

## Special Individualized Programs

Occasional Seminars and Screenings in Multidisciplinary Studies (OSSMS)

presents

### **Adventures in Field Research: Sarwat Viqar and Eric Weissman**

This seminar will be of particular relevance to SIP students who are pursuing a Master's or Doctoral degree which involves a field research component. It is open to all SIP students with an interest in social science methodologies.

The seminar will feature brief presentations by two SIP doctoral candidates: Sarwat Viqar and Eric Weissman (see below for details), following which there will be a discussion on the topic of field research moderated by SIP Director, David Howes.

Refreshments will be served

Time: 10:00 – 11:45 am

Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2012

Place: Room S-205, School of Graduate Studies, 2145 MacKay

Sarwat Viqar is a Ph. D. Candidate in the Special Individualized Programs. Situated in an interdisciplinary framework which draws upon anthropology, history and community studies, her research engages with constructions of community, identity and urban space in the metropolis of Karachi. She has just completed 11 months of fieldwork in Karachi and will be speaking about the challenges faced and insights gained in the process of engaging with the everyday lives of inhabitants in a complex political environment. Previously Sarwat worked as an architect and urban consultant on projects in various regions of Pakistan, Montreal, Bangkok and in the Pacific coastal region of Mexico.

Eric Weissman has spent much of the last 11 years as a participant ethnovideographer in alternative intentional communities built by some of North America's worst-off poor -- the "street-people" of Toronto, Montreal and most recently, Portland, Oregon. A SIP Doctoral Candidate, Eric is currently teaching courses in sociology and visual anthropology in which he emphasizes the application of theory and method to addressing issues of social justice and human dignity. The basic premise examined in his dissertation is that informal processes of learning in intentional communities like shantytowns, provide social skills and political opportunities for residents that are absolutely vital to the survival of the community and to the avowal of self-worth by residents of the

"street". Caught in a cycle of perpetual struggle to legitimize their existence, these processes produce a unique type of activist citizen or else the community dies. At another level, reflexive videography is presented in his work as a means of addressing ethical debates that arise in fieldwork, such as the construction of truth and the question of authority.