

Guidance for SOCY Students Planning to Do Fieldwork
January 2018

Note that these recommendations are not intended to replace your advisor's guidance, but rather to provide general guidelines that may be useful. Check with your advisor to see if they have other suggestions or different ways of proceeding.

Many students undertake fieldwork for their 3rd year paper and/or dissertation. Depending on your topic, there may be funding from within the university or from external sources. In the first few years of the graduate program, you should begin to familiarize yourself with the funding sources that might be relevant for your work. You can often find these from talking to your advisor and other professors, searching on the internet, and talking to more advanced students, including from other departments or outside the university. This is one reason it can be helpful to start attending conferences early in your graduate career.

Keep in mind that funding sources for international research may require recommendations from language teachers or proof of competency in a foreign language, IRB approvals, or permission from an institution in the host country. Some application deadlines may be up to 9 months before any funding is released. This means you may need to have all your application materials (including a language reference) ready at least 9 months before you plan to start your fieldwork. You should make sure you are familiar with the application requirements well ahead of time. There are also some pre-dissertation and dissertation proposal development fellowships that may help you to do some pilot research or lay the foundations for later research.

If you are interested in doing research in a particular world region outside the US, such as Southeast/South Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, or sub-Saharan Africa, you should look for relevant professional associations for people who study this region. These associations, such as the Association for Asian Studies, the Latin American Studies Association, or the African Studies Association, often have listservs or bulletin boards where you can find out about funding sources, jobs, and other important opportunities that may not be widely publicized elsewhere. The various H-Net listservs such as H-Asia can also be very useful for finding out about region-specific resources.

As mentioned above, language training may be a criterion for some international fieldwork fellowships. If a language you are interested in is not available at CU, you may need to explore the possibility of taking summer intensive courses elsewhere. There is often funding available for such programs. Programs include: Southeast Asian Summer Studies Institute (at the University of Wisconsin), South Asia Summer Language Institute, African Flagship Languages Initiative, the State Department Critical Language Scholarship Program. Talking to faculty who do research in the country you are interested in is a good way to find out about these and other language programs. Doing in-country language study can often be combined with fieldwork.

See the department's separate document for potential funding sources for fieldwork and/or dissertation work.