



NYU | WAGNER

Doctoral Research Colloquium, Spring 2017

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Objectives:

This course aims to help students: (a) engage with, constructively criticize, and learn from working papers and unpublished research; (b) get a “behind-the-scenes” peek on how research is conducted by those who are successfully conducting it; (c) identify connections between apparently disparate fields, disciplines, or methodologies; and (d) articulate their own research interests and agenda in a compelling way.

Meeting Times and Places:

Unless otherwise noted, the colloquium meets on selected Thursdays from 12:30-2:00PM in the Rudin Conference Room (see schedule below). These meetings are followed by a debrief session from 2:00 to 3:00PM **room TBA**, attended by enrolled students and the speaker. The papers for each talk will be distributed as they become available. A NYU Classes website with additional readings related to the craft and art of research is available as well.

Schedule:

Jan 26th - Kick-off meeting. We will go over the syllabus, set expectations, and get ready for a productive semester. Please read “That’s Interesting” by Murray Davis. I highly recommend you also read a book titled “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions”, by Thomas Kuhn, available on Amazon and other booksellers.

Feb 2 – Kenneth Couch, Professor of Economics at the University of Connecticut and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. Professor Couch’s research examines numerous topics dealing with disadvantaged groups in society, the labor market, and policies designed to assist them. He has written about the experiences of workers after being laid-off and other individuals who face labor market discrimination. He has also evaluated the effects of numerous public programs such as workfare and Social Security. Prof. Couch obtained a PhD in Economics from the University of Wisconsin.

Feb 9 – Janice Fine, Associate Professor of Labor Studies and Employment Relations at Rutgers University. Professor Fine teaches and writes about low wage immigrant labor in the U.S., historical and contemporary debates regarding federal immigration policy, dilemmas of labor standards enforcement, and innovative union and community organizing strategies. She is a member of the graduate faculty in Political Science as well as the Department of Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies. Prof. Fine obtained a PhD in Management from MIT.

Feb 23 - Benjamin Hansen, Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Oregon and Visiting Research Scholar, Crime Lab New York. In his research, Professor Hansen studies health, education and labor topics. Recently, he started focusing attention on factors influencing adolescent and adult risky behaviors, health economics policy, crime, and human capital formation. Prof. Hansen obtained a PhD in Economics from University of California Santa Barbara. [this event has not been confirmed yet]

Mar 2 – Andrew Schrank, Olive C. Watson Professor of Sociology and International and Public Affairs at Brown University. Professor Schrank studies the organization, regulation, and performance of industry. He is particularly interested in the design and construction of “high road” institutions that reconcile the allegedly competing goals of regulatory compliance and economic competitiveness at the firm and regional levels, and toward that end he has examined the downside of the division of labor. Prof. Schrank obtained a PhD in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Mar 9 – Double-header: Agustina Laurito and Andrew Breck, PhD candidates at NYU Wagner. Agustina Laurito’s research interests are in urban policy and education with a focus on how children’s various social settings affect their wellbeing. Andrew Breck’s research interests are at the intersection of social policy and health behavior.

Mar 23 – Meenu Tewari, Associate Professor of City & Regional Planning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Professor Tewari works on the political economy of economic and industrial development, poverty alleviation, small firms, and the urban informal economy from a comparative, institutional perspective. She teaches economic development, historical and institutional analysis of development processes, and microeconomics. Prof. Tewari obtained a PhD in Urban Studies from MIT.

Apr 13 – Joseph Cimpian, Associate Professor of Economics and Education Policy at NYU Steinhardt and Affiliated Associate Professor of Public Service at NYU Wagner. Professor Cimpian’s multi-disciplinary research focuses on the use and development of novel and rigorous methods to study equity and policy, particularly concerning language minorities, women, and sexual minorities. Prof. Cimpian obtained a PhD in the Economics of Education from Stanford University.

Apr 20 – Abu Shonchoy, adjunct Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Public Policy at The University of Tokyo and Visiting Scholar at NYU Wagner. Professor Shonchoy is a development economist with interests in impact evaluation and micro econometrics. He is also

a Research Fellow at the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE) JETRO, Japan. Originally from Bangladesh, he obtained a PhD in Economics from the University of New South Wales, in Australia.

May 4th – Wrap-up session. We take stock of the topics discussed throughout the semester. Students should read at least one of the *substantive* readings on professional development posted under “The art and craft of a scholarly career”. Please come ready to present the main points in your chosen reading and use them to reflect on the main lessons from the semester.

Assignments:

In addition to attending the presentation, students are required to perform the following tasks:

(a) Participation: students enrolled in this class are required to attend the events, read the papers and engage with the speaker during and/or immediately after the presentation (i.e. Q&A). Naturally, I do not expect that every student will ask questions at every event. Still, I expect to see engagement and participation during the class as a whole. Students are also required to read and discuss some of the readings posted on NYU Classes (see “kick-off” and “wrap-up” above). This item (“*Participation*”) will account for 20% of the final grade.

(b) Your personal research “pitch”: as a young researcher, you will often introduce yourself and your research to others, and your effort to devise a polished and compelling “pitch” can fulfill two functions: (a) it helps you refine and understand your own research agenda; and (b) it helps you connect with other researchers, members of search committees, and potential sponsors, donors and funders.

To this end, students in this course must submit a draft and then a final version of their research “pitch”. When writing your “pitch”, imagine that it will be read by a group of multidisciplinary researchers (economists, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, urban planners), and you are trying to convince them that your research is interesting, doable, and it will contribute to some important body of knowledge.

The “pitch” can take the form of a brief research proposal, or a long cover letter. It should not be more than two pages long (single space). Avoid jargon, and assume that your reader is well-educated person, but not fully versed in your methods or the salient controversies in your field. To help you get started, read “The Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions”, available on NYU Classes.

The first draft will account for 20% of your grade, and it is due on **March 9th**. The final version of your pitch will account for 35% of your grade, and it is due on **May 11th**.

(c) Debriefing memo: after each event, students are expected to take notes on the meeting with the speaker and, at the end of the semester, submit a short memo (three to five pages) with the main points discussed during the debriefing session and lessons learned. This memo is individual. It should not discuss the *substance* of the research but the insights on how research

is actually done (e.g.: how to select a research question and gather data, the importance of methodology, how to write effectively, etc), and how to succeed in this career. One theme that often comes up concerns the importance of disciplinary status for professional success. Should Wagner students try to become economists, political-scientists, or sociologists, or should they embrace their interdisciplinary status?

As a general rule, you should face these meetings with speakers, and the writing of the memo, as an exercise in qualitative research. Your goal is to find out how to be a successful researcher. When the speaker provides an abstract idea, ask for examples. When you think a speaker is contradicting himself, herself, a previous speaker, or the advice you received elsewhere, ask for clarification. Be gentle, but probe deeper. Your skill as an interviewer will show through a memo that goes beyond registering the words of the speaker. A good memo will identify the thought patterns behind the speech, the insights these thoughts provoke, the doubts that remain, and the questions you will pursue next.

Important, the writing of the memo is an opportunity to reflect on the conversation after it is done. The memo should not transcribe the words of the interviewee. It should quote the speaker whenever necessary, but as a stepping stone towards personal reflection and engagement with the topic under consideration.

In the past, I used to attend these sessions but students provided anonymous feedback asking to meet with the speakers by themselves. This means that the discussions are led by students, and it is the students' responsibility to ensure that they remain interesting and engaging. Sometimes speakers will repeat advice you have already heard. Be a skillful interviewer and steer the conversation towards more productive terrain.

Depending on the circumstances, students could use their own papers, career ambitions, experiences and aspirations as fodder for discussion. It is OK to ask for advice, but do not forget that these are group sessions so the conversation should remain interesting for everyone in attendance. Students who want to discuss individual matters with any given speaker should apply for a one-to-one slot.

This item will account for 25% of the grade.

Finally, you may want to run all your submissions through the "Writer's Diet" test, which provides a simplified diagnosis of your writing style, to make sure the language is concrete, simple & direct: <http://writersdiet.com/WT.php>

Format and submission:

All assignments should be written on Times New Roman size 12, doubled-spaced lines (not 1.5), one inch margins all around. Please submit them as .pdf or .doc and include your name, mailbox (if available), date, and other identifying data in the document.

As needed, include citations in the text and a bibliography at the end of the document. Please use the following format for citations: if you are citing an idea or a concept, include (author's last name year) immediately after the passage, once per paragraph. If you are transcribing a passage, include the page number. For instance:

“...this type of engagement has been called responsive (Ayres and Braithwaite 1992, Braithwaite 2005), flexible (Bardach and Kagan 1982), tit-for-tat (Scholz 1984), creative (May and Burby 1998), and adaptive (Hawkins 1984).”

Use footnotes instead of endnotes.

To **submit your assignments**, go to: <http://www.dropitto.me/salocoslovsky> so you can upload the file directly to my computer. You will need a password, which I will distribute in class.

Important, please remember to include your mailbox number in the paper and use the following convention to name your files: DocSem [your lastname] [assignment]

For instance: DocSem Alvarez 1st critique.doc