Political Economy and Global Social Change Research Practicum

Sociology 251

Time: Fall: Wed, 1-4; Winter: Mon, 2-5\*; Spring; Variable as noted.

Location: Variable as noted

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The study of Political Economy and Global Social Change is extremely broad, both theoretically and methodologically. Most graduate students, especially those at early stages of their education, do not know the breath and depth of the empirical work in the field. Thus, the Research Practicum is designed to give students a set of hands on experiences with (1) common methodological approaches, (2) common theoretical approaches, (3) common empirical questions and (4) the diversity of research being conducted by current students and faculty in the specialty.

**Course Goals:** The goal of this course is to introduce students to the practice of social research in the political economy tradition in order to promote the development of each student’s independent research agenda. By the end of this course, students should have a sense of the types of questions that are asked in political economy, the theories that are used to address those questions, and the methodological approaches one commonly encounters in the political economy literature. Students are required to present at least one time on an ongoing research progress in which they are engaged, attend and comment upon presentations given by faculty and students both within the sociology department at UCR and outside it. Grades are based entirely on a student’s progress on their own project and their contribution to the projects of others.

**Course Requirements and Grading:** The course consists of a combination of outside reading, outside writing, and attendance / participation in in-class presentations of ongoing political-economic research. Students will be required to turn in reaction papers. The subject of these papers will depend on whether or not there is a presentation of an ongoing project that week. If there is not, then the content will reflect outside readings assigned in lieu of a presentation. If there is a presentation, then students will have to read the paper prior to class and use their reaction papers as a way to provide critical feedback for the presenter. Reaction papers are due at the end of class.

Ongoing research projects appropriate for this class must include (1) a clear statement of the key research question(s), (2) a thorough discussion of the relevant political-economic literature that relates to the research question(s), (3) a clear and concise statement of hypotheses or orienting questions that follow from the student’s research question and their reading of the relevant literature (4) a clear and concise discussion of both the data and methodology employed to address the research question and (5) a discussion of the findings and their substantive implications. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are welcomed.

**We will have two major types of assignments, as follows:**

Reaction Papers: 50%

Progress on research project: 50%

**Schedule**

*Fall, 2012: Talks take place in the IROWS map room.*

**Week 1, October 3rd:** Introduction to Research in Political Economy. Matthew C Mahutga

**Week 2, October 17th:** “Post-Colonial Legacies and Economic Development: The case of Foreign Language Education.” Gary Coyne.

**Week 3, November 14th:** “Feminist Politics and the World Social Forum: The Role of Gender & Religion at the Nairobi Forum.” Juliann Allison, Alexis Alvarez, Katja Guenther, Christian Jaworski, Linda Kim, Andrew Owen, Preeta Saxena, and Ellen Reese.

**Week 4, December 5th:** “Globalization and Industrial Relations in Affluent Democracies, 1970-2005: A Cross-National Analysis of Corporatism and Industrial Conflict.” Tony Roberts

*Winter, 2013: Talks take place in Watkins 1126*

**Week 5, January 28th, 2-5:** “Foreign Bank’s Reputation and Perceived Creditworthiness of Transition Countries.”Jana Grittersova, Department of Political Science, UC Riverside.

**Week 6, February 11th, 2-4:** Kevin Curwin, “Democracy Without Voters…”

**Week 7, March 18th, 2-5:** Andrew Owen, “Natural Resource Extraction and Income Inequality…”

*Spring, 2013:Talks vary in location and time as noted below*

**Week 8, Thursday, April 18th, 4:00 pm**, **Watkins 1117**: Matthew C Mahutga, “Privatization, World-Economic Integration and Institutional Change: New Evidence for the Distributional Consequences of Post-Socialist Transition.”

**Week 9, Thursday, May 9th, 9:00am, Watkins 1126:** Jason Struna, "Command and Control: The Globalization of Work in the Warehouse and Distribution Center."

**Week 10, Thursday, June 13th, 12:30 pm, Watkins 1126:** Alexis Alvarez, “Forecasts of global governance: world-systems, world polity, and civilizational paradigms.”