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University of  
Michigan  
**Fall 2021**  
Newsletter

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# Letter from the Director



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Cover painting: Bibi Hajra

Editors: David Merchant, Clemente Beghi, Josephine Tolin

## Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am delighted to welcome everyone—students, community members, faculty and staff to the new academic year. While our campus returns to the joys of something resembling the old normal, we have to acknowledge the pandemic's devastating impacts in the US and in South Asia, especially in vulnerable communities.

Let me first take the opportunity to thank Jatin Dua for his excellent leadership over the past year as director of the Center. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Jatin maintained the Center as a space of vibrant exchange, expanding participation in center activities to people from around the world, even while those of us on campus were not able to gather in person. I also extend my thanks to Pinki Vaishnava (Asian Languages and Cultures), David Brick (Asian Languages and Cultures), Madhumita Lahiri (English Language and Literature), for their continuing service on the Center executive committee. I'm sorry to report that Josephine Tolin, our India Communication Specialist, is leaving us. For the last three years, her terrific articles, interviews, podcasts, and posts vividly covered all the research and events connecting the university with India (See p. XX). This fall she begins a Master's of Fine Arts program in fiction at the University of Tennessee. While sad to see her go, we wish her great success. Finally, I would also like to recognize the hard work of our dedicated Center staff, especially our administrator, Clemente Beghi, who make possible our many activities.

The pandemic kept us from gathering in person, but the shift to virtual events allowed many more people from around the world to join in Center events. The 2019 annual UM Pakistan conference on "Religious Landscapes" in April 2020 was canceled, but we were happy that our presenters could join us virtually a year later. The discussion centered on how religious practice has developed in in South Asia in relation to longstanding sacred geographies and networks, intersecting with modern identity formations in unusual and unexpected ways.

Our events this Fall will again be entirely virtual, but we hold out hope that we can join together in person for Winter semester events. We look forward to an exciting speaker series, beginning on September 24th with a lecture from our very own colleague Joyojeet Pal in the School of Information on misinformation and social media in India. The Thomas Trautmann Honorary Lecture of Pre Modern India will be given by Prof. Stephanie Jamison from University of California, Los Angeles, in December. Our second endowed lecture, the Kavita Datla Memorial Lecture on South Asian History will be given by Rama Mantena from this University of Illinois Chicago in April. The Center will be hosting a virtual conference "In and Out of South Asia: Race, Capitalism, and Mobility" in December. In the spring, the Center will hold our annual U-M Pakistan conference in April followed by a May workshop, "Muslim Modernity in South Asia" Workshop. All these events will bring scholars based in South Asia and throughout the world. A detailed calendar for these and other events is provided at the end of the newsletter.

We hope that as the COVID situation improves, we will again be able to welcome students to the U-M campus from affiliate institutions in India and Pakistan, especially the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune, and Habib University in Karachi.

Again this year Center will provide extra support for our graduate students brownbags, faculty-student reading groups and other student-led initiatives. In addition, we will also be strengthening our academic sharing program that provides K-12 teachers and faculty members from other higher education institutions library resources and mentorship for developing South Asia-related curricula and research.

In the pages that follow you'll find more information on the Center's activities over the past year as well as those we have planned for the coming year. You'll also read about research on and engagement with South Asia from across U-M.

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events, virtual and in-person, all of which are free and open to the public.

Sincerely,

## Matthew Hull

Director, Center for South Asian Studies  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Anthropology



# Farewell to Jatin Dua

A conversation with Josephine Tolin

**Josie:** This past year has certainly been unique from a collaboration and leadership perspective. Can you discuss some of the challenges of directing the Center through a pandemic? Some of the bright spots?

**Jatin:** One of the key challenges directing the Center this past year, especially a place like CSAS which is built on a strong ethos of collaboration was trying to envision what collaboration looks like when we're not all in the same place. There were numerous programs that had to be put on hold such as the Summer in South Asia Undergraduate Fellowships (SiSA) and that was very disappointing for us and especially the students involved. At the same time, distance and virtual planning did lead to some unexpected kinds of coming together. We were able to spearhead numerous collaborative projects, including with other Centers at the International Institute. Our speaker series and conferences such as the Pakistan Conference and the Fall conference on Anti Caste Writing and Translation drew audiences from across the globe, including from South Asia creating a very dynamic and lively (virtual) intellectual community. A major bright spot was that

we were somehow able to do all this without a major, or even minor, technical glitch!

**Josie:** Can you describe, in detail, some of your accomplishments as CSAS director?

**Jatin:** I've been particularly committed to ensuring that the Center continues to be a generative recourse and intellectual home for South Asia. I am thrilled that we've been able to sustain a number of international partnerships with institutions in South Asia throughout the pandemic as well as continue key programming and outreach initiatives.

This past year we've been committed to being a resource for graduate students, and undergraduate students through supporting numerous student-led initiatives and workshops. The shift to virtual programming also meant re-envisioning formats and audiences and ensuring that our programming continues to remain accessible and engaging to audiences in many different places. Our goal through all this was to help facilitate forms of community and collective thinking and being together in a year where that has been elusive and difficult. Finally, we were also able to launch some new initiatives such

as the language initiative to work collaboratively with our language faculty to create new pedagogical tools and resources as well as an outreach initiative with the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center. None of this would have been possible without the support and resourcefulness of our staff at CSAS, especially Clemente, Josie, and Shivalika and other colleagues at the International Institute, many of whom I only got to know virtually!

**Josie:** Do you have a favorite CSAS memory from the past year? Why is it your favorite?

**Jatin:** The intellectual energy and community that we were able to foster through our programming was one of my favorite memories from this past year. In particular, I really enjoyed getting to work with our student and faculty affiliates in organizing talks, workshops, and conferences and witnessing lively and engaging discussions. One particular moment really stands out for me which was our final event for the academic year, the Kavita Datla Memorial lecture. This year's lecture was delivered by Prof. Muzzafer Alam, a former teacher of Prof. Datla and it was very clear that he was deeply affected to be giving a lecture in memory of his student. In addition to being an intellectual tour de force, what was so palpable at the lecture even through the zoom screens was the love, generosity, and care that connected so many who were attending the lecture. I was honored that Kavita's family attended the event and that we were able to create the space to come together and honor her scholarship and life.

## Goodbye Josephine



**Josephine Tolin** joined the Center for South Asian Studies as the India Communication Specialist in June of 2019, after graduating from LSA with majors in English and Spanish.

She has kept everyone updated on all things related to India and the University of Michigan, managing the Center's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts, and enriching the center-related [UM-India Impact](#) website with a wide variety of articles, interviews,

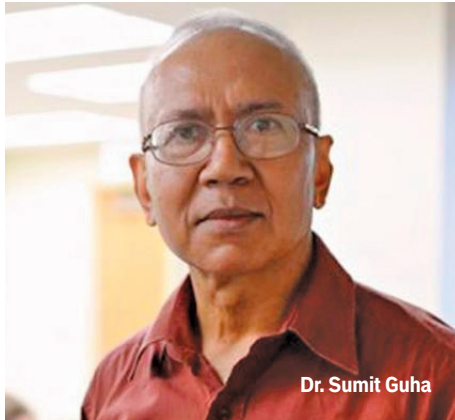
and podcasts about the amazing research carried out by our faculty and the impressive achievements of our alumni, with the overall goal of strengthening the connection between the university and India.

It's hard to select her best articles, as she has written so many, but please check out the following pieces if you haven't already: "[Amid Global Pandemic, Students Find Alternative Modes of Research](#)" and "[Ishtyle, by Kareem Khubchandani, Forthcoming from University of Michigan Press.](#)"

Her experience at the Center has helped her to develop and flourish as a writer, and she is continuing on this path by pursuing her Master's of Fine Arts in fiction at the University of Tennessee.

She will be dearly missed, as she has been a great presence at the Center not just in terms of professionalism, but also as an individual with a bright and friendly character. We wish her all the best, and we hope to see her name in the pages of magazines and literary journals in the future!

# Thomas R. Trautmann Honorary Lecture



Dr. Sumit Guha

**On Friday, January 19, Dr. Sumit Guha,** Professor, Frances Higginbotham Nalle Centennial Professorship in History, University of Texas at Austin delivered this year's virtual Thomas R. Trautmann Honorary Lecture, titled "Time, Memory, Oblivion, Social Frames, and the Production of Collective Pasts." This timely lecture explored the function of collective memory in both pre-colonial South Asia and the world at large.

**The study and profession of history is more vital now than ever. Consensus of memory is crucial to the democratic functioning of nations.**

"I've been at the University of Texas for seven years, where, as Faulkner famously said, 'The past is not dead. It's not even passed,'" Guha said. "It's only been a few years since statues of Confederate generals such as Robert E. Lee were taken down from the University of Texas campus—in the dead of night, so as not to arouse the opposition of the kind of crowd that, just a few weeks [before the lecture]... assembled and tried to storm the US capital."

Guha's evolution as a historian began in 1974 when he joined a master's program at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He said the lecture was an effort to reflect on himself as a historian as well as the larger academic world.

"I joined the PhD Program at the University of Cambridge in 1977. I received my doctorate in 1981, so I have been in the business, so to speak, for over forty years, and perhaps you could say I'm heading for fifty. In that time, the historical discipline has changed radically," Guha said.

The study and profession of history, Guha explained, is more vital now than ever. He said consensus of memory is crucial to the democratic functioning of nations and smaller collective units like communities and organizations.

"The past, memory, monuments--this is what I've been reflecting on over the last couple of decades, more recently in the context of the President that has just left office, and the whole degradation of expertise, factuality, and memory that ensued during his term. Broadly, the lecture [was] about collective memory, the ways in which communities remember this sort of havoc, form an agreement or a consensus on the past, and how those collective memories actually shape the community as it is."

## CSAS Kavita Datla Memorial Lecture

**On Friday, April 16, Dr. Muzaffar Alam,** professor of South Asian languages at the University of Chicago, delivered this year's Kavita Datla Memorial Lecture, titled "Muslim Religious Ideas and Identities in Mughal North India." Alam's lecture explored Muslim identity as it has evolved over time, with a focus specifically on Mughal North India and the religious doctrinal debates between two major Sufi orders, the Chishti and the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi.

"I feel honored to have been invited for this talk in memory of Kavita," Alam began. "She opened up new ways of thinking about histories of Indian secularism. I taught her at [Jawaharlal Nehru University] JNU. She shared with me many of the things which relate to our questions of research and also personal life. I cherish her memory."

Alam went on to introduce the topic of his lecture, saying he wished to share some features of the Mughal Indian debate on Sharia, or Islamic



**Alam's lecture explored Muslim identity as it has evolved over time, with a focus specifically on Mughal North India.**

jurisprudence. The overarching question he posed: what constituted a "true" Sufi Muslim, as defined by the Chishti and the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi?

"Discourse between these two Sufi orders was not new. But in the eleventh century, a kind of compromise emerged. A 'true' Sufi was one who always acted in accordance with how the jurist projected the Sharia," Alam said.

"In the thirteenth century, Jalal ad-Din Rumi is reported to have said that he was one with all seventy-three sects of Islam. And when he was abused by the follower of a particular school for this statement, Rumi reportedly smiled and replied, 'I'm also in agreement with whatever you say.'"

Professor Alam's major publications include *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India* (1986, New Oxford India Perennial Edition, 2013); *The Languages of Political Islam in India: c. 1200–1800* (2004); *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discovery: 1400–1800* and *Writing the Mughal World: Studies in Political Culture* (co-authored with Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 2007 and 2013). We are delighted to have had the occasion to host this prolific scholar.



# Anti Caste Writing Circulation Conference

**Reading the Americanized Joothan: The Translator's Cringe**  
- A Public Keynote Address by Arun Mukherjee

**About Arun Mukherjee:**  
Arun Mukherjee is professor emerita at York University, Toronto, and celebrated translator of Omprakash Valmiki's autobiography, *Joothan: A Dalit's Life*.

**Speaker's note:**  
My translation of Hindi Dalit writer, Omprakash Valmiki's autobiography, *Joothan*, was published by Samya in 2003. Columbia University Press bought the American rights for the book and appointed an editor to edit my translation. My talk will look at some of the changes the American editor made to my translation. As I discovered, by comparing the Indian and American versions, the changes are multiple, and, from my perspective, diminish the beauty and the power of this major Dalit text. Comparing the two versions also brings out the sad fact that certain cultural contexts require an open mind that does not rush to judgment when challenged to move out of its 'comfort zone.'

Friday, November 13th 2020  
9 a.m. to 10 a.m.  
Link:

**LSA** CENTER FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
This conference is funded in part by a Title VI federal grant from the US Department of Education.

**M LRC** UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Literature Professor Emerita and translator **Arun Mukherjee's** public keynote speech, "Reading the Americanized Joothan: The Translator's Cringe" was held as a Zoom Webinar on Friday, November 13th. Comparing the [Samya Press](#) and [Columbia University Press](#) editions of her English translation of Omprakash Valmiki's autobiography, *Joothan*, Mukherjee used side-by-side PowerPoint slides to examine and reflect on the differences between the Indian and American editions of her translation while explaining the decisions she made to protect the beauty of *Joothan*, which was originally written in Hindi.

Organized by the Center for South Asian Studies and funded in part by a Title VI federal grant from the US Department of Education, Professor Mukherjee's keynote served as both the source of inspiration and the launchpad for three workshop sessions--one following her keynote on November 13th, with the other two taking place on November 14th and 20th, respectively--in which authors, translators and publishers discussed pre-circulated texts in English, Hindi, Marathi and

Tamil with the goal of demystifying the linguistic (and often sociohistorical) decisions a literary translator must make. The series of multilingual workshops were coordinated with the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures and co-sponsored by the Center for South Asian Studies and the Language Resource Center.

During the first workshop, "Marginal Perspectives on Publishing Anti-Caste Literature," excerpts from the work of writers like Urmila Pawar and Aruni Kashyap, as well as translators like Arun Mukherjee and Maya Pandit, were studied as a segue into an ethical discussion about how to retain meaning as a literary translator when working from a source text that in itself expands upon a rich and complex history.

The second workshop, "Building Global Solidarities in the Twenty-First Century," featured speakers Perumal Murugan, Meena Kandasamy, Urmila Pawar, G.N. Devy, and Aniruddhan Vasudevan, who discussed their plurality of roles as translators, publishers, editors, scholars, writers, educators, and activists, drawing on their work with women, dalits, buddhists, bahujans, adivasis, and DNTs. The conversation around these roles investigated the place of literature--as well as its production and distribution--in anti-racism and anti-caste discussions and educations. Source texts for this discussion included works in Marathi, Tamil, Hindi, and English.

The third and final workshop, "Anti-Caste Literature and Its Challenges to Embodied forms of Caste and Race," focused on anti-caste literary production in Hindi specifically. Using [Towards An Aesthetics of Dalit Literature](#) by Sharankumar Limbale (translated by Alok Mukherjee) as a launchpad for talking about theoretical articulation of Dalit aesthetics and politics in literary studies, the session examined locations of caste-based critique in Hindi.

# Michigan India Conference

The 12th Michigan India Conference, "Focusing on Stability and Change," was held virtually throughout March 2021. More than 450 alumni and professionals from around the world participated in the event, which featured some of the most influential decision-makers and thinkers surrounding India's government, dynamic economy, and the Indian consumer.

It consisted of 3 events: a panel discussion was with Dr. Anantha Nageswaran and Mr. Neelkanth Mishra, moderated by Mr. Gopal Srinivasan on the 2021 budget and the Indian economy in general; the keynote lecture by Mr. D. Shivakumar, moderated by Ravi Pendse, about the importance of stability and change in India's dynamic economy; and a "fireside chat" featuring Ambassador Tim Roemer, moderated by Dr. Madhumita Lahiri, on why he believes that a strong relationship between the U.S. and India is crucial for global security and prosperity.

**MICHIGAN INDIA CONFERENCE**  
Focusing on Stability & Change

The Michigan India Conference gives business leaders, students, alumni, policymakers, and anyone interested, a chance to learn more about what drives this dynamic economy. For this year's theme, we've brought you the best decision-makers and thinkers surrounding India's government, India's dynamic economy, and the Indian consumer. This will help you get the chance to learn about the latest trends, opportunities, and maybe even a chance to network with some of India's most prestigious figures.  
REGISTER TODAY! [www.michiganindiaconference.com](http://www.michiganindiaconference.com)

**SCHEDULE**

**Panel with Dr. Anantha Nageswaran & Mr. Neelkanth Mishra**  
March 5 9:00 AM EST  
Moderated by Mr. Gopal Srinivasan.  
Both speakers are members of the Indian Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council. Discussion regarding the Indian economy and budget 2021.

**Keynote Presentation by Mr. D. Shivakumar**  
March 19 9:00 AM EST  
The president of Corporate Strategy and Business Development at the Aditya Birla Group discusses stability and change in India.

**Fireside Chat with Ambassador Tim Roemer**  
March 26 9:00 AM EDT  
Moderated by Dr. Madhumita Lahiri.  
Discussion will be about Ambassador Roemer's experiences as an Ambassador and the importance of a strong US-India relationship.

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# School of Nursing Global Reproductive and Sexual Health Summer Institute



## CSAS joined the University of Michigan School of Nursing

for their 2021 Global Summer Institute, which took place May 11-13 in a virtual format, drawing attendees from 30 countries.

Focusing on the theme of “Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights for All,” this year’s agenda included presentations, skills sessions, and panel discussions examining the intersection of research, practice, and advocacy in sexual and reproductive health in both local and global contexts. Over the course of the Institute, attendees had the opportunity to learn about innovative practice, research, and policy trends while networking with practitioners, researchers, and professionals from the U-M School of Nursing and institutions around the globe.

More than 400 individuals registered to attend this year’s virtual Summer Institute – the most since the event began in 2017. Keynote presentations covered maternal health equity with Birth Detroit and Birth Center Equity Co-founder Leseliey Welch, sexual and reproductive health indicators with Sylvia S. Hacker Collegiate Professor of Nursing and Sexual Health [Rob Stephenson](#), as well as maternal and newborn

health policy with USAID’s Senior Maternal and Newborn Health Advisor Deborah Armbruster. The event concluded with a public panel discussion led by U-M School of Nursing faculty members reflecting on 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, along with guest speakers from Haiti, Indonesia, Mexico and China.

**More than 400 individuals from 30 countries registered to attend this year’s virtual Summer Institute – the most since the event began in 2017.**

“Global perspectives are not always presented in a peer structure. The fact that people attended the Summer Institute from all over the world not only as speakers, but as students and participants, was unique and invigorating,” said Maddy Harner, a senior in the U-M School of Nursing’s Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. “It makes this experience much more personable. I can’t express how grateful I am to have had this opportunity.”

## New Book Talk

**Starting from this academic year** CSAS is showcasing recent, ground-breaking publications focused on contemporary South Asia through a series of book talks.

The first speaker of the series was [Ethiraj Gabriel Dattatreyan](#), from the University of London Department of Anthropology. His book, *The Globally Familiar: Digital Hip Hop, Masculinity, and Urban Space in Delhi*, was published in September 2020 with Duke University Press.



In his book, Dattatreyan traces how the rapid development of information and communication technologies in India has created opportunities for young people to creatively explore their gendered, classed, and racialized subjectivities in and through transnational media worlds. His ethnography focuses on a group of diverse young, working-class men in Delhi as they engage with the African diasporic aesthetics and creative practices of hip hop. Dattatreyan shows how these aspiring b-boys, MCs, and graffiti writers fashion themselves and their city through online and offline experimentations with hip hop, thereby accessing new social, economic, and political opportunities, while acting as consumers, producers, and influencers in global circuits of capitalism. In so doing, Dattatreyan outlines how the hopeful, creative, and vitally embodied practices of hip hop offer an alternative narrative of urban place-making in “digital” India.

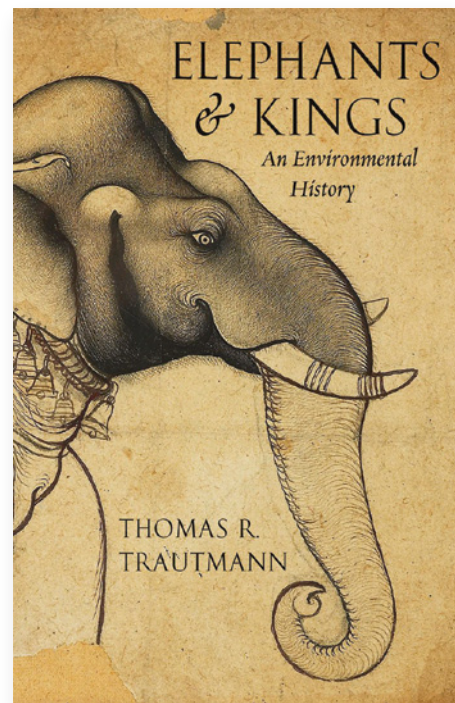
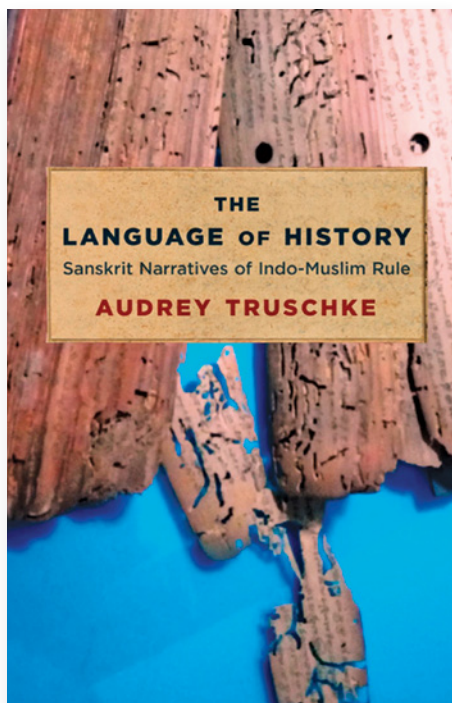


# Premodern South Asia Colloquium

During the Winter 2021 semester, CSAS helped fund the inaugural Premodern South Asia Colloquium, a student-led initiative to create a forum for graduate students interested in the study of premodern South Asian cultural histories to convene and discuss salient works of scholarship in the field. The Colloquium established an interdisciplinary setting for graduate students based in different departments throughout the university to assemble and bring their diverse scholarly perspectives to bear on the literature that is actively shaping their disciplines.

CSAS sponsored a Colloquium meeting where participants met with Dr. Audrey Truschke, Associate Professor and Asian Studies Director at Rutgers University in Newark, to discuss her new monograph, *The Language of History: Sanskrit Narratives of Indo-Muslim Rule*, which was published in January of this year. U-M Professor Emeritus of History and Anthropology, Dr. Thomas R. Trautmann, also kindly joined the group for a presentation of new research, as well as a conversation about his latest book, *Elephants and Kings: An Environmental History*.

Graduate students who are interested in joining the Premodern South Asia Colloquium should contact Jahnabi Chanchani ([jahnabi@umich.edu](mailto:jahnabi@umich.edu)) and Ross Bernhaut ([bernhaut@umich.edu](mailto:bernhaut@umich.edu)).



**The Colloquium is a student-led initiative to create a forum for graduate students interested in the study of premodern South Asian cultural histories to convene and discuss salient works of scholarship in the field.**

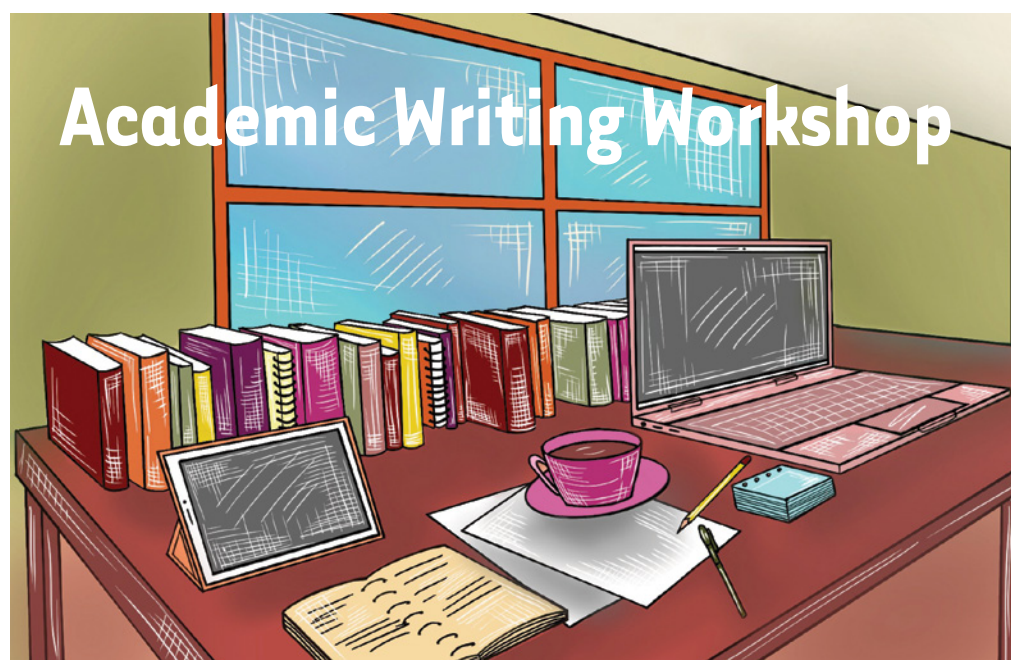


Illustration by Shivalika Kohli

**The Center for South Asian Studies** has been working in collaboration with the Sweetland Center for Writing to offer graduate students focusing on South Asian studies an opportunity to learn more about various aspects of academic writing and publishing. The first workshop in this series, held in spring 2021, focused on best approaches to transform individual chapters of their dissertation into scholarly articles. Similar workshops, focusing on dissertation writing and grant writing are being planned for Academic Year 21-22.



# Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education Partnership



Illustration by Shivalika Kohli

Since 2008, the CSAS has been a strong partner in providing support to community college faculty affiliated with the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education (MIIE) consortium.

In particular, it has co-sponsored several week-long curriculum workshops for community college faculty to develop curriculums on South Asia. These workshops are designed to provide exposure to curriculum resources and ideas of how to infuse curriculum packets (modules) with various global themes. Examples of global themes co-sponsored by CSAS have been human rights, conflict and cooperation, languages and culture, world food, water, and energy issues, global interactions and exchanges, poverty and inequality, environmental stewardship, and global norms and values.

All workshops are interdisciplinary, interactive, and tailored to the curriculum needs of community college faculty. Typically, the workshop participants are limited to fifteen faculty in order to provide personal attention, quality programming, and strong focus on their professional interests and curriculum development that reflects the types of courses that these faculty teach on their campuses.

A main objective of the workshops is to provide strategies and curriculum resources to enhance their teaching by infusing their curriculum with a global theme, either focused on a geographic region, like South Asia, or comparisons across two or more regions. A second objective is to encourage interdisciplinary instructional sharing and develop critical pedagogy.

The five-day workshops offer short-presentations (about 45 minutes) of expert faculty, followed by extensive discussions, working groups, informal networking, extensive opportunities for interdisciplinary learning, and the development of curriculum plans.

Following the week-long workshops, the selected faculty will develop curriculum modules, receive feedback and support from assigned mentors. The faculty are expected to finalize their curriculum packets and implement them in the classroom (for pre-determined courses) the following academic year. All faculty are expected to assess the curriculum work with their students and to report the implementation in the following two years. The faculty developing the curriculum modules and their mentors receive modest stipends upon completion of their work, which are partially funded by the Title VI program of the U.S. Department of Education.

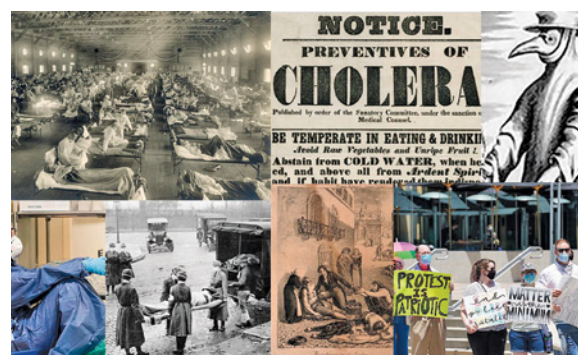
In May 2021, MIIE and CSAS organized and offered a curriculum workshop for forty-four community college faculty. Following the workshop, the faculty were invited to submit proposals to develop curriculum modules with a focus on South Asia.

CSAS has co-sponsored a week-long curriculum workshop on "Global Norms, Values, and Identity," which will take place in August 2021. Twelve faculty have been selected to participate and develop curriculum modules by May 2022 and infuse them in their teaching starting with the fall 2022 semester.

## WHaLI

This year, CSAS and the other NRCs hosted at the International Institute held the 2020 World History & Literature Initiative workshop titled "Pandemics and Power in World History & Literature."

"Infectious disease," historian William H. McNeill asserted, "which antedated the emergence of humankind, will last as long as humanity itself, and will surely remain, as it has been hitherto, one of the fundamental parameters and determinants of human history." The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic confirms McNeill's assertion, while also reminding us that human understanding of pandemic disease is historically contingent. Ancient scholars argued that "plague" emanated naturally from the gods for mysterious reasons to test human will. Later scholars might also blame disease on human causes, whereby religious and ethnic minorities, the poor, or perceived enemies of society could be viewed to be spreading or perpetuating disease. Regardless of origin and cause, humanity's encounter with disease has also been, and will continue to be, shaped by political, social, cultural and economic power. Given how important pandemics have been in world history, it is not surprising that we have a rich historical and literary heritage capturing how pandemics have affected peoples, communities, and the world.



The World History and Literature Initiative's (WHaLI's) three-day conference for secondary teachers focused on these issues, using examples drawn from different historical times and areas of the world. The symposium also illuminated challenges students face in learning such content, explored ways teachers might meet those challenges, and provided participants with relevant resources that can be used in the classroom.

# K-14 Workshops

CSAS recently organized 3 educational workshops for K-14 teachers in the spring/summer 2021. Attended by educators from all over the state and country, workshops were held virtually, as COVID disrupted the typical in-person format. CSAS is a National Resource Center. These K-14 workshops are funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Title VI National Resource grant.

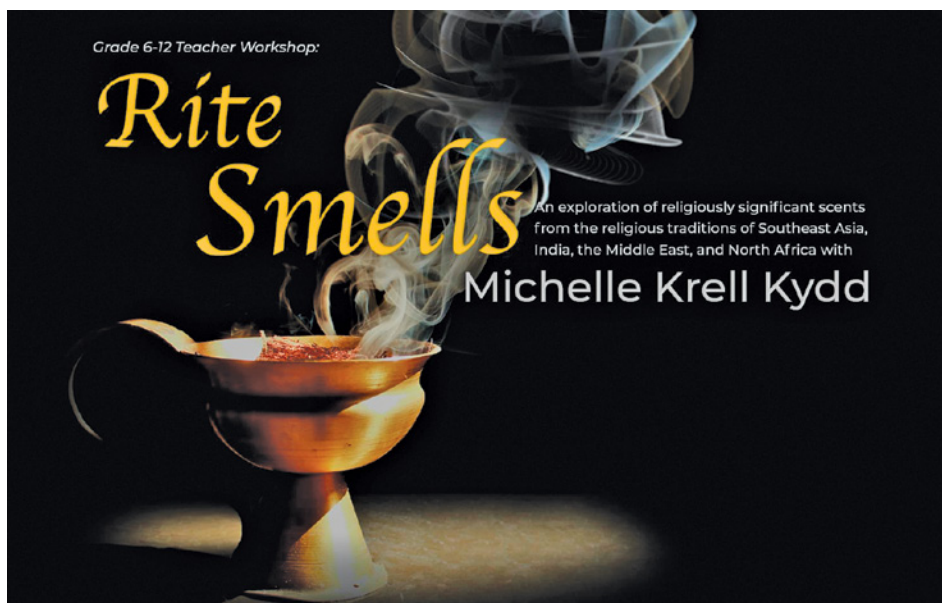
## Something About Mary

On Mother's Day, May 8, 2021, educators gathered to discuss one of the most famous figures in the world, the Virgin Mary, during the workshop "Biblical Women Across Abrahamic Religions." One workshop participant exclaimed, using Mary "as a tool to teach cultural/religious diffusion and imperialism was my a-ha moment -- brilliant!" Participants received a classroom-ready lesson plan aptly titled "Something About Mary."



**La Virgen del Cerro, depicting the Virgin Mary as Pachamama, circa 18th century**

To kick off the program, [Ruth Tsoffar](#), Professor of Comparative Literature and Women's Studies at the U-M, discussed possibly the first example of surrogate motherhood in the Hebrew tradition, the story of Abram's wife Sarai (Sarah) and slave Hagar. [Juan Cole](#), Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at U-M, presented different perspectives and interpretations of the Virgin Mary. [Deirdre de la Cruz](#), Associate Professor of South-



east Asian Studies and Associate Professor of History at the U-M, described how Spanish colonists strategically deployed the image of Mary to convert indigenous populations in the Philippines.

[Jamie Lee Andreson](#), postdoctoral fellow at Penn State University's Africana Research Center, discussed key concepts of syncretism across world religions. Lastly, [Darin Stockdill](#), design coordinator at the Center for Education Design, Evaluation, and Research (CEDER) at the UM School of Education, concluded the workshop with strategies and resources for teaching about syncretism through global representations of Mary.

*This teacher workshop was co-organized by: the Center for Middle Eastern & North African Studies, the Center for South Asian Studies, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.*

## Rite Smells

On June 25, 2021, educators convened to participate in "Rite Smells: A Sensory Exploration of the Historic Trade of the Indian Ocean."

Trained "nose" Michelle Krell Kydd led participant educators on a "scent flight" of eight plant-based essences from Southeast Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, transforming the abstract nature of smell into an articulated, live experience and teaching about the relationship between spirituality and smellscape in various rites and rituals. From a collection of anonymized scents,

asked to 'smell, feel, remember, relate' before the odorants were revealed. Lively discussions ensued during a very 'smelly' session. One participant wrote enthusiastically, "I can't \*wait\* to include smells in my World Literature class! Students will be very interested in learning through smells."

Jatin Dua, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the U-M, discussed the long history of trade in the Indian Ocean, made possible by the Monsoon winds. The presentation broached issues of ownership, control, colonialism, trade, migration, and cultural exchange. Professor Dua also presented his research on maritime piracy along the East African coast. An energetic Q&A followed during which Professor Dua was asked to recount his experiences in researching modern day pirates. One teacher reflected this was a "reminder that Swahili represents the cultural exchanges of trading networks in the Indian Ocean."

Finally, Darin Stockdill, design coordinator at U-M's Center for Education Design, Evaluation, and Research (CEDER), led a pedagogical discussion on using project based learning, and sensory experiences. Educators received a classroom-ready lesson plan 'The Scent of History: How the Spice Trade Connected the World.'

*This teacher workshop was co-organized by: the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, the Center for Middle Eastern & North African Studies, and the Center for South Asian Studies.*



# K-12 Teacher Fellow

## Immigration in Detroit and Michigan

The Center for Education, Design, Evaluation, and Research collaborated with local educators—Fatima Abdullah, Dearborn Public Schools; Laura Rebollar, César Chávez Academy; and Puja Mullins, Lincoln Consolidated Schools—in order to design a lesson plan that explores immigration and cultural diversity in Michigan.



Immigrants celebrate after being sworn in as new U.S. citizens in a ceremony at Comerica Park in Detroit.

The lesson focused on immigrant communities in Southeast Michigan, using background readings, data analysis, and maps. Learning objectives included identifying 'push and pull' factors of immigration, identifying trends by analyzing 20th c. data, and using maps.

Driving questions were:

- *Why do people leave their homes and immigrate (move from one country to another) to new places?*
- *How has immigration shaped different communities in Michigan?*

The goal of the lesson is for students to be able to answer the above questions and express personal experiences about the topic in a safe space. They will learn why immigration is essential to American history and way of life.

"The CSAS Teacher Fellowship was a rewarding experience and a welcome opportunity to learn, despite the pandemic and social distancing. The Center's diverse selection of online lectures and films introduced me to new dimensions of South Asia's history and culture, and it deepened my appreciation for the region's complexities. Virtual discussions of Muslim identities in Mughal North India, South Asian immigrants' historical integration into American society, and the role of Hip Hop in India's cosmopolitan spaces inspired me to find new ways to connect my World History curriculum to my students' interests. For example, my students at Lakeshore High School explored Hip Hop in Delhi and Kashmir, and then connected the lyrical content and musical styles of these performers with Hip Hop artists in the Middle East, North Africa, and the United States. Our class investigation revealed how young people throughout the world use Hip Hop to express their individual/collective identities, promote social justice, and, at times, inspire political protest.

Ultimately, my partnership with CSAS culminated in the creation of a curriculum module that explores South Asia's political borders and India's tenuous relationship with its neighbors. The module challenges students to examine the historical context in which borders are created. The students then connect this context with current crises, exploring how the deceptively simple lines on a political map actually hint to incredibly complex developments and ever-evolving realities.

I look forward to traveling to India and Nepal in 2022, and I remain grateful to CSAS for the opportunity to learn during a particularly unusual school year."



Amy Perkins

## Film Series

CSAS continued its collaboration with the South Asia Film Festival (Kathmandu, Nepal) making their award-winning documentaries available for our audience to view through the U-M streaming platform.

During the Fall Term, the focus was on the 2020 winners, while during the Winter Term, there was a retrospective on the best South Asian documentaries of the past 10 years with regards to music.

CSAS also organized two talks, one on Friday, October 9th with Mauktik Kulkarni, actor and producer of *Riding on a Sunbeam*, and with Munmun Dhalaria, director of *Covid Response – A Himalayan Story*.

- We Have Not Come Here to Die* – India
- Scratches on Stone* – India
- The Winter Tap* – Nepal
- Badshah Lear* – India
- In Fact* – India, 51 mins
- Chai Darbari* – India
- Facing the Dragon* – Afghanistan



- Janani's Juliet* – India
- Memoirs of Saira and Salim* – India
- And What is the Summer Saying* – India
- Muktir Gaan (Song of Freedom)* – Bangladesh
- Bheda Ko Oon Jasto...In Search of a Song* – Nepal
- Miss Nikki and the Tiger Girls* – Myanmar
- The Journey Within* – Pakistan
- On and Off Records* – India
- Chalo Hamara Desh* – India
- Rasan Piya* – India
- Khayal Darpan* – India
- Nusrat Has Left the Building...But When?* – Pakistan
- Kalam* – India

# Faculty News



**Pinderjeet Gill**, Punjabi language faculty, was awarded the 31st Golden Apple Award, as well as the Collegiate Lecturer Award, for her excellent teaching at the University of Michigan.



CSAS faculty affiliate **John Ciorciari** published a new book entitled Sovereignty Sharing in Fragile States with Stanford University Press. It examines international interventions to promote the rule of law through mechanisms, including international policing missions, hybrid criminal tribunals, and mixed anti-corruption commissions. In May, he gave a public lecture hosted by the Holocaust Memorial Center



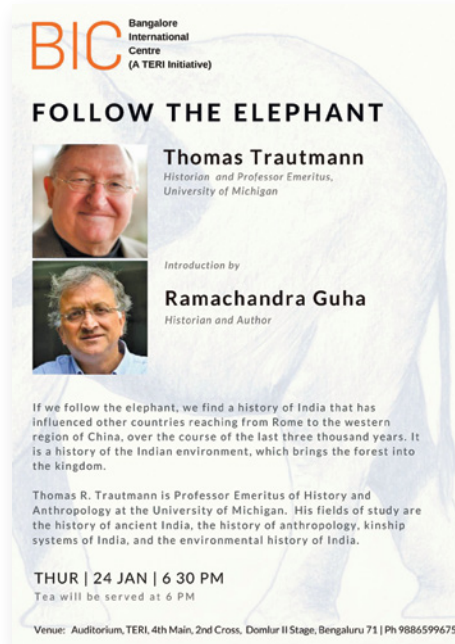
on "Preventing Cambodia's Genocidal Past from Becoming Afghanistan's Future." The talk examined the dangers associated with the withdrawal of US and NATO forces from the country and possible policy responses.



CSAS faculty affiliate **Stephen Rush** completed a book on Anti-Racist Music Theory, in collaboration with many Indian musicians from Mysore (India). The book pushes the scope of

the Fundamentals of Music Theory to include *all* people, and hopes to be as inclusive as possible in terms of race and gender. A class will be offered using a prototype of the book - Experiential Music (PAT 150) in Winter of 2022.

Emeritus Professor **Thomas Trautmann**, at the beginning of 2019, gave the KTM Hegde Memorial Lecture in Baroda, honoring the memory of a gifted archaeologist who taught at the M.S. University of Baroda. Thereafter, he gave lectures in



Bangalore, Chennai (Madras Institute of Development Studies; Raja Muthaiah Research Library) and Delhi (India International Centre; Ashoka University; JNU). Since then he has published an article, "Megasthenes on the military livestock of Chandragupta" (Comparative studies in society and history. 63(2):339-365) and "The Aryan question," a chapter in a Festschrift for Romila Thapar (Questioning paradigms, constructing histories: ed. Kumkum Roy and Naina Dayal, 261-75. New Delhi: Aleph). Forthcoming are a chapter on "Democracy in ancient India", (for *The Cambridge History of Democracy*), "Forest people in the Kautilya Arthaśāstra" (Festschrift for Christopher Minkowski), and "War elephants, forest people" (for a conference volume).

ALC faculty **Syed Ekhteyar Ali, Pinderjeet Gill, Faijul Hoque, Arvind Mandair**, and **Vidya Mohan**, together with PI **Christi Merrill**, Associate Professor of South Asian Literature and Postcolonial Theory, received a NINI Grant for their project "Decolonizing the Curriculum in South Asian Languages and Cultures Courses."

**Dr. Swapnil Rai**, from the Department of Film, TV and Media, delivered a keynote on Political Mediations Through the Lens of Popular Culture



and Technology at an International Online Workshop on "The Dynamics of Socio-Cultural Polarization: Role of Information & Communication Technologies," organized by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India on May 8th, 2021.



**Jyojeet Pal** spent his year at Microsoft Research on leave, setting up a group to study Social Media and Society in Bangalore. His team worked on various projects examining political speech, polarization, misinformation, and on gig work in India. On politics, they published scholarly work on the polarization of politicians and journalists on Twitter, on hate speech, on COVID-related misinformation, and on conspiracy theories surrounding the death of actor Sushant Rajput. On the 'future of work,' his team wrote on labor conditions in app-based driving, and on the changing nature of beauty and care services with the onset of app-based work platforms.



**Jatin Dua**, former interim director of the Center for South Asian Studies, currently director of the Interdepartmental Program in Anthropology and History and an associate professor of anthropology at U-M, was awarded the 2020 Elliott P. Skinner Book Prize by the Association for Africanist Anthropology for his book titled, *Captured at Sea: Piracy and Protection in the Indian Ocean*. Published by the University of California Press, Dua's book investigates piracy in the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean sets the geographical context for his work, which spans both land and sea, and connects the reader to a vast range of actors concerning modern-day piracy. Such actors include Indian ship captains, Somali pirates, South African mercenaries, and British insurance agencies.



# New Faculty Q & A



## **Retika Adhikari** Incoming Assistant Professor in the Department of American Culture

**CSAS:** Tell us about your research interests and what brought you to the University of Michigan.

**Professor Adhikari:** My research interests include refugee studies, transnational migration, critical

humanitarian studies, and the postindustrial United States. My work specifically examines the U.S.-funded project of resettlement of Bhutanese refugees, a Nepali-speaking ethnic minority from Bhutan, in upstate New York. By focusing on how Bhutanese refugees make sense of their arrival in the U.S., I explore the links between South Asian encampment and Rust Belt America, the limits of the global refugee regime, and the contradictions of American refuge.

I am here at the University of Michigan to start my job as an assistant professor in the Department of American Culture this Fall.

**CSAS:** Have you discovered any good secrets about Ann Arbor yet?

**Professor Adhikari:** I am beginning to discover elaborate walking/hiking trails that are all located within the city limits of Ann Arbor and am super excited to explore them.

**CSAS:** What will you be teaching this year and what would you like to accomplish in your spare time?

**Professor Adhikari:** This fall, I am excited to offer a new course: AMCULT/ASIANPAM 204 “New Immigrants and the Rust Belt.” The course is a critical introduction to postindustrial cities in the Great Lakes region, which we colloquially call the Rust Belt. The class will explore Rust Belt cities like Detroit, Buffalo, and Cleveland through the lens of recently arrived immigrants and read a range of anthropological, historical, and urban studies texts. Through concepts like predatory inclusion, austerity urbanism, nativism, and so on, the class will examine how immigrants navigate, contest, and inherit the Rust Belt’s uneven development, structural violence, and systemic racism.

In my spare time, I am looking forward to getting to know refugee communities and/or organizations in and around Ann Arbor as well as

Metro Detroit.

“The class will explore Rust Belt cities like Detroit, Buffalo, and Cleveland through the lens of recently arrived immigrants.”

# UM-UPR Report



**This year CSAS again participated** in the seventh annual joint University of Puerto Rico and University of Michigan symposium. As part of the effort to create sustainable links with institutions serving underrepresented populations, CSAS and several other National Resource Centers at the International Institute have built a partnership with the Colleges of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico. There are no Title VI National Resource Centers on the island of Puerto Rico; there are also no Hispanic serving institutions in the State of Michigan. Thanks to deep existing ties between our institutions, we are able to extend access to area studies and language resources at U-M to faculty and students at UPR, to in-service teachers in the region around UPR, and to their K-12 students. Each year, the International Institute sends mixed delegations of area studies experts to UPR for a K-16 professional and curriculum development symposium and workshop organized around topics that cross multiple disciplines and allow representation from different world regions. The annual symposium aims to create a space in which graduate students from both universities can share innovative ways of studying concepts, as well as intersections with other categories and topics.

**One advantage of hosting the event virtually is that this year has the “largest and most interdisciplinary cohort of graduate students yet.”**

Like many events at the II in the past year, this year’s Summer 2021 Curriculum Design Program focusing on Global Health has shifted to a virtual sphere. One advantage of hosting the event virtually is that this year has the “largest and most interdisciplinary cohort of graduate students yet” according to LACS Program Manager [Alana Rodriguez](#). This year’s theme on global health is particularly salient to recent events and as a result, students from all across disciplinary boundaries are participating. Representing CSAS, [Janaki Phillips](#), a PhD candidate in sociocultural anthropology, collaborated with other participants to put together a lesson plan for a high school history teacher interested in teaching about alternative healing practices rooted in different spiritual systems from around the globe. She will also give a presentation on some initial findings on her new research project on how tarot readers in Mumbai are negotiating the uncertainty of the pandemic through the lense of maintaining spiritual health.





# CSAS In and Out of South Asia: Race, Capitalism, and Mobility

## What does mobility mean in immobile

**times?** Global pandemics, surveillance regimes, and border fences seemingly engender old and new forms of captivity and incarceration throughout South Asia. At the same time, analytical and conceptual frames for studying the region have sought to break out of the gilded cage of methodological nationalism and embrace regional and transregional spatial units such as the recent turn towards Inter Asia, Africa-Asia, and the Indian Ocean. A rich and productive scholarship, emphasizing the deep and enduring connections that link South Asia to places

as far afield as Malacca and New England, has emerged from this transregional turn, providing new vocabularies for understanding polity, economy, and sociality in South Asia and beyond.

In December 2021, CSAS will be hosting an international conference on mobility, race, and capitalism in and out of South Asia. This conference aims to bring together a set of scholars and practitioners who are thinking across scale and time to explore the particular tension of mobility and immobility in shaping conceptual and methodological itineraries in and

out of South Asia. In particular, we are interested in asking how a focus on things/people/ideas/ that move “in and out” might help conceptualize new ways of imagining and engaging South Asia and the methodologies and concepts through which to study the region. We are especially interested in participants that explore the histories and futures of race and capitalism. This event aims at building on and setting new research and intellectual agendas that befuddle the boundaries of land/sea as well as divisions between academic and public scholarship.

## Library News

**Due to the pandemic**, this last year has been a very challenging one for the library, including the South Asia collection. In spite of many difficulties we were able to continue providing services for the university community. Since things are still in flux I'd like to highlight a few salient points:

**1)** The Library homepage (<http://lib.umich.edu>) gives regular updates about services. Two pertinent sections on the homepage are labelled “Moving Toward Fall Semester” and “Onsite Services.”

These sources are regularly updated with the most recent information.

**2)** The HathiTrust Emergency Temporary Access Service (ETAS) ended on August 23, 2021. After that, you'll be able to borrow all of the books in our circulating collection, and you will no longer be able to access the full text of copyright protected books in HathiTrust. Interlibrary Loan services (ILL) are also in full swing for additional materials that you might need.

**3)** If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me, [Jeff Martin](mailto:jeffmart@umich.edu) (jeffmart@umich.edu). I am always happy to assist people with inquiries but also will gladly resolve (or at least try to) any problems you might have in accessing and/or obtaining materials. Also, I am available for research consultations, bibliographic instruction, and any other library-related concerns.



# Graduate Student News

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**Ajitesh Kir** is a Michigan Grotius Fellow and doctoral candidate (SJD) at the University of

Michigan Law School. Ajitesh's dissertation project relates to India's recent legislation enacting a Goods and Services Tax (GST), a form of a value added tax (VAT). This is one of the most significant law reforms since India's Liberalization began in 1991. In July 2021, Ajitesh's doctoral paper titled, "[India's Goods and Services Tax: A Unique Experiment in Cooperative Federalism and a Constitutional Crisis in Waiting](#)" was published in the prestigious Canadian Tax Journal.



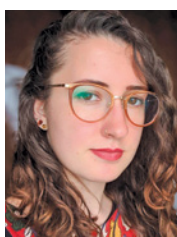
**Swarnim Khare**, from the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, was Awarded

the [Premchand Research Award in Hindi Studies](#) (2020), housed in the Institute for South Asia Studies at UC Berkeley, as well as the Rackham Language Training Award 2020. She also received the Philip Thomas Lincoln, Jr. Memorial Fellowship 2021, administered by the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, and the Rackham One-Term Dissertation Fellowship, 2021.



**Meenu Deswal** is a PhD Candidate in the Department of History currently writing

her dissertation titled, "Uneven Terrains of Struggle: Caste, Class, Gender and the Everyday Experience of Law in Colonial South Asia, 1849-1940." In the 2021-2022 academic year, her research will be supported by fellowships from the Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship program and the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies at the University of Michigan.



**Janaki Phillips** is a 6th year PhD candidate in sociocultural anthropology. After

her original dissertation research was interrupted by the pandemic in 2020, she made the difficult decision to switch her dissertation research topic to a comparative project on the digital practices of tarot readers in Mumbai and Los Angeles. She is interested in how tarot is being used as a divinatory tool, what other forms of spiritual and social practices it is embedded in, and how people negotiate their futures and uncertainty through tarot. Her new project is being supported by a Rackham Humanities Research Fellowship.

## CSAS IS DEDICATED

to promoting a broader and deeper understanding of the region—its histories, cultures, languages, and people—through research, education, and outreach programs. CSAS is committed to creating a supportive environment where scholars, educators, students, and the community have the opportunity to engage in dialogue and to study current and historical events related to South Asia.

CSAS gifts help support internships, student groups, faculty and student travel, workshops and lectures, visiting scholars, artists and performers, and special courses related to South Asia.

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## HOW TO MAKE A GIFT

Our center depends upon your generosity. If you would like to make a gift you may do so online by going to our website at: [ii.umich.edu/csas](https://ii.umich.edu/csas) and clicking on the "Give Online" button.

You may also call the **Gift Help Hotline** from Monday through Friday, any time between 8 am and 5 pm: **1-888-518-7888**

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Thank you for considering a gift to the  
**CENTER FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES!**

# CSAS Lecture Series 2021-2022

**September 24, 2021 (Zoom)**

**Joyojeet Pal**, *School of Information,  
University of Michigan*

**Misinformation and Political Twitter in India**

**October 8, 2021 (Zoom)**

**Juned Shaikh**, *History Department,  
UC Santa Cruz*

**Outcaste Bombay and Inter-war Marxism**

**October 14, 2021 (Zoom)**

**International Institute Collaborative  
Conference on Gender and Health**

**October 15, 2021 (Zoom)**

**Shameem Black**, *Department of Gender, Media  
and Cultural Studies, Australian National University*  
**India's Newest Poses: The Imaginative Life  
of Yoga**

**November 12, 2021 (Zoom)**

**Sheldon David Gilmartin**, *Department of  
History, NC State University*

**The Modern Cosmopolis: Sovereignty,  
Cosmology and the Extrapolitical**

**November 19, 2021 (Zoom)**

**Jinee Lokaneeta**, *Professor and Chair of  
Political Science and International Relations,  
Drew University*

**Scaffolding of the Rule of Law:  
Legal Violence, Policing, and Scientific  
Interrogations in India**

**December 3, 2021 (Zoom)**

**Thomas R. Trautmann Honorary Lecture**

**Stephanie Jamison**, *Department of Asian  
Languages & Cultures, UCLA*

**(Indian) Animals Are Good to Think With**

**December 6 & 7, 2021**

**CSAS Transnational Conference**

**In and Out of South Asia: Race, Capitalism,  
and Mobility**

**January 7, 2022**

**Usha Iyer**, *Department of Art & Art History,  
Stanford University*

**Bombay Cinema and the Caribbean:  
Rhythmic Flows and Cultural Migrations  
across Creolized Geographies**

**January 21, 2022**

**Varsha Ayyar**, *Centre for Labour Studies,  
School of Management and Labour Studies,  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences*

**January 28, 2022**

**Cara Cilano**, *Department of English,  
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies,  
Michigan State University*

**Spatializing Islam during the Early Cold  
War: the 'Ahmadi Question' in the Munir  
Kayani Report and Pakistani Literature**

**February 11, 2022**

**Ravinder Kaur**, *Department of Cross-Cultural  
and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen*  
**Market Futures: On Capital and Resistance  
in India Adda, Davos**

**March 11, 2022**

**Nira Wickramasinghe**, *Institute for Area  
Studies, Leiden University*

**The case of the slave in a palanquin:  
Registration and resistance in nineteenth  
century Jaffna**

**March 18, 2022**

**Ali Usman Qasmi**, *Humanities Center,  
Stanford University*

**Qaum, Mulk, Sultanat: The Ideas of  
Citizenship and Belonging in Pakistan**

**March 25, 2022**

**Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi**, *Director,  
Center for Ethics and Transformative Values, MIT*  
**Book Talk: Running Toward Mystery**

**April 1, 2022**

**11th UM-Pakistan Conference**

**15-Apr-22**

**Kavita Datla Memorial Lecture**

**Rama Mantena**, *Department of History,  
University of Illinois Chicago*

**Liberalism and Anticolonial Politics in  
South India**

**Friday, May 20, 2022**

**CSAS Muslim Modernity in South Asia  
Workshop**

**NOTE: All events in the Fall 2021 term are Zoom events.** Zoom session access links can be found at [ii.umich.edu/csas/news-events/events.html](https://ii.umich.edu/csas/news-events/events.html)

It has not been determined yet whether Winter 2022 term events will be in-person or virtual.

All events are free and open to the public. A complete and updated list can be found on our website, [ii.umich.edu/csas/news-events/events.html](https://ii.umich.edu/csas/news-events/events.html)



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#### 2021 Regents of the University of Michigan

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Paul W. Brown, Ann Arbor; Sarah Hubbard, Okemos; Denise Ilitch, Bingham Farms;  
Ron Weiser, Ann Arbor; Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor; Mark S. Schlissel, *ex officio*

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