

**SOCIAL STUDIES JUNIOR  
FOCUS FIELD AND PLAN OF STUDY  
SPRING, 2009**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS

ACADEMIC ADVISOR \_\_\_\_\_

ADVISOR'S EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_

ADVISOR'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF FOCUS FIELD Democracy and Inequality in Latin America

BOARD OF INSTRUCTION SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

**EXPLAIN WHY THIS FOCUS FIELD IS INTERESTING TO YOU (LIMIT: 150 WORDS)**

I am interested in democracy-building in developing countries, and how economic and social inequalities affect the stability and effectiveness of democratic government. I have chosen to study this relationship in Latin American because most countries in the region have relatively new democracies and high levels of inequality. Liberal economic policies in most countries have contributed to macroeconomic growth but have also exacerbated internal inequality, which threatens the representation of marginalized groups and the survival of the democratic system.

The summer after my freshman year I interned at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in Lima, Peru working on a book on Politics and Poverty in the Andes, which is when I first became interested in the relationship between economic development and democratic deepening. I think it is impossible to understand democracy in the region without studying the context of poverty and socioeconomic inequality. My thesis is going to be on regional inequality and representation in Peru.

**Focus Field Courses:**

**Government 1295: Comparative Politics in Latin America, Spring 2007**

This course provided an overview of politics in Latin America, including the authoritarian coups and the transition to democracy. It covered how inequality led to regime transitions and the challenges of contemporary democracy in Latin America.

**\*Historical Studies B-64: Cuban Revolution, Fall 2007**

This course looked at the breakdown of democracy and the communist revolution in Cuba, which was caused in part by severe inequality. We also looked at the steps taken by the Cuban revolutionary government to try to create an equal society.

**\*Economics 1340: Globalization and History, Fall 2007**

This course provided a broad historical view of globalization, including the winners and losers from trade and development, and the causes and effects of economic inequality. My final research paper for this class was on inequality and the guano trade in 19<sup>th</sup> century Peru.

**Economics Tutorial: Problems of Contemporary Capitalism, Fall 2008**

This course was an introduction to Marxist economics at the University of Havana. We went over dependency theory, development and inequality, and the place of Latin America in the world system.

**Government 1035: Democratic Theory and Electoral Law, Spring 2009**

This course focuses on election law, and how democratic institutions affect who gets represented and how effectively. Though it focuses on the United States, the theory is broadly applicable and concepts such as popular sovereignty and direct democracy relate directly to efforts to deepen democracy in other regions.

**Government 1203: Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, Spring 2009**

This course looks at the transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, how to build democratic institutions and state welfare systems, and the connection between market economies and democracy. Though it is outside my regional focus, it provides a good comparative perspective and directly addresses the issue of how the form of an economy affects its political system.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Your focus field title cannot be longer than six words
- List 4-6 (no fewer than four, no more than six) letter-graded courses, drawn from at least two disciplines and including at least one historical course
- Put a star (\*) next to the historical course or courses
- Do not list introductory language courses, freshman seminars, methods courses, or junior tutorials

- List courses chronologically, starting with the course you took first and ending with courses you plan to take in the future
- For each course you list, provide the course number, title, and term and year that you have taken it (or plan to take it)
- Explain in 1-2 sentences how each course contributes to your focus field
- If a course is *not* in anthropology, economics, government, history, continental philosophy, sociology, foreign cultures, historical studies, ethical reasoning, moral reasoning, social analysis, societies of the world, or America in the World, **attach a syllabus**. Courses outside of these departments will be accepted only if more than 50 % of the topics covered fall into one of those disciplines, or if the instructor has a Ph.D. in one of those fields.