

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDIES  
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
Fellowship Announcement and Application Guidelines, 2006-2007

**Rethinking the Social**  
**PROJECT ON THE AUTHORITY OF KNOWLEDGE IN A GLOBAL AGE, 2004-2007**

The International Center for Advanced Studies (ICAS) at New York University brings together a community of scholars to pursue research, writing, and intellectual exchange around a common theme. The community is international in membership, interdisciplinary and comparative in intellectual strategy, and global in scope.

ICAS offers fellowships to scholars in any field of the social sciences and humanities. There is an annual theme for the fellowship program; in 2006-2007 the Center's theme is "**Rethinking the Social**", which is the third year of "The Authority of Knowledge in a Global Age Project."

Year Three (2006-07): Rethinking the Social

The possibility of something called "society" and its place as a dynamic element of human experience was once the founding problem of the social sciences. But the disciplines came to take this object for granted as an underlying principle of intelligibility, and turned increasingly to study the numerous micro-sociologies, understood as manifestations of this underlying whole. Today, the social often appears only as the networks or strategies connecting individual agents, or as the "social capital" these individuals accumulate.

In many fields of study, however, the concept of the social has recently been reexamined. In social studies of science, the separation between the social and the technical, or the human and non-human, is a problem to be explored, rather than a boundary given in advance. In ecological studies, human actions form part of a larger ecosystem, whose transformations reshape the social world.

Among anthropologists and historians, new questions have been raised about the understanding of the non-secular: If social science is founded upon a commitment to the secular nature of social knowledge, what problems does this entail for understanding the majority of the world's populations, whose lives are experienced as interactions with the divine or other forms of supra-human agency? Must the boundaries of the social world coincide with the limits of the secular? In these and other ways, a variety of contemporary scholarship is reexamining the boundaries of the social asking how they are constituted, transgressed, and transformed. These questions fall within the broad frame of "The Authority of Knowledge in a Global Age, 2006 – 2007."

The Authority of Knowledge in a Global Age

In the first decade of the twenty-first century new fears have come to haunt the politics of the West, unforeseen in the post-Cold War confidence of the 1990s. Political optimism about the inevitable spread of capitalist markets and democratic government has given way to questions about the global hegemony of the United States, the threats of terror and war, and the reduction of freedoms in the name of security. For most people of the global south, the twentieth-century promise of progress no longer provides a rubric for making sense of their lives.

The newly apparent dangers of the present offer a profound challenge to the forms of social knowledge produced in the university. What kinds of critical thinking does the new politics of uncertainty call for and make possible? How do the established disciplines of social science and their methods of analysis frame significant issues for public debate? What are the powers and limits of these frames? What possibilities and risks arise from new interactions between governments and the academy, or between university experts and the lay knowledge of activists and concerned groups? Will American social science continue largely to export its forms of thought to the world, or are there new ways to learn from the political and intellectual debates of other regions?

The fate of the social sciences, both in the United States and abroad, has been the subject of wide discussion. Some argue that the production of knowledge is trapped in the orthodox disciplines, where the questions to be addressed are defined more by technical debates within increasingly specialized fields than by transformations in the wider world. The neglect of area studies, it is said, has isolated the social sciences from sources of knowledge and intellectual questions outside Europe and North America. Academics in many countries appear to be marginalized from the public sphere, whose nature has been transformed by the spread of political think tanks, the increasing privatization of intellectual property, and the growth of the informal knowledge communities of the internet. The division between the humanities, the social sciences, and scientific expertise challenges our ability to grasp contemporary events, in which the cultural and the technological combine to create new socio-technical worlds.

The ICAS project on “The Authority of Knowledge in a Global Age” will bring together an international community of scholars whose work examines the current global conjuncture through the study of particular crises, transformations, cultural forms, social innovations, and modes of contestation. While contributing to the understanding of local experiences of the present political condition, the goal of our collective discussions will be to consider the changed conceptions of the social world, new political vocabularies, alternative understandings of agency and personhood, altered representations of the past and the future, and new claims for justice that arise from these experiences and from our efforts to explain them. The project also seeks to better understand the production, circulation, and legitimation of social knowledge on a global scale.

Each of the successive annual themes corresponds to one of the classical divisions of social theory—the economic, the political, and the social. The intention is not to take these categories for granted, nor to reproduce the divisions between the disciplines of economics, political science, and sociology that were established in reference to them. Rather, it is to examine how the territory marked by each of these founding categories is being questioned or redefined, from within the social sciences and from outside. And it is to ask what new intellectual projects and innovative political understandings result from and contribute further to this process of redefinition. These themes are:

2004 - 2005	The Rule of Markets
2005 - 2006	Politics of the Unprivileged
2006 - 2007	Rethinking the Social

## **FELLOWSHIPS**

**Center Fellows** Scholars and intellectuals at all career stages who hold a Ph.D. degree or equivalent professional experience are invited to apply for appointments as Center Fellows. The fellowship is for the academic year of September 1 through May 15 although on occasion semester fellowships are available. It carries a stipend of \$35,000 for the academic year, plus reasonable travel expenses. The Center will make every effort to accommodate Fellows in NYU Faculty housing.

**Postdoctoral Fellows** Scholars who have completed the Ph.D. degree within the previous three years are invited to apply as ICAS Postdoctoral Fellows. For applicants for the 2006 - 2007 academic year, the degree must have been conferred after September 2003. Postdoctoral Fellows are expected to teach one course during their residency. The Fellowship is for a full academic year, from September 1 through May 15 and carries a stipend of \$35,000, plus reasonable travel expenses. The Center will make every effort to locate suitable housing at NYU.

**Residency Requirements** All Fellows are expected to be in residence at the Center for the full term of their appointment. Research trips and travel to conferences, etc. may be arranged during the course of the year. Center Fellows must devote full time to their proposed projects and may not be employed or hold other major grants during the term of residence. Fellows are expected to present their work at one of the Center’s Friday seminars and to participate in other activities of the Center. Each Fellow will be provided with an office in the Center, a computer, reasonable administrative support, and access to the University's libraries and Internet facilities. It is hoped that

Fellows will take advantage of the opportunity to become part of the intellectual life of the relevant departments at NYU, and the Center will offer assistance toward that end.

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INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDIES  
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

*THE AUTHORITY OF KNOWLEDGE IN A GLOBAL AGE*

FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS, 2006-2007

**RETHINKING THE SOCIAL**

Applicants must propose a scholarly project relevant to the Center's theme. Applicants for Postdoctoral Fellowships must have received their Ph.D. after September 1, 2003. Applicants for Center Fellowships must have a Ph.D. or equivalent professional experience.

A complete application consists of the following:

1. A completed application form
2. A 100-word summary of the proposed fellowship project
3. A complete and up-to-date *curriculum vitae*
4. A description of the proposed fellowship project, 800-1200 words in length, double-spaced, that describes:
  - The question the project addresses
  - The research on which it is based
  - The project's relationship to existing research or debates in the field
  - Its relevance to the project on "The Authority of Knowledge in a Global Age"
5. Three letters of recommendation from people qualified to evaluate the proposed fellowship project and the applicant's general accomplishments. Referees should send their letters directly to the Center.

*It is the applicant's responsibility to provide a copy of the project proposal to the referees and to ensure that the Center receives their letters by the application deadline.*

(Although not required, three copies of the application materials would be appreciated)

Women, members of minority groups, and foreign scholars and intellectuals are especially invited to apply.

**Applications must be received by post (or email) no later than January 6, 2006**

**Fellowship awards will be announced by April 1, 2006**

Address application materials and any questions to:

Fellowship Selection Committee  
International Center for Advanced Study  
New York University  
53 Washington Square South, Room 401-E  
New York, N.Y. 10012  
USA

Email address: [icas@nyu.edu](mailto:icas@nyu.edu)  
[www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/icas](http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/icas)

Tel.: +1-212-998-3770  
Fax: +1-212-995-4546

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/icas>

ICAS FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION FORM

**PART 1: Personal Information**

Title:  Mr.  Mrs.  Ms.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number (U.S.-based applicants) \_\_\_\_\_ Date PhD conferred \_\_\_\_\_

Current position or affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2. Application Categories and Residency Preferences**

Postdoctoral Fellow (residency is for the academic year)

Center Fellow. Indicate whether for:  Academic year 2006-2007

Fall semester 2006

Spring semester 2007

**You may indicate more than one residency preference.  
Summer residencies are not available.**

**PART 3: Names of those providing letters of recommendation**

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 4: Survey (Optional)**

How did you learn about the ICAS fellowships? Please complete the following:

Publication \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 5: Attachments**

Project Summary (on a separate sheet, not to exceed 100 words)

Curriculum vitae

Project statement (800-1200 words, doubled spaced. See instructions)