

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY/CSER 9000
Dissertation Development Seminar:
Workshop on Critical Approaches to Race and Ethnicity
Fall 2014/Spring 2015

Instructor: Van C. Tran
Phone: 212-854-4115
E-mail: vantran@columbia.edu
Office: 606 Knox Hall, 606 W. 122nd St.
Course time: Mondays, 12:10-2 p.m.
Location: 420 Hamilton Hall
Office hours: Wednesdays, 3:00-5:00 p.m. Please sign up [here](#).
Website: https://courseworks.columbia.edu/portal/site/CSERG9000_001_2014_3

Course Description:

This course is designed with three objectives in mind. First, it will guide doctoral students through the process of producing a high-quality dissertation and other scholarly work. Second, it will provide an interdisciplinary space for doctoral students to critically examine the issue of race, ethnicity, and migration, among other topics. Third, we will discuss the challenges in the research and writing process as well as practical strategies for navigating them. The course is offered through the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race and is cross-listed with sociology.

The course meets bi-weekly for both Fall 2014 and Spring 2015, offering two academic credits per semester. You are strongly encouraged to sign-up for both semesters, although we recognize that this might not be possible under certain circumstances (i.e. travel for fieldwork). In most of our meetings, we will have a presenter and a discussant. The presentation will be from 12:10 to 1:30 p.m. We will also reserve some time during our meetings (from 1:30 to 2 p.m.) to discuss the dissertation writing process as well as related professional development topics.

The primary purpose of this seminar is for doctoral students to circulate **works-in-progress** in order to elicit feedback and suggestions for improving scholarly work such as dissertation chapters or research proposals, journal article or book chapter submissions, grant applications and conference papers. The workshop will be home to a broad range of interests under the general rubric of race, ethnicity, and immigration studies. Most importantly, the workshop will provide an intellectual venue and community for doctoral students to present their own research and get feedback from others. If you are at the pre-dissertation stage, this seminar will help you shape your dissertation topics and questions. If you are writing your dissertation, this seminar will help you develop your chapters and cope with the writing challenges in the process. The course welcomes graduate students from a range of disciplinary background, including literature, history, sociology, urban studies, social anthropology, and political science.

For the 2014-2015 academic year, this workshop will be a collaborative effort between the “Workshop on Critical Approaches to Race and Ethnicity” at the [Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race](#) and the “Race, Ethnicity, and Migration” Workshop in the [Department of Sociology](#).

Course Objectives:

In this dissertation development seminar, we will:

1. Present work-in-progress to receive feedback.
2. Provide feedback to each other's scholarly work.
3. Discuss the dissertation research/writing process.

Course Requirements:

1. Presenting your work (40% of final grade)
2. Serving as a discussant (30% of final grade)
3. Seminar participation (30% of final grade)

Presenting your work

Every student is expected to present their research at least once during the academic year. The presenter will have to circulate a paper two weeks in advance of the workshop, so that everyone will have the opportunity to read it before the workshop. Your paper could be a research article, a book chapter, a dissertation proposal, a field statement, or a dissertation chapter that you would like to get feedback on. The emphasis will be on **work-in-progress**.

Serving as a discussant

At each workshop, one student will serve as a discussant for the paper. Your responsibility will include: (1) highlighting the main themes from the paper; (2) providing constructive comments aimed to improve the paper; and (3) summarizing the remaining questions to be discussed.

Leading discussion and seminar participation

Your active participation is important. Please read the paper that is circulated before each workshop and come prepared to discuss it. We will try to be as critically constructive as we can. You will also be responsible for leading discussion on one set of professional development topic.

Course Readings

Becker, Howard. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, Second Edition.

Bolker, Joan. 2010. *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis*. New York: Holt Paperback.

Germano, William. 2005. *From Dissertation to Book*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Also recommended:

Goldsmith, John A., John Komlos, and Penny Schine Gold. 2001. *The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Frank F. Furstenberg. 2013. *Behind the Academic Curtain: How to Find Success and Happiness with a PhD*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

Fall 2014, Mondays 12:10 p.m.-2 p.m.

Monday, September 8

Presenter: [Robert C. Smith](#) (Professor of Sociology, CUNY-Baruch College & Graduate Center)
Title: “Horatio Alger Lives in Brooklyn ... But Check His Papers”
Discussant: [Nicol M. Valdez](#) (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Columbia University)

Monday, September 22

Presenter: [Nicolas Legewie](#) (Ph.D. Candidate in Social Science, Humboldt University of Berlin)
Title: “Against All Odds: Social Support and Educational Upward Mobility Among Disadvantaged Students”
Discussant: [Christina Ciocca](#) (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Columbia University)

Monday, October 6

Presenter: [Warren McKinney](#) (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Columbia University)
Title: “The Legendary Topography of Race: Slavery and Tourism in West Africa”
Discussant: [Abosedo George](#) (Assistant Professor of History and Africana Study, Barnard College)

Monday, October 20

Presenter: [James R. Jones](#) (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Columbia University)
Title: “The ‘Last Plantation’: Racial Stratification and Segregation in the United States Congressional Workforce”
Discussant: [Kimberley Johnson](#) (Associate Professor of Political Science, Barnard College)

Monday, November 10

Presenter: [Melissa M. Valle](#) (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Columbia University)
Title: “The Body and The Barrio: Race, Space and Representation in Cartagena, Colombia”
Discussant: [Anthony Ureña](#) (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Columbia University)

Monday, November 17

Presenter: [Luciana de Souza Leão](#) (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Columbia University)
Title: “The Paradox of Mixing: Identities, Inequalities and Perceptions of Discrimination among Brazilian Browns”
Discussant: [Brittany N. Fox](#) (Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Columbia University)

Monday, December 1

Presenter: [Dan J. Wang](#) (Assistant Professor of Management, Columbia University)
Title: TBA
Discussant: [Christel Kesler](#) (Assistant Professor of Sociology, Barnard College)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE AND RELATED READINGS

- September 22:** **The Dissertation Writing Process**
Bolker, Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-48
Goldsmith, Komlos and Gold, Chapters 3, pp. 44-53.
Cassuto, "[The Adviser and the Committee.](#)"
- October 6:** **Special Event for Professor Herbert Gans (509 Knox Hall)**
[No reading this week.]
- October 20:** **How to Find a Dissertation Topic?**
Goldsmith, Komlos and Gold, Chapters 4, pp. 54-65.
Treitler, "[How to Choose a Dissertation Topic](#)"
- November 10:** **How to Approach the Dissertation Proposal?**
Cassuto, "[It's a Dissertation, Not a Book](#)".
Cassuto, "[Demystifying the Dissertation Proposal](#)".
Herrmann, "[My Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Dissertation.](#)"
- November 17:** **Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods?**
Small (2009), How Many Cases Do I Need?
Small (2011), How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study?
- December 1:** **The First Draft**
Bolker, Chapters 4-5, pp. 49-79.
- January 26** **Challenges in the Writing Process**
Becker, Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-42.
- February 9** **Editing and Revising Your Work**
Becker, Chapter 4-5, pp. 68-107.
- February 23** **How To Find Support in the Process?**
Bolker, Chapters 6-7, pp. 80-115.
Ms. Mentor, "[Do I Have to Finish My Dissertation.](#)"
- March 9** **The Second Draft**
Bolker, Chapters 8-10, pp. 116-150.
- March 23** **Finishing up Writing Projects**
Becker, Chapter 6-8, pp. 108-149.
- April 6** **Landing an Academic Position**
Goldsmith, Komlos and Gold, Chapters 4, pp. 44-65.
- April 20** **From Dissertation to Book**
Germano, Chapters 1-4.

Spring 2015, Mondays 12:10 p.m.-2 p.m.

Monday, January 26

Presenter: TBA
Title: TBA
Discussant: TBA

Monday, February 9

Presenter: TBA
Title: TBA
Discussant: TBA

Monday, February 23

Presenter: TBA
Title: TBA
Discussant: TBA

Monday, March 9

Presenter: TBA
Title: TBA
Discussant: TBA

Monday, March 23

Presenter: TBA
Title: TBA
Discussant: TBA

Monday, April 6

Presenter: TBA
Title: TBA
Discussant: TBA

Monday, April 20

Presenter: TBA
Title: TBA
Discussant: TBA