Understanding and promoting economic, social, and political development is one of the primary challenges for the world in the twenty-first century. Despite the tremendous efforts over the last fifty years, a large share of the world’s population – in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and some of the Transition Economies – still lives in abject poverty. And while many countries have made the transition to democracy, pervasive inequalities, weak political institutions, and fragile civil societies continue to pose significant challenges to the exercise of genuine democratic freedoms. Moreover, the “problem” of development has become an increasingly global challenge as issues of security, governance, economic stability, and environmental sustainability have become internationalized. Recent cases of economic collapse, political upheaval, civil war, and resurgent nationalism provide jarring reminders that we still have much to learn. Success stories that defy traditional trajectories of development – rapid and sustained growth in East Asia, cases of social development without growth, and waves of democratic transitions – call for new explanatory models. Coming to terms with these complexities requires modes of thinking, forms of knowledge, and tools of research that borrow from all the social sciences.

DS 2010 is the second half of a two semester course. It is designed to assist PhD students in preparing research proposals. The course will be organized around presentations by Brown and external faculty on a range of development topics.

Requirements:

* Do all the readings and be active in class participation. Course readings will be posted electronically on the MyCourses website.

* Attend and participate in the Colloquium on Comparative Research (CCR), which meets every other Wednesday, 5-6:30pm, in the McKinney Seminar Room at the Watson Institute.

* A “research proposal” paper. The paper should frame a substantive research question, explain why it is worth studying, and then outline the steps that should be taken to answer the question. A short 2-3 page statement of the topic of the paper, including a preliminary bibliography, is due on March 1, 2011. The paper itself is due at the end of the semester; it must be turned in online.

* Two short (3-5 page) observation and research design papers.

* An in-class presentation on your research proposal paper.

* Written comments and presentations on two other students’ research proposals.
January 26: Introduction: Course Logistics

Method, Research Design, and Proposals re the Study of Development

February 2: Issues of Method and Research Design I


Thad Dunning, “Natural Experiments,” Draft entry for the International Encyclopedia of Political Science, Yale University, Department of Political Science, 2010.


John Comaroff, “Notes on Anthropological Method mainly in the key of e.”

February 9: Issues of Method and Research Design II


John Comaroff, “Notes on Anthropological Method mainly in the key of e.”

February 16: Issues of Method and Research Design III

“On Dissertations and First Books: Perspectives from Leading Comparativists,” in Munck and Snyder, excerpts.

“On Fieldwork: Perspectives from Leading Comparativists,” in Munck and Snyder, excerpts.


February 23: The Craft of Writing Research Proposals


Graduate student panel: Angelica Duran-Martinez (Political Science), Susan Ellison (Anthropology), and Jennifer Costanza (Sociology).

*From Method to Practice in the Study of Development* (Readings will be assigned for each presentation)

**March 1:** **Presenter:** Andrew Foster, Professor of Economics, Brown

**March 8:** **Presenter:** Fotini Christia, Assistant Professor of Political Science, MIT

**March 15:** **Presenter:** Dan Smith, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Brown

**March 22:** **Presenter:** Joanna Davidson, Assistant Professor, Anthropology, BU
April 5: Presenter: Peter Evans, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, UC-Berkeley

*April 12: Presenter: Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Brown

April 19: Presenter: Akhil Gupta, Professor, Anthropology, UCLA

Student Presentations

April 26: Student Presentations

April XX (date to be negotiated): Student Presentations