

SOCS 320

Asma Abbas

Junior Fellows Programme & Proseminar in Social Scientific Inquiry 2-V College Centre
HOME AND THE HAUNTS OF MODERNITY aabbas@simons-rock.edu; x7215

Autumn 2008, R, 2-5, 5:30-7:30, Room 2 Office hours: M, 4-5 pm, T, 9-11 am, & by appt.

As the core and defining component of the Junior Fellows Program, the Proseminar in Junior Scientific Inquiry provides a group of select juniors and seniors with an opportunity for immersion in social theory, social research, and social action through intensive interaction with scholars active across the broad spectrum of the disciplines, and through colloquia and mini-workshops. Through lectures, symposia, seminars, readings, discussions, excursions, and writing, the Program is aimed at nurturing an intellectual community seeking to bridge scholarship and citizenship through critical engagement with problems that impede the development of a just and sustainable global civil society. We will seek to promote forms of scholarship that stitch together different disciplinary fabrics in academic practice, as well as new forms of student and faculty engagement with issues that define our times. This is an in-house Signature Program for students whose concentrations entail significant work in the social sciences or cognate fields of inquiry.

Through intellectual exchanges with social scientists and interdisciplinary scholars in a variety of settings, Junior Fellows will become acquainted with professional standards for scholarly work as practiced by their own teachers and by an array of guest lecturers and workshop leaders. Throughout the Proseminar, participants will be expected to think and write collaboratively, expansively, and rigorously, honing their methodological and research skills, en route to preparing papers for professional conferences, planning for senior theses, and contemplating post-baccalaureate life.

The theme for this first Junior Fellows Program is “home” as trope, element, and object of social scientific inquiry. Whether in its resonance with notions of origins, dwelling, foundations, constructions, stability, etc., metaphors and valences of home are numerous, and inhabit some of the most basic presumptions of, and most visceral challenges to, our desires and our struggles in this world. The program will explore our explicit and implicit attachments to home as a notion and an actual place, as a part of both our intellectual and experiential compartments. As the Division of the Social Sciences, we are prepared to commit ourselves to “Home” as a canny and somewhat organic concept that figures at once in epistemological and ontological concerns of our disciplines. It is a puzzle that, while serving as a topic to which we can reach out from our diverse pedagogical and scholarly habitats, forces us to consider not only what home is, but also how it is insinuated in our methodological and formal investments, at work and in everyday life, as part of broader trajectories of thought and practice, or as dissenters from them. We hope that Fellows will be able to bring their own pursuits, interests, and proclivities to bear on “home” in direct or indirect ways collaboratively responding to questions we will together articulate in response to the various engagements with speakers and with texts broadly understood. It takes seriously the challenge of late modernity to questions of subjectivity, identity, alienation, desire, freedom, where they must be found and how we know we’ve found them (and at what cost), these yearnings that make us card-carrying citizens of a colonised and globalised world.

EXPECTATIONS

The Proseminar features each of its participants as interlocutors with each other, and with the guests we invite into our colloquia. These encounters will also entail bringing each of your independent projects, whether pre-existing or emerging over the semester in relation to our other interests, into discussion. The weeks with guest speakers from will be dedicated to their work. Please remember that on the Thursdays when speakers are here, your presence will be required at all times, unless you inform me much in advance. Also, we will divide up responsibility for being “hosts” for these speakers.

Required readings that will have to be done in preparation for the stated weeks. However, it is my full intention that once you start figuring out your own way, we will develop, through consultation, independent concurrent bibliographies/reading lists for your own ideas, interest and works in progress. This is where we will draw on other resources within our school, and also others that we can access, in terms not only of libraries, but people and experts. Which is one reason why we have not planned yet any further trips beyond the APSA, for I want us to make those plans together.

In addition, for certain weeks, we may have in-house guests from the Social Sciences and other divisions to join us on days featuring topics cognate to their work. As a general principle, a score of people could be relevant for any given day, and the invitations will be made without prejudice to anyone, and certainly on the basis of our collective judgment of proximity.

There will be regular directed writing at home (in response to readings and speakers, in a way that pertains to your own project) and in class (every week we do not have a speaker), and colloquium-style review /workshopping (3 rounds of it), so you can work towards your own writing goals fixed at the beginning of the term.

The goal is, by the end of the Fall, to have worked significantly on your individual projects according to your own plan. You are required to propose a paper or article to an undergraduate conference or undergraduate journal by the end of the Fall semester. The Spring component of this Proseminar will see you through the completion of that commitment, whether in the form of attending a conference or submitting a completed work.

You will be graded on a portfolio submitted at the end of the semester, which will include all your writing and reflections from the semester (that will also be submitted throughout the term), as well as documented “outreach” (seeking out conferences, publications, and other action or political venues, setting goals and pursuing them).

Grading Scheme

Hosting responsibilities	10%
Portfolio	90%

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Homework/preparation over last couple of weeks of Summer break.

- a. Pick out one excerpt of writing, preferably scholarly (however you want to define it—and please define it too) that you like very much.
- b. Pick out one “text” (understood broadly) that you would define as haunting (you).
- c. For each of these, do a FFW on why they have the effect they have.
- d. Make enough copies of (a) and (b) to share with the rest of us in Boston. Please do not forget.

Please note:

TBA means I haven’t decided yet, details forthcoming, will be announced in due course.

TBD means to be discussed in our group.

Selections marked with an asterisk are placed on electronic reserves

HW means homework!

Week I, Aug 28/Aug 29/Aug 30

Convene in Boston on early Friday morning. All of you have free registrations, but we must first meet as a group.

Friday: convene in the morning, attend conference all day (each person to attend 4 panels)

Saturday: convene in the morning, then depart.

HW: written report/reflections on panel.

Recommended Reading as primers for the visit:

APSA website and conference programme;

George Steinmetz, *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences*. pp. 207-232, pp. 470-495

Week II, Sep 4—Terms of Inquiry and What’s Scientific About Humans?

Back at Simon’s Rock.

Discussion on each others’ selected pieces.

In-class writing.

Readings: *Selections from Immanuel Wallerstein, *Undoing Social Science* (TBA)

*Selections from Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (TBA)

Week III, Sep 11—Broaching Space (and preparing for colonialism...)

Bring in your DuBois/Forster papers from your soph sem.

Some writing at home. (TBD)

In-class writing. (TBD)

Round 1 of review (TBD)

Required Reading: Selections from Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (TBA)

Recommended Reading: Katherine Cummins’ BA thesis (2001)

Week IV, Sep 18—Homes of Narrative and Narratives of Home

Guest Speaker: David Adams, Associate Professor of English, Ohio State University

Required Reading: *Introduction and Chapter 2 from his book *Colonial Odysseys*.
*“Metaphors for Mankind: The Development of Hans Blumenberg’s Anthropological Metaphorology”
* Background reading (TBA)

Dinner @ 5 pm

Evening lecture topic: “The Mind at Home: Common Sense and Paranoia” (6 pm, Clark Auditorium)

HW for next week: directed writing in response to Adams (In what ways did the day’s proceedings speak to your topic/project?)

Student Host: Nuola/Dylan

Week V, Sep 25—Haunting, Science and the Critique of Knowledge

Required Reading: Selections from Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (<http://www.wright.edu/cola/descartes/meditation1.html>)
*Selections from Susan Bordo, *The Flight from Objectivity*
*Selections from Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*

Week VI, Oct 2—DuBois as Social Scientist

Guest Speaker: Adolph Reed, Professor of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania

Required Reading: *Selections from W.E.B. DuBois and American Political Thought

Dinner @ 5 pm

Evening lecture topic: on Obamamania and Race Politics Post-Katrina (6 pm, Clark Auditorium)

HW for next week: directed writing in response to Reed (In what ways did the day’s proceedings speak to your topic/project?)

Student Host: Brendan/Nuola

BREAK

Week VII, Oct 16—Oikos: Ecology Here and There

Guest Speaker: Christopher Russill, Assistant Professor in Environmental Communication at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Required Readings: TBA

Dinner @ 5 pm

Evening lecture topic: “Tipping Point Forewarnings of Climate Change Danger, or, Everything’s Cool” (6 pm, Clark Auditorium)

HW for next week: directed writing in response to Russill (In what ways did the day’s proceedings speak to your topic/project?)

Student Host: Dara/Els

Week VIII, Oct 23—The Local/e of Inquiry

Guest Speaker: June Nash, Distinguished Professor Emerita, The Graduate Center and City College, The City University of New York.

Required Readings: *Selections from Nash, *Practicing Ethnography*, along with some current articles

Dinner @ 5 pm

Evening lecture topic: "From the Western Highlands of Guatemala to the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts: An Anthropological Odyssey" (6 pm, Clark Auditorium)

HW for next week: directed writing in response to Nash (In what ways did the day's proceedings speak to your topic/project?)

Student Host: Nastia/Jocelyn

Week IX, Oct 30—Seeing Oneself in Others—Questions of Visibility and Exposure in Communities Away from Home

Guest Speaker: Anaele Diala Iroh, Centre for Transcultural Research and Media Practice, Dublin Institute of Technology (also visiting lecturer at Simon's Rock starting Fall 08)

Required Readings:

*Aniakor, C. C. 1996. "Household Objects and the Philosophy of Igbo Social Space" In: M. J. Arnoldi, et al. (eds). *African Material Culture*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, pp.214 – 242.

*Foster, H. 1996. "The Artist as Ethnographer." In: *The Return of the Real*. Cambridge MA and London: The MIT Press, pp 171 – 204.

* Iroh, A. D. 2008. "Transnationalism and Transformation: Nigerian Familial Formations in Spaces of Regulation and Regimentation in Ireland." (Special Issue) *Family Dynamics in Transnational African Migration, African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 1, (2), (forthcoming).

*Iroh, A. D. 2008. "The Instability of Community: Visualising the Igbo in Ireland." In: B. Faragó and M. Sullivan (eds.). *Facing the Other: Interdisciplinary Studies on Race, Gender and Social Justice in Ireland*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, pp. 74 - 92

The seminar will also have the components of an art installation and subsequent discussion and hands-on work by students. (the installation goes up on

Dinner @ 5 pm

Evening lecture topic: "Home, Otherness and Memory: Nigerian Family and Community Formations in Ireland" (6 pm, Clark Auditorium)

HW for next week: directed writing in response to Adis (In what ways did the day's proceedings speak to your topic/project?)

Student Host: Noah/Laura

Week X, Nov 6—Homelessnesses

Guest Speaker: Susan Jones, Professor of Clinical Law, George Washington University Law School, Washington DC

Required Readings: TBA

Dinner @ 5 pm

Evening lecture topic: “An Economic Justice Imperative” (6 pm, Clark Auditorium)

HW for next week: directed writing in response to Jones (In what ways did the day’s proceedings speak to your topic/project?)

Student Host: Katie/Emanuel

Week XI, Nov 13

Student Colloquium (Round 2)

Week XII, Nov 20—Friends, Enemies, Lovers

Guest Speaker: Leela Gandhi, Professor of English, University of Chicago

Required Readings:

*“Manifesto” and “Sex” in Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siecle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*—discussion will include Forster’s *A Passage to India*, Kipling’s *Kim*, and Vikram Seth’s, *Beastly Tales*

Dinner @ 5 pm

Evening Lecture topic: TBA

HW for next week: directed writing in response to Gandhi (In what ways did the day’s proceedings speak to your topic/project?)

Student Host: Laura/Els

BREAK

Week XIII, Dec 4—The Gothic and the Grave

Student Colloquium (Round 3)

Required Reading: TBA

Week XIV, Dec 11

Student Colloquium (Round 3)

Revisiting writing from Week 1