



American Political Science Association
Africa Workshops



With support from the
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: 2012 WORKSHOP FELLOWS

“Local Communities and the State in Africa”

July 15 to 27, 2012

*Sponsored by the American Political Science Association
and the University of Botswana, Gaborone*

The American Political Science Association (APSA) and the University of Botswana are pleased to announce a call for applications from individuals who would like to participate in a workshop on “Local Communities and the State in Africa” with a focus on field research methods. The two-week workshop will be held from July 15 to 27 at the University of Botswana, in Gaborone. The organizers, with a grant secured from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, will cover all the costs of participation (including travel, lodging, meals, and workshop materials) for up to 26 qualified applicants. The working language of the workshop is English.

The workshop leaders are Parakh Hoon (Virginia Tech, USA), Lauren MacLean (Indiana University, USA), Joseph Mbaiwa (Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana, Maun), Sethunya Mosime (University of Botswana, Gaborone), and Lungisile Ntsebeza (University of Cape Town, South Africa).

Program information, eligibility requirements, and a web link to the online 2012 Application Form can be found through the APSA Africa Workshop website at: <http://bit.ly/AfricaWorkshop2012>.

The application deadline is March 30, 2012.

Participants

The workshop is targeted principally at university and college faculty in the social sciences residing in Africa, who have completed their Ph.D. and are in the early stages of their academic career. Up to four advanced U.S. Ph.D. students will also be accepted. All Workshop Fellows must be actively engaged in an empirical research project in political science or an area of inquiry related to politics. Fellows should be working on a manuscript, paper, book chapter, or article that can be developed for publication in a peer reviewed journal or edited book. Professional fluency in English is required.

Workshop Theme

For two weeks, workshop fellows will study a series of interrelated theoretical and methodological themes under the banner of ‘Local Communities and the State in Africa.’ After two decades of significant political and economic reforms in Africa, new forms of local institutions and organizations are vying for public authority. How do we conceptualize and systematically study the relevant informal institutions, including various “twilight” extra-legal institutions, and new claims made on behalf of local communities? This workshop will conceptualize and study: (1) interactions between local communities and the state that go beyond a narrow geographical concentration on a particular community, and (2) linkages that connect local, national, and transnational actors.

At the outset of the workshop, participants will develop a shared intellectual foundation by exploring the significant empirical questions related to local communities and the African state, focusing on core issues including rights and recognition, public goods and service provision, and decentralization and local empowerment. Afterwards, participants will move towards a discussion of the relevant theories for understanding these empirical puzzles, concentrating on structural, institutional, community-based, and comparative theoretical perspectives. In the last phase of the workshop, participants will think critically about the methodological challenges faced when attempting to build theoretically-informed and empirically-substantiated arguments. Themed discussions will emphasize the value of empirical field research and research design, the politics of access and researcher positionality, and future trends in using new technologies, working in conflict zones, and obtaining funding.

Applications

To submit an application for participation in the workshop, first review the eligibility requirements on APSA's Africa Workshop website and then follow the web link to the online 2012 Application Form. If preferred, a version of the Application Form can be e-mailed to you upon request. Complete applications, including all necessary supporting documents, should be sent to APSA electronically by March 30, 2012; please email all materials directly to africaworkshops@apsanet.org. The final list of selected Workshop Fellows will be announced in April.

Applications must be in English and include:

1. The completed Application Form (online via <http://bit.ly/AfricaWorkshop2012>).
2. A detailed, recent Curriculum Vitae/resume.
3. A 500-word statement that describes your current research interests and how it relates to the workshop theme.
4. The draft working paper or manuscript in progress that you propose to take with you to the workshop. At a minimum, this should be a 2,500-word document that includes:
 - A 150-word abstract
 - A description of research design (recommended, but not required)
 - A one-page bibliography of literature most relevant to your paper
5. Two letters of reference on official letterhead and scanned as electronic files. If you are a graduate student, one letter should be a letter of introduction from your supervising professor. If you are a researcher or faculty member, the letters can be from a former dissertation supervisor, a colleague or collaborator at your home institution or elsewhere, a university official, or an employer.

For questions, contact us at africaworkshops@apsanet.org, or call Andrew Stinson at (202) 349-9364. Please do not contact the workshop leaders directly.