicate that independent of stereotyped identities, bigger groups are unconsciously viewed as more competent than smaller minority groups. These results add further urgency to efforts aimed at increasing diversity and have been presented at an interdisciplinary working group (2), a major psychology conference (3), and accepted to another major conference (4). I am also currently preparing a first-author manuscript. (5).

Most recently, I have begun work on whether and how social knowledge is updated. This work examines updating using implicit (unconscious) measures and explicit (conscious) measures. My NSF research proposal details a future study that will use explicit measures. But I have already completed two studies using implicit measures that demonstrate that unconscious perceptions are not appropriately updated in response to relevant information. These two studies have been accepted to the first international conference of a preeminent psychology organization (6).

Future goals: I entered graduate school to become a scientist and empirically study the issues I had engaged with personally. After graduate school, I want to become a social psychology professor at a research university so that I can continue to pursue basic questions about the mind. Since starting graduate school, it has been rewarding to share what I have learned with others. I mentor two undergraduate research assistants, teaching them the scientific skills that Drs. Dunning and Regan taught me. I helped organized orientation for incoming first-year graduate students, and I plan to become an advisor to newly declared psychology majors. Becoming a professor will allow me to continue these important mentoring and outreach activities *and* enable me to seek out deeper understandings of human social life. Armed with this deeper scientific understanding, it is my hope that future efforts to alleviate social inequalities will be at least as benevolent but far more effective.

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## NSF Research Statement, Felix Wong<sup>5</sup>

### **Cell Mechanics: Subcellular Organization and Robust Regulation of Bacterial Size, Shape, and Growth Under Mechanical Forces**

**Introduction.** Biophysics aims to discover, model, and understand the functional mechanisms of biological systems in order to explain their emergent physical properties. **Cell mechanics**, the study of cellular responses to mechanical force fields, **is a crucial area of research** in modern biophysics because of its immense basic and translational relevance. For example, the shape of a bacterial cell influences its chemotactic motility and ability to grow and reproduce.<sup>1</sup> This in turn has broad ramifications in human health: because turgor pressure and shape are regulated by mechanically sturdy cell walls in most bacteria, antibiotics that inhibit cell wall biosynthesis have been used since penicillin in 1928 to destroy malignant bacteria and treat bacterial infections.<sup>2</sup> **My Ph.D. research is an ambitious program to classify the set of biological and physical mechanisms that confer robust cellular physiology and address how cell shape, size, and growth respond to external stresses and environmental perturbations.** Aside from being one of the most exciting areas of biophysics, this research direction promises **to revolutionize our abilities to control and manipulate microorganisms, synthesize novel forms of antibiotics, and understand aspects of biological design that will inform our development of biotechnology and synthetic biology.**

**Background.** Although cell walls and their biosynthesis have been the subjects of extensive biochemical and biophysical investigations in the context of cell growth, shape, and division, **we are still far from being able to predict the shape of a cell from first principles.**<sup>3</sup> It is well-known that the shape and size of most bacteria are imparted by three-dimensional peptidoglycan (PG) meshworks, but **the mechanisms that maintain robust cell morphology and growth—as well as those that determine the precise shape and size of the PG structure—are unclear.** Similarly, the relationship between mechanical stresses and cellular morphology is not well-understood. Recent work has elucidated the effects of cell wall curvature on the spatial patterns of cytoskeletal proteins such as FtsZ and MreB, the critical length scales of membrane bulging in *E. coli*, and the mechanical response of Gram-negative cell walls to PG perturbation, but have yet to be integrated into a **full understanding of the effects of mechanical stress on subcellular organization.**<sup>1,4,5,6</sup>

My doctoral advisor, Ariel Amir, has recently examined the coupling of cell wall synthesis to mechanical stresses and showed that *E. coli* straighten by growing after being plastically deformed by hydrodynamic forces.<sup>3</sup> I have been driven by my own interest in cell growth to work with Ariel.

**Research Questions.** My program will address the following questions:

1. PG is a single macromolecule: the mechanisms that locally synthesize the PG structure therefore dictate the shape of the bacterium. It is known that the actin homologue MreB moves circumferentially around the cell to direct the radial insertion of new PG.<sup>7</sup> **How do the shortrange activities of biosynthetic complexes confer a well-defined shape to the cell wall?**

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<sup>5</sup> Note that the author uses the Introduction and Background to set the stage for a highly technical project. Note that he also uses the Background to clarify the relationship between his advisor's research and his own. He emphasizes what attracted him to this research area and then carves out his own research questions on the topic. He also covers broader impact nicely, showing the implications for fighting infectious diseases through biotechnology and cell mechanics.

2. How do curvature and mechanical stress affect cell growth? Are they coupled? In general, is there a **geometric, elastic growth algorithm** (a *differential growth algorithm*) that maintains the topology of a cell while remaining robust to local external stresses?

**Methods. Elasticity theory**—ranging from topological defect theory to nonlinear shallow shell theory—will be used to model the local deformation and structure of bacterial cell walls and associated small molecules like MreB. To address Question (1), I have **already begun collaborating with Ethan Garner**, whose lab is a world leader in super-resolution microscopy and provides the experimental data motivating my models. Using nonlinear shallow shell theory and recent research on the indentation of cylindrical elastic shells, **I am currently formulating a model to explain how elastic deformations of cell membranes and rod-shaped MreB filaments regulate shape in *B. subtilis*.**<sup>8</sup> This model will allow us to **predict and explain the effects of MreB depletion, MreB filament curvature, and osmotic pressure on the shape of a bacterium.** To address Question (2), I will incorporate numerous tools from differential geometry—namely perturbations of a Riemannian metric and its energy-minimizing embeddings in  $R^3$ —in a new framework for **differential growth**. However, the most important method here will be numerics: before experimentally verifying any growth algorithm, simulations must give it credence. I will perform these simulations by **building up a code base of computational geometry algorithms** that implement Seung-Nelson discretizations of elastic cell walls and compute energetically favorable states under pressure, stress, and other environmental conditions.<sup>9</sup> This is **highly feasible because of my extensive experience with computational geometry, 3D computer graphics, and computer vision**, and I have already started this using a combination of OpenGL, C++, and MATLAB. As these methods indicate, **I am in a unique position to pursue my research** because of my detailed understanding of both the underlying biology and methods from solid mechanics, pure mathematics, and computer science.

**Anticipated Results and Verification.** I will consult an interdisciplinary team of solid mechanists and imaging specialists at Harvard in verifying the following anticipated results:

1. MreB and other biosynthetic molecules can locally deform the cell membrane by “docking,” which makes it energetically favorable for the membrane to indent. These short-range deformations confer a long-range cylindrical order to the cell wall by the circumferential motion of MreB. My model will be experimentally verified in conjunction with Ethan’s lab by conducting **atomic force microscopy (AFM)** experiments that measure the shape of *B. subtilis* under varying osmotic pressures, degrees of MreB depletion, and curvatures of MreB filaments.
2. I will find a **differential growth algorithm dependent on both subcellular mechanisms and the elastic properties of cell walls in response to mechanical stresses**. This growth algorithm will be corroborated by simulations and **microfluidics experiments** that mechanically deform bacteria under hydrodynamic forces, following prior setups.<sup>3</sup>

**More on Broader Impacts.** A complete understanding of the mechanisms that regulate cell shape, size, and growth under external stresses will allow us to synthesize more robust biological circuits and **biologically-inspired devices**. Recent work on the mechanics of epithelial tissue morphogenesis suggests that an improved understanding of cell mechanics will have significant implications on **tissue growth and fluidity**, as the same basic principles would apply to an ensemble of cells.<sup>10</sup> Novel insights into mechanotransduction will lead to better methods of constructing tissue for artificial organs, which—along with antibiotics that are more effective at fighting infectious diseases—will greatly benefit our **societal well-being, national security, and economic competitiveness**. In making my simulations **open-source**, continuing to collaborate with an interdisciplinary team of researchers, and fervently pursuing this project, my goal is to bring society closer to the promise of better medicine and biotechnology by becoming a **world expert in the field of cell mechanics**.

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## **Proposed Plan of Research – Blythe Katelyn George**<sup>6</sup>

**Research Question:** My research goal is to understand rural poverty’s effects on minority student achievement using a Native American reservation home to two tribes in Northern California as my case study. While urban poverty has attracted much scholarly attention, rural poverty remains under-studied. Drawing on the urban poverty literature, specifically the effect of neighborhood context on minority children’s outcomes, I propose to adapt and extend this framework to reflect the experiences of rural Native communities. My central argument is that, as in urban communities, the concentration of poverty and other negative social forces will have profound negative effects on students’ outcomes. Adaptation is necessary, however, because rural areas are home to poor Native minorities, and are marked by more extreme spatial isolation & unemployment. Specifically, in the case of Native American reservations, preliminary findings show that these areas are geographically remote and have unemployment rates over 80%, and that living within the physical boundaries of a reservation further handicaps individuals in the labor market. I hypothesize that this concentration of disadvantage negatively impacts student performance in different ways than in the urban example. I view this adaptation of neighborhood effects theory to rural reservation poverty as a new aspect of the field.

**Literature Review:** Specific studies of urban populations have demonstrated how dwindling job markets (Wilson 1987) and residential segregation (Massey & Denton 1993, Sampson 2012) have shaped a persistent urban “underclass.” The concentration of poverty generates deviant behaviors that are normalized across generations. Children socialized in these neighborhoods have few of the skills that are rewarded by the outside society. This subpar home preparation manifests in the classroom where students from these neighborhoods demonstrate low academic performance from an early age (Duncan & Murnane 2011). These studies have primarily focused on the black inner-city underclass, yet rural reservation communities have similarly high concentrations of disadvantage, and are further isolated through historical legacies of genocide and removal. In addition, Native students are some of the lowest performing students as a result of culturally insensitive school systems. Reservations represent microcosms of Native culture and poverty, and I hypothesize that the impact of concentrated disadvantage in these places will be more extreme given their historical isolation and exploitation.

**Research Proposal:** I propose to study rural Native communities in northern California, specifically the Yurok & Hoopa reservations, to answer the following research question: what neighborhood effects do we see in rural Native neighborhoods, & in what ways do they differ from the urban example? I hypothesize that, as in the urban context, spatial isolation from job markets undermine the possibility for stable employment in rural areas. These effects may be especially pronounced in rural reservation areas given the historical antagonism between reservations and their surrounding communities, demonstrated by the extreme spatial separation that characterizes these places (see map). Reservations represent an extreme concentration of poverty, and I hypothesize that living within reservation boundaries will be associated with further barriers for job seekers and students from these communities, above and beyond the impact of spatial isolation and extreme poverty.

In order to answer these questions, I propose a mixed methods case study approach. For my quantitative analysis, I would first establish neighborhood residents’ proximity to “local employment clusters,” their access to transportation, and the characteristics of their social capital networks for gaining employment. Examining the effect of these neighborhood characteristics on student outcomes, beyond the effects of

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<sup>6</sup> The opening paragraph provides an exceptionally clear and succinct articulation of the research question, the central argument in terms of the negative effects of poverty on students’ outcomes; it also nicely positions the research within the scholarly dialogue.

students' individual and family traits, will allow me to gauge the impact of rural neighborhood effects on education outcomes. I will also compare the outcomes of individuals living directly within and outside of reservation boundaries (demonstrated by the black dots in the figure). By comparing the outcomes of individuals who face similar spatial isolation from job markets, but differ on reservation status, I can separate the unique effects of reservation residence on students' outcomes.

The quantitative analysis is complicated in two ways. First, rural communities have lower average population densities within census tracts than urban areas. As a result, the census tract is a less precise measure of neighborhood effects in these areas. To combat this imprecision of quantitative measurement, I propose a qualitative investigation of the forces that shape contemporary reservation neighborhoods and their interaction with external agencies. I would use my position as a Yurok tribal member and established research consultant to speak with tribal elders to gauge the historical development of concentrated disadvantage in these areas. I would also work with tribal governments to detail the legal parameters that have shaped each of the tribal communities of Klamath and Hoopa. Finally, I would use my community position to address the second limitation to this analysis, the disparate nature of data in rural areas. The data that do exist are scattered throughout a two county region, and this project seeks to not only create new information, but also to centralize existing data resources for both community and academic use alike.

The Yurok & Hoopa communities in Northern California provide ideal research sites because they include the largest reservation and the largest federally recognized tribe in the state, making this population both substantively important and large enough for statistical analysis. Finally, as a member of the Yurok Tribe, I have access to the area through cultural and social ties, and I have already completed two research projects for local school districts in the two-county area. I can use this research background to facilitate the completion of the proposed project.

***Intellectual Merit & Broader Impacts:*** As noted, very few sociological studies of rural or Native communities exist. My proposed project will adapt and apply theories of neighborhood effects to fit impoverished Native American rural communities, thereby expanding the literature on neighborhood effects to include rural poverty & its variations. Such research would also help improve these communities through shaping informed poverty reduction policies aimed at increasing employment opportunities and educational outcomes. By improving the understanding of social factors that shape student performance, this analysis could inform the creation of better school environments for students in these areas, and increase the number of opportunities available to Native rural students. Finally, this project would provide a model for data infrastructure in rural communities, a step desperately needed for future research.

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## **Personal Statement – Blythe Katelyn George<sup>7</sup> *Personal***

### ***Qualifications:***

I grew up far away from the Ivy League. I lived in a home full of love, but little else. Money was always a constraint. Arguments about bills often spiraled into domestic violence, leaving my brother and me to seek shelter outside of our home. This violence increased when my father became addicted to methamphetamine when I was 14, and from that time on, I knew no sanctuary greater than the four walls of a classroom. At school, I was safe from the violence and stress of home, and there my intelligence and tenacity for learning provided a clear way “out” of life below the poverty line. I chose to pursue college far from home, only to spend each step away from McKinleyville, CA, looking back to what I’d left behind. At first, family was the only tie I had to that isolated place. Yet, as I learned through my courses that a quality education wasn’t available to every student, even those from my home, that commitment grew. I focused my studies on poverty and education inequalities, and while I greatly enjoyed the work of William Julius Wilson on urban inner-city poverty, I couldn’t help but miss the experiences of Native communities in the sociological literature. That void has driven me ever since, as I work to insert the stories of people like me, Native Americans from rural places, into the overarching narrative of poverty in America.

After completing my B.A. in Sociology at Dartmouth College in 2012, I worked as an academic advisor at a Yurok reservation charter school. I counseled students on their college prep and postgraduation goals in order to help increase the number of local students pursuing higher education. Specifically, I helped high school students enroll in courses at the local community college, advised their college admissions’ applications, and coordinated financial aid workshops. Over the course of my work with these students, it was striking how my own life experience resonated strongly with their own, despite growing up over 50 miles from the reservation and having mixed blood. We shared blood and cultural ties as members of the Yurok Tribe of northern California, yet we also shared the experience of growing up below the poverty line in households marked by domestic violence and substance abuse.

Unlike my students, I grew up off the reservation, and consequently, had access to better schools and diverse communities. Given this access, I overcame economic hardship and other challenges to succeed academically. Working with Yurok students was not the first time I had observed this reservation/off reservation difference. When I got to Dartmouth College in 2008 and met my Native peers from reservations, it was obvious how the experiences of poverty and subpar schooling had affected them. Nearly half of the Native students who began their studies with me at Dartmouth either dropped out or postponed graduation due to poor academic preparation. Historically, Native Americans have been the lowest performing minority group in the US across a spectrum of performance metrics. Seeing this stratification first hand in my own community and others solidified my commitment to articulating this trend at the tribal, state, and national level.

Current research on rural Native American communities is limited, in part because of the challenges of gaining access to these communities, and their limited data resources once entry is gained. Prior to beginning my Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Policy at Harvard University, I completed two data projects on Native populations in rural Northern California, and plan to continue my research on this population with the tools my Harvard preparation will provide. I have the cultural and social ties to the proposed study area of Humboldt and Del Norte counties to gain access to a hard-to-study population, specifically poor Native Americans living on a tribal reservation. I am committed to conducting research that will not only extend the understanding of space and poverty in rural communities, but also improve these areas.

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<sup>7</sup> While the personal essay describes the hardships in her home life, she moves smoothly into how she overcame these hardships through education. Note as well how she assigns her scholarship an important role in bringing her back to that harsh environment, with a goal of bringing rural poverty into the scholarly dialogue that focuses on urban poverty.



Despite being born into a poor working-class family, I have overcome many obstacles that keep children trapped in the poverty that holds their parents. I was fortunate enough to do so through pursuing higher education, and I want to produce high-quality social policy research aimed at increasing these opportunities to rural Native Americans. I will use my personal background and professional training to study these communities, and my hope is that by contributing to the data and educational resources of these places, more Native students will excel in K-12 and higher education in the STEM subjects in which they have traditionally fallen behind. In doing so, more students will have the tools necessary to pursue higher education and return to their tribal communities with the human capital resources these areas desperately need.

***Relevant Research Background:***

In my own work, I have explored the nexus of culture, structure, and poverty, and I hope to continue this line of inquiry in my graduate program. My work as a Yurok academic counselor was directly tied to the research opportunities I sought out in my undergraduate career. As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, I examined education and socioeconomic inequality in Native communities. During an internship with the Urban Institute in Washington D.C., I analyzed California's standardized test proficiency rates from 2002-7 to profile student performance. I found a negative correlation between student performance and alternative school attendance. These findings served as the quantitative portion of my senior thesis and were completed as a part of the Urban Institute's Academy for Public Policy Analysis and Research. I later presented these findings in a poster session at the 2011 Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Conference.

In my senior year, I received a Dartmouth Senior Fellowship to conduct a yearlong research project that built on my previous analysis of Native student performance. I used an inter-disciplinary approach that drew from sociology, Native American studies, and education to analyze the complex issue of minority student performance. I employed a mixed methods approach with regression analyses and interviews to describe the factors affecting Native American academic performance and the best practices schools can use to address these issues. I initially hypothesized that student performance might be higher in alternative schools with the structural flexibility to adopt culturally relevant materials and teaching styles. However, I found a negative association between alternative school attendance and Native student proficiency rates.

To better understand this counter-intuitive relationship, I interviewed educators in Humboldt and Del Norte counties in California, both of which include a large number of Native students from my tribe and other local tribes. While alternative schools usually had lower proficiency rates on standardized tests, I found that these schools saw success in other metrics, like graduation and attrition rates. I highlighted obstacles that continue to limit Native student performance and how schools can address these high needs. Despite lower student test scores, alternative schools fostered a school ethos that better supported Native students through strong relationships, cultural relevance, and individualization. I proposed that traditional schools and tribes must borrow these more effective methods to improve student performance. I am eager to explore these educational partnerships and the social factors they address in my future research.

Building off of this mixed methods project, I returned to my home area of Humboldt County in 2012 and began work as a data consultant for the area's P-16 Council, a group of school administrators focused on improving Native student performance from pre-kindergarten to college completion (year 16). I extended my work on student performance in the state by collecting and centralizing a wide array of performance data ranging from standardized test proficiency rates to college attendance. I collected this information for two student populations from 2008-11. First, I collected state data on Native student performance, determined by student self-identification of ethnicity. In addition, I centralized school-specific records on verified tribal enrollees. These two student populations are important because schools only receive federal funding for the support of *tribally affiliated* students. Formerly, these school resources existed in disparate locations in five different school districts with over

60 schools, but are now centralized in one location. Findings from this project were included in the *2012-13 Regional Data Report*, a model currently being suggested to California as a template for a statewide report card on Native student performance. I have the permission of the P-16 council to access these resources for future research, and my proposed project would use these data as to show student outcomes.

***Future Goals:***

I am pursuing a joint Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Policy at Harvard University. I plan to focus on educational and economic reform policy in Native and rural communities. The interdisciplinary and applied nature of the Harvard Sociology department, as demonstrated by its partnership with the Kennedy School of Government, will prepare me to contribute interdisciplinary research at national, state, and tribal levels. The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development gives me direct proximity to the leading data project in Indian Country, an invaluable resource to my proposed project and professional preparation. In addition, my research will benefit from the mentorship of my advisor, William Julius Wilson, a leading scholar on neighborhood effects. Wilson's work with inner-city minority communities is the template for my work on Native reservations, and I plan to extend theories of employment opportunities and their effect on student and community health to the rural Native context. This program gives me the support to incorporate my unique perspective of Native communities into the existing sociological research on poverty and neighborhoods.

I want to expand the existing rural sociology literature to include analysis of neighborhood effects (borrowed from urban sociology) and the Native American experience from an ecological perspective. Current literature on rural sociology emphasizes development, and land use, with little emphasis on how concentrated disadvantage impacts these communities compared to their urban counterparts. I plan to apply theories of neighborhood effects and their impact on student performance to rural communities. Such an analysis would have fruitful takeaways for those studied, and for understanding the relationship between social context and life outcomes more generally. By establishing a baseline of geographical isolation and concentrated poverty in rural areas, my research could inform better policies of economic revitalization in these places. In addition, understanding the impact of families and neighborhoods on Native student performance could illuminate best practices for schools. The lack of existing data infrastructure and geographically disparate population are surmountable obstacles given adequate funding. With minimal investment, the results of this research would have real long-term implications for these impoverished communities.

Despite growing up far from the Ivy League, I will have a degree from not one, but two such institutions upon completion of my Ph.D. As a Native American and a sociologist, I will measure and articulate those experiences that have thus far been understudied in sociology. Like the work of William Julius Wilson has disentangled the intimate connections among culture, structure, and poverty in the inner city, I want to better understand this relationship in rural Native low-income communities, like my home. This research will be important at the national and tribal level for education reform, poverty relief, and economic policy. In doing such research, I want to improve Native student performance and enrich tribal communities through effective policy that honors the unique abilities and history of this distinct population.

## **Proposed Plan of Research – Francheska Lopez Rivera**<sup>8</sup>

My research will focus on regulation of gene expression, a critical aspect of normal growth and development in humans and other organisms. In humans, there are over 20,000 genes whose expression must be precisely regulated. The regulation of gene expression often occurs at the level of transcription, the process in which the DNA sequence is used to make an RNA copy. Many studies have shown that the failure to carry out proper transcription can result in cell death or disease, such as cancer. However, several fundamental aspects of transcription are not well understood, which my proposed research seeks to address. A detailed understanding of transcription is crucial for treating diseases resulting from defects in this process.

Among the proteins required for transcription is Spn1, the topic of this proposal. Spn1 is an essential protein that is conserved from yeast to humans and that has been associated with cancer. However, the function of Spn1 in transcription is unknown. Spn1 interacts with a second essential and conserved protein, Spt6, which has been more extensively studied. During transcription, Spt6 maintains chromatin organization and prevents aberrant transcription initiation at improper locations within genes. Although Spt6 and Spn1 interact, the specific roles of Spn1 in transcription and the significance of its interaction with Spt6 are unclear. My goal is to determine the role of Spn1 during transcription. I will perform these studies in yeast, which will allow me to use high-resolution genetic and biochemical approaches. Given the conservation of Spn1, what is learned in yeast will be relevant to human biology.

First, I propose to identify mutations that compensate for the absence of Spn1 protein, also known as suppressors. The identification of the genes that contain these mutations will illuminate the transcription processes that normally require Spn1. Yeast cells lacking the *SPN1* gene are inviable. To isolate these suppressor mutations, I will grow cells that lack a copy of the *SPN1* gene in the yeast genome, but contain a copy of *SPN1* on a plasmid, an unstable, extrachromosomal piece of DNA. These cells will be grown under conditions that will select for survivors after loss of the *SPN1* plasmid. The viable cells will be analyzed to identify the suppressors that allow *SPN1* deficient cells to survive. Future experiments to uncover the relationship between suppressors and *SPN1* gene will inform us about the function of the Spn1 protein.

Second, I propose to determine whether the function of Spn1 in transcription depends on its interaction with Spt6. Yeast cells in which the interaction between Spn1 and Spt6 is disrupted will be used to determine the ability of Spn1 to participate in transcription across the genome using a method known as ChIP-seq. Cells defective for Spn1-Spt6 interactions will be compared to wild-type cells. If the location or levels of Spn1 are changed in defective cells, I will perform additional experiments that assess chromatin organization and transcription initiation within genes in the mutant and wild-type cells. These experiments will help me determine which of the prospective functions of Spn1 is affected in the defective cells.

I will carry out this research project in Dr. Fred Winston's laboratory in the Genetics Department at Harvard Medical School. The Winston lab is a leader in studies of transcription in yeast, including expertise with genetics and high-throughput sequencing methods such as ChIP-seq. In addition, I have already taken courses that have enhanced my understanding of transcription. These courses are genetics,

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<sup>8</sup> This statement is for a Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowship, which is similar in application requirements to the NSF. This is a good example of handling a technical topic by leading in with an opening that helps set the stage by providing some background for the reader.

molecular biology, cell biology, and regulation of eukaryotic gene expression. I will also take a computer programming course that will help me analyze DNA sequencing data.

My long term career goal is to become a professor at the college level and a molecular illustrator. As a college student in Puerto Rico, I had outstanding mentors who had a huge impact on my decision to pursue a career in science. I would love to serve as a mentor for other minority students at such a critical step in their careers. As a scientist with a background in architecture, I appreciate the importance of visual resources as tools to communicate complex concepts. Many of the discoveries we make in the lab have a huge impact on the general public. However, the public is usually unaware of these discoveries because of scarce communication with the scientific community. My goal is to make use of animation and graphic design to communicate scientific discoveries to students and the general public.

## **Dissertation Fellowship Proposals**

The examples presented here represent a variety of fields and types of research projects. Some fellowship competitions ask for relatively brief proposals, setting a page limit of around two to four pages doublespaced. Others ask for more elaborate proposals, and set a limit of up to ten pages double-spaced. Most of the samples here are the shorter type proposal, while the final two samples (of George Timback and Alex Boax) are the longer and more elaborate type.

In the present chapter, the discussion on writing dissertation fellowship proposals presents three possible paradigms for producing a polished and tightly-knit argument on how a dissertation will contribute to the field:

**Paradigm A:** It brings to light new material that hitherto has been overlooked by scholars.

**Paradigm B:** It studies well-known material that has been examined many times before, but calls for a reassessment by looking at it in a new way.

**Paradigm C:** It does some combination of the two — i.e., it exposes some new material, which in turn calls for some reassessment of what already has been done.

The examples on the following pages illustrate the use of the three paradigms.

**Arlene Wang.** *This statement illustrates Paradigm C. It uncovers new material, which causes a shift in how we might think about this topic.*

### **The Establishment of the Museum Institution in Nineteenth-Century Japan**

While the establishment of the museum institution in Meiji Japan (1868-1912) has largely been understood as part of the mass implementation of Western culture and concepts, the idea of the museum as an instrument for the re-evaluation and re-presentation of Japan's own traditional arts has yet to be explored. My study, which will focus on the network of three Imperial Museums, installed in the cities of Tokyo, Nara, and Kyoto, respectively, centers on the premise that the museum of late nineteenth-century Japan forged its own direction in the adaptation of the Western museum typology; it distinguished itself from its foreign model as well as the nation's extant artistic practices, and acted as an essential force behind the creation of a newly defined national aesthetic that was being mobilized for Japan's self representation in the international arena. By examining the original documents, set of objects, and architectural designs that led to the physical and conceptual generation of the Imperial Museums, I hope to provoke a rethinking of the Japanese government's pioneering effort at defining a uniquely "Japanese" art.

In considering the first museums of Japan, scholarship has either overlooked or underemphasized the fact that the Imperial Museums were the product of the collaborative efforts of both foreign experts (e.g., Ernest Fenollosa, Josiah Conder) and Japanese academics (Okakura Kakuzô, Katayama Tôkuma). This international panel of specialists was responsible for shaping the new, modern perception of Japanese aesthetics, and their diverse visions melded to form the origins of our current discipline of Japanese art history. Because this legacy of written history, preservation initiative, and classification methodology still prevails today, it is significant to reexamine the unique circumstances and particular predilections that directed and propelled the initial creation of "Japanese art" as we know it today.

My preliminary study on this topic, which consists of two research papers and a three-month fellowship in Japan, indicates that in the establishment of Japan's first museums and the expression of its national aesthetic, some unexpected approaches were taken. First, unlike their European inspirations such as the Hermitage of Catherine II, the Imperial Museums were not constructed to house an *existing* collection of objects. Rather, the government held extensive, nationwide inventories of public and private holdings of culturally important objects, specifically for assembling them into a museum collection. Second, the set of objects eventually chosen for the Imperial Museums exhibited a strong bias toward ancient and Buddhist artifacts, rather than presenting a comprehensive historical and typological survey of the arts of Japan. Artworks such as those by artists belonging to the *ukiyo*e and *buijinga* traditions that dominated the artistic landscape of the preceding Tokugawa period (1600-1868) were overlooked by the Imperial Museums, for both political and aesthetic reasons. Third, the exhibition environment and mode of display for the chosen objects made no reference to their original historical or religious contexts. This exhibition strategy signaled the creation of new meaning, especially for the Buddhist pieces whose removal to a secular environment from their original liturgical context was unprecedented.

Another crucial component of the Imperial Museums that has not been studied is their architecture. "Japanese art" was being defined by the choice of a particular set of objects as well as a particular architectural style for accommodating them. A primary design concern for the architects of the Imperial Museums, Josiah Conder and Katayama Tôkuma, was the creation of an architecture that visually symbolized both Japan's cultural lineage *and* its modern aspirations. Museum architecture, a major component in the visual and ideological construction of the new national aesthetic, exhibited a creative adaptation and interchange of the existing Western and Japanese conventions. An example of this cultural hybridity was the design of a prominent frontal entryway *a la* Western Neo-Classical protocol, and the

virtual nonuse of it due to the Japanese custom of reserving main entrance spaces for exclusive imperial usage.

My work on the establishment of the Imperial Museums, the first study to consider the roles of both art *and* architecture in the defining process of a national aesthetic in Japan's modernity, will contribute a fresh perspective to the growing discourse on the re-definition and institutionalization of the arts during the Meiji period. To date, no Japanese or Western scholar has attempted to examine the museum as a total environment, a constructed ensemble of art objects and architectural space. Only by acknowledging the art and architecture of the museum as parts of an organic whole will one be able to understand the museological project as originally envisioned by its Meiji period creators.

The primary sources of investigation for this research will be the documents currently in the archives of the Tokyo National Museum, the Nara National Museum, the Kyoto National Museum, and the Imperial Household Ministry that contain the mission statements for the Imperial Museums. Another source of information will be the literature and exhibition catalogs published by the museums during their opening years. An examination of the language employed to describe and contextualize the artworks in the museum holdings will bring the contemporary perspective into clearer view. Papers and transcripts of lectures given by the chief directors of the Imperial Museums Kuki Ryūichi, Okakura Kakuzō, and Yarnadaka Nobutsura, and the architects Josiah Conder and Katayama Tōkuma will also be investigated.

For the architectural designs of the museums, access to the working and finished drawings of all three museum buildings will prove to be crucial. To date, no extensive documentation or study on these three buildings have been published, despite the voluminous number of extant drawings. (For the design of the Imperial Museum of Kyoto alone, 630 drawings by the architect Katayama still remain.) Architectural drawings and photographs will be especially vital for the Imperial Museum of Tokyo, whose original structure has been lost since the great Kantō earthquake of the 1920's.

For expert guidance on the architecture of the Imperial Museums, I wish to consult Professors Suzuki Hiroyuki and Fujimori Terunobu, both of the University of Tokyo, who specialize in modern architecture of Japan in an international context. Having been in contact with them since the summer of 1998, I have benefited greatly from studying their published works as well as speaking to them in person. As for expert guidance on the history of modern Japanese art, I hope to solicit the advice of Professor Sato Doshin of Tokyo National University of Fine Art and Music whose book *'Nihon bijutsu' tanjō: Kindai Nihon no 'kotoba' to senryaku* (The Birth of Japanese Art: Words and Strategies of Modern Japan) has greatly influenced this proposed study.

This project, an on-going research effort of two years, was developed in consultation with my advisors, Professors Cherie Wendelken and Neil Levine of Harvard's Department of History of Art and Architecture. It has evolved from a twenty-five page seminar paper ("Kyoto Imperial Museum: Visual Politics in Nineteenth-Century Japan", May 1998), to a fifty-page departmental qualifying paper ("Establishing the Imperial Museum of Kyoto: Containing the Past within the Present", April 1999); in addition, the Mellon I Fellowship and Reischauer Institute Summer Research Grant (summer 1999) allowed me to conduct a three-month investigation in Japan, through which I have been able to discuss my proposed project in detail with Professor Suzuki Hiroyuki of the University of Tokyo, and the curators Nakamura Yasushi and Hirano Yuki of the Kyoto National Museum.

This project, to be implemented in a twelve-month period starting July 2000, is indispensable not only to my doctoral dissertation research but also my future career in academia. This investigation of the origins of the disciplines of art history and architecture both challenges and justifies the work that I and my colleagues pursue. It will therefore be immeasurably consequential for my professional growth. Given the

extensive preparatory work I have done at Harvard University and the relevant data and expertise in the United States that I have exhausted, the logical next step is to continue this study in Japan where I will be able to consult the much needed material and human resources. Having already conducted a short research trip to Japan and established contact with some of the experts in the related fields as well as with the museums of my study, I am confident that I will be successful in carrying out this project to fruition.



**Abigail Lieser.** *This statement illustrates Paradigm A. It is dealing with material that remains largely unknown for the period in question. Note that in this case the concise description of the project is postponed until paragraph two, which is counter to the suggestion made elsewhere that this should be done at the beginning. In our view, this particular opening helps to arouse the reader's interest, which justifies the slight delay in getting to the important facts about the project. It could be considered an exception that proves the rule.*

### **Popular Religion and Politics in Andalusia, Spain, 1812-1872**

In the seventeenth century, at a monastery near Segovia, Spain, the local populace finally gathered to take drastic measures against the locusts that had besieged its fields for two years. Appearing before a makeshift courtroom, three saints, represented by villagers and acting as prosecuting attorneys, indicted the grasshoppers for their vicious “crimes.” St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas served as impressive witnesses for the prosecution. The judge, the Blessed Virgin Mary, consulted with her advisors (St. Jerome and St. Francis) before handing down the guilty verdict: the locusts must leave town immediately, or face excommunication. Such was one way in which Spanish peasants attempted to influence their universe through self-designed rituals.

I am applying for a Fulbright to Spain in order to conduct research for my doctoral dissertation on Andalusian popular religion in the 1800s, a century of belief and practice virtually untouched by scholars. Although a good deal of research has been done on the institutional history of the Spanish Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, the history of popular belief in that period remains largely unexamined. This lack is only emphasized by the excellent analyses that exist for the early-modern era and the twentieth century. As these works have demonstrated, the study of popular religion can offer important insights into how “average” people conceived of, and attempted to influence, the world around them. By focusing on the nineteenth century, an era in which traditional beliefs collided with new ideas introduced by the Enlightenment, industrialization, and other forces of modernization, my study will help explain how the rural population of Andalusia made sense of the rapid changes occurring around it. Some manifestations of unorthodox belief, like the 1860 processions designed to solicit from God the rains needed to end a devastating drought, had their roots in centuries-old traditions. Others however, like the enlightened prophecies issued by a Sevillian nun in 1814, were shaped significantly by the tensions and ideas of the age. Indeed, preliminary archival research I conducted this past summer has convinced me that nineteenth-century popular religion effectively articulated collective concerns, both old and new.

But popular religion does more than merely express cultural and social anxieties. It is my contention that just as local devotions may have been used to solve natural problems like drought, so too may they have served as a means of political influence and resistance. In Spain, the nineteenth century was punctuated by dramatic clashes between Church and State, and frequent political upheaval. Manifestations of popular belief, like the apocalyptic prophecies that accompanied Napoleon's invasion, may be interpreted as forms of resistance—often the only ones safely available to subordinate social groups. Because its peasants and artisans were radicalized earlier, and more thoroughly, than in other parts of Spain, Andalusia makes an ideal region from which to study the relationship between popular religion and politics. In fact, some historians have suggested that the explanation for anarchism's early emergence and unusual coherence in Andalusia may lie with the popular religiosity of the region's rural population. Until now, however, no one has undertaken the research necessary to prove or disprove this contention.

An effective study of popular religion requires an interdisciplinary approach. I bring to my research an understanding of anthropological methodology and political science resistance theories. In fact, my studies have prepared me well for such an undertaking. Coursework completed at the University of Cordoba with Professor Soledad Miranda, who has agreed to supervise my work while I am in Spain, introduced me to

the problems that characterize modern Spanish history. My master's thesis, completed in May 1992, examined the apparition of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes in 1858. In it, I attempted to understand how, in a century normally characterized as one of steady de-Christianization, the event could inspire such fervent expressions of belief. I also explored the political implications of a religious manifestation that initially worried the Catholic hierarchy and outraged the French government.

Having already conducted preliminary research in Spain, I am convinced that this project can be completed in one year. I have identified the files in the National Archives with which I will be working, and examined catalogues of municipal holdings in Cordoba and Seville. Diocesan archives in these locations, with their records of pastoral visits and religious disturbances, prove especially rich.

It is my contention that popular belief can lend important insights into both the mentalities and the actions of rural populations. The events described at the beginning of this proposal, for example, raise significant questions about how believers conceived of their relationship to the world around them, how they dealt with catastrophe, and how they articulated their political and social anxieties. By asking these questions of an era marked by upheaval and witness to the forces of industrialization, de-Christianization, and modernization, my study will not only fill in the historical picture of modern Spain, but also contribute to our understanding of rural identity in a rapidly changing world.

**Amy Fish.** *This statement illustrates Paradigm B. It takes a familiar subject, children's writings, and presents it in a new way by highlighting an era when writings of children of color became suddenly popular, along with a belief that they had a special ability to speak truth about American racism and inequality.*

“Cross-Age Aesthetics: Child Authorship and Creative Collaborations in the 1965-75 United States”

My dissertation examines a surge in the publication of literature authored by children of color in the 1960s-1970s United States. Although writings by children had long attracted adult attention, this historical moment was distinguished, I argue, by a widespread belief that children of color were uniquely able to speak truth about American racism and inequality. I have identified over fifty youth-authored anthologies published from 1965 to 1975, which have been occasionally treated by education scholars but remain virtually unmentioned in historical and literary studies. Methodologically, I embed close readings of minority youth anthologies within archival research on their production and reception to show both why these texts suddenly became popular and what it meant for young people to write in such conditions. While adults looked to “children’s voices from the ghetto,” young writers in turn depended on the adults who supported, publicized and edited youth writings. The literary works emerging from this mutual influence exemplify what I call *cross-age aesthetics*. The framework of cross-age aesthetics contests scholarly dismissals of children’s writings as hopelessly mediated by adults and surfaces young authors’ own experiences and tactics, neither fully determined by nor entirely resistant to adult influence. My dissertation thus brings new sources and a focus on collaboration into literary critical discussions of authorship, agency and voice.

As a small but growing number of scholars bring fresh attention to children’s own agencies and creative acts, mitigating the traditional view of children’s culture as a manifestation of adult desires, I answer a particularly urgent need to address the silence of children of color in literary studies. Minority youth writings have been ignored not only because of bias but also because of understandable concerns about the problematic nature of texts edited by and profiting often white, privileged adults. Yet I propose that the doubly minoritized position of youth of color makes their writings particularly rich for considering *cross-age aesthetics*. This term sees authorial agency as distributed across unequally positioned but mutually influential collaborators, with young writers neither fully empowered nor completely exploited by adults. My sources thus raise the very issues of power, freedom of expression and self-determination that were at stake at the convergence of civil rights, anti-war and cultural nationalist movements—the same issues about which children of color were being asked to speak in 1960s- 1970s America. Moreover, I insert children’s writings into conversations on subaltern speech and on co-authorship and authenticity in minority texts, from Harriet Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* to Rigoberta Menchú’s *I, Rigoberta Menchú*. By highlighting the intricacies of influence, control and collaboration in literary texts, I engage recent methodological debates over symptomatic reading, surface reading, literary uses of Actor-Network Theory and other attempts to rethink how texts should be read and understood to affect the world.

With respect to scholarship on 1960s-1970s American culture, my project traces the role of minority children’s voices in this era and also reveals close ties between seemingly disparate groups and agendas. Both supporting and complicating important new work on African American childhoods, I portray a multiethnic phenomenon involving African American, Latina/o, American Indian and Asian youth writers. I tell a story about the interweaving of radical and moderate politics, such as the investment of both American Indian activists and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in reservation schoolchildren’s writing. My project thus demonstrates the complex, interconnected nature of political movements, even and especially in the iconic era of Black Power, the Chicano Movement and Vietnam.

My method combines close readings; research in personal papers, publishers' archives, government documents and the press; and oral histories with surviving participants. I uncover the stories behind sites of cross-age aesthetics, such as the collaboration of adolescent students and dropouts in Harlem and Brooklyn with renowned writers, including June Jordan, Ishmael Reed and Victor Hernández Cruz, to form an influential youth writing collective who appeared on radio and TV and were read across the country. I also track the circulation of particularly popular youth poems that were recruited into adult agendas yet exceed the terms of that reception.

Popular interest in "children's voices" did not always equate to serious consideration of their literary productions, which were often reduced to social messages. I probe how young writers adapt radical rhetoric, schoolroom diction and the sounds and styles of popular culture, and how children respond to a politicized interest in their voices with a range of writings, only some of which are overtly political. My readings incorporate visual and performance analysis, since youth writing functioned as a nexus of multigeneric creative practices. For example, my analysis of the adaptation of one youth anthology into a hit Broadway musical traces how the status of youth authorship shifted from page to stage, while also illustrating the influence of cross-age aesthetics at the convergence of performance, antiracism and responses to social division.

In summary, my dissertation reveals the role of minority childhoods in national reckonings with racism and inequality in 1960s-1970s America and establishes the place of the youth-authored anthology genre in minority literary history. Through my framework of cross-age aesthetics, I demonstrate that the texts and histories of young writers of color illuminate the intersections of racialization, aesthetics, authenticity and authorship in American culture.

**Hansun Hsiung.** *This statement illustrates Paradigm A. It is dealing with material that remains largely unknown.*

### **Textbook Enlightenment: Barbarian Knowledge and the Late Republic of Letters, 1811-1877**

The adoption of Western assumptions and methods by nineteenth-century Japan – in politics, in economics, in physics, in chemistry – was a world historical phenomenon. In the space of mere decades during the late nineteenth century, intellectuals, statesmen, engineers, and scientists transformed a relatively closed country into a constitutionally governed imperial power seeking equal status with America and European nations. Japan's success was once considered positive proof of modernization's universality. Even today, in an age that has discarded the modernization paradigm, the episode is still considered a defining example of cultural and intellectual adaptation.

My dissertation calls for a reassessment of this process from the perspective of the transnational history of the book. In particular, I seek to examine nineteenth century Japan's study of the West through the specific lens of how everyday European school textbooks mediated the global circulation of ideas. Intellectual historians writing on this period have so far focused almost exclusively on the reception and translation in Japan of major European thinkers – Rousseau, Tocqueville, Darwin, Mill. A simple bibliographical survey, however, shows that such 'great' names were statistically far more the exception than the rule. Instead, the overwhelming number of works shuttling between Japan and the West for much of the nineteenth century were European textbooks: forgotten titles written by forgotten authors intended for use in the classrooms of new elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and, occasionally, universities. I therefore argue, on the basis of this empirical observation, that we cannot fully understand the process by which Japanese intellectuals engaged with the West in the nineteenth century without understanding how this seemingly trivial, quotidian, and innocuous object – the school textbook – functioned as a medium of knowledge transmission. Moreover, I contend that such an understanding, in shedding light on a critical episode of world history, can also offer crucial new insights into how Western concepts of politics, science, and philosophy came to infiltrate and hold sway on the non-Western world.

Accomplishing this project means, in concrete terms, tracing the following four-step cycle of textbook-mediated exchange between Europe and Japan: 1) the production of European textbooks; 2) their procurement by Japanese scholars; 3) their reading, censorship, and translation by Japanese scholars; 4) the dissemination of Japanese-language translations to a Japanese public. The first of these stages builds upon my previous visits to publishers' archives in London, and Caen, France. My research suggests that the mass production and consumption of school textbooks in nineteenth-century Europe marked a fundamental change in how and why Western knowledge communicated itself. Unlike the erudite treatises of the old Republic of Letters, these new school textbooks were the children of domestic revolution and overseas empire. The former created an increasing demand for institutionalized national education, encompassing at its far ends a call for texts accessible both to the sons of farmers as well as those of former aristocracy. Direct colonial administration, meanwhile, created a monopoly market for certain educational publishers – Heinemann in South Africa, Colin and Hachette in Algeria – that helped financially sustain the industry. School textbooks were therefore both an ideology as well as a technology. They represented 1) new definitions of the knowledge necessary for modern national citizenship; 2) new modes of presenting said knowledge in a universal, 'easy-to-understand' form; 3) new networks of transnational publishing in an age of high imperialism.

Yet to stop my investigation here would be to deny the agency of Japanese intellectuals as they adapted, transformed, and appropriated these textbooks. Textbooks may have been a European ideological technology, but local actors in Japan reformulated them in accordance with local meanings. It is in order to answer these questions and provide a sense of agency to the Japanese that I require substantial research

time in Japan. I am confident that sources in Japanese archives will be of vital importance to answer the questions of why intellectuals in Japan selected some textbooks but either censored or ignored others; how those same intellectuals read the textbooks they did select; and, finally, what effect translations of these textbooks had on the wider acceptance of Western ideas.

While there is no single comprehensive archive of foreign textbooks imported into nineteenth-century Japan, my previous fieldwork has indicated a representative resource: the former library of the Institute for Barbarian Books. Originally dubbed the Office for Translating Barbarian Books upon its creation by the Tokugawa shogunate in 1811, the Institute functioned partly in the fashion of an area studies center, and partly in the fashion of a censorship bureau, deciding what Western books would be imported, which portions would be translated, and to whom this information would be circulated. Later on, the Institute took on pedagogical functions, training students in Dutch, French, English, and German. As this pedagogical role grew, the Institute established an in-house printing press to produce its own textbooks.

Materials pertaining to the Institute for Barbarian Books are spread across three sites: the Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo, the National Diet Library, and the Aoi Bunko collection at the Shizuoka Prefectural Library. The Historiographical Institute houses administrative documents relevant to the Institute for Barbarian Books. Through these documents, I will principally be seeking to understand procurement practices. Did scholars ever contract directly with foreign publishers? Were titles chosen explicitly by scholars, or was this left up to the discretion of middlemen? To what extent was pricing decisive?

Aoi Bunko in Shizuoka and the NDL in Tokyo together house the former library of the Institute for Barbarian Books. I have already conducted a bibliographical survey of the French, English, and German holdings in Shizuoka. These total 506 unique titles, slightly less than two-thirds of them being clearly identifiable as school textbooks. I have not yet completed surveying the NDL holdings, nor have I completed my catalogue of Dutch-language titles in Shizuoka. A long-term stay in Japan will be indispensable for this, and especially for the next step of my project after my bibliography is complete. This next step is to make sense of the various forms of ‘marginalia’ in these books. Here, I use the term ‘marginalia’ broadly in three distinct senses of reader response: 1) linguistic traces; 2) highlighting and underlining; 3) glued-in “Post-Its.” These traces of interaction between reader and text will allow me to draw conclusions about how Japanese understood new textbook forms.

In addition to Japanese and Chinese, I read German, French, and Dutch. I have also been trained in material bibliography under Ann Blair. David Howell and Shigehisa Kuriyama have trained me in early modern Japanese paleography. A Fulbright Grant, however, would provide me with the opportunity to work with Matsukata Fuyuko of the University of Tokyo. Professor Matsukata is a specialist in information circulation between early modern Japan and Europe. Her advice on how to read and interpret the traces left by Japanese scholars would prove indispensable for my project, and I hope to participate actively in her research seminars.

Giving my existing experience and preliminary research, my course of study should present no completion difficulties within the allotted time frame. Furthermore, as I have already lived in Tokyo, I possess numerous area contacts, both professional and personal, who can be of aid should unforeseen exigencies arise. My projected timeline thus places me back at Harvard in the Fall of 2014 to write my dissertation. This dissertation will open up new directions for intellectual dialogue between Japan and Europe, contributing to our understanding of how ideas circulate globally.

**Stella Kirsten.** *This statement illustrates Paradigm C. It uncovers new material, which provides a new perspective on what is already known. Note how the applicant handles the need to use words that would be unfamiliar to many readers; she juxtaposes the words with the most helpful English equivalent.*

### **Between Law and Society: The *Muhtasib* of Mamluk Egypt**

In Bahri Mamluk Egypt (1250-1382), no individual represented the face of the law in society more so than the market regulator (*muhtasib*), whose role lies at the heart of my dissertation. Armed with a legal manual explaining the laws that he was to enforce—ranging from ensuring that merchants’ scales worked properly to preventing bakers from kneading dough with their feet—the *muhtasib*, would travel the marketplace and enforce these laws directly and immediately wherever he saw a violation. Functioning under the Islamic legal principle of *hisba*—commanding the good and forbidding the evil—the *muhtasib* was more visible in society than the judge (*qadi*), who had to wait until a complaint was brought to him before he could take any action.

Standing at the intersection of law and society, the *muhtasib* offers the ideal lens for examining how the Islamic legal system interacted with social, political and economic realities. This is one of the most fundamental issues in the study of Islamic law and society, yet it has been virtually ignored by scholars. Islamic law provides a wide spectrum of rules that govern Muslims in many facets of life and, as such, it is a powerful force for the regulation of society. Scholars, however, have tended to focus on isolated parts of Islamic law—such as Islamic legal theory as formulated by the jurists—and have failed to address the larger and more significant questions: How did the Islamic legal system function as a whole? What were the mechanisms by which the text was applied to the social, political and economic context?

Using the institution of the *muhtasib* as a case study, in my dissertation I will address this crucial but neglected issue of the application of the legal text to the social context. The Mamluk-era *muhtasib* is an ideal subject for this methodology not only because the institution embodies both law and society but also because a wide range of source material is available, such as chronicles, travelers’ accounts, and documentary evidence. One essential but under-studied source are the manuals written for *muhtasibs* to guide them in their work. These manuals were often written by former *muhtasibs* themselves. Based on the two published Mamluk-era *hisba* manuals, written by ibn al-Ukhuwwa (d. 1329) and ibn Bassam (d. 1300s), I have chosen three areas of the law that the *muhtasib* dealt with to focus my study on: (i) commercial exchanges involving usury (*riba*’); (ii) price fixing of commodities and hoarding of foodstuffs in the market; and (iii) use of public space in the market and its environs, such as the degree to which a merchant’s stall may encroach upon the public space of the market. In order to study the mechanisms by which the *muhtasib* applied the text to the social, political and economic context, I will analyze how these three aspects of marketplace life and practice are treated across a spectrum of sources, ranging from theoretical writings of the jurists to evidence of the *muhtasib*’s day to day practice.

Tracing the same three legal questions across a range of sources will provide insight into how the system dealt with local conditions and social realities and how the *muhtasib* used discretion in his decision-making. Some of the questions I will be asking are: Why was such an official needed to go out and actively regulate the marketplace? Did the social context require such active supervision by the *muhtasib*, and how was the society in turn shaped by it? To what extent was the decision-making of the *muhtasib* influenced by the policies of the Mamluk ruling elite? By local social and economic conditions?

In the first step of my work I will ascertain the manner in which the manuals written for the *muhtasib* instructed him to act with regard to the three areas of the law listed above. After understanding the instructions these manuals gave the *muhtasib*, I will focus on the theoretical end of the spectrum and compare the treatment of these topics in the prevailing *fiqh* works of the Mamluk era. I will examine how this *fiqh* was “translated”

from the language of the jurists into the administrative terms of the manuals, which were more conducive to the daily operations of the *muhtasib*. This is especially important since all *muhtasibs* were not necessarily scholars capable of independent legal reasoning (*mujtahids*) and needed more practical guidance. This focus will reveal much about the operations of the legal system and the process by which law was reformulated when it passed from the realm of legal theory to the manuals. My research will then use sources such as chronicles, travelers' accounts, and documentary evidence to focus on the day-to-day level of the *muhtasib*'s activities and examine how the *muhtasib* applied the law to the merchant or other participant in the marketplace. I intend to assess the forces that influenced his role as a regulator in general as well as the factors that he took into account when making specific decisions.

Source materials relevant to my research are located in the U.S. and Cairo, Egypt. Materials available in the U.S. consist of the published Mamluk-era *hisba* manuals, chronicles, and texts of Islamic legal theory, travelers' accounts and other narrative sources. I am currently making use of these sources. Conducting research in Egyptian archives is, then, the next step in my research and is essential to my project. Thus, I would use the Kennedy, Knox, Sheldon & Lurcy Fellowship to spend one academic year in Cairo. I intend to consult manuscripts in the Egyptian National Library (Dar alKuttub) that are related to *hisba* and the *muhtasib* as well as materials in the Egyptian National Archives (Dar al-Watha'iq).

The history of Islamic law and society is a fascinating yet neglected field that eagerly awaits scholarly attention. My dissertation will be a major step in the beginnings of the development of this field and I look forward to a scholarly career that advances our understanding of Islamic law and its application in societies both past and present.



**Lincoln Stuart.** *This statement illustrates Paradigm A. It deals with a subject that has never been examined. Note the strong case the applicant makes for the contribution this study will make. Note as well how clearly he defines the period covered in his study*

### **The Capuchins and the Art of History**

My dissertation investigates the artistic imagery of the Capuchin Order of reformed Franciscans from their origins in 1525 to the advent of Baroque art around 1600. I will focus on Italy because the Capuchins were an Italian foundation and created most of their early art and thought in the complex cultural milieu of the late Italian Renaissance and Counter Reformation.

The significance of the Capuchins for the development of religious art in mid-to-late 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italy has never been examined. But my study of their artistic contributions—as creators, patrons, and even art historical scholars and theorists—will do more than provide merely another example of how a monastic order attempted to turn art to its purposes. Rather, it will recover the neglected but persuasive evidence that the Capuchins instigated one of the earliest conscious “medieval revivals”, clearly seen in Capuchin architecture and devotional painting, and asserted in Capuchin writings. After establishing this as the Order’s aesthetic, I will approach more subtle uses of the medieval legacy by investigating the controversial but crucial area of late 16<sup>th</sup>-century “reform art”, and the impact of Capuchin taste and vision on the stylistic reforms of painting by artists like Caravaggio, the Carracci, and Federico Barocci— all important contributors to the genesis of Baroque style. These two complementary aspects of my dissertation—study of the Capuchin “medieval revival”, and of its connections to the reforms of painting in Italy during the later 16<sup>th</sup> century—will ultimately offer a new approach to the culture of the late Renaissance and its complex views on the status and purpose of art, the nature of history, and the viability of a recovery of the past.

The Capuchin Order provides a fascinating opportunity for this sort of study because early Capuchin historians have left us explicit and copious definitions of the order’s artistic beliefs and practices. The solution the Capuchins proposed to the corruption and fragmentation of the church of their day was a return to an ideal 13<sup>th</sup>-century world—the world of Saint Francis. Since all direct links to this privileged past had been lost to the confusion of centuries, Capuchins were placed in a situation ironically similar to that of Renaissance humanists and antiquarians, who had labored to recover the lost Roman past. Realizing this, the friars adapted Renaissance historical methods to reconstruct a medieval “antiquity”. And like antiquarians, Capuchin researchers focused much attention on the study of visual remains.

Based on analysis of early Franciscan churches—including actual archaeological investigation of some ruined 13<sup>th</sup>-century shrines—the Capuchins created a “medieval revival” by building churches they believed Francis would recognize. Further, they appropriated nascent art history to examine medieval paintings and mosaics, and used their findings both to revive the Order’s original habit with its distinctive pointed hood—the central visual symbol of the reformers’ polemic for a return to Franciscan origins— and to create gold-ground devotional “portraits” of Francis that imitated the style of 13<sup>th</sup>-century images. Archaism was even incorporated into Capuchin altarpieces, and some artists used archaizing styles for Capuchins while their works for other patrons followed “current” styles. Altarpieces, however, present a special case. In creating archaizing churches and devotional images, the Capuchins were able to work through their own members. But large altarpieces were often gifts from wealthy supporters, and commissions were usually given to prominent, sophisticated artists who would not simply revert to a superficially archaic style. The Capuchins responded creatively to this dilemma by favoring—and furthering—the work of a group of artists including Barocci, the Carracci, and others, whose art was not

overtly archaic but involved a sympathetic rethinking of the artistic past for the reformation of the artistic present.

Federico Barocci is especially interesting in this regard, for he was a Capuchin lay brother. His religious art is often seen only in the general terms of the “Counter Reformation,” or related to his admirers among San Filippo Neri’s heavily-studied Oratorians. But Barocci’s spiritual world was formed by the little-studied Capuchins. His *Madonna del Popolo*, painted in response to a request for a *Misericordia* image, is a famous example of his brilliance at rethinking medieval imagery in modern style. And his *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* for the high altar of his Capuchin friends in Urbino is similar. The painting is suffused with a reappraisal of the *Stigmatization* tradition—but any overt archaism stems largely from the depiction of Francis’ habit with pointed hood, and of Urbino’s “13<sup>th</sup>-century revival” friary. Barocci used the power of Renaissance naturalism to convey the forceful presence of the old habit and the medievalizing church—significant symbols of Capuchin revival in any image, even one in a modern style. Capuchins themselves, as they moved around Renaissance cities in their distinctive robes, were living “medieval pictures” in the modern environment. And such eruptions of the past into the present could effectively encapsulate the Capuchin message whether they appeared on a street or in an altarpiece.

But if the Capuchins appreciated Barocci’s skill in conveying the reality and power of their medievalizing symbols, they also valued his ability to represent all aspects of the sacred event vividly. They referred to the altarpiece as “bellissima”, and had it copied for another church. The positive links between Barocci’s style and the friars’ ideal of religious art have never been studied, yet they provide a way into the heart of the “reform art” of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Part of Barocci’s success lay in his skill in representing the rich visual and visionary world of early Franciscan texts so valued by the Capuchins—a world too vivid and alive for a fully archaic style to convey to a society of viewers accustomed to naturalistic images. Strict archaism in painting was best for presenting “icons” of sacred power, such as the 13<sup>th</sup>-century-style “portraits” of Francis. For altarpieces, a sensitive mix of archaism’s spiritual power and modernity’s representational skill proved most effective for the dual Capuchin goals of returning to origins, and encouraging the faithful to follow. This mix of old and new in painting became part of larger Counter Reformation culture, and provided an underlying brief for the religious art of many important painters of the period. The final goal of my dissertation is to illuminate this reformulation of religious art, inspired in part by the Capuchins’ bold experiment in “neo-medievalism”.

To realize my project I require another year of intensive research in Italy. During a seven month trip in 1991, I defined the topic after a wider investigation of Franciscan reform and art throughout the Renaissance, and initiated visual and archival work. My preliminary investigations convinced me that there were many more untapped riches, both in visual and archival form, that must be analyzed to do justice to the fascinating legacy of early Capuchin art and thought. So little scholarship exists in this field that much of the work can only be done in Italy: but the buildings, paintings, and unpublished texts I have found thus far have amply confirmed the interest of the topic, and I am confident of success if I can simply have the time in Italy to complete the systematic investigations that must undergird my assertions.

During this year at Harvard I am focusing on aspects of the dissertation that may be approached from this side of the Atlantic, and have immersed myself in the diverse and often polemical secondary literature on late Renaissance painting and the genesis of the baroque. Further, I am offering a seminar for undergraduates called “The religious image in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italy: evolution and transformation” that will engage many issues upon which I must reflect in the course of formulating my theses. Finally, I am mapping out a detailed strategy for specific archival and visual research upon my return to Italy.

My fieldwork will center on Umbria and the Marches, the original Capuchin “heartland”. Northern Italy will also provide a focus, for it witnessed the creation of important and idiosyncratic Capuchin architecture

and superb Capuchin altarpieces, by the Carracci, Bassano, and others. In addition to my investigation of Barocci in Urbino, I intend to focus on Annibale Carracci's work for the Capuchins of Parma as one of the "test cases" for my conclusions. Finally, the area around Rome is of crucial importance for three reasons. First, its countryside contains several surviving early Capuchin churches with altarpieces by important "reform" artists. Second, Rome itself was a center of experiments in artistic historicism both in Capuchin circles and in the patronage of some learned ecclesiastics, such as the Cardinal Baronius who attempted to restore his titular church of Santi Achileo e Nereo to its early medieval state, or Pope Gregory XIII, who demanded that artists reproduce decaying mosaics at Santa Saba with stylistic faithfulness. Gregory also endowed the Capuchin church at Frascati and commissioned a major "reform" artist, Girolamo Muziano, to decorate it. The church and its paintings survive, and provide me another example on which to focus my study. Finally, Rome is the best base for my Italian research, for its resources are better adapted to my topic than those of any other city. The riches of church history libraries such as the Vatican, the Angelica, and the Vallicelliana are incomparable. Rome is also home to the General Archive and the Historical Institute of the Capuchin Order, where I may discuss ideas with Capuchin scholars. And the Biblioteca Hertziana provides superb resources whenever I require references from secondary art historical literature. With Rome as a base for research and travel, I would be perfectly placed to probe the multi-faceted, crucial phenomenon of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century reevaluations of the Christian artistic heritage, and the reforms that created the pictorial and architectural realm seen, used, and partly inspired by intense friars in tattered robes, seeking to revive the art, as well as the spirit, of another age.

**Kenneth Benitor.** *This statement illustrates Paradigm B. Focusing on a work of Dante that is already well known, it calls for a reassessment of the work — viewing it as an aesthetic work in its own right, rather than merely as an interpretative tool for reading Dante’s other recognized masterpieces. MAYBE OMIT*

### **Dante and the grammar of humility: Anxiety in the ‘De vulgari eloquentia’**

“I am amazed that commentators of the ‘De vulgari eloquentia’ have treated this product of medieval culture as a mere doctrinal work stuffed with boring Scholastic elements, while neglecting its artistic, humorous and autoironic qualities . . .”

a. Leo Sptizer, 1953

I propose a rereading of Dante’s “De vulgari eloquentia” (“On Eloquence in the Vernacular,” henceforth Dve) that offers an aesthetic appreciation of the treatise in its own right, not merely as an interpretative tool for our reading of the *Comedy*. My reading aspires to remind *dantisti* that the Dve, too, is the product of an extraordinary and singular poetic imagination. The poet’s quest to seek out and define an “illustrious vernacular,” an Italian national poetic idiom, makes for a fascinating and, at times, troubled narrative. My reading will give close consideration to the narrative voice, the ways in which it establishes and undermines its objectives, its telling digressions, and the rich and sometimes bizarre metaphors it produces.

Critical debates over Dante’s attitude towards language have tended to focus upon apparent contradictions in his texts, contradictions regarding the origin and nature of human language before the Confusion of Tongues. It is my contention that such textual incongruities betray a basic tension in the poet’s thinking. In its most generic articulation, this is a tension between unity and diversity. On the one hand, Dante laments human linguistic fragmentation as the sorry legacy of Babel, God’s punishment of human presumption; in his attempt to reconstruct an “illustrious vernacular,” he emulates a linguistic ideal that recaptures the language of Adam, by which signified and signifier are once again bound together in unambiguous union for the entire human family. The Dante of the Dve (written ca. 1304, some fifteen years before the *Paradiso*) appears, at least on the surface, to espouse such a prescriptive attitude.

And yet, there is another Dante who not only accepts linguistic differences as the necessary condition of history, but seems to embrace this diversity as a vehicle for God’s love on earth. This latter Dante revels in the myriad dialects of the Italian peninsula and of human society at large; he is excited by the dynamism of a linguistic cosmos in which he is an eager participant. This more descriptive Dante comes to the fore in *Paradiso* XXVI, where Adam reveals that all human language has always been, and will always be, subject to continual change.

Critics’ attempts to resolve the contradictions in Dante’s linguistic attitudes have generally neglected the subtlety and richness of this dialectic in their search for the “definitive” Dante. They have largely dismissed the longing for unity apparent in the Dve as representative of an immature stage in the poetlinguist’s thinking; Thomas Greene, for instance, feels the poet takes comfort in the Dve by excepting Latin and Hebrew from the law of variability.

Yet the Dve is anything but a comfortable text. It is a text brimming with doubts and anxieties that will find only partial resolve with the mournful lessons of Adam in the eighth sphere. What my rereading of the treatise aspires to add to the critical terrain is a fuller appreciation of these tensions, as a way of bringing to light personal and poetic dimensions of the text heretofore overlooked by the critical literature.

A first section will consider the treatise’s placement within the medieval grammatical tradition while focusing on the poet’s use of the word itself, “gramatica”. I will demonstrate the ambiguous semantic

potential of the word as Dante conceived of it and reveal this ambiguity as a primary source of narrative anxiety. A second section will demonstrate the intimate connection between the political and linguistic assertions of the treatise and suggest that the poet was engaged in a kind of self-allegoresis in terms of the Babel event. A third section will consider Dante's metaphorical use of gender in the *Dve* as a reflection of personal psychological anxiety (here Freud and Lacan may be of help). I will give considerable attention to the poet's unprecedented elaboration of the mother tongue metaphor, particularly his implicit equation of the vernacular to mother's milk.

A final section will reconsider the dominant metaphorical imagery of the *Dve* — a hunt through the leafy (linguistic) forest — from the perspective of *Paradiso* XXVI, 64-66, Dante's reformulation of St. John's discourse on Charity (John 15,1). My reading of *Paradiso* XXVI asserts that Dante's use of St. John's branch and leaf images provides a Scriptural justification for his acceptance of linguistic variability. I will demonstrate that this same imagery is present in the earlier treatise and thus be in a position to suggest that the very conceptual framework of the *Dve* works against the poet's intentional propositions; the dominant imagery is constantly undermining the grammarian's prescriptive agenda; metaphor is at odds with doctrine, poetry with intellectual pragmatism.

By insisting that a "minor" treatise deserves our aesthetic attention every bit as much as the *Comedy*, I see my project as participating in other recent critical attempts to challenge such notions as "major" and "minor" as they figure in the canon of "Great Works" (cp. Harrison, *The Body of Beatrice*). I feel my reading of the *Dve* can provide us with a greater understanding of medieval linguistic sensibilities, as well as make us more sensitive readers, not only of the *Dve*, but of Dante's universe in general. I will hope to have portrayed the *Dve* as the textual battleground upon which the (Christian) poet carries out a highly personalized struggle with his own over-intellectualized self.

My dissertation will represent the outcome of a long-time personal enthusiasm for Dante, who has remained a primary academic focus since I first encountered the *Comedy* as a senior in high school, and a major step towards what I now envision as a lifetime career as a *dantista*. I am already familiar with much of the critical literature relevant to my topic and have written a formal prospectus that takes much more detailed account of the criticism, as well as my own critical arguments. I have already written much of the first and fourth sections (these four sections will eventually be divided into smaller chapters).

Although Professor Dante Della Terza is my formal thesis advisor, much of my thinking on Dante has been influenced by Professor John Freccero of Stanford University, where I was an Exchange Scholar in 1986-1987. Professor Freccero has also written a letter in support of my application. My extraordinary teaching load at Harvard during the fall semester has put me in a financial position to work full-time on the dissertation until July or August 1989; I hope to produce at least three solid chapters in that time. Were I to receive an additional year of support from the Whiting, I am confident that I could then bring the project to completion.

**Ned Hall.** *This project statement illustrates Paradigm C. It will provide new data that will cause some shift in our thinking. More specifically, the candidate proposes to collect corroborative archaeological data, which will help to settle a current division among scholars as to the relative success or failure of Rome's experiment in empire building.*

### **Roman and Native Interaction in the Roman Alpine Provinces**

My present research concerns the nature of culture contact between empires and indigenous peoples conquered by them, especially those groups who were geographically isolated from the powerful cultural influences of imperial towns and highways. It uses as a central case the interaction between the Roman Empire and the ancient peoples of its alpine provinces and is designed as an interdisciplinary study of ancient literary sources, ethnohistoric accounts, and contemporary frontier studies, bolstered in large part by the archaeological record.

Scholarship is generally divided between those who would view Rome as successful in maintaining its empire, a process which was helped along by a fair degree of native acquiescence, and those who see in the literature a history of revolts which constantly threatened the fabric of the empire. In the absence of corroborative archaeological data one might quite reasonably adopt either point of view. The principal question asked by this research concerns the relative success or failure of Rome's experiment in empire building and maintenance.

The implementation of such an interdisciplinary project is unusual in its emphasis on both classical and anthropological methodology, but it is in keeping with a new body of classical inquiry which attempts to derive from the Latin literature a semblance of objective truth concerning imperial policy, Roman racial attitudes, and the tribal response to conquest. These scholars rightly call for the testing of their hypotheses, yet the archaeological work remains to be done. Consequently, the value of my research is that it draws upon a wide array of classical and historical scholarly resources and ties them to the archaeological record in order to develop a more complete picture of what happened in history.

This research has thus far been developed under the supervision of my advisor, Professor Peter S. Wells, Director of the University of Minnesota Center for Ancient Studies and formerly Assistant Professor of European Prehistory at the Peabody Museum. It has also been monitored by Professor C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, Director of the Peabody Museum, and David Gordon Mitten, Loeb Professor of Classical Archaeology at Harvard's Fogg Art Museum, both members of my dissertation committee.

In bringing corroborative archaeological data to bear on the various hypotheses of the success or failure of Roman empire building and maintenance, the study relies heavily upon information gathered from ancient burials and settlements. Burials usually constitute sealed cultural contexts representative of a single moment in time. Material objects signifying social status, group affiliation, or those utilized as protective talismans were placed by the living alongside the deceased in keeping with local customs and beliefs and provide an intimate glimpse into the perceptions and self-image of indigenous populations.

Still, burial data may often represent the 'best' a given culture had to offer its deceased and, used alone, are potentially misleading indicators in cultural historical reconstructions. In order to broaden my base of inquiry, and also to control the validity of information derived from native burial contexts, I have drawn upon archaeological materials excavated in a number of high mountain habitation sites. More representative of daily life, these data offer an insight into the nature of domestic ceramic production and use, house construction technology, stock raising practices, and commercial exchange mechanisms. Combined with

information derived from grave goods they proved a clear comparative base against which to view processes of culture change over time.

For the past year I have lived in Northern Italy as a Fulbright Fellow and a Harvard Sinclair-Kennedy Scholar. In my examination of alpine archaeological materials, the quantity of objects of Roman origin appears to diminish slightly as the distance from imperial centers and roadways increases. Yet from the outset of the Roman occupation in the Central Alps, one finds overall an increasing number of Roman goods in native burials and settlements, even those quite far removed from direct Roman control.

In native burials, imported Roman materials become increasingly common over time, but I view this phenomenon as more closely tied to status acquisition and fashion demands than to a situation of profound culture change. Mountain burials, when viewed comparatively with those excavated in the more 'romanized' lowland centers, are actually quite poor and lack the glass and high quality ceramic luxury goods found regularly in Roman urban contexts. What we see instead is a mixture of occasional pieces of fine Roman tableware, local imitations of Roman vase forms, and some ceramic pieces of alpine Iron Age tradition. Roman bronze *fibulae* are a regular import item, but their placement in burials indicates a continuity of pre-Roman costume traditions. There is also an occasional nativistic treatment of Roman materials.

Such archaeological evidence could nonetheless lead one to accept the relative success of the Roman Empire in 'converting' its native alpine populations. Yet a closer look at the data suggests instead a surprisingly strong continuity of indigenous lifeways. In the high mountain settlements, ceramic styles often mirror those in use in late prehistoric times, and 'Roman' vase forms are generally poor local imitations of Mediterranean styles. Animal husbandry, as viewed in the faunal record, followed a pattern established as early as the Bronze Age, regulated by the harsh conditions imposed by the alpine environment. Local house construction techniques, especially when compared with the Roman models then employed in the administrative centers of the principal river valleys, also point to a continuity of prehistoric lifeways. Ultimately, we do see an increase over time in the presence of Roman import goods in indigenous settlements, but quantitatively these are vastly inferior to materials of local tradition and manufacture.

In regard to the various scholarly hypotheses for explaining the presumed patterns of Roman-native culture contact, the alpine archaeological information points clearly to a situation in which the lifeways of peripheral populations were often maintained throughout the imperial period, largely in the absence of either extreme conflict or total assimilation. A further proof of this continuity is seen in the renaissance of traditional mountain craftwork and cultural practices in the early Middle Ages after the withdrawal of Roman administration from the region.

For the next five months in Italy I will continue my inquiries into the archaeological record of the Central Alps. I also intend to enlarge the ethnohistoric aspect of the overall research as it has so far been extremely useful in offering new insight into the archaeological material. Upon my return to the United States in the Spring of 1989, I envision a limited period of research into anthropological and ethnohistoric examples of analogous culture contact situations from other world contexts. This will be followed by an intensive period of writing in which I will compile the data gathered here in Italy as well as background materials (core-periphery studies, Latin literature, and the historical assessment of Roman policy) I have already collected. I will complete the project by June 1990.

From 1980 until 1982 I lived on a farm in the Italian Dolomite Alps and commuted to lectures on Roman archaeology at the University of Padua. During that time I became keenly aware of the tremendous retention of traditional culture in the mountains versus the more progressive cultural reality of the Venetian Plain. What, I wondered, would have been the reaction of ancient mountain peoples to the commercial presence

and subsequent conquest by the Romans? Since beginning this research in 1986 I have been impressed by the potential for applying a multidisciplinary approach to the study of imperial-native interaction in other parts of the world. Completion and publication of my PhD thesis will not only frame the general debate on the concept of Romanization but will also stimulate archaeologists and historians to reconsider accepted views of culture contact.

The Whiting Fellowship will enable me to publish my dissertation at a time when imperial-native studies are becoming a much-debated topic in the academic world.



**James Scott.** *This project statement also illustrates Paradigm C. The project is in the Natural Sciences, and like most in this area, it proposes to provide new data — in this case new computations — which call for adjustment of existing theory. This statement also illustrates a scientific proposal aimed at a fellowship committee consisting of generalists rather than specialists. Note how the opening explains the project in accessible language suitable for such a committee.*

### **Condensed Matter Theory**

One of the major obstacles confronting condensed matter theorists is the difficulty involved in describing the enormous number of particles present in solids. Frequently, theorists formulate sophisticated models, then carefully adjust unknown parameters until the theory best agrees with the experimental data. However, due to the recent increases in computational power, it has become possible to make first principles *ab-initio* calculations, calculations which do not use any experimental results as input and which contain no adjustable parameters. We can then make a direct comparison between theory and experiment, and for many quantities the agreement is excellent (~1.0%). Moreover, using these techniques it is often possible to gain information about physical properties which are difficult or even impossible to measure directly.

In this spirit, my major research interest is directed towards making realistic calculations, in the context of the local density approximation, of the structural and electronic properties of materials. For the past year, I have been working with Dr. David Vanderbilt here at Harvard University. The major thrust of my work has been the study of semiconductor surfaces. I am in the midst of a minimal energy calculation of the Germanium (111) surface. This calculation will predict the atomic positions and the macroscopic surface stress of the relaxed slab geometry. I will soon extend this study to include various adatom decorations of the surface, geometries in which 'extra' atoms sit on the surface. Because slab geometries involve large unit cells, these calculations are very complex; they are typically 64,000 times more timeconsuming than the equivalent bulk calculations. Fortunately, I have had the opportunity to use the Cyber 205, a supercomputer located at the John von Neumann Supercomputer Center in Princeton, N. J.

I have also developed a continuum elastic theory of surface energies. This theory may provide insight into strain-mediated interactions between adatoms on surfaces and between surfaces in slab geometries. I also intend to calculate the microscopic stress tensor for semiconductor surfaces. This quantity, which has never been measured or calculated, would provide considerable insight into the reconstruction of these surfaces.

Even though physics is my primary interest, I also enjoy doing computational work. I have found that the process of writing programs which implement physical theories exposes one to details of those theories which otherwise might be overlooked. Conversely, I also believe that a thorough understanding of physics allows one to devise clever means to perform computations which otherwise might be considered intractable.

**Luigi Paulo Gamboni.** *This statement is a special version of Paradigm C. It is part of a large and ongoing team effort, where there is a substantial amount of agreement on basic research issues. The proposal nevertheless manages within this context to identify a specific area that needs doing. The proposal is also noteworthy for the way it explains technical matters to a non-technical reader, and yet does justice to the subject for a specialist in the field. By writing in a more accessible language, the applicant enhances the possibility of winning in a more general fellowship competition, as well as one reserved for scientists.*

### **Finding Dark Matter Particles**

I would like to spend a year at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Geneva, Switzerland, where the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) – the world’s largest particle accelerator – has just turned on. The goal of the LHC project is to study fundamental particles, the building blocks which make up our universe, using the most advanced technology available. I am interested in searching for Dark Matter particles. These particles – making up more than three quarters of our universe – have been predicted by theories and indirectly detected by astrophysics experiments, but they have never successfully been produced in a lab. Finding Dark Matter particles will not be easy, and it will not happen quickly; their existence can only be demonstrated after at least a year of good data taking and stable conditions.

At CERN, I will study and analyze the raw data within seconds of a collision, placing myself in the front lines of the search for new phenomena. In particular, I will be responsible for guaranteeing the necessary feedback to detect data or hardware problems in their earliest phases: an important role in a new experiment. Due to continuously changing conditions and a tendency of complex instruments to become unstable, the first few years of an experiment are the most exciting and active ones. Being at CERN will offer me a rare opportunity to contribute to a great scientific endeavor and to develop my skills as an experimental physicist.

The LHC is a 27-kilometer long underground ring built to accelerate protons – the electrically charged component of atomic nuclei – in opposite directions. The velocity of these protons is so high that when they are made to collide, they are forced to reveal their internal structure and produce showers of new particles. Since the 1950s, research centers in the United States and Europe have built increasingly powerful particle colliders allowing scientists to deepen our knowledge of nature by smashing together subatomic particles and studying their behavior. These projects take many years to plan and many more to build; I was fortunate to be present at the startup of the LHC a few weeks ago. The initial round of protons was only the beginning, however: Tuesday, the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, together with hundreds of other physicists, I observed the highest energy collisions the world has ever seen.

The effort to reach this goal has been tremendous, and there are no concrete plans to surpass it. The US, together with Russia, India, Japan and many other non-European countries, is now a collaborator in the CERN experiments. China’s involvement, a topic of debate, is imminent according to the Director General. CERN is now a global research center. The LHC, the largest of its accelerators (ten thousand scientists), and ATLAS, the largest of the LHC detectors (two thousand scientists, 135 institutions, 35 countries) are completely international.

Within CERN, I will be working on the ATLAS (A Toroidal LHC Apparatus) detector, which will record and analyze the collisions produced by the LHC. ATLAS is a camera looking for rare events. Every second the LHC will collide particles in the center of ATLAS 40 million times, but ATLAS will only choose the 200 most interesting collisions per second to be recorded. Each picture is taken with many lenses, many different technologies, allowing us to see different species of particles. The largest of these lenses is the Muon Spectrometer, detecting and following the movements of a type of unstable particle known as the muon, which is particularly important in the specific subset of Dark Matter theories I am studying. My role in ATLAS will be to monitor the data produced by the Muon Spectrometer, and determine whether this part of the experiment is performing up to the very high standards that are required to discover new particles.

I have already been at CERN for a semester, and thanks to my advisor – Prof. Franklin – I will be here for the rest of the academic year. The Harvard group has been involved in the design and construction of the ATLAS Muon Spectrometer for many years, leading to a natural role in monitoring the data produced by it. As soon as I arrived at CERN I started learning about the many tools and methods available for data monitoring, and I have subsequently acquired “expert” status with respect to the Muon Spectrometer. As an expert, I am responsible for maintaining the instruments available to the muon community, and using them to identify problems. In addition, I play an active role in the daily determination of the quality of the data, deciding whether the detector is working well enough for its data to be used in physics searches. Aside from learning and upgrading the data monitoring tools, I have spent a large amount of time accumulating the necessary knowledge (of both hardware and software) to be able to troubleshoot the problems that these tools bring to the surface almost every day. As the ATLAS detector has started to take data, it has been extremely satisfying to see the monitoring tools come alive and to follow up the issues they point to. These problems range from quirks in the bytestream (the 0’s and 1’s making up the data), to periodic bursts of electronic noise, to unexpected behaviors correlated with the first circulating beams.

The skills I have learned in the past few months, which I will continue to improve, have another advantage: they are directly transferable to the search for Dark Matter particles. I will be able to start this search as soon as the detector becomes stable and enough data is collected. Then, my experience with computer clusters, databases, data selection and processing, and my familiarity with the detector, will allow me to get past many initial barriers and to concentrate fully on interpreting the data itself. As with most aspects of particle physics, this kind of search will require collaborating with many other scientists. It will only be possible to do this effectively at CERN, because even the most modern forms of communication are not a substitute for a live discussion, and because the best way to obtain a detailed answer from a busy physicist is still to walk into their office and ask them face to face.

The LHC project was conceived in 1984, and a few weeks ago it has finally started. It will take at least 15 years before the next generation of particle accelerators has been planned and built. If I remain at CERN in the next academic year, I will have the rare opportunity to take part in the running and commissioning of a young detector, and I will exercise a crucial role as data monitoring expert for the Muon Spectrometer. I will also have the chance to participate in the first hardware upgrades planned for early 2011 – gaining access to the ATLAS cavern that is kept closed while there are collisions. Finally, I will be able to collaborate with the large international community of CERN physicists in the search for Dark Matter particles, and be among the scientists to participate in proving their existence directly.

**George Timback.** *This project statement is an example of the longer more elaborate proposal. Note the effective division of the longer proposal into sub-sections, which help to produce a clearly organized presentation. The project statement illustrates Paradigm C. It is dealing with a subject that has received some attention, but is providing a new perspective. References are provided in a Selected Bibliography which he candidate submits as an attachment at the end, which is common when longer proposals are required. Note as well that references are cited within the body of the text, rather than in foot-notes; this is also common in proposals.*

### **Minamata: Power, Policy, and Citizenship in Postwar Japan**

#### **PURPOSE**

I propose to study power, policy, and citizenship in postwar Japan by examining the responses to the tragic mercury poisoning of the city of Minamata. The period from the 1950s through the 1980s encompassed the outbreak of the epidemic of “Minamata Disease,” conflict over its causes, media advocacy, demands for restitution by victims and their supporters, the rising activism of citizens’ groups, responses by the private sector and the government, major legal decisions, and finally the fading of the issue from national consciousness. In the context of Japanese history, Minamata is more than the site of one of the world’s worst cases of industrial pollution. It is also the locus of the development of new forms of civic action, of contending and evolving relationships among society, corporations, and the state, and most important, of an ongoing redefinition of citizenship in postwar Japan.

#### **SUBJECT AND STRATEGY**

Minamata is a factory town surrounded by fishing villages in Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan’s four main islands. The Chisso company began producing acetaldehyde using a mercury catalyst there in 1932. The city, and Chisso’s production, grew rapidly in the early 1950s, and fish, seabirds, trees near the shore, and even cats were already dying. By 1956 there was an epidemic of a “strange disease,” mainly among fishing families in outlying villages. What was soon called “Minamata Disease” caused symptoms ranging from sensory loss to paralysis and death in adults. Congenital poisoning caused 38% of the children born from 1953 to 1960 to be mentally handicapped and many others to be physically deformed. Over 1,200 people have died so far. The cause—conversion of inorganic mercury in factory waste into organic mercury—was suggested by 1958 and proved by 1962, but Chisso continued to discharge mercury until 1971. In part because “solatium agreements” committed the company to making payments to victims beginning in late 1959, no victims filed suit against Chisso until 1969. They won in 1973, though there are still cases in the courts concerning compensation and other issues.

Minamata generally appears in the Japanese literature as a study in victimization: a struggle by citizens’ groups fighting for social justice against the Chisso company and the government, whose concerns were power, profits, growth, and the enforced social peace that made these possible. Relatively little has been published in English, although W. Eugene Smith’s powerful photographs of the victims’ twisted bodies brought the tragedy to world attention in the 1970s. There are sections on Minamata in books by specialists in pollution and public health (None Huddle and Michael Reich), political science (Margaret McKean), and law (Frank Upham); a translation of a novel by a victim (Ishimure Michiko); and a few articles, most of them published two decades ago.

As a historian, I believe that Minamata ought to be told as a complex but coherent story. Its political, economic, social, and scientific aspects need to be brought together and placed in their historical context. It is certainly a story of victimization, but it is also a case study of the many forces that shaped postwar Japan and the contemporary world. The civic response in Minamata reveals how the Japanese defined citizenship, after having been imperial subjects for most of a century and subject to feudal lords for

hundreds of years before that. The flexible, evolving, and generally effective response by corporations and by the national and local governments helps to disprove the myth of a monolithic state or an all-powerful “Japan, Inc.” Many social scientific works on Japan, such as Chalmers Johnson’s MITI and the Japanese Miracle, are studies of “successes” that focus on the top levels of government and business. Minamata requires attention to complex responses that sometimes succeeded and often failed, but which linked the highest levels of bureaucracy with the smallest local communities. A historical study of Minamata should broaden our understanding of Japan in the past four decades, and at the same time further the study of postwar Japan as history. No longer need the nearly half century of postwar history be confined to the domain of sociologists and political scientists. Historians elsewhere have long studied such subjects as the US civil rights movement, the Cultural Revolution in China, and the cold war. It is high time that Japan’s postwar past become a similar object of historical inquiry, and that postwar developments be connected to their prewar antecedents.

A comprehensive study of Minamata requires the examination of a broad cross-section: the victims, the company, the media, support groups, the local and national governments, the ruling and opposition parties, and the courts. The responses of each of these groups were a blend of old and new, as indeed was postwar Japan itself. The government sought to regain control of methods of dispute resolution, as it had in the case of the prewar labor movement that Sheldon Garon has analyzed, although with Minamata the situation was more complex. There were links to pre-Meiji Japan as well, for it was perhaps as difficult for citizens to decide to sue the company that was the economic mainstay of their city as it had been for Tokugawa peasants to rebel against their lord. In the postwar period, however, it was possible to gain nationwide and even worldwide publicity and support that would have been unimaginable earlier. These and other changes in historical context will inform my attempt to sort out the old and the new and to analyze Minamata as something more than a tragic case of industrial pollution.

I will approach the issue of Minamata from several perspectives. The first looks at the forms of civic action that evolved as the Japanese experimented with new freedoms and gradually became conscious of the costs of rapid industrial growth. I will examine, for example, the Mutual Aid Association formed by victims’ families in 1958, and the Minamata Disease Study Group, founded in 1969 by lawyers, professors, doctors, and members of the media. This group wrote a report that became the basis of the suit filed in 1969. I will look also at the “one-share movement,” in which victims and supporters bought one share each in Chisso. This enabled them to attend and disrupt the 1970 shareholders’ meeting, which was broadcast on national television.

Second, I will examine the responses by business and government. The goals of the conservative coalition were to stay in power, restore social peace, and regain control of dispute resolution, but the government and corporations were by no means monolithic and unchanging. They reacted flexibly, as had many of their predecessors earlier in the modern period. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party responded to the threat with a rapid policy turnabout culminating in the legislation passed by the “Pollution Diet” of 1970 and the establishment of the Environment Agency in 1971. Questions about the central government’s relation to local institutions must be addressed as well, since the changing relationship between national and local politics is one of the main stories of the postwar period. In this case, I will be dealing with prefectural as well as local initiatives. The national government funded a medical research group at Kumamoto University, but cut off its funds soon after its preliminary report blamed the disease on effluent from the factory. (The research was subsequently funded for three years by the US National Institute of Health.) Another example of interactive response is the split of Chisso’s Minamata union into two, one supporting and one opposing management. Several members of the anti-management union joined the Minamata Disease Study Group and supplied it with confidential inside information from Chisso, which was later used by the victims in their suit. Minamata, like postwar Japan, was by no means a Manichean drama in

which the forces of an interlocking elite battled a coalition of victims and activists. Instead it was a series of interactive responses by three collective actors: citizen, corporation, and state.

Third, and most important, I will seek to understand Minamata as an effort to define and create new forms of citizenship in postwar Japan. Citizenship is a political question, but one that is often resolved in Japan in a social rather than parliamentary context, as the experience of Minamata confirms. The victims of the pollution were mainly poor fishing families living on the outskirts of a town whose single smokestack industry had brought them all a boom in the 1950s, and their relationship to the factory remained ambivalent. The options available to them in the late 1960s were to accept government mediation, to join the “trial group” and sue Chisso, or to join the “direct negotiation” group advocating confrontational tactics. I will analyze the conflict between modes of civic action and how it was resolved in favor of the trial group. The victims’ plight attracted reporters, lawyers, and environmentalists from all over Japan, and linked them to other antipollution movements in Niigata, Toyama, and Yokkaichi. Minamata in fact lent its name to the Niigata case, where the victims suffered from “Niigata Minamata disease.” The citizens’ groups supporting the victims developed patterns of social citizenship which were later reflected not only in the environmental movement but also in anti-nuclear activism and the consumer movement, and indeed in a changed relationship of ordinary Japanese to their socially defined polity.

## **LITERATURE**

Although Minamata has not been studied in the way I propose, there is a huge volume of sources already assembled, and in many cases carefully organized. This should make it possible to complete my research in Japan in one year, spending about half the time in the Tokyo area and half in Minamata and Kumamoto (the prefectural capital). In Tokyo, Kumamoto, and Minamata there are court and government records, newsletters, photographs and films, tapes and transcripts of interviews, and records of citizens’ groups, unions, and fishing cooperatives. The historian Irokawa Daikichi, who has written on Minamata, has agreed to sponsor my studies. He recommends that I work with him at Tokyo Keizai University, and with the Minamata study group at Kumamoto University, which includes Harada Masazumi of the medical school and Maruyama Sadami of the faculty of humanities. I will also make use of the materials at the Minatabyo Rekishi Koshokan in Minamata.

## **PREPARATION AND PLANS TO SHARE FINDINGS**

I plan to take my comprehensive Ph.D. examinations in May 1993 and spend a year doing research in Japan beginning in August 1993. In preparation, I have compiled an extensive bibliography and consulted US scholars who have studied Minamata, among them Michael Reich of Harvard’s School of Public Health, Frank Upham of Boston College Law School, and Margaret McKean of Duke University. I met with Ui Jun, author of many works on Minamata and industrial pollution, during his visit to Cambridge this fall, and he will be a valuable source of advice and ideas.

My conclusions will be shared with both the American and Japanese scholarly communities. The research will result in a Harvard Ph.D. dissertation, which I plan to complete in 1995. It will be copyrighted, abstracted in Dissertation Abstracts, and available through University Microfilms. I will present copies of the dissertation to the institutions and scholars with whom I work in Japan. I will also develop one or two papers from my research and present them at scholarly conferences, and plan to write a book based on the dissertation.

I see Minamata as a lens through which to view larger questions of democracy and civic action, relationships between citizens, corporations, and the state, and the meaning of social citizenship. Japan’s experience is not unique. My study also offers possibilities for comparison with the experience of other countries in redefining democracy and citizenship in the second half of the twentieth century. I hope that a

study of Minamata may help to reattach postwar Japan to earlier Japanese history and also to relate the Japanese experience to developments elsewhere in the world.

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**Alex Boax.** *This too is an example of the longer more elaborate proposal. It too makes effective use of subdivisions to give shape to the longer statement. The project illustrates Paradigm C. It introduces some new material and concepts, which in turn cause a reassessment of the topic. Note the use of footnotes, in contrast to the preceding longer statement, which incorporates the references into the body of the text.*

**Beyond “Agrarian Reform”: Agriculture and Business in  
Rural Veracruz, Mexico, 1940-1958**

**Purpose**

The purpose of my proposed research is to explore the transformation of Mexican rural social relations from 1940 to 1958 by examining the increasingly dominant social role of business in agriculture. I will focus on the Gulf state of Veracruz, known for a wide range of soils, climates, food crops, and social relations of production, as well as for the strength of its peasant leagues since the 1920s. My preliminary work indicates that the study of business interests and networks is the most effective way of understanding the nature and pace of change in rural social relations in modern Mexico. In this context “business” may be broadly defined as the profit-oriented activities of individuals or companies with an interest in rural production — e.g., machinery, fertilizers, pesticides, seed, credit and marketing. My work on the state of Veracruz, the first properly historical study of Mexican agriculture after 1940, will test the explanatory possibilities of this novel perspective, and will contribute new sources and fresh approaches to the fields of modern agrarian history and rural development.

**Subject and Strategy**

Students of rural Mexico have traditionally distinguished between “agrarian” and “agricultural” questions, and have kept them separate. “Agrarian” histories chronicle the social and political struggles waged by rural communities over land and water rights, reflected in rebellions, revolutions, and legislation going back at least to the Spanish conquest and culminating in the Mexican Revolution and in the Agrarian Reform of the 1930’s. The work of historians thus far has been predominantly “agrarian,” concentrating almost exclusively on issues of land tenure and government policy. “Agricultural” studies, often influenced by contemporary theories of “development,” have focused on technology, productivity, economic geography, and State-led “modernization,” but seldom from an historical perspective. Both approaches share an overriding concern with institutional or structural change and tend to privileged the role of the State in bringing it about. As a result, the internal dynamics of rural social relations have been neglected and the importance of private interests has been played down. Essentially, we do not know how and why changes have taken place. My aim is to construct an alternative account of rural transformation by emphasizing social relations, in particular those involving agricultural production. The conceptual premise behind this project is that research into the history of agricultural business activities is the most effective way of identifying the various social forces that determine the direction of modern rural change.

Mexican rural history since 1940, which my proposed research seeks to outline for the first time, is particularly suited for this conceptual innovation. Mexican agriculture underwent momentous changes after 1940: large and small irrigation projects; new crops; altered patterns of cultivation; modern technology in tools, machinery, fertilizer, pesticides, and seed; new market structures and credit mechanisms — these all spread unevenly through the countryside. An account that hopes to make sense of these developments and their effect on rural social relations much reach beyond the confines of traditional “agrarian” history. It must take note of the historic growth of opportunities for business in areas broadly related to agriculture. By 1940, there existed for the first time a potential for profit in each component of the cycle of agricultural production.

There are many crucial questions to be addressed from this perspective: Who represented the machinery companies in Veracruz and at the local level? What was the background of these people? How were decisions about improvements in irrigation and communications made? Who got the building contracts?



What was the effect of these projects? How was the production and distribution of fertilizer organized? How did land use change? What groups were interested in new crops and why? How were those changes implemented? What was impact of all these initiatives on rural communities and *ejidos*? How was the making and implementation of agrarian policies affected by private interests? Many more could be formulated. The central point is that information can be obtained, and it is an essential component of any persuasive explanation of the process of rural change. Without it, one cannot hope to make sense of the development of agriculture in Mexico after 1940. This broad insight guides my proposed research on the history of agriculture in Veracruz.

This is not to say that legislation and government policy are unimportant; rather, the point is that it is misleading to assume that rural transformations can be explained as a function of state action or inaction. In this respect, I expect that my research will provide a novel perspective from which to re-evaluate the significance of agrarian legislation and policies.

As has been mentioned, I will concentrate my research on the state of Veracruz, on the Caribbean coast of Mexico. There are many reasons why it is well suited for this project. The total volume and value of the agricultural production of Veracruz during the period in question are among the highest of any Mexican state. Important cattle-ranching regions are also a part of Veracruz. Moreover, the variety of soils and crops cultivated is impressive and unmatched by any other state. Mexican soils are classified according to altitude as *tierra fría*, *tierra templada*, and *tierra caliente*, and all are found in Veracruz. Besides corn, beans, and chile, Veracruz produces rice, tomatoes, plantains, pineapple, citrus, vanilla, apples, rice, cotton, various vegetables and tropical fruits, and some wheat. Coffee, sugar cane, and tobacco are also very important crops, especially given their link to industrial activities. The systems of land tenure and the social organization of work under which rural production takes place are no less varied: there are villages, plantations, *ejidos*, haciendas, ranchos, and colonias. In addition, in 1940 30% of the municipalities of Veracruz still had a sizable number of inhabitants (over 25%) who did not speak Spanish, and another 18% also had some. The main ethnic groups in such municipalities were Nahuas, Totonacos, Huastecos, Popolocas, and Otomíes.<sup>9</sup> Because of this rich diversity, research on Veracruz might shed light on the process of rural change in other regions of Mexico. Finally, the fact that Presidents Alemán (1946-1952) and Ruiz Cortínez (1952-58) were previous governors of Veracruz makes the choice of this state additionally interesting, since they were both ardent promoters of agricultural business.

I have selected the years 1940-1958 because they seem to constitute a distinct period of Mexican rural history. 1940 is a sound point of departure not only because it marks the end of Lázaro Cárdenas' presidency and of his radical agrarian policies, but also because the Second World War set in motion global forces that would significantly increase the opportunities for business in agriculture. Likewise, 1958 seems an appropriate cutoff point for this project because the Cuban Revolution of January 1959, upset prevalent notions about the implications of rural change and hastened the spread of "development" and technical assistance programs into the Latin American countryside. These new programs and the changed political climate appear to mark the beginning of a new phase in rural history

### Intellectual Background

Scholarship on modern rural Mexico reflects the peculiar intellectual trajectory of agrarian issues in twentieth-century Mexican political ideology. One of the best known armies of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) fought for the explicit purpose of defending village lands from encroachment. By 1915 these

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<sup>9</sup> An excellent source of information on Veracruz during this period is Moisés de la Peña, *Veracruz Económico*, 2 vols., México, 1946. Two studies of agrarian movement in Veracruz during the 1920's and 1930's are: Heather Fowler Salamini, *Agrarian Radicalism in Veracruz, 1920-1938*, Lincoln, 1971 and Romana Falcón, *El Agrarismo en Veracruz, 1928-1935*, México, 1977.

men, led by Emiliano Zapata, had come to demand far-reaching changes in the laws and provisions that governed the most varied aspects of rural life. In the words of their historian, they were “country people who did not want to move and therefore got into a revolution...Come hell, high water, agitators from the outside, or report of greener pastures elsewhere, they insisted only on staying in the villages and little towns where they had grown up, and where before them their ancestors for hundreds of years had lived and died in the small state of Morelos, in south-central Mexico.”<sup>10</sup> Fragments of their vision of land tenure and agrarian welfare found their way into the Constitution of 1917. Those who emerged victorious from a decade of armed conflict, not “country people” themselves, gave official status to a rhetoric that enshrined the years of upheaval as primarily, if not essentially, a struggle for agrarian justice for (and often by) villages and peasants. Succeeding national governments made a habit of portraying all rural change as the gradual fulfillment of this revolutionary legacy. Scholarly studies of the Revolution by and large concurred.

For years, the agrarian interpretation of the Mexican Revolution cast a long shadow over the Mexican countryside. Historians studied rural change almost exclusively from the perspective of legislation and government policy, and the reform of land tenure systems was their principal concern. The history of the countryside was essentially regarded as the conflict-ridden process of implementing the promises of the Revolution. This is the “agrarian” approach mentioned above.<sup>11</sup> Since 1968, a series of political and economic crises have shattered the credibility of the “agrarian revolution,” and interpretations of rural change that relied on a revolutionary mandate are no longer acceptable. Historians are now faced anew with the task of identifying the forces that have shaped post-revolutionary rural society. My research project proposes to do just that for the period after 1940. By focusing on the business of agriculture in rural Veracruz, I seek to establish a new conceptual framework for the study of modern rural history.

Theories of “economic development” have also influenced the study of modern agriculture. Although historians of rural Mexico have not yet ventured past the 1930’s, other social scientists have written on Mexican agriculture after 1940. These are the “agricultural” studies mentioned earlier. However, much of this literature on modern rural change has been dominated by the assumption that there is a general concept of “agrarian reform” able to explain seemingly concerned attempts to alter both rural land tenure systems and “traditional” patterns of cultivation and technology. “Agrarian reform” has thus meant a “complex process of directed change” in which a “government,” “state,” or “planner,” prompted by possibly contradictory yet discernible objectives, sets about to implement policies designed to transform selected aspects of rural society.<sup>12</sup> The fact that Mexico underwent a lengthy process of “agrarian Latin America”<sup>13</sup> — and that the first international technical assistance program in agriculture was implemented there, made the country a compelling case study for social scientists interested in the theory and experience of

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<sup>10</sup> John Womack, Jr., Zapata and the Mexican Revolution, New York, 1968, pp.ix. Also Arturo Warman, ...Y Venimos a Contradecir: Los campesinos de Morelos y el Estado Nacional, México, 1976, Ch.3.

<sup>11</sup> A notable example from the 1930's is Eyler N. Simpson's The Ejido: Mexico's Way Out, Chapel Hill, 1937.

<sup>12</sup> This standard terminology is taken from Elias H. Tuma, "Land Reform and Tenure," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th edition, pp. 558-565.

<sup>13</sup> Steven E. Sanderson, The Transformation of Mexican Agriculture, Princeton, 1986, p.7

“development.”<sup>14</sup> Thus this second type of scholarship has also tended to focus on State action, in this case aimed at achieving “modernization” or “development.”<sup>15</sup>

In this regard, I believe that our understanding of the transformation of rural social relations and of agricultural in Mexico since 1940 will benefit from research that does not take for granted the concepts and analytical premises that form the basis of “development” thought. Post-1940 rural history must instead seek to explain the origin and impact of these new modes of analysis and intervention, themselves a product of the period in question. Historical research must provide a context within which those developments (in every sense) can become more readily understandable. In particular, this requires moving beyond the concept of “agrarian reform” as described above. I believe that my project can contribute to this task. Agricultural business picks up dramatically during the presidencies of Avila Camacho (1940-46) and Alemán (1946-1952), precisely when the notion of having rural development strategies and programs for countries like Mexico is being articulated for the first time.<sup>16</sup> This is not likely to be merely coincidental. It is my intention to document and analyze the links between these simultaneous phenomena, opening up the topic for future research.

### Methodology

My research strategy has two parts: first, to draw a detailed picture of the actual conditions of agricultural production — land quality, water resources, tools, social organization of work, seed, crop selection, credit, agricultural calendars, etc. — and of land tenure systems in Veracruz as these change during the period in question. The main sources for this would be government and diplomatic documents and statistics, community archives, newspapers, agricultural manuals and other specialized publications, anthropological studies, and field interviews. The second part is to reconstruct the agricultural business networks in the state during those years. Here the sources would be company and private papers, business publications, local newspapers, community records and especially oral history. Once this is completed I should be able to outline the role those business interests playing in determining the trajectory of rural change. This would be illustrated by means of case studies of communities, private farms, and the lines of business selected on the basis of the information I am able to gather.

The sources for this study are located in Mexico and the United States. I am now working with the U.S. materials, which include company papers, documents from the Departments of State and Agriculture, the Rockefeller Foundation archive, technical studies commissioned by international organizations, and a vast secondary literature on agricultural science and technology. The Mexican sources I wish to study are located in Mexico City and in Xalapa, Veracruz. Preliminary research conducted in these cities over the last three summers has given me a very concrete idea of the range of available material. Thus I am confident that the work I would need to do in Mexico can be completed in a twelve-month period.

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<sup>14</sup> Mexico was the birthplace of the "Green Revolution." In 1941 the Rockefeller Foundation sent a team of scientists to Mexico "to examine the condition of Mexican agriculture at first-hand" in order to "help improve the production and quality of its basic food crops." The Agricultural Program of the Rockefeller Foundation, the first venture in what has been called "cooperative agricultural development," began in Mexico in 1943. See E.C. Stakman, Richard Bradfield, & Paul Mangelsdorf, Campaigns Against Hunger, Cambridge, Mass., 1967, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Cynthia Hewitt de Alcántara, Modernizing Mexican Agricultural "Socioeconomic Implications of Technological Change, 1940-1970, Geneva, 1976. Also Centro de Investigaciones Agrarias, Estructura Agraria y Desarrollo Agrícola en México, México, 1974. The anthropological literature merits separate consideration. It has made valuable contributions to the understanding of rural social relations at the community level. As such, many village studies, ethnographies, and analytical essays on modern rural Mexico are useful references for historical studies such as the one I propose to undertake. In this respect, the works of Arturo Warman and Paul Friedrich are particularly noteworthy.

<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to note that the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations was officially founded in October of 1945. See, e.g., Gove Hambidge, The Story of FAO, New York, 1955. The United Nations Economics Commission for Latin America (ECLA) was created in 1948.

My plan is to spend four months in Mexico City consulting the archives of the Ministries of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform; presidential and private papers housed in the Archivo General de la Nación (e.g., the Gonzalo Robles archive); contemporary newspapers at the Hemeroteca Nacional; records from national chambers of commerce; the specialized collections of the libraries of the Banco de México and the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura-Chapingo; and possibly the archive of the Confederación Nacional Campesina.

In July 1990, I worked in the Biblioteca de Cuerpo Consultivo Agrario of the Ministry of Agrarian Reform, set up to assist lawyers handling agrarian reform cases. With the assistance of the librarian, Lic. Mercedes Espíndola, I was able to consult useful documentation, including a complete collection of the Diario Oficial. Particularly noteworthy was the “Perfil Agrario de Veracruz,” an unpublished statistical study of all agrarian reform activity in Veracruz since 1915. It provides rich and detailed information on every municipality in the state, and should be of great assistance during the first part of my research.

While in Mexico City, I would be affiliated to the Centro de Estudios Históricos of El Colegio de México as a visiting student researcher. Dra. Alicia Hernández, director of the Centro, and Lic. Mario Ojeda, president of the Colegio, are familiar with my project and have pledged the support of their institution. I look forward to discussing my ideas on a regular basis with the faculty of the Colegio and with other scholars residing in Mexico City. In particular, Dr. Enrique Florescano and Dr. Arturo Warman have expressed their willingness to talk about my work and offer advice along the way.

For the remaining eight months I would be based in Xalapa, Veracruz. My stay in Veracruz would be devoted to archival research and to fieldwork. The holdings of the recently constituted Archivo General del Estado de Veracruz include documents from the Department of Agriculture and the Governor’s Office, as well as legislative records and a complete collection of the state’s oldest newspaper, El Dictamen. During my visit I was able to see considerable documentation for the period after 1940, little of which has been consulted by scholars. I have discussed my project with the director of the archive, Dra. Carmen Blázquez Domínguez, who has pledged to assist me. The Comisión Agraria Mixta in Xalapa keeps records of agrarian reform activity in Veracruz and is open to scholars. I would also consult the archive of the Liga de Comunidades Agrarias del Estado de Veracruz. Olivia Domínguez is currently cataloguing it and will allow me to work with it. In addition, she has offered to help me gain access to some of the local archives of member communities.

I have made arrangements to be a visiting researcher at the Centro de Investigaciones Históricas of the Universidad Veracruzana during my stay in Xalapa. This is very important for the success of my research because the Centro brings together a number of historians of Veracruz. I have had conversations with Richard Corzo, Olivia Domínguez, and Abel Juárez, among others, and their familiarity with sources and local institutions has already proved useful. I expect the Center to offer me office space and photocopying facilities. Sharing my work with these historians would be one of the most rewarding aspects of my trip to Mexico.

Reconstructing agricultural business networks in Veracruz for the period in question will involve conducting research in the local chambers of commerce; locating regional trade publications; searching for private papers, book collections, and business records; and especially travelling around the state in search of oral accounts and testimonies. The aim is to identify people and organizations who were involved in business and to learn about their activities. This part of my work is especially important not only for the conceptual reasons outlined above, but also because it incorporates research strategies that future scholars, further removed from the period in question, will not be able to employ. The range of contacts I have established with local historians at the Centro de Investigaciones Históricas should prove very useful in this respect. Other scholars in Mexico City who are natives of Veracruz have also offered to provide contacts.

To this end, I have also approached the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. Through its research director, Dra. Maya Lorenza Pérez Ruiz, I have arranged to share my research ideas with the staff of anthropologists at the INI's Coordinadora Estatal de Veracruz. I would then be allowed to join them during field trips to the rural communities with which they work, thus getting an opportunity to learn firsthand about those villages and to investigate the role of business interests therein.

### Preparation

This project has evolved from a long-standing personal interest in “development” studies and rural history, and had been approved as a dissertation proposal by Harvard's History Department. It was formulated in consultation with my advisor, Professor John Womack, who specializes in modern Mexican history and is an expert on Veracruz. He has been especially helpful in locating obscure bibliographical materials, and in suggesting research strategies. I have also benefited from the advice and encouragement of the rest of my PhD examiners: Professor John Tutino, who taught me colonial Mexican history; Professor Alfred Chandler, who taught me American business history; and Professor Thomas Bisson, who introduced me to medieval rural history and to the words of Marc Bloch.

Mexican rural history after 1940 remains to be written. My proposed work on business and agriculture in Veracruz between 1940 and 1958 will be a solid and innovative first step in that direction. It will demonstrate the necessity of incorporating business into the study of rural social relations. I am confident that the results will establish an agenda for modern agricultural history that subsequent scholarship would not be able to neglect.

**Note: The candidate also included a Bibliography, observing the page limit requirement.**

**Christopher Foster.** *This project statement is another example of the longer more elaborate proposal. In this case the student writes a seamless essay, without division into sub-sections. The project statement illustrates Paradigm C. It deals with a subject, the early use of writing in China, where there is a common belief that during the early period in Chinese history writing practices were unstable and oral traditions were more important. He studies newly discovered manuscripts in a genre neglected by scholars and shows how it helped to standardize both the form and content of writing.*

### **“Cang Jie Created Writing...”: A Model for Text Production in Early China**

My research project concerns the remarkable emergence of a mature manuscript culture during the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), when there occurred a shift away from oral traditions to a world largely defined by the written word. Explaining this transformation is of particular significance, as the popularization of writing allowed the Han Dynasty to become the first enduring empire in China, not to mention one of the most formative periods for Chinese thought. My project focuses on “character books” (*zishu* 字書), which is a genre that includes primers, dictionaries, and lexicons. The earliest dynastic bibliographies listed character books under the “primary education” (*xiaoxue* 小學) category, and ostensibly treated them as textbooks for children to learn how to read and write. It is here where students were first introduced to writing, and indeed where the range and function of writing was initially demarcated. An important example of this genre, holding a central place in my study, is the *Cang Jie Pian* (蒼頡篇), for which manuscript evidence has been newly discovered. Through a detailed study of the *Cang Jie Pian*, I aim to clarify who was engaged in writing character books, how these manuscripts were prepared and circulated, what purposes they were intended to serve, and ultimately what various roles writing itself played in the lives of Han individuals. To this end, it is imperative that I conduct my research in China, as the *Cang Jie Pian* manuscripts remain unpublished in full, and I must personally investigate their material features in close detail.

Over the past few decades, the study of early China has been revolutionized by dramatic discoveries of manuscripts written on sheets of silk or strips of bamboo and wood, such as those excavated from Mawangdui, Shuihudi, and Guodian. The impact of these finds however has been largely deconstructive in nature. As Michael Nylan observes, “interpreting this wealth of new material... has so complicated our current notions of text and ritual in the classical world that many in the field seem ready to jettison the old commonplaces, even if they remain unsure how to proceed.”<sup>1</sup> In this regard, the new finds have exposed how little we actually know about the use of writing “on the ground” during the Warring States (5th cen. – 221 BC), Qin (221 – 207 BC) and Han periods. This in turn has encouraged, for instance, an overemphasis on the orthographic instability and rhyming patterns witnessed in certain excavated manuscripts, with a resulting tendency to denigrate the importance of writing in favor of oral traditions.<sup>2</sup> My study responds to this trend by offering a positive model for how written texts were produced and utilized in early China.

While recent discoveries have inspired some fresh scholarship theorizing textual production in the Han, my proposed project is unique both in that it focuses on the genre of character books, and also because it systematically outlines the entire life of representative texts like the *Cang Jie Pian*, from harvesting the bamboo down to reading the finished manuscript.<sup>3</sup> To date, the genre of character books has been neglected by scholars. Unlike other recent bamboo-strip manuscript finds in China, such as the philosophical treatises from Guodian, newly discovered character books have not attracted much attention in modern scholarship, particularly in Western language publications.<sup>4</sup> Sinologists have generally treated primers, dictionaries, and like materials as merely linguistic databases, to be mined selectively in order to solve textual problems presented in other documents, but rarely treated holistically in their own right.<sup>5</sup> I would like to correct this methodological oversight, and demonstrate that these are much more complex texts, worthy of their own dedicated study.

Learning from a character book is an act uniquely situated at the crossroad between readership (in looking over the characters to be copied) and authorship (in copying characters down), and one moreover that bridges between oral traditions (in a teacher reviewing aloud to students) and the personal mastery of writing, making the genre especially pertinent for the concerns of my study. These works are not only self-propagating, in that they constantly generate new editions via the hand of a student, but also selfreflexive, implicitly commenting on and then transforming the textual arena in which they also participate. In this light, character books are an especially potent tool for standardizing both the form and content of writing, which is why it is no surprise that some of the most influential figures in Qin and Han China are said to have authored their own editions, or that aspiring officials may have been tested on their mastery of these texts to gain positions in the Han bureaucracy.<sup>6</sup>

My project is also innovative in its methodological frame, as I will approach textual production from three different levels of analysis: the material, technical and intellectual. By the material production of a text, I am referring to how bamboo-strip scrolls (the equivalent of a book in Han times) were fashioned as actual artifacts. Physical features, such as unusual slanting scratches we've recently noticed on the verso of many strips, present clues that will help me reconstruct the *chaîne opératoire* for these manuscripts.<sup>7</sup> For example, I believe that these scratches in particular will prove that strips were carved in small batches and "numbered" before being bound together with cord, only to then be written upon at the same site locally, but later transported elsewhere for consumption. Features like these scratches cannot be seen on published photographs, when such publications are available, which is why it is so important that I work with the manuscripts in person.

Next is the technical production of a text, which concerns the application of calligraphic skills in the scribal act itself. At this level of analysis, I will for instance compare character variants to discuss the varying degrees of literacy exhibited by the scribes of these newly discovered manuscripts.<sup>8</sup> Characters were often mistakenly written based on similarities in the sound, form, or meaning to other like characters, much as we might mistake the English words of 'which' and 'witch', or miswrite 'witch' for 'watch', or switch 'watch' with 'clock'. By quantitatively documenting these types of variants, I will be able to imagine the conditions under which given manuscripts were inked, such as whether a scribe was looking at a master copy (and potentially misreading), or listening to a teacher's instructions (and potentially mishearing them).<sup>9</sup> Only having access to the character book manuscripts themselves in China, and not just low-quality photographs or hand-drawings where they have been (rarely) published, will allow me to notice these often slight variations.

My final level of analysis is the intellectual production of a text, including the selection of content and outlining the various uses of the text as final product. One specific approach I will pursue at this stage is to explicate vocabulary choices in character books. Why were certain characters included, while others are apparently left out? How does this vocabulary relate to that found in other texts circulating during the Han? What does this suggest about the audience for character books, or why they were composed in the first place? I would like to map out (perhaps literally, using visualization software) how characters are positioned vis-à-vis one another, to better understand their semantic relationships, and see how these specific word choices and usages might then be reflected in the larger corpus of Han writings. Once again, working in China next year is crucial for this part of my project as well, as I may then discuss the meaning of archaic or unknown character forms with some of the most renown paleographers in field.

Each of these three levels of analysis (the material, technical and intellectual), although treated separately at first, will ultimately be brought into dialogue with one another for a more holistic understanding of the processes underlying manuscript production in Han China. Indeed, I believe that it is only through such a nuanced understanding of Han manuscript culture, as this methodology uniquely pursues, that we may appreciate the full context of the written word in early China, and thus begin to write responsible intellectual

history. In this light, my study will contribute to a number of debates that have defined the field of early China. For example, much has been made about the Qin biblioclasm and ensuing standardization of the Chinese script, though questions have been raised about how efficiently this program was executed.<sup>10</sup> My study turns to the character books directly as a vehicle for script standardization, and may help answer questions about the target and reach of this crusade. Similarly it was during the Han Dynasty that the Confucian classics were first canonized, though there is no consensus as to exactly how or when this took place. The infamous “ancient script (*guwen* 古文)” versus “modern script (*jinwen* 今文)” debate is intimately connected to this phenomenon, but it is likewise poorly understood.<sup>11</sup> I would like to explore how calligraphy itself (as opposed to textual content alone), one aspect of a character book’s curriculum, also held political overtones and might motivate these divisions. Indeed the Han Dynasty witnesses the beginning of an appreciation of calligraphy as art and personal expression, which is a development that I think stems from these very character books also.<sup>12</sup> These are only a few of the broader topics with which I would like to engage in my research.

In regards to the sources for my research, the focus of my project is the *Cang Jie Pian*. The *Cang Jie Pian* takes its name after Cang Jie, the mythic inventor of Chinese characters, but is said to have been authored in part by the Qin statesman Li Si. Thought to be lost by the end of the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907), a number of wood and bamboo-strip manuscript fragments of the *Cang Jie Pian* have been recovered over the past century dating to the Han period. I’ve already identified materials from the *Cang Jie Pian* in ten different caches, with the most complete manuscripts excavated from the sites of Fuyang and Shuiquanzi, and purchased by Peking University off the antique market in Hong Kong.<sup>13</sup> *Cang Jie Pian* fragments have been found in a broad variety of archaeological contexts that span all across China, from an elite burial in Anhui, to trash piles among frontier forts around Xinjiang and Gansu, suggesting that the text enjoyed widespread distribution, and perhaps hinting at an even larger role for character books in this period.<sup>14</sup>

My project will also however draw upon other sources selectively. While the *Cang Jie Pian* is the earliest extant character book known from the dynastic bibliographies, next year I hope to investigate an even earlier work, the provisionally titled *Chu Zi Xi* (楚字析), held by the Shanghai Museum.<sup>15</sup> This bamboo-strip manuscript dates to the Warring States period and thus offers a glimpse of character books from before the unification of China by the Qin, and before their supposed efforts to standardize the script. Finally, there have also been discoveries of short fragments from the *Ji Jiu Zhang* (急就章), another character book composed during the Han Dynasty.<sup>16</sup> The *Ji Jiu Zhang* is unique in that it has been transmitted down to the present presumably intact, allowing for an interesting comparison between excavated and received editions of the same text.

The Peking University edition of the *Cang Jie Pian* remains unpublished, while the Shuiquanzi and Fuyang editions are only partially published or include photographs too unclear to use in my research. Likewise the Shanghai Museum *Chu Zi Xi* has also not been published in any form. Gaining access to the original manuscript artifacts is thus paramount to the success of my project. This is the case even for those collections for which data has already been made available, let alone those still unpublished, as aspects of my research require that I personally examine the strips for features not otherwise visible, such as the verso scratches or minute brushwork variants mentioned before. In addition to accessing primary sources, conducting research in China is an opportunity for me to learn from paleographers intimate with the artifacts I’m studying. Moreover, it will allow me to continue to use and improve my language skills, and also share with Chinese scholars my own research and that of Western sinologists generally.

In order to prepare for my project, I have already studied other important primary sources, including character books found only in the received corpus like the *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (說文解字), *Er Ya* (爾雅), *Xiao Er Ya* (小爾雅), *Shi Ming* (釋名), and *Fang Yan* (方言).<sup>17</sup> To expand my scholarly horizons, I’ve also familiarized myself with theoretical work on historical archaeology discussing the relationship between



text and artifact,<sup>18</sup> as well as on literacy and oral traditions in ancient cultures besides China, to bring in a comparative perspective.<sup>19</sup>

This past year I have also served as a Senior Visiting Scholar at Peking University working alongside Zhu Fenghan (朱鳳瀚), who is responsible for editing the Peking University Han bamboo-strip manuscripts. Under Zhu's guidance, I've finished reviewing secondary scholarship on the *Cang Jie Pian*, and was fortunate enough to briefly inspect the Peking University bamboo strips in person on multiple occasions, allowing me to identify more precisely those features that I need to examine in detail next year. Zhu has agreed to continue working with me, and just recently provided me with his own transcriptions and annotations for the Peking University *Cang Jie Pian*, which we will go through together character by character should I be allowed to remain in Beijing. Zhu has also offered to make introductions for me in the future as I travel to other institutions to view their materials. In addition to Zhu Fenghan, I've been fortunate to interact regularly with other Chinese scholars as well, including Li Ling (李零). It was Li Ling who first told me about the *Chu Zi Xi* in the Shanghai Museum, information that would have been difficult or impossible to learn of otherwise.<sup>20</sup>

I have already obtained Zhu's approval to extend my affiliation with Peking University, and submitted the appropriate application (see attached). Should I receive a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship and remain at Peking University, I will have ample opportunity to share my research. I plan to continue auditing Zhu's courses, and moreover Peking University will hold a conference dedicated to the *Cang Jie Pian* next fall, during which I hope to present my initial findings. It is also my personal goal to publish an informal article in Chinese (ideally on [www.bsm.org.cn](http://www.bsm.org.cn) or a similar paleography blog), and of course ultimately circulate my dissertation to Zhu and other Chinese scholars as well, to reciprocate for the guidance they have so graciously offered.

Thank you for your consideration.

<sup>1</sup> Nylan, Michael. "Toward an Archaeology of Writing: Text, Ritual, and the Culture of Public Display in the Classical Period (475 B.C.E.-220 C.E)." *Text and Ritual in Early China*. Ed. Martin Kern. Seattle:

<sup>2</sup> For example, Martin Kern's work on *Shijing* citations in Warring States excavated manuscripts argues that texts were primarily composed and transmitted orally, the implication being that these texts are now only available to scholars indirectly and fundamentally transformed. See: Kern, Martin. "The *Odes* in Excavated Manuscripts." *Text and Ritual in Early China*, pp.149-193. This understanding pressures scholars to treat written texts in isolation, and without any expectation of coherency, which are dangerous assumptions, particularly if Kern's conclusions are extended into the Han without proper study. See: Radich, Michael. "Orality, Literacy, and Early Chinese Philosophical Texts." Harvard University, 2003. Unpublished paper.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Puett, my advisor, recently edited a volume on the *Huainanzi* addressing textual production in the Han, which has provided inspiration for my own research. See: Queen, Sarah A., and Michael Puett, eds. *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Only two articles have been published in Western languages on this *Cang Jie Pian* manuscripts: Greatrex, Roger. "An Early Western Han Synonymicon: The Fuyang Copy of the *Cang Jie Pian*." *Outstretched Leaves on His Bamboo Staff*. Ed. Joakim Enwall. Stockholm: Association of Oriental Studies, 1994, pp.97- 113; Bottéro, Françoise. "Les Manuels De Caractères à L'époque Des Han Occidentaux." *Éducation et Instruction en Chine*. Ed. Tri and Despeaux. Paris: Peeters, 2003-4, pp.99-120. In China, Hu Pingsheng (胡平生) has published a number of articles on the *Cang Jie Pian*, see for instance: "苍颉篇的初步研究."

《文物》2 (1983): 35-40; Japanese scholar Fukua Tetsuyuki (福田哲之) has also studied this text, see:

《説文以前小學書の研究》東京: 創文社, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Greatrex 1994, esp. pp.107-11, is particularly indicative of this bias. Jan Vihan's recent dissertation on the *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (説文解字) from the received corpus is however a refreshing turn away from this approach: Vihan, Jan. *Language, Likeness, and the Han Phenomenon of Convergence*. Diss. Harvard University, awarded 2012.

- <sup>6</sup> Robin Yates suggests that the *Cang Jie Pian* might have been used in this capacity, based on his study of recently excavated statutes from Zhangjiashan that list character counts for testing scribes. See: Yates, Robin D.S. "Soldiers, Scribes, and Women: Literacy among the Lower Orders in Early China." *Writing & Literacy in Early China: Studies from the Columbia Early China Seminar*. Eds. Li Feng, et al. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011, pp.339-69, esp. pp.350-1.
- <sup>7</sup> Although identified on the Baoshan strips in the 1990s, the importance of these scratches were first appreciated in: 孫沛陽. "簡冊背劃綫初探". 《出土文獻與古文字研究》12 (2011): 449-62.
- <sup>8</sup> Li Feng and David Prager Branner confess that "it is an embarrassment that so little study has been undertaken on the development of literacy in a civilization such as China's, supremely devoted as it is to the values of writing and reading," and thus their recent edited volume on the topic was intended as "the first of a series of probes into the darkness" of this new field. My project will offer further illumination. See: Li, Feng, et al. *Writing & Literacy in Early China: Studies from the Columbia Early China Seminar*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011. For the only sustained treatment on literacy in China previously, see: Rawski, Evelyn Sakakida. *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979.
- <sup>9</sup> I anticipate that patterns in character variation will differ according to the nature of the manuscripts I compare, with "master copies" by literate scribes used in teaching revealing an attempt at orthographic standardization, and "practice scraps" exposing a rather wider range of variants that hint at oral instruction and the illiteracy of pupils. Inspiration for this methodology was drawn from: Nugent, Christopher M. B. *Manifest in Words, Written on Paper: Producing and Circulating Poetry in Tang Dynasty China*. Harvard- Yenching Institute Monograph Series. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010
- <sup>10</sup> William Boltz and Imre Galambos for example have applied the new paleographic finds to discuss the standardization of the script in this period, both in its successes and shortcomings. See: Boltz, William G. *The Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System*. New Haven: American Oriental Series, 1994; Galambros, Imre. *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing: Evidence from Newly Excavated Manuscripts*. Budapest: Department of East Asian Studies, Eotvos Lorand University, 2006.
- <sup>11</sup> For recent work on this debate, see: Nylan, Michael. "The Chin Wen/Ku Wen Controversy in Han Times." *T'oung Pao* 80.1-3 (1994): 83-145; Nylan, Michael. "The Ku Wen Documents in Han Times." *T'oung Pao* 81.1-3 (1995): 25-50; Van Ess, Hans. "The Old Text/New Text Controversy: Has the Twentieth Century Got It Wrong?" *T'oung Pao* 80.1-3 (1994): 146-70; Van Ess, Hans. "The Apocryphal Texts of the Han Dynasty and the Old Text/New Text Controversy." *T'oung Pao* 85.1/3 (1999): 29-64.
- <sup>12</sup> The *Ji Jiu Zhang* in particular comes to be associated with early works of calligraphy as such. For a view of the late beginnings of calligraphy that I would like to oppose in particular, see: Nylan, Michael. "Calligraphy: The Sacred Text and Text of Culture." *Character and Context in Chinese Calligraphy*. Ed. Cary Y. Liu et al. Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum, 1999, 1-42.
- <sup>13</sup> See respectively: 阜阳汉简整理组. "阜阳汉简苍颉篇." 《文物》2 (1983): 24-34; 张存良, et al. "水泉子汉简初识." 《文物》10 (2009): 88-91; and 朱凤瀚. "北大汉简苍颉篇概述." 《文物》6 (2011): 57-63.
- <sup>14</sup> For the Anhui burial, refer to the Fuyang report above. For fragments collected from northwest China, see for example: 王濤, et al. 《英國國家圖書館藏斯坦因所獲未刊漢文簡牘》. 上海: 上海辭書出版社, 2007.
- <sup>15</sup> There have been no formal publications announcing this manuscript. I am indebted to Li Ling for bringing it to my attention.
- <sup>16</sup> See for instance: 羅振玉, et al. 《流沙墜簡》. 北京: 中華書局, 1993.
- <sup>17</sup> These texts, and others I've found particularly useful, have been listed in the attached bibliography. <sup>18</sup> The classic treatment is with: Deetz, James. *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977. I have drawn inspiration also from: André, Anders. *Between Artifacts and Texts: Historical Archaeology in Global Perspective*. New York: Plenum Press, 1998; Moreland, John. "Archaeology and Texts: Subsistence or Enlightenment." *Annual Review of Archaeology* 35.136-228 (2006). For the Chinese context, see among his other statements: Falkenhausen, Lothar von. "On the Historiographical Orientation of Chinese Archaeology." *Antiquity* 67 (1993): 839-49.

<sup>19</sup> For a few representative works, see: Harris, William V. *Ancient Literacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989; Havelock, Eric Alfred. *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986; Johnson, William A., and Holt N. Parker. *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Meuthen, 1982.

<sup>20</sup> My advisor, Michael Puett, once studied with Li Ling and secured my initial affiliation with Peking University through him, for which I am extremely grateful.

## SAMPLE BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS FOR FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS

Some applications ask for a CV or seek a more extended biographical essay — for example, the Fulbright Institute of International Education application includes a CV in essay form that asks for such personal history as family background, intellectual influences, enriching experiences and how they have affected you. **Whether it is a standard CV or a biographical essay, it is important to be selective and to present those aspects of your background that emphasize how well qualified and well suited you are for the particular fellowship.** The essay is not the occasion to “tell the story of your life.” A good idea in preparing to write the essay or CV is to make a list in hierarchic order of what you think are your most outstanding qualifications and then work them into a personal essay or a CV. In organizing a regular CV the typical procedure is to list things in reverse chronological order, since your most impressive qualifications or experiences are probably your most recent ones. For the same reasons you might even want to organize your biographical essay in that fashion: you need not start from the beginning—it is possible to work backwards.

The three examples presented here — all written for the Cultural Exchange Fulbright application — show how effectively the biographical essay can convey the unique qualities of a candidate. Note how the examples combine the requested personal history with some of the more standard items of a CV such as scholarly or other professional achievements.

*Note how all the biographical essays combine the personal and the professional, weaving smoothly between the two. This combination is important for the Fulbright personal essay, since the competition seeks applicants with strong interpersonal skills, the maturity to adapt to a new culture, and also strong scholarly preparation for the research project.*

## **Biographical Essay of Jason Paulson**

Doctoral students in the humanities invest over five years of their life alone in the archives, poring over the detritus of dead generations, with no job guarantees after their degree. But, at the same time, they are also engaged in the best way life can offer. Gripped by a passionate intensity that refuses to release them, doctoral students are attracted in the way of young love – wondrous, bright-eyed, and always beautiful. It takes this level of intensity to swear fidelity to one’s research and follow it wherever it may lead – across borders and continents, in sickness and in health. It’s what I’ve sworn, on bended knee, to the study of Japanese modernity.

It is seven years now since this intellectual liaison began, while still an undergraduate at Yale. Far from love at first sight, the process of seduction started with a slowly unfolding mystery. What did it mean for Asia to be modern? Could there be a modernity that did not, in some way, imply a European model? These questions first led me to anthropology, in particular the lectures of Bill Kelly (suggestively titled “Culture, Society, Modernity”). By the end of that year, Professor Kelly had graciously invited me into his graduate seminar in the anthropology of Japan. Professor Kelly urged me to replace easy critiques of modernization with the rigorous labor of deep scholarship. He furthermore gave me the unique opportunity of conducting fieldwork in Shikoku for three months.

It was in the process of taking on the role of an anthropologist that I discovered my attraction to historical research. At first, this was admittedly a selfish interest. I thought: informants stared back at you, but archives didn’t. What I quickly discovered instead was that history, too, was a harsh judge, humbling me by revealing the extent to which my own thoughts were often immature recapitulations of those past. The richness of nineteenth century materials, in particular, awoke me to the relative simplicity to which contemporary debates had reduced questions of modernity, Japan, and Europe. For an earlier period, concepts of West and East were extremely porous; the dialogic of encounter was dynamic, malleable, and agentic. This consequently became my chosen field. I wrote a prize-winning senior thesis on it; I continued to pursue historical research at the University of Tokyo after graduating from Yale. Over these years, my constant partner – the question of Japanese modernity – grew with me. I became aware that my original idea of modernity as a choice between “Asia” and “Europe” was overly schematic. I<sup>SEP</sup> even began to question whether “modernity” was a useful historical concept at all. These<sup>SEP</sup> musings drew me to Harvard, where I study under Shigehisa Kuriyama. For me, Professor Kuriyama’s work was singular in its ability to take the comparative history of Asia and Europe and paint an intimate portrait of a whole other way of being and experiencing. Under his guidance, I came to believe that a history of how things became modern could also be a history that liberates us from the very constraints of modernity itself.

Perhaps, as Carol Gluck contends, modernity is ultimately a condition neither optional nor dispensable – a historical equivalent to the law of gravity binding us to this earth. If so, then the work I aim to produce could be described as a catalog of Japanese bodies poised midair in freefall. For while descending, we can still choose what position our bodies will take. We can curl up into a ball, plunge with arched arms outstretched as a diver, or even pose for imagined cameras. I see in the thought of nineteenth-century Japan this open air of possibilities. I feel in the intellectual rush of the period a terrifying dizziness whose perils also imply a kind of sheer freedom. Hazard and potentiality – a sense of thrill, danger, and hope just beyond the threshold of our horizons: these are the ingredients of the most passionate loves in our life. Are they insane? Maybe. Are they an experience worth having? Unquestionably.

## **Biographical Essay of Jorge Santez**

Twenty-seven years ago my mother gave birth to me in Arecibo, a small town on the northern coast of Puerto Rico. My family did not, however, spend much time in Puerto Rico following my birth. Before my first birthday, my father joined the United States Air Force and we moved to South Carolina. Two years later we went to San Antonio, Texas, where we lived for two more years.

Apparently nostalgic for the tropical scene, my father successfully requested a transfer to the Air Force base in Ramey, Puerto Rico. We made Ramey our home for three years, until my father left the Armed Forces, honorably discharged. Already with a troop of his own — five children, a wife, and a mother-in-law — he moved to Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.

In Guaynabo, I experienced physical stability for the first time. I did not leave until nine years later to go to college. One of the most significant aspects of this period was my Jesuit high school education at Colegio San Ignacio de Loyola. The Jesuits, some of whom I still keep in touch with, instilled in me a passion for learning and community service.

I left home in 1979 to attend Harvard University, where I took a degree in economics and philosophy, magna cum laude. I wrote a Senior Honors Thesis under Robert Dorfman and John Rawls contrasting the philosophical underpinnings of Classical and Marxian economics. The thesis argued, more specifically, that the different understanding of what scientific concepts are in these two traditions contributes significantly to their divergence in approach and results.

Right after college I entered Yale Law School, attracted by its philosophical and interdisciplinary bent. At Yale, in addition to taking captivating courses and being a senior editor for the Law Journal, I was able to start teaching. I worked as a teaching fellow in the course “Civil Procedure” at the law school and in “Philosophy of Law” in the philosophy department. I met the law school’s supervised analytic writing (SAW) requirement with a paper under Owen Fiss on German philosopher Jurgen Habermas’ notion of rationalization of law and did clinical work for a New Haven public interest law firm. After law school, I took a one-year position as a judicial clerk for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Stephen Reinhardt in Los Angeles.

In 1987 I joined the graduate program in philosophy at Harvard University. I pondered considerably my choice. In college and law school, my philosophical interests had centered around the so-called “continental” philosophers: Fichte, Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Habermas. During my law school days, I even began learning German in order to pursue this interest further. I opted for a department known for its strength in Anglo-American “analytic” philosophy, however, because I wanted to be well-versed in this rich and rigorous tradition. In fact, my research and writing will involve the two traditions. I want to study the philosophy of Hegel as well as its relevance to contemporary analytic political philosophy.

Given my area of specialty, studying in Germany is indispensable for me. Effective scholarship in Hegel requires mastering the German language. By the end of this year, I will have taken almost four years of German. The next logical step is to spend some time speaking and reading the language on a regular basis. In Germany, moreover, I would have wider access to the primary and secondary sources on Hegel and invaluable exposure to German students and professors dedicated to Hegel. A direct acquaintance with these material and human resources available will help me significantly not only with my doctoral investigation but undoubtedly with my future professional work as well.

As this essay has perhaps already suggested, I am committed to a career in academia. This aspiration has developed over many years. Throughout my life, I have encountered numerous situations and people that have taught me to love cultivating and sharing ideas, as well as investigating their practical applications. As a professor, I will be in a unique position to pass on this love to generations to come.

### **Biographical Essay of Ruth Kolman**

One of the lessons I have learned at Harvard is how thoroughly I am a product of my West Coast upbringing. I grew up near San Francisco, privileged with good public schools, beautiful surroundings and a strong, devoted mother. When I was ten my parents divorced. On holidays I flew with my two brothers and sister, sometimes alone, to Catalina Island where my father, living with his wife and younger children, practiced medicine. Despite the emotional wear and tear, growing up in a divorced family made me independent at an early age and taught me how to adapt to new surroundings.

I first awoke to a world beyond California at fifteen when I spent a year as an exchange student in a small northern German town. All of my studies and travels since have been shaped by the curiosity that first introduction to a foreign culture and different national history sparked. Living in Europe, I was confronted with new, sometimes negative images of the United States. I instinctively defended my country and world view, but was often overwhelmed by my politically engaged German peers. I returned home with a strong desire to sort out the conflicting views of America I had encountered.

To better understand America's world role, I chose to study political science at the University of California, Berkeley. I spent my junior year at Goettingen, where I began reading twentieth century German literature to understand how the nation dealt with its National Socialist past and the problem of national identity. Curious about how American culture had been used to fill the cultural vacuum of the postwar period, I researched and wrote a paper on U.S. Armed Forces' German-language newspapers.

Moving to Japan to teach English I was instantly struck by the superficial similarity of the rebuilt urban environment with German cities. When I learned of Japanese customs and talked about cultural differences with students and friends I inevitably referred back to Germany. My personal experiences and studies of modern history have made it impossible to speak of one country without the other. The themes of my current research, specifically the social impact of war and occupation, and the production of memory, history and identity come from questions that arose while living in each country.

My earning a PhD is, in a sense, a result of both frustration and idealism. Growing up in the 1960's and 1970's in California left me wanting to change the world. I have been overwhelmed by the task. The possibility of teaching people to think critically, to recognize a multiplicity of histories and to challenge fatalism and passivity, however, has encouraged me to devote myself to academics. As a new graduate student from the West struggling to adjust to Harvard I often thought my communication skills were being wasted in the library stacks. Teaching discussion sections for Core courses on Japan has cleared up such doubts. I set off to research abroad with a new kind of idealism. I strongly believe that my dissertation will not only contribute to much needed scholarship on Asia but will be significant for future U.S. - Japanese relations.



## **APPENDIX B SAMPLE CURRICULUM VITAE AND COVER LETTERS**

### **FOR ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT**

#### **ABOUT THESE CURRICULUM VITAE SAMPLES:**

The process of writing a curriculum vita is a highly individualized one. It is important to pay attention to your own strengths and to tailor some of the more flexible categories in a manner that best highlights those strengths. For particular job descriptions, you will also want to highlight those qualifications that show how well matched you are for particular positions. The samples presented here have been chosen because they illustrate helpful points about how to proceed (the particular points are identified in footnotes). There is, however, no single model that will work for everyone or for every position, and it is important to keep that in mind when viewing the samples.

**HELEN KUNO<sup>17</sup>**

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Cambridge, Ma. 02138  
e-mail: Kuno@hugsas

Phone: (617) 876-3208 (home)  
(617) 495-4444 (office)

**EDUCATION**

Harvard University Ph.D. (expected)  
University M.A.  
Stanford University B.A.  
*Phi Beta Kappa*

Dept. of Anthropology 2007 Harvard  
Dept. of Anthropology 2003  
Dept. of Anthropology 2000

**DISSERTATION**

“Work, Family, and the Self: A Cultural Analysis of Japanese Family Enterprise”

A study of concepts of the self and the social world among owners and workers in small family enterprises in Japan. The dissertation does the following:

- 1) Applies the concepts and methods developed in symbolic anthropology to the relatively new field of the anthropology of work, and complements the rich existing literature in kinship studies and industrial relations.
- 2) Focuses upon a vitally important yet little-studied sector of Japanese society: the small, urban family enterprise.
- 3) Is based upon two-and-a-half years of field work in Tokyo, Japan. Primary research techniques included:
  - a) Participant observation — Working in Japanese family enterprises, three months in the service industry, and one year in a factory; living for three months with a family who owned their own small company, and thereafter in the neighborhood in which I worked; participation in community activities such as festivals, tea ceremony lessons, adult education, company trips, and other events.
  - b) Interviews, both formal and informal.
  - c) Written materials, including statistics, government documents, and scholarly works, in both Japanese and English.

**HONORS AND GRANTS**

Social Science Research Council Dissertation Fellowship (write-up grant) 2006 Fulbright-Cultural Exchange/IIE Fellowship 2005  
Fulbright-Hays/DDRA Dissertation Fellowship 2003  
Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship 2002, 2000

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<sup>17</sup> This CV illustrates a dissertation abstract that presents the project's contribution to the field clearly in outline form, and includes both substantive issues and research techniques. The candidate omits a longer version as an attachment, since she feels that this outline form is most effective. The remaining categories after the dissertation and their order are determined by what the candidate feels are her strongest and most relevant qualifications for college or university teaching positions. Thus, her honors, which are impressive, appear early in the vita. Under teaching, she is careful to present both subject matter and level of responsibility, including lectures she gave.

Dept. of Anthropology, Harvard University; grant for exploratory summer research on Japanese career and professional women 2001

Japan Foundation/Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs; grant for one-month language/study tour of Japan 1999

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Fellow, Harvard University Courses

Taught:

Senior Thesis Individual Tutorial, Committee on East Asian Studies 2006-07

Advising senior concentrators in East Asian Studies who are writing senior honors theses on Japan, or sociological/anthropological theses on China. Principal duties are editing and academic counseling.

“The Anthropology of Religion”, Prof. Evon Z. Vogt 2003

Led discussion section; organized Japan section of course; gave four lectures. Undergraduate course, surveying major theoretical approaches to the study of religion and ritual, applying theories to ethnographic data from four cultures: Eskimo, Zinacanteco, Japanese, and American.

Junior Tutorial, Committee on Folklore and Mythology 2002

Organized and led small discussion seminar on anthropological approaches to the study of myth and ritual. Class consisted of junior concentrators in Folklore and Mythology.

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Kodansha International, Publishers. The Encyclopaedia of Japan. 2002

Research and writing on various topics in Japanese religion.

Research Assistant to Prof. Harumi Befu, Dept. of Anthropology, Stanford University. 2000

Tabulating data collected by Prof. Befu on Japanese gift-giving and social exchange.

## PAPERS

“Creating an Ideal Self: Ethics Training in Japan”, unpublished manuscript based on field research. 2006

“The Way of Tea; A Symbolic Analysis of the Japanese Tea Ceremony”, special paper, Harvard

University. Forthcoming in S.J. Tambiah, ed., volume on ritual. 2003

“The Miko: Women and Shamanism in Japan”, unpublished senior honors thesis, Stanford University. 2000.

**RONALD PARKER<sup>18</sup>**

113 Mather House  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 498-4593  
e-mail: Parker@Hugsas

**EDUCATION**

**Ph.D. Harvard University** (expected June, 2017)  
**A.M. Harvard University**, 2012  
**B.A. Columbia University**, May 2010

**DISSERTATION TOPIC**

“The Unbounded Community: Neighborhood Life and Social Structure in New York City, 1830-1875”.  
(See attached summary)  
Advisor: Professor Stephan Thernstrom

**PREPARED TO TEACH**

Urban History (See Summary of Thesis)  
Quantitative History (See Quantitative Skills)  
American Social History (General Examination field with Stephan Thernstrom)  
Survey American Political History (See Teaching Experience)  
Historical Sociology (General Examination field in Historical Sociology with Professor Orlando Patterson)

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

Charles Warren Center Summer Grant for Research (Summer, 2014)  
Harvard University History Department Grant for Summer Research (Summer, 2014) Charles Warren Scholarship in American History (2010-2012)

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Head Section Person  
“American Political History, 1920 to the Present”. 2015-2016.

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<sup>18</sup> The candidate opts to discuss the dissertation on a separate page as an attachment to the CV. He still gives the dissertation its own heading and a prominent position on the first page of the CV, referring the reader to the attached summary. In the summary, the candidate not only deals with substantive issues and research techniques, but also shares some important findings from the dissertation. He makes optimal use of this length — not too short, but not too long — to convey how the dissertation contributes to the field. The candidate also includes a category on what he is prepared to teach, placing it near the beginning of the CV. For each item in this category he cites the principal source of this preparation, making it more concrete. Under teaching, he highlights his role as Head Section Person, and explains the special administrative responsibilities of that role. Finally, he rounds out his background with related experience, research, languages and quantitative skills — the last item being treated with specific detail about the skills.

## **Ronald Parker, page 2 Teaching Fellow**

Oversaw the teaching of two other teaching assistants for a class with over 160 students and conducted two sections. Prepared class assignments and some course examinations. Lectured on the Cold War, the Korean War, and McCarthyism

“American Political History, 1870-1920”. 2013-2014, 2012-2013

Lectured on “Immigrants, Bosses and Machines”, and on “Urban Reform During the Progressive Era”.

“Supervised Research for Senior Thesis”. 2015-2016, 2014-2015.

Topics included “Promise and Performance: The History and Accomplishments of Private Pension Plans in the United States”, “Protest from Depression to Prosperity: An Analysis of the Harlem Riots of 1935 and 1943”, “Paradise Lost: Park Development in New York 1850-1910”, “Planning the Central Artery in Boston, 1909-1979”, and “Black Rights and the Second World War, America’s Battle at Home”.

“Junior Tutorial in American History”. 2014-2015, 2013-2014.

Developed syllabus for and taught a small conference course in general American History.

Supervised Independent Study in Jacksonian American History and American Urban History. 2013 to 2014

“Sophomore Tutorial in History”. 2012-2013.

Taught an introductory conference course on topics in World History. Wrote a syllabus for American History that was employed the following year.

## **Teaching Assistant**

“The New Deal” under Professor Frank B. Freidel. 2013-2014, 2012-2013.

Aided in conference course and had experience evaluating substantive research papers.

## **RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Mather House, Harvard University**

Resident Advisor, August 2014 to the present.

Serve as academic advisor to history concentrators in the House. Social Responsibilities include the History Table, Wine Stewardship, Lapidary Workshop, and Coordination of Faculty Dinners.

Non-resident Advisor, March 2013 to August 2014.

## **RESEARCH**

“The Politics of Municipal Default: Patrician Reform and the Establishment of the Fall River Board of Finance”. (2013)

“Work and Residence in Ante-Bellum New York City: Broadway—A Neighborhood Reconstitution”. (2011)

“Boardinghouse Structure and Function in Ante-Bellum Boston”. (2011)

## **QUANTITATIVE SKILLS**

Computer Languages and Packages: SPSS, SAS, Loglin, Harvard Computer Program for Analyzing Sociological Data, and assorted Editing languages.

Statistical Techniques: Factor Analysis, Log-Linear Analysis, Iterative Proportional Fitting, Analysis of Variance, Linear Regression.

**Ronald Parker, page 3**

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Spanish (Proficiency in Reading and Speaking). German (Adequate Reading).

**SUMMARY OF THESIS**

The rapid turnover in population in nineteenth century cities and the chaotic ordering of the neighborhoods has led many historians to focus almost exclusively on the social dislocation and uprootedness that they felt urban life brought. This dissertation seeks to re-examine these assumptions by searching for evidence of social networks and social mechanisms that might have served to cushion the adjustment of both newly arrived and settled urbanites in four New York City wards between 1830 and 1875. To this end, both quantitative and qualitative sources, such as manuscript state census, savings accounts, police blotters, church memberships, baptisms, marriages, government documents, diaries and guidebooks were scrutinized using the three essential definitions of neighborhood offered by modern sociologists: 1) the ecological roots of community as shown by the role of social status, family and ethnicity in shaping neighborhood selection; 2) the symbolic community or the ways in which contemporaries defined their neighborhoods; and 3) the social community or the role of informal and formal ties in helping to anchor the lives of many nineteenth century New Yorkers. Through statistical analysis, employing factor analysis and iterative proportional fitting, this study provides solid evidence which calls for a redefinition of the total dislocation that urban life was thought to present. Social networks and kinship ties are found to extend well beyond the confines of the immediate neighborhood to suburbs and satellite cities throughout the New York metropolitan area. Through a weak constellation of countrymen, co-workers, and friends, New Yorkers not only avoided dislocation, but also “found themselves as well protected and as comfortable as in a smaller town.”

**JOHN BAKER GRUFF<sup>19</sup>**  
12 Wendell Street  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138  
(617) 876-3457

## **EDUCATION**

Harvard University, Ph.D., Romance Languages and Literatures, 2007  
Harvard University, A.M., Romance Languages and Literatures, 2002  
Williams College, B.A., Romance Languages, Philosophy, 1993 Sweet  
Briar College Junior Year in Paris, 1991-1992

## **HONORS**

*Phi Beta Kappa* (Williams College), 1993  
Benedict Prize in French (Williams College), 1993 Woodrow  
Wilson Fellow, 1993

## **DISSERTATION**

“From *Centenaire* to *Millionaire*: Collectors and Collections in Balzac, 1822-1847”

My dissertation explores the emergence of the collector of art and antiques as a character type in the works of Balzac. Focusing primarily on the *Comédie humaine*, but also using texts from Balzac’s juvenilia and journalism, I trace the gradual evolution of the collector from harmless eccentric to heroic preserver of traditional values. This involves examining the collector as social type, as psychological phenomenon, and most importantly as avatar of the novelist himself. By treating Balzac the novelist as a kind of collector, I show that his work involves “collecting” at various levels: at the level of subject matter, at the level of descriptive structure, and at the level of the *Comédie humaine*, a collection of collections designed as a microcosm of the “real” world beyond the text.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY, 2003-2007**  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

**Program in History and Literature**

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<sup>19</sup> The candidate chooses to present the dissertation and its contribution in a succinct well-written paragraph — again with no attachment at the end. Under teaching, he makes a distinct separation between college-level experience and work done at the secondary level. The overall effect of the combined experiences is to show a strong background in French literature, language and civilization — thus allowing him to apply for a wide range of positions. The inclusion of academic service and additional experience abroad are also of interest to potential employers. Finally, there is the added touch of special pedagogical training which shows another facet of his preparation.

## Gruff, page 2

Team-taught Sophomore Tutorial, an interdisciplinary seminar in History and Literature 2005-07  
In collaboration with an historian, designed and taught three year-long group seminars in the history and literature of France, England and America.

Planned syllabi, led discussions, assigned and graded papers.

Senior Thesis Tutorial, History and Literature 2004-06

Advised senior concentrators in History and Literature on the preparation of their senior honors theses on French history and literature. Helped students with choice of topic, research, and editing.

Junior Conference Courses, History and Literature 2004-06

Designed and taught year-long individual conference courses in French literature 1750-1960 for junior concentrators in History and Literature. Planned reading lists suited to each student, led one-to-one discussions, assigned and graded papers, helped in preparation of junior honors essay.

### Department of Romance Languages

“The Nineteenth Century Realist Novel in France,” Prof. Per Nykrog 2004-05

Led discussion section, helped to write and grade exam. Undergraduate course in the novel from Balzac to Zola as a reflection of increasing authorial social awareness. Works read and discussed in English.

Introductory French 2003-04

Taught one class of this five-day-a-week, full-year beginning language course, using Benamou/Ionesco *Mise en train*. Contributed to and graded oral and written exams. Worked with students in language lab.

### ST. CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL, 1994-1998

Richmond, Virginia

Senior Elective Language Course in Impressionism and French Film 1997-98

Designed and taught this two-semester course, conducted in French, for seniors who had studied French since grade six. First semester, French painting from Delacroix to Cezanne, used slide lectures and class discussions of slides as basis for conversation. Second semester read scripts and saw clips of films from Renoir to Truffaut. Both semesters featured guided writing assignments in French, focusing on visual materials.

Senior Elective Language Course in French Art in the Roman period 1995-96

Planned and taught this two-semester course, conducted in French, with procedures similar to those in course above. Survey of architecture and sculpture as well as painting. Language courses 1994-98

French: beginning, intermediate, and advanced



## **Gruff, page 3**

### **ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC SERVICE**

Non-resident Tutor at Lowell House, Harvard University. Advise students in this residential hall on academic matters, supervise French table. 2005-present

Member, Committee on Instruction in History and Literature. 2005-07

Wrote and graded senior general examination, conducted senior oral exams, considered petitions for course credit in concentration, made degree recommendations.

Organized and managed a French film festival at St. Christopher's School, Richmond, Virginia. 1998

Planned and escorted a study tour for high school students in France, England, Austria and Czechoslovakia. 1995

### **ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE ABROAD**

Summer study with Institut d'Etudes Françaises d'Avignon 2004

Summer work at American Hospital of Paris 2000

Summer work with Indussa Corporation, Belgium 1999

## **Gruff, page 4**

### **SPECIAL PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING**

Student in Professor Wilga Rivers' Romance Philology, a course in language teaching methodology, taken in tandem with a practicum in language teaching techniques, and in conjunction with my work as a teaching fellow in Introductory French . 2003-04

**ROGER BROWN<sup>20</sup>**

Dept. of Physics      Dimick St. Apt. 3 Harvard University      Somerville, MA 02143  
Cambridge, MA 02138      Tel: (617) 628-6194  
Tel: (617) 495-7850; e-mail: Brown@hugsas

**EDUCATION HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

Ph.D. Physics, degree expected June 2017  
A.M. Physics, 2012

**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**

A.B. Physics, 2010. *Summa Cum Laude Phi Beta Kappa*, 2010.  
Kusaka Physics Prize, 2010 (best thesis in department).  
Pyka Physics Prize, 2007 (most progress in freshman physics).

**THESIS**      “Computational Inflation”

This thesis, under the direction of Prof. William Press, is the most recent project in a graduate career devoted to the interplay of cosmology and elementary particle physics, and specifically the inflationary universe. (see publications below and attached summary)

**TEACHING HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

and

**ADVISING INSTRUCTOR, 2016-2017.**

(promoted based on demonstrated teaching ability.)

Physics Department: will teach, during spring semester, the introductory physics course satisfying premedical requirements.

Astronomy Department: presently teaching “The Astronomical Universe,” an introduction to astronomy and astrophysics for nonscience majors.

**TEACHING FELLOW, 2013-2016.**

Physics Department: The same as above plus an introduction to physics for science majors, and a graduate course in quantum mechanics. Suggested and developed a set of lectures on the path integral formulation of quantum mechanics, presented at the professor’s request. Taught introduction to physics for science majors not only during the regular academic year, but also during the summer when the course is open to students from all institutions.

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<sup>20</sup> In this case, the candidate presents a brief statement about his thesis on the first page of the CV, and also includes a one-page summary as an attachment. His initial statement not only refers the reader to the attached summary, but also to publications stemming from the thesis. Although his topic is highly technical, his summary employs an accessible writing style. His strong interest in teaching as well as research is clearly reflected in the prominent and careful treatment he gives to his teaching experience. Finally, he shows a certain breadth by the non-technical writing he has done. The overall presentation helps to make him a strong candidate for small teaching colleges as well as serious research institutions.

## Roger Brown, page 2

Astronomy Department: The same as above.

Core Curriculum: “From Alchemy to Elementary Particles,” Sheldon Glashow’s course on modern physics for nonscientists.

PHYSICS TUTOR, Lowell House, 2014-2017

Advise all House undergraduates enrolled in physics courses, and promote interest in science through dinnertime science tables open to everyone. This fall (2016) presented a talk entitled “The Architecture of the Universe: A New Understanding.”

## PUBLICATIONS

“Fluctuations in Models with Primordial Inflation.” *Physics Letters* **141B**, 317 (year).  
(with R. Brandenberger)

“Cosmological Perturbations in Inflationary Universe Models.” *Physical Review* **D29**, 2172 (year).  
(with R. Brandenberger)

“Cosmological Perturbations in the Early Universe.”  
*Physical Review* **D28**, 1809 (year). (with W. Press and R. Brandenberger)

“Finding the Order in Chaos.”  
*Newsweek* (date), p. 53. (with S. Begley and J. Carey)

“Hawking Radiation in an Inflationary Universe.”  
*Physics Letters* **119B**, 75 (year). (with R. Brandenberger)

“The Decay of Perturbations in DeSitter Space.” unpublished,  
(year).

“Galaxy Formation and the New York City Bus System.” *McDonald Observatory News* (to be published).

## OTHER SCIENCE WRITING

For the past year have been helping Prof. Victor F. Weisskopf of M.I.T. with the writing and revising of his Sloan foundation sponsored autobiography.

During the summer of 2015 was an **AAAS Mass Media Science Fellow**, at *Newsweek Magazine* in New York; researched and wrote articles for the science section of the magazine. This fellowship was sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

## THESIS SUMMARY

How can we explain the observed large scale structure of the universe? Where did this spectrum of cosmological perturbations arise and how did it evolve? The inflationary universe (first proposed by Guth, 1979) comes tantalizingly close to finally providing a possible scenario. Inflation transforms initial quantum and thermal fluctuations into a final spectrum with the correct shape but with an amplitude  $0(10^4)$  too large (Brandenberger and Kahn, Physical Review **D29**, 2172 (1984); and many others). What went wrong? In the paper cited above, we demonstrated that the final predicted spectrum of cosmological perturbations depends crucially on the equation of state of the universe at initial horizon crossing. This thesis considers two approaches which take advantage of that observation:

- a) assume the previous analyses are correct, and examine more exotic elementary particle models, which lead to different equations of state. With Brandenberger, I have studied a class of models which produce the desired final result (Physics Letters **141B**, 317 [year]).
- b) question the previous analyses. In particular, examine in detail the equation of state throughout the period of interest. I have developed a classical, (2+1) dimensional computer model describing a phase transition in the early universe. This model includes a thermal bath dynamically as an explicit set of evolving fields. I am presently studying this model to see if I can achieve the desired spectrum of fluctuations, even in elementary particle models considered conservative (according to today's generous standards).

This work rests on a framework developed over the past several years. Press, Brandenberger and I described a general gauge-independent method for analyzing these cosmological perturbations (Physical Review **D28**, 1809 [year]). Brandenberger and I proved the existence of Hawking radiation in inflationary universe models (Physics Letters **119B**, 75 [year]). My work in this area began with my qualifying exams in 1993, when I examined the decay of perturbations in pure DeSitter space.

## ROBERT BRADLEY<sup>21</sup>

Home Address Office  
Address e-mail:

### EDUCATION

**Harvard University**, Ph.D. Political Science                      expected June 2017  
M.A. Political Science                      June 2013

**Free University of Brussels** 2010  
Institute of European Studies

**Middlebury College**, B.A. *summa cum laude* May 2009  
Political Science/French  
Junior Year at l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris

### DISSERTATION

“The Politics of Monetary Policy in France, Germany and Italy: 1973-1985” (see attached summary)

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

#### HARVARD UNIVERSITY

**Senior Thesis Advisor, Government Department** 2016-2017

Currently advising senior concentrators in Government who are writing senior honor theses in the areas of Western European politics and international political economy. Duties include counseling on thesis organization and research method.

**Teaching Fellow, Government Department and Core Curriculum** 2012-2016

Conducted weekly discussion sections, graded research papers and examinations, and helped prepare examination questions in the following courses:

“International Conflicts in the Modern World” Spring 1996 (Core Curriculum). An introductory course on the causes of interstate conflicts. Topics include the 19<sup>th</sup> century balance of power, imperialism, the origins of World Wars I and II, the Cold War, nuclear deterrence, and international economic conflicts.

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<sup>21</sup> While the CV of this candidate displays a well-rounded background — including related professional experience in government work — his cover letter, which is presented here, is more focused.

## **Bradley, 2**

“U.S. Foreign Policy” Spring 2013 (Government Department). A survey of American foreign policy in the twentieth century towards the Soviet Union, China, Western Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Also considered were the Vietnam war, human rights, and the policymaking process.

“Political Development of Western Europe” Fall 2012 (Government Department). A comparative analysis of the economic and political development of Britain, Germany, Italy and France.

## **GRANTS AND AWARDS**

Richard D. Irwin Doctoral Fellowship in Business, Economics, and the Social Sciences 2016-2017

National Science Foundation Dissertation Grant 2014-2016 Fulbright-Hays Fellowship to Italy 2014-2015

Krupp Foundation Fellowship 2013-2014

ITT International Fellowship to Belgium 2009-2010

Middlebury College, Phi Beta Kappa (elected junior year) 2008

Charles A. Dana Scholar, Middlebury College 2006-2009

## **PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Discussant, Panel on the “State and Social Regulation,” Conference Group on Italian Politics, American Political Science Association convention, Washington D.C., August 30, (year). “Rediscovering Les Patrons,” French Politics and Society, Fall (year): 35-40.

## **RESEARCH AFFILIATIONS**

Graduate Student Associate, Center for European Studies, Harvard University. 2012-2016 Co-Chair, Study Group on Monetary Policy. 2015-16

Visiting Researcher, Institute National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, Paris. 2014 Visiting Scholar, Council for the United States and Italy, Rome. 2013

Visiting Scholar, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, Bonn. 2012

## **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

Non-Resident Tutor, Lowell House, Harvard University 2015-2016 Serve as academic advisor to Government concentrators.

Assistant Head Tutor, Government Department, Harvard University 2015-2016 Responsible for administering junior tutorial program.

## **RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Assistant to Press Attache, U.S. Embassy, Belgium December 2009

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

French, German, Italian, Spanish.

**ROBERT BRADLEY**

**Thesis Abstract**

**THE POLITICS OF MONETARY POLICY IN GERMANY, FRANCE, AND ITALY**

All governments must reconcile the conflict between sovereignty and interdependence in monetary policymaking. In the case of the industrial countries, this conflict became particularly acute after the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates in 1973. Despite their similar predicaments, monetary authorities in different industrial countries have formulated diverse policy responses. Three kinds of theories — international, structural, and process — have been proposed in the political economy literature to account for this divergence in monetary policy. Each approach offers valuable insights but ultimately fails to provide an adequate explanation. The central thesis of the present study is that differences in monetary policies are best explained by the systematic integration of these three approaches. In particular, the study argues that external pressures and the degree of central bank independence determine the degree to which domestic politics (elections, parties, interest groups, and bureaucratic politics) influence monetary policy.

This conclusion is based on a structured comparison of monetary policy in three states: Germany, France, and Italy. In adopting this research strategy, the present study seeks to bridge the gap between the existing cross-national statistical analyses and single country case studies of monetary policymaking. In each instance, I evaluate the relative importance of specified domestic and international factors. Interviews I conducted with more than 150 prime ministers, central bank governors, treasury ministers, senior officials, politicians, and interest group representatives in the three countries constitute the primary data for this research.

## BRADLEY COVER LETTER<sup>22</sup>

address date

Dear Professor X:

I am writing to apply for the position in comparative politics. Your announcement mentions that you are seeking a candidate with an interest in cross-national comparative research. As my vita indicates, my research analyzes European policymaking in comparative perspective. In particular, my dissertation compares the politics of monetary policymaking in Germany, France, and Italy from 1973 to 1985. It seeks to explain why the monetary strategies of the three countries have followed such different courses in the past thirteen years. To answer this question, I examine crucial turning points in the monetary policies of each country. The dissertation argues that the difference in the monetary policies of the three countries results from differences in central bank independence, exchange rate regimes, and economic policy ideas. This analysis is based upon two years of field research in Europe, during which time I conducted more than 150 interviews with past and present prime ministers, central bank governors, treasury ministers, politicians, senior government officials and interest group representatives. I expect to complete the dissertation in the summer of 2017.

As shown in my vita, I have served as a Teaching Fellow for the courses on Western European politics, as well as for courses on international relations and U.S. foreign policy. In addition to teaching several courses in comparative and Western European politics, I am prepared to teach courses in international political economy, methods of comparative political analysis, public policy, and foreign policy.

My dossier is being sent to you under separate cover, and I would be happy to provide you with any further information.

Sincerely,

Robert Bradley

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<sup>22</sup> This sample cover letter belongs to the preceding CV, which was included as an enclosure with this letter. It responds directly to the announcement, which calls for someone with an interest in comparative research. The letter emphasizes how the dissertation fulfills this requirement, with further reinforcement through teaching experience. The letter is both concise and informative, as is the dissertation abstract that is attached to the CV.



## LAURA A. LITCHFIELD<sup>23</sup>

Office Address:  
Committee on the Study of Religion  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 495-2099; e-mail: Litchfield@

Home Address:  
108 Garden Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 491-4774

### EDUCATION

Ph.D. Harvard University, Study of Religion 2017 (expected)  
A.M. Harvard University, Study of Religion 2015  
M.T.S. Harvard Divinity School, History of Religion 2012  
A.B. Vassar College, Religion (General Honors) 2003

### DISSERTATION TOPIC

“Veda and Torah: The Ontological Status of Scripture in the Hindu and Judaic Traditions” (see “Publications and Papers” below and attached abstract)

### PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS

“Hindu Ethics” (Essay and Annotated Bibliography). In The Berkeley-Harvard Annotated Bibliography on Comparative Religious Ethics, edited by Valerie DeMarinis and Douglas Mansager. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press (forthcoming).

“The Bride of Israel: The Ontological Status of the Torah in the Judaic Tradition.” In Rethinking Scripture, edited by Miriam Levering. Albany: State University of New York Press (forthcoming). “Hindu Cosmogony: Creation Motifs in Vedic and post-Vedic Mythology.” Harvard University (in preparation for publication).

“The Agnistoma Sacrifice as Reflected in the Soma Mandala of the Rg-Veda.” Harvard University (in preparation for publication).

“Sakti: The Paradoxical Power of the Feminine.” Paper read at Harvard University (2015).

### AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

**Primary:** Religious Traditions of India — General history and literature, Vedic studies, Epic and Puranic studies, Hindu religion and philosophy, Buddhist religion and philosophy

**Secondary:** Judaic Tradition — General history and literature, biblical hermeneutics, rabbinic Judaism, Kabbalah

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<sup>23</sup> The CV for this candidate includes a category entitled “Areas of Specialization,” which is a fairly standard practice in this field. Each field has its own norms, and candidates are well advised to conform with them. Another feature of the CV is the effective way in which the candidate summarizes the teaching responsibilities of a Teaching Fellow at the very beginning of the entries on teaching experience. This results in a concise treatment of teaching experience, which in this case is fairly extensive. Adjoining this CV we have provided an actual job description and the cover letter the candidate wrote in response to the job description.

## Litchfield, page 2

**General Religious Studies:** World Religions, phenomenology of religion, traditional and modern hermeneutics

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

#### Teaching Fellow, 2012-2017

Responsibilities have included planning and preparation of course syllabi and reading lists, presentation of lectures, conducting of weekly discussion sections (approximately 20 students per section), student advising, and grading of examinations and term papers. Activities as a Head Teaching Fellow have involved the additional responsibilities of coordination of all course administration and supervision of the other Teaching Fellows for the course.

“Scripture” and “Classic”: Great Religious Texts, Harvard University, taught by Professor William A. Graham, Jr. 2016-2017

“The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet,” Harvard University, taught by Professor David Eckel (taught two sections of the course)

“Sources of Indian Civilization,” Harvard University, taught by Professor Diana L. Eck (taught one section of the course) 2015-2016

“Ritual and the Religious Life” (Hindu and Christian), Harvard University, taught by Professor Diana L. Eck (taught one section of the course) 2014-2015

“Introduction to Theological Education for Ministry,” Harvard Divinity School, taught by Professors George MacRae, Sharon Welch, and David Eckel (taught two sections of the course)

“Introduction to the History of Religion,” Harvard University, taught by Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith; Head Teaching Fellow for three Teaching Fellows and six section (taught two sections of the course) 2013-2014

“Sources of Indian Civilization,” Harvard University, taught by Professor Diana L. Eck (taught two sections of the course)

“Hindu Dharma: Moral Theory and Cultural Embodiment,” Harvard Divinity School, taught by Professor John B. Carman (co-teaching of seminar) 2012-2013

“Introduction to Theological Education for Ministry,” Harvard Divinity School, taught by Professors Helmut Koester, David Eckel and Sharon Parks (taught two sections of the course)

#### Research Assistant, 2011-2016

Project on Global Approach to the Study of Religion, Harvard University, University of California at Berkeley, and University of Chicago 2015-2016

Research and outline of a basic introduction to the Hindu tradition to be used in a guidebook to train college teachers of religion participating in the series of summer institutes (2015-2018) on the

## **Litchfield, page 3**

comparative study of religion jointly sponsored by Harvard University, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Chicago.

Project on Comparative Religious Ethics, Harvard University and University of California at Berkeley, funded by NEH and the Luce Foundation 2011-2014

Coordination of the project in the initial stages of planning. Research and preparation of an essay and annotated bibliography on Hindu ethics (see “Publications and Papers” above) to be incorporated in a syllabus for introductory courses on comparative religious ethics to be used by colleges and universities throughout the United States.

## **HONORS**

Mentorship Grant, Office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Harvard University, spring 2017

Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Merit Fellowship, 2014-2015

American Institute of Indian Studies Junior Research Fellowship, 2014-2015

Harvard University Scholarship, 2011-2017

Dorot Foundation Grant for Study in Israel, summer 2010

(administered by Frank Moore Cross, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University)

General Honors, Vassar College, 2013 (highest honors awarded at Vassar)

Selected for University of Wisconsin College Year in India Program, 2000-2001

National Defense Foreign Language — Title VI Award, University of Michigan, summer 2000 Vassar College Scholarship, 1999-2003

## **LANGUAGE SKILLS**

Sanskrit (eleven semesters)

Hindi (four semesters)

Hebrew: Biblical (four semesters), Rabbinic (two semesters), Modern (two semesters)

Aramaic (one semester)

French (eleven semesters)

German (two semesters)

## **TRAVEL EXPERIENCE**

India (eleven months, Aug. 2000 - June 2001, July - Aug. 2016) Israel (four months, Dec. 2008 - Jan. 2009, June - Aug. 2010)

Switzerland (four years and seven months, Jan. 2004 - June 2005, Nov. 2005 - Dec. 2008)

## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The study of scripture since the nineteenth century has been almost exclusively the domain of biblical and orientalist scholars, who have applied the tools of critical analysis in order to determine the cultural, historical and literary influences that have given rise to individual texts. In order to supplement these historical and literary studies of particular texts, a number of historians of religion in recent years have emphasized the need for more inquiries into the role of religious texts as scripture in the ongoing life of religious communities. While these scholars have been primarily concerned with the functional status of scripture, the focus of my dissertation is the ontological status of scripture. My study is concerned not with what people have done with scripture, but rather with what they have conceived scripture to be — its origin and cosmological import, its role in creation and revelation. Such conceptions significantly influence the sacred status, authority and function of scripture within religious communities.

My dissertation is a study of traditional ontological conceptions of scripture as expressed in the Hindu concept of Veda and the Judaic concept of Torah, with particular emphasis on the role of knowledge and speech as identified with scripture in the processes of creation and revelation. Part I of my study focuses on the traditional Hindu perspective in which the sacrality and authority of the Veda are held to be based on its ontological status as sruti. In this perspective the Veda is viewed not only as a textual phenomenon but also as a cosmic reality, encompassing both an earthly and a divine dimension. In its earthly dimension the Veda consists of a concrete, finite corpus of hymns, sacrificial formulae, chants, etc., that has been meticulously preserved and passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition, while in its divine dimension the veda is conceived to be that eternal, supersensuous knowledge which exists on the subtle level of creation as the source of the universe. My study analyzes the ontological conceptions of Veda from their seminal expression in Vedic cosmogonies to their detailed elaboration in the creation accounts of post-Vedic texts, with some attention given to the theoretical reflections about the Veda contained in the writings of certain philosophical schools.

Part II of my study analyzes the ontological conceptions of Torah found in certain strands of the Judaic tradition in which the Torah is viewed not merely as a circumscribed body of texts but also as a cosmic reality that is a living manifestation of the divine. In its earthly dimension the Torah consists of a concrete written text together with an oral tradition of interpretation that was revealed at a particular time and particular place within history. In its divine dimension, as described in certain texts, the Torah is conceived to be that pre-existent, primordial wisdom which is a living aspect of God and the immediate source of creation. My study examines the ontological conceptions of Torah from the seed conceptions first expressed in the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible and Apocrypha and further developed in rabbinic sources, to the elaborate cosmogonies contained in the Zohar and other medieval kabbalistic texts.

As a result of my doctoral dissertation, I hope to be able to make a significant contribution to the understanding of both the Hindu and Judaic traditions by illuminating the significance of the ontological conceptions of Veda and Torah not only as a pervasive and enduring motif in the traditional texts, but, perhaps more importantly, as a living force influencing the attitudes and practices of the Brahmanical custodians of the Vedic recitative tradition and the exponents of the rabbinical tradition from ancient times until the present day. Furthermore, by placing my study of Veda and Torah in the broader context of the status and role of scripture as a general religious phenomenon, I also hope to contribute to the understanding of one of the foundational concepts not only of the Hindu and Judaic religions, but of religion in general.

#### **4JOB DESCRIPTION FOR LITCHFIELD COVER LETTER**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA**, Department of Religious Studies, invites application for an anticipated position beginning Fall 1997, in the general area of Cross-Cultural Religious Studies.

Applicants should demonstrate a sound knowledge of more than one religious tradition, with appropriate philological competence; be prepared to work in a cross-cultural mode; and be thoroughly conversant with the methodological approaches to the study of religions. Candidates must have potential both as a research scholar and as a teacher. Disciplinary areas could include: History of Religions; Social-Scientific Study of Religion (e.g. Anthropology of Religion); or Comparative Philosophy of Religion. It is expected that this position will be filled at the junior level, but senior scholars may also apply. Normally, completion of the PhD is required at the time of appointment.

Please send resume or placement file and names of three references to: Professor Ninian Smart, Chairman, Search Committee, Department of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106. (805) 961-3578. Deadline for applications: March 1. EOE/AA.

## LITCHFIELD COVER LETTER<sup>24</sup>

Address

Date

Professor Ninian Smart, Chairman  
Search Committee, Department of Religious Studies  
University of California, Santa Barbara Santa  
Barbara, CA 93106

Dear Professor Smart:

I am writing to apply for the position in Cross-Cultural Religious Studies in your Department of Religious Studies. I was very interested to learn of this position, as my research and teaching experience correspond closely with the requirements described in your announcement. I am a PhD candidate in Comparative Religion in the Committee on The Study of Religion at Harvard, specializing in the Hindu tradition as my major and the Judaic tradition as my minor. I plan to complete the PhD this spring and will be available to begin teaching by July 1, 2017.

As the enclosed abstract indicates, my dissertation is a study of traditional cosmological conceptions of scripture as expressed in the Hindu concept of Veda and the Judaic concept of Torah, with particular emphasis on the role of knowledge and speech as identified with scripture in the processes of creation and revelation. While a number of scholars have emphasized the functional status of scripture in religious communities, my study is concerned not with what people have done with scripture, but rather with what they have conceived scripture to be—its origin and cosmological import, its role in creation and revelation. My study attempts to illuminate the significance of the cosmological conceptions of Veda and Torah not only as a pervasive and enduring motif in the traditional texts, but, perhaps more importantly, as a living force influencing the attitudes and practices of the Brahmanical custodians of the Vedic recitative tradition and the exponents of the rabbinic tradition from ancient times until the present day. Furthermore, by placing my study of Veda and Torah in the broader comparative context of the status and role of scripture as a general religious phenomenon, I hope to contribute to the understanding of one of the foundational concepts not only of the Hindu and Judaic religions, but of religion in general.

As my dissertation topic, my curriculum vitae, and synopsis of courses indicate, I have completed substantial work in both Sanskrit and Indian studies and Hebrew and Judaic studies. My research in Indian studies has primarily focused on certain foundational myth complexes in the classical texts of the Brahmanical Sanskrit tradition and has involved a diachronic analysis of the layers of interpretation and reinterpretation through which these myths were modified in the course of the tradition's formative development. In particular I have been concerned with three main myth complexes: (1) Hindu cosmogony, (2) Krishna mythology and devotion, and (3) mythology of the Goddess. In addition to my work in Hindu

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<sup>24</sup> The cover letter provides ample information in response to the fairly detailed job description, which is presented on the preceding page. Note how the cover letter deals with each item in the job description, bringing out the candidate's qualifications for the position through the dissertation and other research, as well as teaching experience. Note as well how her letter effectively uses her dissertation abstract, paraphrasing the major points about her contribution to the field rather than engaging in a counter-productive attempt at a new formulation. In general, her letter works closely with her CV and reinforces the picture presented there. Her letter is perhaps long, but her many qualifications for this fairly complex job description determined the length. She is thorough in her response, but does not overlook the need to be succinct in the way she discusses her many qualifications.

mythology, I have been interested in the ritual, moral, and social order of Hindu society, particularly as expressed in the concept of dharma. This interest has grown out of research and teaching with my doctoral advisor, John Carman. As a research assistant for the Harvard-Berkeley Project on Comparative Religious Ethics I prepared an essay and annotated bibliography on Hindu ethics, which primarily focused on dharma and related concepts.

My work within the Judaic tradition has focused primarily on the traditions of biblical interpretation, with particular emphasis on Midrash and rabbinic hermeneutics. As in my Hindu studies, I have been interested in examining the way in which certain key concepts and laws described in seed form in the Torah (Pentateuch) are developed and elaborated through successive stages of interpretation and reinterpretation in the later texts.

During my graduate studies at Harvard I have had extensive experience teaching courses in the religious traditions of India, including Buddhism as well as Hinduism. I have also had the opportunity to teach courses in world religions, in theological education, and in the comparative study of religion. My teaching experience has included large introductory undergraduate courses as well as more advanced graduate level seminars. I am prepared to teach courses in both Indian and Judaic studies, including historical and textual studies as well as more thematic and topical studies. In addition, I would enjoy teaching courses involving cross-cultural analyses of religious categories such as scripture, myth, ritual and sacrifice.

I would be happy to furnish you with any further information or with samples of my written work. With respect to my references, I have asked the Dossier Service of Harvard University to send you my dossier.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Laura A. Litchfield

## VERNON LING<sup>25</sup>

House  
Department of Government  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 498-3130

Littauer Center  
Harvard University  
(617) 495-7949

### EDUCATION

Ph.D. (expected), Department of Government, Harvard University. 2007  
B.A., *Magna Cum Laude*, Claremont College, California. 2000 Field:  
European Intellectual History.

### DISSERTATION

“From Rotten Apples to Falling Dominos to Munich: The Cognitive and Structural Limits of Reasoning by Analogy about Vietnam.” (See attached summary) Advisors: Professors Stanley Hoffman and Michael Smith.

### HONORS AND GRANTS

Social Science Dissertation Fellowship, Harvard University. 2006-2007  
Moody Grant for Research in the Johnson Library, Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation, Austin, Texas. 2006  
Institute for the Study of World Politics Fellowship, New York. 2005-2006  
Graduate Associate, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. 2003-2005 History Prize (best student in department), Claremont College. 2000  
R.H. Garrison & J.R. Hayes Foundation Scholarship, Claremont College. 1997-2000

### PUBLICATIONS

“Seduction by Analogy in Vietnam: The Malaya and Korea Analogies,” in Kenneth Thompson (ed.), *Institutions and Leadership: Prospects for the Future*, (Maryland: University Press of America, forthcoming).  
“War and International Theory: A Commentary on the State of the Art,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (January year), pp. 41-63.  
“A Rejoinder [to Bruce Bueno de Mesquita’s reply to the above review essay of The War Trap],” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (January year), pp. 77-78.

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<sup>25</sup> The candidate makes particularly effective use of the thesis summary in showing how his research contributes to the field. It not only describes the topic, but actually shares some important findings of the thesis — something that normally can only be done if the candidate is far enough along on the thesis.



## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Recipient of three Certificates of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard-Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University. 2003-2006

### **Teaching Fellow, Department of Government**

“Theories of International Relations” (R. Keohane). 2005

Junior Tutorial: “Approaches to International Relations Theory”. 2004

Designed and taught weekly small seminars for Junior honors candidates in the Government Department. Emphasis was on contending approaches and their bearing on the results of the theoretical inquiry. Assigned and graded seminar-length papers.

Senior Thesis Advisor to honors candidates in the Government [and Social Studies] Departments. Supervised five theses on American foreign policy and International Relations Theory. 2002-2005

Sophomore Tutorial: “Constitutional Democracy in America”. 2002-2004

Designed by faculty but taught by Teaching Fellows in Harvard’s residential Houses. Course examines the relationship between American political thought and practice. Taught two \_\_\_\_\_ House sections each year.

Led weekly discussion, assigned and graded short papers every other week.

Head Teaching Fellow, CORE Curriculum

“Ethics and International Relations,” (S. Hoffman/M. Smith). 2003-2005

Conducted sections and coordinated teaching activities of three other teaching assistants for a class with over 100 students. Assigned and graded papers; helped set and graded final examinations. Lectured on Nuclear Deterrence.

“War,” (S. Hoffman/M. Smith). 2002

Conducted sections and coordinated teaching activities of four other teaching assistants. Assigned and graded papers; helped set and graded final examinations.

## **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

Resident Tutor in Government, \_\_\_\_\_ House. 2002-present

Academic advisor to over forty Government majors residing in \_\_\_\_\_ House each year. Taught Sophomore Tutorial, 2002-04. Ran Politics and Society Dinner Series: invited social science faculty to dinner and discussion with \_\_\_\_\_ House students.

Vernon Ling

## **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

“Seduction by Analogy in Vietnam: On the Descriptive, Prescriptive, Normative and Predictive Aspects of the Malaya and Korea Analogies,” paper presented at the American Political Science Association Meeting, New Orleans. 2005

“The Scientific Study of War,” seminar presentation before the National Security Study Group, Harvard University. 2003

Member, American Political Science Association. 2000-present

## **LANGUAGE AND QUANTITATIVE SKILLS**

Malay/Indonesian: Good speaking, reading and writing abilities.

Chinese: Native speaking ability in Mandarin, Hakka, Hokkein and Cantonese.

Statistical Techniques: Linear regression, Factor analysis, Recursive and Simultaneous equation models

## SUMMARY OF THESIS

My dissertation examines the nature of analogical reasoning and the role such reasoning plays in foreign policy decision-making. An analysis of the historical analogies which informed the thinking of those who formulated America's Vietnam policy shows that (i) "the lessons of the past" played a critical role in the U.S. decision to intervene in Vietnam: they were used to diagnose the nature of the Vietnam conflicts, to define the stakes involved and to predict the likelihood of a U.S. victory; (ii) reasoning by analogy is a hazardous enterprise because of limitations inherent in the structure of the analogy and in human cognition. This approach contrasts with existing approaches that focus on criticizing inexact analogies and on identifying systematic ways to use analogies better. If my argument is correct, the search for better or more systematic ways to use analogies is likely to be an elusive enterprise.

Interviews with former officials, including Dean Rusk, McGeorge Bundy, William Bundy, Harry MacPherson, George Ball and Roger Hilsman, together with newly declassified documents in the Johnson Library, constitute the major primary sources used in answering the question, "How important were the lessons of the past in decision making"? The link between historical analogies and the decisional outcome is then demonstrated more rigorously by using Alexander George's "congruence procedure" and "process tracing." Finally, findings from cognitive psychology — schema theory in particular — are used to illuminate the obstacles that prevent policy makers from using analogies well.

## LING COVER LETTER<sup>26</sup>

Address  
Year

Professor Donald Moon, Chairman Department  
of Government  
Wesleyan University  
Middletown, Connecticut 06457

Dear Professor Moon:

I am interested in applying for the junior opening in International Relations. Enclosed you will find (i) my curriculum vitae; (ii) a chapter of my dissertation; (iii) a reprint of an article published in 2004 and (iv) the syllabus of a course on International Relations Theory I designed and taught in the fall of 2004.

Letters of recommendation from Professors Stanley Hoffmann, Michael Smith and Robert Keohane will arrive shortly. Syllabi for courses in which I have served as a Teaching Fellow and Bruce Buneo de Mesquita's reply to my review essay of his book, *The War Trap* will also be sent soon.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely

Resident Tutor in Government

P.S. From Nov. 10-21, I can be reached at (512) 477-6395; I expect to be in Cambridge otherwise.

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<sup>26</sup> The cover letter is very brief, but is accompanied by a considerable amount of supporting material, which will bring out the individuality of this candidacy. In this case, the supporting material was required, but candidates may send material even if this is not the case, as long as it is not forbidden.

**APPENDIX C RESEARCH AND RELATED POSITIONS — NONACADEMIC RESUMES  
AND**

**COVER LETTERS**

As with the academic CVs, these have been chosen to illustrate certain points. They are simply suggestions. The resume — even more than the vita — must be designed in a way that works best for your individual goals and experiences.

[SAMPLE SKILLS RESUME]      SHARON GOLD<sup>27</sup>

1178 Suffolk St.  
William James Hall  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
(617) 864-6280; e-mail:

Harvard University  
Cambridge, MA 02138

## EDUCATION

**Harvard University** Ph.D. Candidate. Field: Psychology and Social Relations, specializing in Psycholinguistics. Degree expected in June, 2017.

Dissertation topic: Strategies for Effective Communication in English by Non-Native Speakers. Minority Students Fellowship, 2012-present.

**Vassar College** A.B. 2012. *Cum Laude* with Department Honors in Psychology.

## EXPERIENCE HUMAN RESOURCES/MOTIVATION STUDIES

**Research Assistant, Harvard University** 2015-present.

Explore the psycholinguistic variables causing empathy in interpersonal relations. Design computer programs to visually display experimental protocol and to measure reaction time. Analyze data and prepare results for grant proposal.

**Research Associate, The Huron Institute** Cambridge, MA 2013-2015.

Designed questionnaire and interviews to assess strategies and motivation for second language acquisition. Formulated and conducted bilingual interviews to determine sociolinguistic factors affecting second language learning. Manuscript in progress.

## DATA ANALYSIS/COMPUTATIONAL SKILLS

**Research Associate, Yale University** New Haven, CT Summer 2014, 2015.

Devised and executed computer programs for data from a second language learning study, using multivariate analysis and SPSS, Data Text and BMDP programs.

**Principle Investigator, Massachusetts Institute of Technology** Cambridge, MA 2013-2014

Planned and executed a study of acoustic phonetics in Black English using spectrographic analysis. Study presented at the Acoustical Society Conference. Manuscript in progress.

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<sup>27</sup> In this skills resume, the candidate carefully orders her research skills or categories, placing the most important and preferred ones first. Right at the beginning of the resume, under "Education," she presents her dissertation topic, which is closely related to her first skills category. The format makes very clear the variety of skills she has to offer on the basis of her training and background.

## **Gold, page 2**

### **Data Analyst, Ohio Bell Telephone Co.**

Cleveland, Ohio, Summer 2012.

Investigated Watts Line revenue to identify the source of declining revenue in the northwest Ohio region.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

### **Research Associate, The Huron Institute**

Cambridge, MA 2014.

Supervised work on transcription and coding of data for a project on second language learning.

### **Representative to the Committee on Undergraduate Instruction Psychology Department, Harvard University, 2013-2014.**

Elected to serve as graduate student representative to evaluate and revise undergraduate curriculum in psychology.

### **Resident Tutor, Currier House, Harvard University, 2012-2014**

Appointed resident academic advisor to 35 undergraduate concentrators in psychology, and general counselor for 380 resident students. Served on the administrative staff of the house. Organized seminars on Psychology and Hispanic Studies.

### **Student Assistant, Vassar College, 2010-2011.**

Appointed as assistant to house administrative staff to counsel 40 freshman students.

## **TEACHING**

### **Teaching Fellow in Psychology, Harvard University, Spring 2015, 2014.**

Taught sections of beginning level courses in Culture and Human Development.

### **Sophomore Tutor in Psychology, Harvard University, 2012-2014.**

Appointed as seminar leader and academic advisor for 10 undergraduate concentrators in a year-long seminar on language and communication.

## **LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN TRAVEL**

Fluent in Spanish, reading ability in French. Exchange student for 5 months, lived in Madrid, Spain.

## **REFERENCES**

Available upon request



Department of Government, Littauer Center M-36, Harvard University,  
Cambridge, MA 02138 (617) 495-5946  
Home: 413 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138 (617) 661-7987; e-mail: anderson@

## EDUCATION

**Harvard, Ph.D., Department of Government**, completion expected Fall 2016.

The dissertation is an empirical investigation of the relationship between macroeconomic conditions and political support based on re-analyses of survey data and estimation of aggregated and disaggregated econometric models.

**Yale, M.A.**, Interdisciplinary Program in International Relations. Concentration in micro and macroeconomics, and econometrics, 2010.

**University of Aarhus, Denmark**

Study of political science, economics, public administration, 2003-2008.

## SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE

Modeling for economic planning and forecasting, policy formulation and evaluation through a variety of analytical techniques including statistics and econometrics as well as qualitative methods. On-site research in several European countries.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE RESEARCH

Project Director, 2015-present, "Predictive and Analytical Models on Political Support for Incumbents in Industrialized Nations," with Professor Douglas Hibbs, Jr.

- \*Supervision of the organization and collection of data
- \*Construction and estimation of forecasting models
- \*Drafting of reports

Co-author, textbook on Swedish politics and policy, with Professor Hugh Heclø, 1994-present \*Interviews and compilation of information

- \*Analysis of labor market, housing policy and administrative reforms

Principal Investigator, comparative study of public attitudes towards taxation and social policies, with Professor Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr. 2011-2012 (see publication list)

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<sup>28</sup> This candidate chooses a chronological resume since it shows steady and rapid progress in precisely the kind of research he hopes to do in a nonacademic setting. His use of a brief summary of his specialized experiences emphasizes his most important skills before the itemized entries begin. In each entry, he makes effective use of his title or role, showing that he held responsible positions in the various research projects. His publications are listed on a separate page, but he calls attention to them on an earlier page, in the entry where he is Principal Investigator.

Anderson, page 2

Author/Co-author

Publications in leading American and European scholarly journals and contributions to edited volumes in political science and economics, 2010-2015

**TEACHING**

Harvard University, Teaching Fellow, 2012-present

Undergraduate seminars in public policy; courses in elementary statistics and econometrics

Danish School of Journalism, Lecturer, 2007

Course in public administration and local government

**LANGUAGES**

Complete fluency in German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish; Reading comprehension in French and Latin.

Use of several software packages for survey and econometric analyses (SPSS, SAS, TROLL, TSP)

**LIST OF PUBLICATIONS**

(with D.A. Hibbs, Jr.) "The Impact of Economic Performance on Electoral Support in Sweden, 1967-1978." *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol. 4, 1, year.

(with D.A. Hibbs, Jr.) "Public Reactions to the Growth of Taxation and Public Expenditure," *World Politics*, vol. XXXIII, 3 (April), year.

"Partisanship and Macroeconomic Outcomes: A Reconsideration," in D.A. Hibbs, Jr. and H. Fassbender, eds. *Contemporary Political Economy* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, year).

"Class Power and Participatory Equality: Economic Democracy in Denmark and Sweden," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol. 3, 4, year.

"Electoral Outcomes and Macroeconomic Policies: The Scandinavian Cases," in P. Whiteley, ed., *Modern Political Economy* (London; ECPR-SAGE, year). POETICS - A Timeseries Cross-Section System of Data, 1920-1975 (Arrhus: Institute of Political Science, year).

**WORK IN PROGRESS**

(with Hugh Heclø), textbook on Swedish politics and public policy.

"The Fading Legacy of Social Democracy: Postwar Economic Performance and Mass Political Support in Denmark, Norway and Sweden," PhD Thesis.

## [CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME]

EILEEN BELL<sup>29</sup>

Department of Anthropology  
William James Hall  
University  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
4444; e-mail: Bell@

Home Address: Harvard  
8 Brastow Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143 (617) 495-  
(617) 628-6187

## EDUCATION

**Ph.D. Harvard University**, in Social Anthropology, June 2015, specializing in Psychological Anthropology

**B.A. Swarthmore College**, Sociology and Anthropology, 2009, *Phi Beta Kappa* and with Senior Thesis of Distinction

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Trained and experienced in field research design and methods including open-ended and structured interviewing, non-intrusive observation and community analysis, cognitive testing, and linguistically based methods. Quantitative and computer analysis skills. Lucid report writing. Cross-disciplinary knowledge of child development and of environment-individual interactions.

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Ethnographic and Psychological Research, Micronesia. Designed and conducted 15 months of field research in two communities in Micronesia. Used participant observation, interviewing, and cognitivelinguistic test methods to investigate emotional development and ethnopsychological beliefs. Analyzed data with several computer modelings. Wrote doctoral dissertation on the ethnographic and developmental data. 2011-2015

Participant in HIMH-funded research grant on Cross-Cultural Child Development, Director, Beatrice B. Whiting. Cooperated in weekly seminars on design and analysis of community research. Presented lectures on plans, methodology and results. 2011-2012

Cross-cultural study of psychiatric symptoms based on available hospital data. 2011-2012; M.A. paper presented April 2012

Research Assistant in Education, with John Whiting, Harvard University. 2010-2011

Computer analysis of demographic data from Kenya. Developed Guttman scale for modernization variables. Factor analyses performed on cognitive test data. 2009

Research Assistant to Professor Steven Piker, Swarthmore College. 2009

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<sup>29</sup> Once again, a chronological resume is a good choice in this case, since it highlights steady and rapid progress in the field of research in which the candidate wishes to continue. The summary of qualifications at the beginning proceeds from general skills to more specific ones in child development. Unlike the preceding two resumes, which present the dissertation topic under "Education," she opts to present it under "Research Experience," and emphasizes the research skills more than the topic itself. The highly specialized nature of the research topic makes this approach an advisable one.

Bell, page 2

Library Research and quantitative analysis of data on cross-cultural problems in socialization. 2008

NSF Student Originated Study, Swarthmore College. Conducted sociological field and archival research on tax assessment bureaucracy in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Worked with interdisciplinary team to write report. 2008

### **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Paper to be presented at the Annual Meetings of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, March 1996: "Ifalukian Ethnopsychology: The Structure and Processes of the Self".

Invited Social Science Research Council conference participant, "Affect and Cognition", Boulder, Colorado, August 7-10, 2015.

Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Society for Cross-Cultural Research, February 22, 2015, Philadelphia: "Emotion Words on Ifaluk Atoll".

Lecture presented at Tufts University, December 5, 2014: "Adoption and Child Development on Ifaluk Atoll".

### **HONORS AND GRANTS**

HIMH Training Grant, 2011-2014 Fellowship,  
Harvard University, 2009-2011

Charles G. Mortimer Scholarship, 2005-2009

Honors Student, Swarthmore College, 2007

### **LANGUAGES**

Reading Knowledge of Spanish

Speaking knowledge of Woleaian (Malayo-Polynesian language)

[MODIFIED CHRONOLOGICAL WITH COVER LETTER]

SARAH FELICE EISENBERG<sup>30</sup>

5807 S. Dorchester  
Apartment 9F Chicago,  
IL 60637 e-mail:  
Eisenberg@

**EDUCATION:**

**Ph.D. Candidate, Harvard University, Fine Arts Department** - Degree anticipated in June 2016

**M.A., Harvard University, Fine Arts** - 2013

**B.A., Mount Holyoke College, History of Art** - 2008, *Phi Beta Kappa*

**PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND**

**Field of Specialization**

European Art of the 18<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> century; dissertation on “The Mythological Paintings of Sir Edward Burne-Jones”

**Museum Experience**

**Fogg Museum, Harvard University, 2011-15**

Organized and installed the exhibition *Pre-Raphaelite and Early French Symbolist Art from the Fogg Collection*; in conjunction with the exhibition, organized and introduced an interdisciplinary lecture series; prepared an essay for the public which was available in the galleries and led school groups and scholars through the exhibition

Assisted in the installation of the galleries as well as in preparation of the audio-visual educational component of the exhibition *Edward Waldo Forbes, Yankee Visionary*, held at the Museum

Conducted tours for school groups

Participated in the two-semester training program for students planning careers in museum work, offered by the Fine Arts Department at Harvard under the direction of Agnes Mongan

**Tate Gallery of Art, London, England, 2011 Public Education Office, Yale Center for British Art and British Studies, New Haven, Connecticut, Spring 2010-2011**

Research for the catalogue of the collection of works by Sir Edward Burne-Jones

Developed the plan for school and community programs to be offered by the museum; served as liaison with school systems in the New Haven area; developed a budget, and began the recruitment of volunteers

**Education Department, Museum of Transportation, Massachusetts, 2008-09**

Conducted tours and workshops for school and community groups, ran recreational programs, worked with special needs audiences and the general public, and assisted in program development

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<sup>30</sup> This candidate’s experience is so varied and abundant, that she chooses a modified chronological resume, organizing her experiences under “Museum Work,” “College Teaching” and “Human Services.” This order and choice of categories nicely reflects her goal of a position in museum education. The letter of inquiry and its strategies will be discussed with the sample.

**College Teaching**  
**Harvard University**

House Seminar on the Museums of Boston and Cambridge, including field trips and guest speakers, 2015  
Sarah Felice Eisenberg, page 2

Department of Fine Arts, 2013-2014; supervised four undergraduate independent study courses on 19<sup>th</sup>  
century art and museum problems

Teaching Fellow in art history survey course, ancient through modern art, 2012-13

**Publications and Papers**

“Burne-Jones and the Antique,” College Art Association of America, annual meeting, Chicago, General  
Session on Nineteenth Century Art, 20—

“Burne-Jones and the Impact of Florentine Painting,” Northeast Victorian Studies Association, annual  
meeting, Ramapo College, 20—

“The Royal Academy and Victorian Art,” catalogue essay for the exhibition *The Revolt of the  
PreRaphaelites*, held at Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, March through April 20—

“Edward Waldo Forbes: City Planner” (with M.K. FitzSimons), catalogue essay for the exhibition *Edward  
Waldo Forbes, Yankee Visionary*, held at Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, January through  
February 20—

**Experience and Training in Human Relations and Services**

Proctor, Harvard Summer School, 2014

Supervised a co-educational residence hall and conducted extracurricular activities for students

Study for Harvard Graduate School of Education, two courses, 2013-2014

*Counseling: Its Psychological Assumptions and their Expression*, and *Special Reading and Research in  
Counseling and Consulting Psychology*

Resident Tutor, Dunster House, Harvard University, 2013-2014

Provided academic advising, personal counseling, and organizing extracurricular activities for  
undergraduates

Harvard-Radcliffe Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, 2012-2013

Interviewed and evaluated applicants as well as conducted group information sessions for candidates and  
their families

Resident Fellow, Silliman College, Yale University (similar to a Resident Tutor at Harvard), 2010-2011

Board of Directors, Information and Counseling Service for Women, New Haven, Connecticut, 2010-2011

A career counseling service

**Other Professional Activities**

College Art Association of America

Member of the Board of Directors, 2012-2016

Developed the guidelines for the College Art Association’s Distinguished Teaching of Art History Award  
as well as served on the first Prize Committee for the award, 2014-2017

American Association of Museums, 2014-2015

Committee for the Status of Education

[EISENBERG COVER LETTER]<sup>31</sup>

63 Walker Street, Apartment 11  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 354-4492; e-mail: Eisenberg@

April 2, 20— David  
Wynne  
Director of the Museum Education Adult Programs Art  
Institute of Chicago, Michigan and Adams  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Wynne:

Douglas Benson, a Trustee of the Art Institute, suggested that I write to you. I am currently a graduate student in the Fine Arts Department at Harvard University. I shall be moving to Chicago in June and am eager to explore the possibility of serving the Art Institute's Education Department in some capacity.

My commitment to the community-minded public service orientation of museums has always been strong, which is why I have chosen the field of museum education after completing my training as a doctoral candidate in Fine Arts. Moreover, my goal as an art historian is to be an educator in the broadest sense of the word. From my professional experience, I have discovered that, for me, the museum setting provides the freedom and flexibility to achieve this objective.

I have had several opportunities to explore ways in which the museum can serve as a teaching resource. I am currently working in the Education Department of the Museum of Transportation in Brookline, Massachusetts. I conduct tours and workshops for school and community groups, ranging in age from pre-school to adolescence. I also do work with special needs groups and the general adult public. I have also had experience giving tours to high school and college students at the Fogg Art museum as well as teaching art history to Harvard University undergraduates. Moreover, in 20— and 20— I served as the Public Education Officer at the Yale Center for British Art and British Studies in New Haven, Connecticut, an art museum with an interdisciplinary orientation. My primary role at the Center was the development and initial implementation of the plan for the school and community programs to be offered by this new museum after its public opening.

I hope very much to have the opportunity to talk with you. I am eager to learn about the educational offerings of the Art Institute. I would be especially interested in giving gallery talks, lectures, and tours, as well as in creating and implementing programs which will serve to interpret works of art for people of all ages. Also, I have experience in counseling and human services and am very much concerned with community outreach programs.

Sincerely,

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<sup>31</sup> This is a sample of an unsolicited letter of inquiry in the field of museum education. It shows the use of a helpful contact, mentioned right at the beginning of the letter, along with her purpose for writing the letter. After the opening, she leads the reader through the most relevant aspects of her experience for the position she is seeking.

## **APPENDIX D GUIDE FOR TEACHING FELLOWS ON WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

### **WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO TEACHING**

Writing letters of recommendation is a skill that will be of great importance throughout your teaching career, and perhaps should be viewed as an almost integral part of your teaching experience. Students in your sections or tutorials who have had a positive experience — in terms of what they have learned, or the work they have produced — are likely to come to you for a letter of recommendation. Indeed, an abundance of requests can be taken as an indication that you are a good teacher and have an ability to establish a rapport with your students. In our view, good letter writers deserve considerable recognition for the contribution that they make. (If you have written a large number of letters, you might even consider making a note of that when asked by a potential hiring department about your teaching skills and responsibilities.)

### **THE CONTENTS OF A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

- In simplest terms, a letter of recommendation is a letter that makes a statement of support for a candidate. If, after doing a careful review of a candidate's strengths and weaknesses, you cannot write a supportive letter, it is important to have a candid discussion with the student.
- Beyond that simple definition, a letter of recommendation should also present a well-documented evaluation, providing sufficient evidence and information to help a selection committee in making its decision.
- A letter of recommendation should also address the specific purpose for which it is written — although you will also receive requests from many students for a general letter for their House file, in anticipation of eventual applications. For most applications, a letter of recommendation will need to discuss both scholarly capabilities and personal character — although the balance between the two will vary, depending upon the nature of the application. For example, at one end of the scale, a letter for an applicant for graduate study in the arts and sciences should focus primarily on the scholarly, while at the other end, a letter for an applicant for a non-academic position should discuss a broader range of qualities and experiences — including extracurricular or work experience as well. As a further example of matching a letter with its purpose, a letter for an applicant for a fellowship with a specific project should discuss the validity and feasibility of the project, as well as the candidate's qualifications for fulfilling the project. The letter should pay close attention to the language of the fellowship announcement.

If you have any questions about the criteria for a specific application, consult the appropriate specialists - for example, those who do pre-law, medical, business or fellowship advising at the Office of Career Services or in the Harvard Houses.

- A letter of recommendation can also be used to explain some weakness or ambiguity in a student's record. If appropriate — and probably after consulting the student — you might wish to mention a family illness, financial hardship, or other factor.



- a. You should promptly identify yourself and the basis of your knowledge of the student: Were you a Teaching Fellow in a tutorial or small seminar for department concentrators? How often did it meet, how many students? How many papers? Do you also know the student through exposure as a House Tutor, or some other capacity? Has your acquaintance been sustained over a number of years? Writing the letter on department letterhead is a further form of identification.
- b. In evaluating a student's intellectual capabilities, try to describe the student in terms that reflect that student's distinctive or individual strengths. Whatever strengths strike you as particularly salient, be prepared to back up your judgment with concrete examples — papers, exams, class presentations, or performance in a laboratory.

Above all, avoid the misconception that the more superlatives that you use, the stronger the letter. Heavy use of stock phrases or clichés in general is unhelpful. Your letter can only be effective if it contains substantive information about the student's qualifications.

- c. Ranking the student may be requested or desired by selection committees. Having concentrated on the student's individual or unique strengths, you might find it difficult to do so. Ranking is of course less of a problem if a student is unambiguously among the top five or ten percent that you have taught, or so outstanding that he or she would safely rank high in any group. Many of the students who come to you for a letter, however, will not fall within that small unambiguous group. If you wish to offer some comparative perspective, you might be more readily able to do so in more specific areas: Is the student one of the most articulate? Original? Clear-thinking? Motivated? Intellectually curious? Some schools or fellowships have forms, which ask for rankings broken down into specific areas.

If you lack sufficient information to answer some questions posed or suggested in an application, it is best to maintain the integrity and credibility of your letter, and say only what you are in a position to say.

- d. In discussing a student's character, proceed in a similar fashion to the intellectual evaluation, highlighting individual traits and providing concrete illustrations.
- e. After discussing each of the above points, your letter should have some brief summation, giving the main thrust of your recommendation for the candidate.

## **HOW TO ACQUIRE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE LETTER**

### **Meeting with the Student**

Even if you know a student very well, the process of writing an effective letter can be greatly facilitated if you arrange to have an interview with the student, using this as an opportunity to discuss the student's goals — short-term and long — and to acquire more precise information in any area where it is needed.

### **Obtaining Written Materials**

As you arrange a meeting with a student, you should also ask the student to bring the following items:

- A resume or curriculum vitae,
- A paper or an exam written for your course,
- A copy of the application essay or fellowship statement of purpose
- A transcript
- Any literature that describes the fellowship or program for which the student is applying; specific recommendation forms or questionnaires if they are provided for the letter writer to complete
- The date on which the recommendation is due, as well as the address - preferably an addressed envelope to which it must be sent
- A waiver form (obtained by the student from the House Senior Tutor), indicating whether or not the student waives his or her right to see the letter of recommendation. If the student has any questions about this decision, you might point out that there are important benefits in maintaining the confidentiality of letters. Selection committees, for example, tend to view confidential letters as having greater credibility and assign them greater weight; also, some letter writers actually feel less inhibited in their praise of students in confidential letters. While making these points, be sure to make it clear that it is up to the student to decide.

One other factor that greatly facilitates letter writing is if you can write a letter as soon as possible after you have taught a student, while your impressions are still vivid and fresh. You might consider encouraging students to make their requests early, rather than waiting until senior year or beyond. These early letters can be placed in the students' House files, as well as maintained in your own files for future reference.

#### **FURTHER REFINEMENTS: HANDLING THE EASIEST CASE, THE IN-BETWEEN CASE, AND THE MOST DIFFICULT CASE**

The written materials listed above and a discussion with the student will greatly benefit the letter writing process — and indeed, the application process — although in each case it will benefit in a different way. The following are possible scenarios:

**The easiest case:** A request is made by a student you know very well, have seen in different settings — classroom and House — and whose performance and conduct you find to be consistently outstanding. In this case, you can use the discussion and written materials not only to further refine your own presentation of the student, but also to help the student refine the application — and especially the application essay. Many students find it difficult to talk about themselves — even the most articulate. By drawing the student out, asking for further elaboration or more specific details, you can help bring into sharper focus such items as past accomplishments, future plans, or why the student is making this particular application.

**The in-between case:** A request is made by a student who has made some favorable impression, but you lack considerable information to write a well-documented letter. The benefits of the interview and acquiring written materials are most obvious in this instance. In addition to allowing you to do all of the above, they will allow you to fill in gaps in your knowledge and to gain a clearer view of the candidate. It is particularly helpful for students who tend to be somewhat shy or quiet in class. What you may not have learned about the student in the classroom, you may be able to learn through a discussion that specifically addresses matters that you need to know.

**The most difficult case:** A request is made by a student who has made no impression, or only a negative impression. In this case, it is extremely important to be both candid and helpful at the same time. One of the things a discussion can accomplish is to give the student a thorough hearing before you decide whether or not you can provide support. If you still find that there is little that you can say in support, you might help the student to identify a more appropriate letter writer, and also explore whether the student is making an appropriate application.

Such a discussion offers an important teaching and advising opportunity — one that may be sorely needed. The student who comes to you for a letter that you cannot write may have a similar problem with other instructors. It is important to discuss with the student how he or she might improve prospects for the future. Above all, it is important to avoid allowing the student to believe that all opportunities have been permanently closed. Try to emphasize the student's potential strengths — perhaps asking the student to share with you a favorite paper or other positive experience that may have occurred outside of your class. The message to convey is that there are constructive steps to be taken, and that if the student has gained a clearer understanding of his or her strengths and weaknesses, then this marks an important first step.

## QUESTIONS OF FORMAT AND STYLE, CO-SIGNED LETTERS

In some applications, the format is determined by the application itself: the recommender is asked to answer a series of questions. If a form does not allow you to say everything that you would like to say, it is appropriate to attach additional remarks. Indeed, it is common practice to attach a full letter of recommendation to a form, in addition to responding to questions on the form. Furthermore, if a form asks for information that you cannot provide, it is best to say so. The following are further considerations:

- The length of a letter: If you follow the above guidelines, your letter probably will be somewhere between one and two pages. Anything longer than three pages is counter-productive, since readers normally have a quantity of letters to read. On the other hand, anything shorter than a page may imply a lack of interest or knowledge about the student.
- The care with which you write the letter: This will also influence the effectiveness of the letter. Writing in your best polished prose style is another way of registering your support for the student.
- Clarification of terms peculiar to Harvard: Terms such as “Tutorial” require some explanation. It may mean that you taught the student in a small seminar, or perhaps you provided individual supervision for the student's thesis. Similarly, if your primary contact with the student is through your role as a House Tutor, it is important to explain that role. It may be useful to clarify that the Harvard Houses are more than dormitories and that they perform academic functions as well.
- Writing the letter on a word-processor: If possible, do so, and be sure to save the file. Once you have been asked by a student to write a letter, that student may return again and again, over a large number of years, for additional letters. A word-processor allows you to adapt and up-date an original letter with considerable ease. It is a way of protecting your initial investment in time and effort.
- To whom to address the letter: If a student is applying to similar programs in a number of different schools, your letter can be left virtually unchanged for each application. In this case, addressing the letter “To whom it may concern” will facilitate this multiple use. This is also useful if a student is simply asking for a letter for his or her House file, in anticipation of eventual applications. For medical school applications, the letter should be addressed “To the Admissions Committee.” In the case of

letters for specific fellowships, each letter should address the appropriate fellowship committee, and make any other adjustments in the letter that may be necessary.

It should be noted that in some cases, letters of recommendation are submitted to a campus representative, rather than sent directly to a selection committee. The Fulbright Grant is one example; medical schools also require an intermediary, or a composite letter from a Dean. These variations are steps taken after you have produced your letter, and need not affect the process we describe in this guide for writing letters. One other possibility is that the student requests a letter of recommendation for the House file, in anticipation of future applications. The advantage of this early request is that you are asked to write while you still have the student's performance freshly in mind and can write a more vivid letter. Be sure that the student fully informs you as to the purpose and destination of your letter.

- The issue of gender: In the past, it was common for letter writers to make distinctions in the way they described women versus men. Descriptions often paid greater attention to the personal lives or personal characteristics of women than men, focusing on items that had little proper place or relevance in a letter of recommendation. While this problem has greatly improved, it is still important to remain sensitive to this issue.
- Co-signing Letters with Senior Faculty: Students at Harvard at times find that all of their potential letter writers — i.e., the teachers who know them best — are graduate students, rather than professors, since graduate students are mainly the ones who teach small sections and tutorials. In most cases, it is important for applications to include at least one letter from a member of the Faculty. If a student in your section is in this situation, you can propose to have the letter co-signed. This would probably require that you prepare a draft of the letter, share it with the course Professor, share as well written materials provided by the student, and also arrange for a meeting between the student and the Professor. (Some of these steps take place in any case as a normal part of course procedure.)

## **SAMPLE LETTERS** (with modifications and deletions in order to preserve anonymity)

### **Sample A**

"I first knew X in the spring of 2006 when she was a member of my Freshman Seminar, .... In such small groups teacher and students come to know one another in a way that is seldom, if ever, possible in large lecture courses. In either forum something can be learned about a student's academic ability, but only in the former can one get a reliable measure of the student as a person....Having kept in touch with X in the intervening years, I am confident in my knowledge of her.

To begin with, she is an excellent student, with a lively curiosity that makes her dissatisfied with superficial explanations. That curiosity frequently led our seminar down avenues and into areas that, otherwise, would have remained unexplored....

One has only to speak to her to recognize her openness and eagerness. It is easy to mistake this for naiveté, an error I made when she first told me she had signed up to be an apprentice teacher in one of Boston's more notorious inner city high schools....Throughout the term, often at great cost to her own peace of mind, and sometimes in explicit conflict with the regular teacher, she continued to insist on a high level of performance from her students. She not only survived the term but won the admiration and respect of students accustomed to being patronized by teachers content to believe that nothing much can be expected.

I would expect X to bring these same qualities of character to....That is, an openness to new places, peoples, cultures and customs; a keen intelligence, with which to analyze and order her experience; irrepresible

curiosity; and an unusual ability for dealing with people of all ages and conditions. Those qualities, combined with her toughness of character...will enable her to understand and empathize with others while never losing touch with who she is.”

### **Sample B**

“X has been an assistant in my laboratory during the past year, and has proven to be exceptional in several respects. First, X is exceptionally intelligent. He proved to be a very quick study, learning the elements of experimental design and the uses of microcomputers in record time. Furthermore, his questions are always thoughtful and penetrating. X threw himself into his assigned projects wholeheartedly, and shows every sign of having real talent in...I was a little surprised by his high degree of enthusiasm because I knew that X was not primarily interested in...When I mentioned this to him, I discovered that he has well defined career goals that mesh with the projects he was working on....

Second, X is exceptionally diligent and hard working. He worked many extra hours over the summer. I vividly recall coming into the lab late in the evening...and finding X at work. X invariably finished projects well in advance of our projected target date. X was always cheerful during this intense period, and was a joy to have in the lab.

Third, X is very good at working with other people. He is exceptionally nice and considerate and sensitive. X is not only good humored and friendly, but also is good at gauging other people’s level of knowledge and attitudes....

All in all, I think X has a very bright future, and I am sure that he would benefit from...Given his great intelligence and sensitivity, I am sure that he could put...to good use.

In short, I give X my highest recommendation, and very much hope that the committee judges his application favorably.”

### **Sample C**

“I am writing in support of X to.... I have known X since September, 2006. He was a member of a small ...tutorial that I taught in 2006-07....X was an active and conscientious member of the class. He challenged the rest of the class to consider issues from new perspectives and often asked very penetrating and important questions. He chose to take on difficult topics and handled them well. His assignments were well-written, well-supported, organized, neat, and timely. It was evident that X really desired to learn more and challenge himself....

X also has interest outside of academics. He has been an active member of ... a Harvard singing group, and a member of the campus ... club. He is also a member of the ... House film society. X’s personality is wonderful. He is outgoing and friendly, but not dominating. He has an obvious and sincere concern for others ....

X would be a wonderful student to have at .... He has skills that he is eager to share, but he is just as eager to learn .... I feel very confident that he will be extremely successful in all his future endeavors. He is a focused and determined young man. I highly recommend him for....”

### **Sample D**

“I am pleased to write to you on behalf of X, who is applying for a fellowship to study .... I have known X for two years. She took my course in.... More recently, I have been advising her on her thesis. X has done well in Harvard’s ...concentration. The concentration includes preparation in.... In addition, she has had substantial exposure to the “practical” aspects of her topic, for example through her work at.... Thus she is extremely well prepared to fulfill her proposed project.

X has selected an area, ..., which is of growing interest.... In my view as someone who studies...among other topics, questions such as this are severely under-researched. The proposed topic - ... - seems to be both worthwhile and feasible, and should prove very interesting.

X is an independent self-starter. While she has no trouble working in groups, or interacting with others, she can also work well on her own. Furthermore, she is mature and personable. I would expect her to perform well in a wide range of environments. In fact, her personality and skills should place her high on any list of good “representatives” for the U.S.

I hope that you will consider her application strongly.”

### **Sample E**

“This letter is in support of X, who is applying for a ... grant. I have read his statement of purpose with great care; in fact, I have had many discussions with him about his project, which I find both compelling and important.

X is a rare combination: he is already at this young age a seasoned expert in both literature and iconography.... Having taught him in a language-intensive course last year, I can bear witness to his superb command of German....

His project’s focus of interest, the..., is admirably suited to someone of X’s talents and industry. The ... Institute is the ideal place to carry out such research, and I am confident that X’s discoveries will in the long run make an impact on learning in that field.

Add to all this that X is a very congenial person, well-liked by teachers and fellow-students alike, and you will see why I am so positive about this bright and energetic young scholar. I endorse his candidacy with confidence and enthusiasm.”

## APPENDIX E TWO ESSAYS ON WRITING FELLOWSHIP PROPOSALS: SSRC, NEH

### On the Art of Writing Proposals

Adam Prezeworski  
Frank Saloman

#### Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions

WRITING PROPOSALS FOR RESEARCH FUNDING is a peculiar facet of North American academic culture, and as with all things cultural, its attributes rise only partly into public consciousness. A proposal's overt function is to persuade a committee of scholars that the project shines with the three kinds of merit all disciplines value, namely, conceptual innovation, methodological rigor, and rich, substantive content. But to make these points stick, a proposal writer needs a feel for the unspoken customs, norms and needs that govern the selection process itself. These are not really as arcane or ritualistic as one might suspect. For the most part, these customs arise from the committee's efforts to deal in good faith with its own problems: incomprehension among disciplines, work overload, and the problem of equitably judging proposals that reflect unlike social and academic circumstances.

Writing for committee competition is an art quite different from research work itself. After long deliberation, a committee usually has to choose among proposals that all possess the three virtues mentioned above. Other things being equal, the proposal that is awarded funding is the one that gets its merits across more forcefully because it addresses these unspoken needs and norms as well as the overt rules. The purpose of these pages is to give competitors for Council fellowships and funding a more even start by making explicit some of those normally unspoken customs and needs.

#### Capture the Reviewer's Attention

While the form and the organization of a proposal are matters of taste, you should choose your form bearing in mind that every proposal reader constantly scans for clear answers to three questions:

What are we going to learn as the result of the proposed project that we do not know now?

Why is it worth knowing?

How will we know that the conclusions are valid?

Working through a tall stack of proposals on voluntarily-donated time, a committee member rarely has time to comb proposals for hidden answers. So, say what you have to say immediately, crisply, and forcefully. The opening paragraph, or the first page at most, is your opportunity to grab the reviewer's attention. Use it. This is the moment to overstate, rather than understate, your point or question. You can add the conditions and caveats later.

Questions that are clearly posed are an excellent way to begin a proposal. *Are strong party systems conducive to democratic stability? Was the decline of population growth in Brazil the result of government policies?* These should not be rhetorical questions; they have effect precisely because the answer is far from obvious. Stating your central point, hypothesis, or interpretation is also a good way to begin: *Workers do not organize unions; unions organize workers. The success and failure, of Corazon Aquino's revolution*

*stems from its middle class origins. Population growth coupled with loss of arable land poses a threat to North African food security in the 1990s.*

Obviously some projects are too complex and some conceptualizations too subtle for such telegraphic messages to capture. Sometimes only step-by-step argumentation can define the central problem. But even if you adopt this strategy, do not fail to leave the reviewer with something to remember: some message that will remain after reading many other proposals and discussing them for hours and hours. “She’s the one who claims *Argentina never had a liberal democratic tradition*” is how you want to be referred to during the committee’s discussion, not “Oh yes, she’s the one from Chicago.”

### **Aim for Clarity**

Remember that most proposals are reviewed by multidisciplinary committees. A reviewer studying a proposal from another field expects the proposer to meet her halfway. After all, the reader probably accepted the committee appointment because of the excitement of surveying other people’s ideas. Her only reward is the chance that proposals will provide a lucidly-guided tour of various disciplines’ research frontiers. Don’t cheat the reviewer of this by inflicting a tiresome trek through the duller idiosyncrasies of your discipline. Many disciplines have parochial traditions of writing in pretentious jargon. You should avoid jargon as much as you can, and when technical language is needed, restrict yourself to those new words and technical terms that truly lack equivalents in common language. Also, keep the spotlight on ideas. An archaeologist should argue the concepts latent in the ceramic typology more than the typology itself, a historian the tendency latent in the mass of events, and so forth. When additional technical material is needed, or when the argument refers to complex ancillary material, putting it into appendices decongests the main text.

### **Establish the Context**

Your proposal should tell the committee not only what will be learned as a result of your project, but what will be learned that somebody else does not already know. It is essential that the proposal summarizes the current state of knowledge and provides an up-to-date, comprehensive bibliography. Both should be precise and succinct. They need not constitute a review of “the literature” but a sharply focused view of the specific body or bodies of knowledge to which you will add. Committees often treat bibliographies as a sign of seriousness on the part of the applicant, and some members will put considerable effort into evaluating them. A good bibliography testifies that the author did enough preparatory work to make sure the project will complement and not duplicate other people’s efforts. Many proposals fail because the references are incomplete or outdated. Missing even a single reference can be very costly if it shows failure to connect with research directly related to one’s own. Proposal writers with limited library resources are urged to correspondence with colleagues and libraries elsewhere in the early stages of research planning. Resource guides such as *Dissertation Abstracts International* and *Social Science Periodical Index* are highly recommended.

For any disciplines, Annual Reviews, (e.g. Annual Review of Anthropology) offer state of the art discussions and rich bibliographies. Some disciplines have bibliographically-oriented journals, for example *Review of Economic Literature* and *Contemporary Sociology*. There are also valuable area studies-oriented guides: *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, *International African Bibliography*, etc. Familiarizing yourself with them can save days of research.

### **What’s the Payoff?**



Disciplinary norms and personal tastes in justifying research activities differ greatly. Some scholars are swayed by the statement “it has not been studied” (e.g. a historian may argue that no book has been written about a particular event, and therefore one is needed), while other scholars sometimes reflect that

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there may be a good reason why not. Nevertheless, the fact that less is known about one’s own chosen case, period, or country than about similar ones may work in the proposer’s favor. Between two identical projects, save that one concerns Egypt and the other the Sudan, reviewers are likely to prefer the latter. Citing the importance of the events that provide the subject matter is another and perhaps less dubious appeal. “Turning points,” “crucial breakthroughs,” “central personages,” “fundamental institutions,” and similar appeals to the significance of the object of research are sometimes effective if argued rather than merely asserted. Appealing to current importance may also work: e.g. democratic consolidation in South America, the aging population in industrialized countries, the relative decline of the hegemony of the United States. It’s crucial to convince readers that such topics are not merely timely, but that their current urgency provides a window into some more abiding problem.

Among many social scientists, explicit theoretical interest counts heavily as a point of merit. Theoretical exposition need not go back to the axiomatic bases of the discipline—proposal readers will have a reasonable interdisciplinary breadth—but it should situate the local problem in terms of its relevance to live, sometimes controversial, theoretical currents. Help your reader understand where the problem intersects the main theoretical debates in your field and show how this inquiry puts established ideas to the test or offers new ones. Good proposals demonstrate awareness of alternative viewpoints and argue the author’s position in such a way as to address the field broadly, rather than developing a single sectarian tendency indifferent to alternatives.

### **Use a Fresh Approach**

Surprises, puzzles, and apparent contradictions can powerfully persuade the reviewer whose disciplinary superego enforces a commitment to systematic model building or formal theorizing: “Given its longstanding democratic traditions, Chile was expected to return to democracy before other countries in the Southern Cone and yet.... It is because the assumption on which this prediction was based is false?” “Everybody expected that the ‘One Big Union’—the slogan of the movement—would strike and win wage increases for workers. Yet statistical evidence shows just the contrary: strong unions do not strike but instead restrain workers’ wage demands.

It is often worthwhile to help readers understand how the research task grows from the intellectual history or current intellectual life of the country or region that generated it. Council committees strive to build linkages among an immense diversity of national and international intellectual traditions, and members come from the various countries and schools of thought. Many committee members are interested in the interplay of diverse traditions. In fact, the chance to see intellectual history in the making is another reason people accept committee membership. It is a motive to which proposals can legitimately appeal.

It pays to remember that topics of current salience, both theoretical and in the so-called real world, are likely to be a crowded field. The competitors will be more numerous and competition less interesting than in truly unfamiliar terrain. Unless you have something truly original to say about them, you may be well advised to avoid topics typically styled “of central interest to the discipline.” Usually these are the topics about which everyone is writing, and the reason is that somebody else has already made the decisive and exciting contribution. By the time you write your proposal, obtain funding, and write it up, you may wish you were working on something else. Or if your instinct leads you to a problem far from the course that the pack is running, follow it—not the pack: nothing is more valuable than a really fresh beginning.

## **Describe Your Methodology**

Methodological canons are largely discipline-specific and vary widely even within some disciplines. But two things can safely be said about methodological appeal. First, the proposal must specify the research operations you will undertake and the way you will interpret the results of these operations in terms of your central problem. Do not just tell what you mean to achieve, tell how you will spend your time while doing it. Second, a methodology is not just a list of research tasks but an argument as to why these tasks add up to the best attack on the problem. An agenda by itself will normally not suffice because the mere listing of tasks to perform does not prove that they add up to the best feasible approach.

Some popularly used phrases fall short of identifying recognizable research operations. For example, “I will look at the relation between x and y” is not informative. We know what is meant when an ornithologist proposes to “look at” a bird, but “looking at” a relation between variables is something one only does indirectly, by operations like digging through dusty archive boxes, interviewing, observing and taking standardized notes, collecting and testing statistical patterns, etc. How will you tease the relationship of underlying forces from the mess of experience? The process of gathering data and moving from data to interpretation tends to follow disciplinary customs, more standard in some fields than in others; help readers from other fields recognize what parts of your methodology are standard, what innovative.

Be as specific as you possibly can be about the activities you plan to undertake to collect information, about the techniques you will use to analyze it, and about the tests of validity to which you commit yourself. Most proposals fail because they leave reviewers wondering what the applicant will actually do. Tell them! Specify the archives, the sources, the respondents, and the proposed techniques of analysis.

A research design proposing comparison between cases often has a special appeal. In a certain sense all research is comparative because it must use, implicitly or explicitly, some point of reference. Making the comparison explicit raises its value as a scientific inquiry. In evaluating a comparative proposal, readers ask whether the cases are chosen in such a way that their similarities and differences illuminate the central question. And is the proposer in a position to execute both legs of a comparison? When both answers are positive, the proposal may fare particularly well.

The proposal should prove that the researcher either possesses or cooperates with people who possess, mastery of all the technical matters the project entails. For example, if a predominantly literary project includes an inquiry into the influence of the Tulpan language on rural Brazilian Portuguese, the proposal will be checked for the author’s background in linguistics and/or Indian languages, or the author’s arrangements to collaborate with appropriate experts.

## **Specify your Objectives**

A well-composed proposal, like a sonata, usually ends by alluding to the original theme. How will research procedures and their products finally connect with the central question? How will you know if your idea was wrong or right? In some disciplines this imperative traditionally means holding to the strict canon of the falsifiable hypothesis. While respecting this canon, committee members are also open to less formal approaches. What matters is to convince readers that something is genuinely at stake in the inquiry—that it is not tendentiously moving toward a preconceived end—and that this leaven of the unknown will yield interesting orderly propositions.

Proposals should normally describe the final product of the project: an article, book, chapter, dissertation, etc. If you have specific plans, it often helps to spell them out, because specifying the kind of journal in which you hope to publish, or the kind of people you hope to address, will help readers understand what might otherwise look like merely odd features of the proposal.

While planning and drafting your proposal, you should keep in mind the program guidelines and application procedures outlined in the brochure specific to the program to which you are applying. If you have specific questions about the program, you may wish to consult with a staff member. Your final

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proposal should include all requested enclosures and appendices.

### **Final Note**

To write a good proposal takes a long time. Start early. Begin thinking about your topic well in advance and make it a habit to collect references while you work on other tasks. Write a first draft at least three months in advance, revise it, and show it to colleagues. Let it gather a little dust, collect colleagues' comments, revise it again. If you have a chance, share it with a seminar or similar group; the debate should help you anticipate what reviewers will eventually think. Revise the text again for substance. Go over the language, style, and form. Re-sharpen your opening paragraph or first page so that it drives home exactly what you mean as effectively as possible.

Good luck!

## **The Art of the Fellowship Proposal** John Lippincott

*With appreciation to the editor of Humanities, Judith Chayes Neiman, for her kind permission to let us recopy this. Mr. Lippincott wrote this as a member of the endowment staff.*

Each year the NEH receives thousands of individual fellowship applications from good scholars for good projects. A few hundred are recommended by review panels for funding, but only a few score elicit a unanimous recommendation of “Absolutely Yes!” As budgetary constraints on the endowment increase, the importance of a strong panel endorsement to the success of an application also increases.

Writing a fellowship proposal that receives enthusiastic endorsement from panelists is both an art and a science. The science is in carefully following the guidelines for the format of the application and in presenting a proposal that clearly reflects knowledge of the subject being studied and the methodology appropriate to it. The art is more difficult to describe and is the subject of this article.

The art of writing a successful proposal is **not** a matter of knowing arcane secrets of grantsmanship, a presumed hidden agenda at NEH, or that influential someone in the Fellowships Division. Nor is it achieved by mimicking proposals that received NEH grants in the past. (Examples given in this article are intended to demonstrate levels of quality, not to serve as models.)

The art of writing a successful proposal is largely a matter of understanding how individual fellowship applications are selected for funding.

There are three fellowship programs that award grants for individual study and research in the humanities: Summer Stipends; Fellowships for College Teachers; and Fellowships for Independent Study and Research. They are all highly competitive because of their limited budgets and the large number of good proposals submitted each year. The ratio of grants to applications varies among the programs and from year to year, ranging from a low of one-to-five in the College Teachers program to a high of one-to-nine in Independent Study.

All three programs use ad hoc review panels—composed of scholars representing the disciplines of the applications under consideration—to evaluate the proposals. Panel ratings serve as the basis for the National Council on the Humanities’ funding recommendations to the NEH chairman, who gives final approval on all endowment grants.

In making their assessments of an application, panelists consider the evidence provided by the applicant—the description of the project, the letters of reference, the curriculum vitae, and the bibliography of works relevant to the study. (Directions for proper completion of application materials cannot be recapitulated here; they are given in the guidelines for each program and should be followed carefully.)

In evaluating this evidence the panelists adhere to the four selection criteria stated in the program guidelines. A review and discussion of these criteria (which vary only slightly among the three individual fellowships programs) will help reveal what makes for an “artful,” i.e., competitive, application.

### **1. The quality or promise of quality of the applicant’s work as a teacher, scholar, or interpreter of the humanities.**

This criterion focuses more on the applicant than on the project. The panel looks for evidence that the individual has the knowledge and ability to carry out the project and a commitment to excellence in scholarship. In making this determination, the panel considers more than just the curriculum vitae and record of previous publications. Reference letters provide critical information as well, and the project description itself, in its conception and presentation, is an important indicator of the quality of the individual's thought.

The phrase "the promise of quality" in this criterion indicates that panelists are concerned not simply with past accomplishments of the applicant. All three programs make grants to scholars early in their careers, as well as to senior scholars. Panelists try to judge the quality of applicants' work by standards appropriate to their career stages. There are no quotas set for awards to junior or senior scholars, nor is there any prejudice against either group. Among the Independent fellowships awarded last November, forty-eight percent went to junior scholars. (Forty-nine percent of the applications were from junior scholars.)

One of these junior scholars is studying the origin of the economic decline in New England from 1840 to 1925. The applicant was awarded a doctorate in history in 1979 and is currently an assistant professor at a major university. Her record of publications includes two journal articles and three conference presentations.

In evaluating her application, panelists took note of her status as a younger scholar. The sophisticated knowledge of the subject revealed in the proposal itself and strong letters of reference were instrumental in convincing the panel that there was "promise of quality" from this applicant. "Extremely impressive proposal," commented one panelist. "Well-reasoned, clear and attractive."

When panelists evaluate the "quality of work" of senior scholars, they may place greater emphasis on some aspects of the application.

One of the 1982-83 Independent Study awards to an established scholar (doctorate awarded in 1968, college professor since 1966, currently an associate dean at a major university) was for a biography of Anne Sexton. Certainly the proposal description was a principal element in panelists' consideration of the quality of work of the applicant, as were the letters of reference. But panelists also took careful note of the applicant's record of achievement—nine academic honors; three books and numerous articles of high quality; and poems published in a variety of journals.

Without this level of accomplishment it is unlikely a panelist would have concluded, "Seldom have I found an applicant I could bet on with more certainty—an absolutely first-rate proposal and person to do it." Another remarked, "Publications are quite good, references are excellent, and the candidate obviously has access and can do the biography."

It should be noted that the "work" whose quality is being judged under this criterion need not have been conducted in an academic setting. Two of the three programs entertain applications from scholars unaffiliated with colleges or universities; they also include unaffiliated scholars on their panels.

## **2. The importance of the proposal to the specific field and the humanities in general.**

The best evidence of the importance of the project is given in the applicant's project description, though certainly letters of reference provide necessary corroboration. An applicant cannot assume that panelists will appreciate the importance of a project or have a predisposition toward the subject matter. It is incumbent upon the applicant to make the case for the importance of the study to be undertaken.

Because applications are competitive and reviewed in groups, panelists look for those projects likely to make the greatest contribution to the humanities. The contribution an applicant expects to make may be through teaching, through the production of materials that will serve other scholars, or through development of new perspectives on the discipline that will encourage further discussion and understanding of the subject among all interested audiences.

A project that will serve only the applicant (such as remedial work by the applicant to “catch up” in a field) will not be competitive with projects that offer to add to the knowledge of students, colleagues, or a wider public.

A summer stipend was recently awarded for a project to write an archaeological commentary on the *Wasps* of Aristophanes, applying vase paintings and other monumental evidence to a study of the play’s terms, puns, metaphors, objects, actions and the *mise-en-scene* of the Athenian law courts.

In his proposal, the applicant argued the importance of the project by citing other scholars who have affirmed the value of applying archaeological evidence to interpretation of Aristophanes’ comedies. He then offered his own view of the significance of providing a “material and historical context” for understanding literature in general and the *Wasps* in particular. He suggested the study would serve classicists as well as a wider group of readers and would provide a basis for more authentic and effective productions of the play.

He persuaded the panel that a new understanding and appreciation of Aristophanes was needed and could be achieved through this project. One panelist commented, “This kind of study is something we should see more of and that is an approach to a classical text which attempts to conceptualize a drama as it was originally conceived and produced as, among other benefits, a stimulus to the production of ancient comedy.” Another noted that “it is the sort of work that combines ‘scholarly’ and ‘practical’ use; it may well help directors and actors present more visually meaningful performances of the play.”

In addition to the importance of the subject matter, the proposal may argue for the value of its methodology, as in this excerpt from a 1982-83 Independent Study proposal:

Political history is currently out of fashion, largely because it tends to be biographical and narrative in orientation and, except for vote counting, does not lend itself to social-scientific techniques and analysis. Political history, however, deserves attention, partly because it contains the central questions of history—how are decisions actually made—and partly because political, old-fashioned elitist history needs redoing. I propose to take a fresh look at the political history of Tudor England and study the political environment in which individuals translated their culturally conditioned aspirations and assumptions into the realities of political success and failure. It is customary to approach politics from the perspective of those who succeeded because the documentation is skewed in that direction and successful ideas live on in terms of their historic consequences. Unfortunately, successful people also tend to be well-adjusted and to know how to make the system work for them; as a result, they do not usually have much to say about the functional and psychological strains under which they operate. It is the unsuccessful who flounder and cry out and thereby reveal in their lives and writings the pressures and emotional strains under which all the natural leaders of society must work. As Scott Fitzgerald said: ‘It is from the failures of life and not its successes that we learn the most.’ The ultimate tour de force is to relate theory to practice and to offer an explanation of Tudor politics in terms of a multitude of failure stories, thereby

rewriting and reinterpreting the sixteenth-century political scene... Irrationality in politics, political failure and paranoia are, alas, sufficiently relevant themes to need no special pleading. That they are being studied within a sixteenth-century context should not distract from their importance to the scholar, from their interest for the general reading public, or from their impact upon our knowledge about mankind.

Panelists were convinced. “It appears that the realization of this project would shed new light on the political dynamic of a crucial period... I think his approach will serve as an important scholarly model in terms of developing understanding of the political process in any era.” “The book would likely reach not only specialists but intelligent readers generally and make a significant and original contribution to both. This is one among two or three proposals that I rank as the very best -the reflection of a mature and brilliant scholar on a field in which he has long worked, that is at the same time an act of imagination—an asking of fresh questions of material long familiar that will influence all our thinking.”

Importance of the project is not a function of the discipline or scope of the project. There are no favored fields, time periods, or cultures. It is rather what the applicant makes of the subject that determines its importance—a point to be taken up under the third criterion.

### **3. The conception, definition, and organization of the proposal.**

This and the preceding criterion are mutually supportive. The importance of a project is dependent on the way it is conceived, and its conception cannot be judged without regard for its importance.

Good conception, definition, and organization of the project obviously result from the applicant’s command of the subject and thus fall within the realm of the science of proposal writing. There is, however, also an art to conceiving, defining, and organizing the project. Put simply, the most successful applications seem to be those in which applicants let their ideas and enthusiasm for the subject “shine through.”

A potential applicant once contacted an NEH program officer and said she had two projects for a summer stipend in mind. After describing the projects, she asked the staff member which she should submit. The program officer counseled her to submit the one that interested her most.

Conception of the project involves asking the right questions about the subject to be studied, drawing the right comparisons with other works and subjects, and setting the right scope for the project. The operative term here is “right.” The right questions, right comparisons, and right scope—in addition to being appropriate to the field—are those that capture the interest of the panel. And since a panel is made up of scholars in the discipline, their interests will be similar to those of an applicant’s colleagues.

Competitive proposals are those that go beyond a naive or redundant treatment to explore the subject’s real potential, to yield new perspectives (including interdisciplinary views), or break new ground.

Among the applications for 1981-82 Fellowships for College Teachers were two projects treating ethical issues related to science. Both studies were intended to improve classroom instruction and serve as the basis for new courses. Of these two projects in essentially the same discipline and with the same purpose, only one was funded. The quality of the conception and definition of the project made the difference.

The successful proposal focused the study on ethical issues relating to medicine and explained clearly the value of the project to the institution and students it would benefit. It then discussed the nature of and reasons for recent moral problems associated with medicine and appropriate ways for approaching these

problems. The proposal concluded with the specific questions to be explored and the methodology that would be applied.

The project received a strong recommendation from panelists. Typical of their comments was, “This is an excellent proposal both in terms of care with which it is worked out and the probable significance for teaching.”

The unsuccessful application proposed a two-part study on 1) “the history of the biological sciences and of philosophical issues peculiar to them” and 2) “contemporary work in the area of ethical issues in science and technology.” The proposal discussed the applicant’s teaching responsibilities, academic background, and current approach to and problems with teaching ethical perspectives on science, and offered as a plan of study only a brief paragraph noting resources and faculties to be consulted.

Panelists expressed concern at the application’s lack of a clear focus for the study, or specific issues to be tackled of the approach to be taken. “In comparison with the other proposal which takes biology as background for considering ethical issues, this one is not as well developed,” one panelist remarked.

Another called the proposal “too broad, too vague.” A third said, “not clear that this really takes her enough beyond what she already does and knows to constitute a ‘project.’”

As these examples illustrate, it is important that applicants state clearly what they intend to do, what questions they intend to ask and why. It cannot be left to the panel to infer or the references to imply what the plan of study will be. Panels must know how the grant period is going to be used.

#### **4. The likelihood that the applicant will see the project through to completion.**

This criterion simply means that panelists will consider whether or not what is proposed can be and is likely to be achieved.

The criterion does not mean that the entire project must be completed during the grant period, only that it should eventually be completed and that the portion slated for the period of the fellowship can be handled in that time.

A 1981-82 College Teachers fellowship was awarded for a study of gambling in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, focusing on how this leisure activity reflects changes in social and private values resulting from industrialization.

Following an intensive discussion of the significance and approach of his study, the applicant stated:

As ambitious as the project is, I believe that it is not an unrealistic one, and my previous work suggests that I can undertake it successfully. I am already familiar with much of the literature, both primary and secondary, on “sporting” topics, and I have had some success in using this material in a constructive way.

In addition to favorable reactions to the applicant’s abilities and the potential value of the study, panelists were convinced of the likelihood the research and a monograph would be completed. “Proposer offers convincing argument and has evidently pursued work to point where it can be completed,” said one. Another said, “[He] has background to indicate likelihood of completion.”



Finally, there are a few additional factors a panel may consider in making decisions on a group of applications. Geographical and institutional diversity are sought among fellowship awards, though no quotas are set. Panelists often take this into consideration as a tiebreaker among highly rated proposals.

The individual fellowship programs give preference to applicants who have not had major grants or postdoctoral fellowships in the last six years. Panels are also sympathetic to able applicants in situations or institutions that offer few research opportunities.

There is also a *je ne sais quoi* a “sparkle,” an appeal that distinguishes successful proposals from the nearly successful proposals. This special quality is synergistic, combining and transcending all the previously mentioned qualities, as the following excerpt from a highly rated summer stipend proposal demonstrates:

An extensive study of Russian twentieth-century literature for children is long needed. It would provide us with an observation point from which the very formation of the ‘Soviet mind’ could be observed, because children’s literature in the USSR reflects that process in its complexity; from ideological indoctrination by the state to inoculation with critical attitudes and ways of independent thinking by dissenting writers. For this author the study of Russian children’s literature is a lifelong commitment. I was born and raised in a family of children’s writers: my father was the author of more than sixty books of prose and poetry for children and about two dozen plays for the same audience. And my mother has published several books of poems for children as well. I had the privilege of knowing almost every contemporary significant children’s writer personally. For fifteen years I worked as a writer and, from 1962 to 1975, as an editor for the children’s magazine *Kostyor* in Leningrad. I published a few books of my own and translated poetry for children. Nine of my plays for children were staged and published. At the same time, I was studying and collecting materials related to the history of Russian children’s literature, beginning with the 1920s, when the Russian literary avant-garde became involved in children’s literature.

At this point I am entering the conclusive stage of my project: to complete my manuscript on the “History of Modern Russian Literature for Children” I need to carry on some additional research in earlier Soviet periodicals and rare books and to double-check the materials that I copied in Soviet libraries some years ago. The NEH stipend would enable me to complete my work during the summer of 1982 by working in the libraries of Harvard and Yale, and, primarily, in the Library of Congress.

“Absolutely yes!” was the funding recommendation from one member of the review panel. The other members agreed.