

Institute for the Study of Societal Issues

GRADUATE FELLOWS PROGRAM

Description and Instructions for 2021-22 Application



Institute for the Study of Societal Issues

The Graduate Fellows Program at the Institute for the Study of Societal Issues

The Institute for the Study of Societal Issues is pleased to announce a call for applications for the Graduate Fellows Program (GFP). In its forty+ years of existence, the Program has provided an interdisciplinary research and training environment as a complement to, and resource for, graduate programs in the social sciences and professional schools. Over 200 Graduate Fellows have successfully completed their doctoral studies and gone on to carve out distinguished academic careers that have significantly influenced their respective disciplines and fields on contemporary issues of social stratification and inequality. We are currently seeking applications for the 2021-22 academic year from doctoral students who are interested in substantive issues related to contemporary processes of social change in U.S. cities. The GFP is open to all UC Berkeley graduate students in good standing who have completed at least three years of graduate studies. The GFP is committed to diversity in graduate education and the academy more broadly. We are looking for applicants

- with the potential to bring to their academic research the critical perspective that comes from their understanding of the experiences of groups historically underrepresented in U.S. higher education or underserved by academic research;
- who need the additional training and mentoring offered by our program; and
- who are committed to doing research to advance social justice or social change.

Registration Required: You must be currently enrolled in a UC Berkeley doctoral program and have completed at least three years of graduate study (by May 2021) to be eligible for the Graduate Fellows Program. If selected as a Graduate Fellow, you must be a registered student in the 2021-22 academic year.

Program Overview

The Institute for the Study of Societal Issues (ISSI) (<http://issi.berkeley.edu>) serves as the research and teaching base for the Graduate Fellows Program. Fellows attend a weekly two-hour seminar* in which they receive practical training in theory, methods, and policy work. The core emphasis is on field research and the production of scholarly work geared towards a broad understanding of the patterns of social change in the structures, social practices, and culture of U.S. cities. The training draws on insights from a wide array of fields, including sociology, urban anthropology, political science, urban and regional planning, geography, education, history, public policy, law, social welfare, and public health.

This research initiative and the focus of graduate training are organized with an eye to addressing the conditions of social and economic development and urban inequality and the potential for effective reform. The Graduate Fellows Program also benefits from the research and training activities of ISSI's seven research centers: the Asian American Research Center, the Center for Research on Social Change, the Berkeley Center for Social Medicine, the Latinx Research Center, the Center for Right-Wing Studies, the Joseph A. Myers Center for Research on Native American Issues, and the Center for Ethnographic Research.

*NOTE: Before each semester begins, Fellows select a convenient day and time to meet on a weekly basis. If it is unlikely that your schedule will be flexible enough to accommodate a weekly meeting, you should not apply. If in-person instruction resumes in the fall of 2021, attending the seminar meetings in person will be required. Participation in the GFP requires a substantial time commitment, equivalent to taking a course.

Training Content

The formal training emphasizes qualitative and mixed methods research in order to understand contemporary social change processes in U.S. cities. In order to be responsive to the specific needs of students at different stages in their graduate careers, the program is designed to span two years. Graduate Fellows who are active program participants and successfully complete the requirements during the first year (regular attendance, completion and presentation of an empirical working paper) are eligible to apply for a second year as a Fellow. Fellows are eligible for office space at ISSI to facilitate their research and writing.

The mentoring and networking that are part of the GFP continue beyond the two years of the formal program: throughout the Fellows' graduate studies and often extending into their first years as an assistant professor.

Doctoral students in their first year of the training program

During the first year, the focus of the training program is on the development of a working paper based on dissertation research. Fellows receive training in selecting and framing a research problem, situating the research within the relevant scholarly literature, choosing the appropriate research approach and methods, conducting preliminary research, and drafting a research working paper. Papers are drafted by the end of February and completed by the end of the academic year, after which they are added to the California Digital Library, the University of California's "[eScholarship Repository](#)." In addition to regular attendance at weekly seminars, Fellows are expected to provide and receive critical feedback on other Fellows' works in progress and to be active and contributing members of an interdisciplinary community of young scholars. In the spring semester, first-year Fellows make a public presentation of their working papers at an ISSI-organized colloquium, panel or conference. The presentation provides an opportunity, in conjunction with development of the working paper, to receive feedback and build skill at crafting a rhetorically and academically effective documentation of one's research.

Doctoral students in the second year of the training program

During the second year, Fellows continue to meet weekly to present and receive constructive feedback on their individual research and writing projects and skills training in professional development to prepare them for the academic job market.

Application and Information

Stipends: A modest stipend will be offered. We are currently fundraising and will announce the stipend amount when the new Fellows are accepted.

Contact: For questions or additional information please contact Dr. David Minkus, Co-Director of the Graduate Fellows Program: minkus@berkeley.edu.

Selection Process: *There are two stages to the selection process.*

Stage 1: Applications for the Graduate Fellows Program are due **before 5PM on Monday, March 29**. Applicants will be **notified by Wednesday, April 21** whether their application has been selected for the second and final stage of the selection process.

Stage 2: Applicants who have been selected for the second stage will be provided with critical feedback on their research statement. The second draft of the application is **due Monday, May 10 by 9am**. Applicants will be **notified by Friday, May 28** if they have been selected to join the Graduate Fellows Program.

Application: Please complete the online form at [https://issi.berkeley.edu/Graduate Fellows Program](https://issi.berkeley.edu/Graduate_Fellows_Program).

As part of the form, you will be asked to upload:

- A. Research Statement: Up to 1,000 words. See the instructions below for a description of what to include.
- B. Diversity and Social Change Statement: 250-500 words describing your personal background and contributions to diversity, equal opportunity, and social change.
- C. A copy of your unofficial graduate transcript.
- D. A copy of your curriculum vitae.

Also required: A letter of recommendation from your faculty advisor or from a faculty member who is supervising your graduate studies. Please ask your faculty advisor to send their letter of recommendation directly to issi@berkeley.edu. Please include the e-mail address for your recommender below: and ask your faculty advisor to send their letter of recommendation directly to issi@berkeley.edu

RESEARCH STATEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Please upload a short research statement that summarizes your research. ***Your statement should be double-spaced and no longer than 1,000 words.*** This statement should demonstrate a link between your work and the GFP's research focus on patterns of social formations and social change in the social and economic development, social relations, and culture of cities in the United States. *Your statement should link your specific research project with a specific research location(s) or place(s), (e.g., gentrification in West Oakland, day laborers in the East Bay, inter-ethnic relations among teenage youth in San Diego, the social history of blue collar neighborhoods in San Francisco).*

Examples of relevant research foci could include (but are not limited to): education in settings with students from multiple ethnic and cultural backgrounds, social movements in a city, housing and the built environment and patterns of settlement, neighborhood and community formations, social and economic development in ethnic or multi-ethnic neighborhoods and communities, trends in social or political participation in a city, changes in quality of or access to social and health services, or patterns of social and cultural relations among members of one or more racial and ethnic groups in a specified urban setting.

Every Fellow will be expected to complete a working paper during the coming academic year. Your statement should include a brief discussion of your timeline and your ability to complete a first draft of the working paper by the end of February 2022. (To achieve this goal, you should plan to collect all primary data needed for this paper by the end of 2021.) Preference will be given to students who have already begun collecting data for the working paper they will be writing as participants in the first year of the Graduate Fellows Program.

Be sure to number the pages of your research statement in case they get separated.

The 1,000 word statement should include the following components:

1. A title (25 words or less) describing your research focus;
2. A short narrative description of your research focus;
3. A description of the research problem that your current research is addressing;
4. A short description of key concepts, theories, or findings that help guide your research effort;
5. A description of your current or proposed research methods;
6. A statement on the contribution that your research will make to one or more research disciplines (or sub-disciplines) or research areas; and
7. A description of how your current research effort is related to your previous or planned future research activities. You may outline a broad research agenda, but be sure to specify what you are planning to accomplish during the '20-'21 academic year, including the gathering and analysis of empirical data (e.g., new data that you will be collecting or analyzing, data you have already collected, writing up your research results, etc.). If you are part of a collaborative research team, specify your contribution to the research.
8. A works cited list, which will not count toward the 1,000 word limit.