Field Briefs: Global Studies MA

Brief One due August 1st; Brief Two due October 1st, 2015

One of the primary missions of the Global Studies MA Program is to send our students out in the world. During the first three quarters on campus, students become familiar with global studies debates, learn research skills, and define questions. The subsequent summer/fall quarters after the first year represent a phase spent abroad on field research and public engagement in a case-study site (or two sites compared). This period can combine research and an internship -- or be dedicated to field research alone.

What is a “case study”?

We understand the term “case study” in a maximally inclusive way, as a specific, located process of gathering findings, focusing frameworks, and preparing analysis. Global processes, studied via a “case,” can be analyzed as they manifest in a particular NGO agenda, social movement, institutional expression, historical process, development project, or socio-cultural formation; or as a unique state, legal, policy or policing apparatuses of governance; or a set of norms, ideologies or discourses deployed around an identified problem; or as a set of measurable social or economic patterns, etc.

What are some forms of field research?

Forms of field research around a “case study” can include: observation of social movements or development processes, accessing an unusual oral-history or document archive, registering for intensive language study on-site, generating an ethnography of NGOs or media, taking classes or auditing classes on-site with experts in the field of your research (preferably classes offered in the native language) – or a mix of these modalities.

What is a Field Brief?

In order to help students through the challenges and opportunities this time abroad affords, we request two Field Briefing Reports from our MA students during this period. The first report is due on August 1st, the second is due on October 1st. Each 3-page briefing (single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font) must be emailed to Erika Klukovich (erika@global.ucsb.edu) on or before the due date; no extensions will be permitted. She will then review the reports with Grad Director Prof. Paul Amar, and then pass the reports on to each student’s committee members who may respond to the student if s/he needs advice or assistance.

Structure of each Briefing Report:
1. Reclarify your research question or argument (maximum 15 words)

2. Identify the case study location where you are now working (organization, group, community, project). If you are on an internship, then specify how you are accessing a specific “case,” that is, a project, archive, set of practices/discourses, etc, in the context of your internship that will provide you with “case-study” findings.

3. Explain how your participation, reading, research, and interaction with this case study, and the archives and public information produced in and around this case study, are providing findings that illuminate your initial research question. (this section should be three paragraphs, approximately)

4. Describe processes of adaptation and learning. What challenges have you faced in the field and/or in internships or participatory experiences? What have you learned from these challenges, and how can these lessons be applied to your case study? If you have had to shift or adopt a different case study, justify that here. (Four paragraphs, approximately)

5. Please provide an update on your language learning process, networking progress, or any relevant skills acquired that will help you answer your research question.