


## Pratiksha Thangam Menon

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## Education

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- Ph.D., **Communication & Media (Conc: Digital Studies)**, University of Michigan | Expected 2025
  - Dissertation: *Laughter is the Best Poison*: How Humor Mainstreams the Extreme
  - Committee: Aswin Punathambekar & Muzammil Hussain (co-chairs), Apryl Williams, Johannes von Moltke (Film, Television & Media; Germanic Languages & Literatures)
  - NHA Documenting the Impact of the Humanities in Higher Education Certificate, 2024
  - Rackham Professional Development Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Certificate, 2023
- M.A., **Communication**, University of Illinois at Chicago | 2018 (fully-funded)
  - Thesis: *Whose Feminism Is It Anyway? The 'Empowered' Woman in Bollywood*.
  - Committee: Zizi Papacharissi (chair), Aswin Punathambekar, Diem My-Bui
- P.G. Diploma, **Mass Communication (Conc: Journalism)**, Symbiosis Institute of Mass Communication, India | 2006
- B.A., **History**, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai University, India, | 2004

## Research Appointments

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- Research Associate, **Digital Accessible Futures Lab, University of Michigan** | Present
  - **DISCO** Curriculum Research Project: collaborative codebook development, qualitative coding, and transcribing of participant interviews examining how students learn about the intersections of race, gender, and disability in digital studies classrooms.
  - Editorial committee member: [Accessing Disability Culture Anthology](#); Editorial consultant on the forthcoming disability justice podcast.
  - Event planning
- Research Assistant, **Annenberg School for Communication, UPenn** | Winter 2023
  - Assisting Dr. Aswin Punathambekar with preliminary research for textbook on the Indian television industry
  - Summarizing existing subject-specific scholarly research and identifying key theoretical conversations
  - Creating chapter bibliographies
- Communications & Research Intern, **National Humanities Alliance (NHA)** | Fall 2022
  - Case study research on successful efforts in expanding access to undergraduate humanities education
  - Built multidisciplinary outreach database of scholarly societies and higher-ed associations outside of the humanities disciplines
  - Pre-research on DEI trends in higher-education for the [Expanding Access](#) report
- Student Engagement Fellow, **University of Michigan Library** | Nov. 2021- Dec. 2022
  - Built an anti-racism toolkit for library staff: responsible for conceptualization, structure, research, content
  - Collaborated with anti-racism task force to ensure consistency of messaging across anti-racism initiatives
  - Crafted case studies to maximize impact, prioritizing accessibility across a cross-section of staff

## Academic Publications

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- **Peer-Reviewed Article:**
  - Babri Retold: Rewriting popular memory through Islamophobic humor. (*Ethnic & Racial Studies*, 2023)
- **Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters:**
  - Reinventing Masculinity: The Sigma Male Phenomenon in the Post-#MeToo Landscape. (*Routledge Companion to Fan Video & Digital Authorship*, Forthcoming)
  - (Principal Author) The Dirtbag Left: Bernie Bros and the Persistence of Left-Wing Misogyny. (*The Palgrave Handbook of Gendered Violence and Technology*, 2022)
- **Book Chapter:**
  - Women Protagonists in Contemporary Hindi Cinema. (*The International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media, and Communication*, 2020)
- **Book Reviews:**
  - The Burden of Choice: Recommendations, Subversion and Algorithmic Culture. (*Television and New Media*, 2020)
  - This is why we can't have nice things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture. (*Social Media + Society*, 2017)

## Conference Presentations

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- ***Why Critical Humor Studies, Why Now?*** Invited panel discussion of the Critical Humor Studies Association with Raúl Pérez, Simon Weaver, and J Finley. Virtual, 2024.
- ***The Sigma Male: Contemporary Hindutva Masculinity & Comedic Schadenfreude.*** Presenter and panel chair at the annual conference of the International Communications Association (ICA). June, 2024. Gold Coast, Australia.
- ***Imagining Access: Disability, Race, and Technological Justice in the Classroom.*** Presenter at the annual Multiple Perspectives conference of disability studies academics, practitioners, and activists. April, 2024. Hosted by Ohio State University.
- ***Re-energizing Undergraduate Humanities Education: Shifting Perceptions to Attract More Students.*** Project presentation at the annual National Humanities Conference (NHC). November 2022, Los Angeles.
- ***Hindutva & The #SigmaMale: Schadenfreude as a Shield for Wounded Masculinity.*** Paper presentation at the annual Global Fusion Conference. October, 2022. Philadelphia.
- ***"It's Funny Because It's True": Rewriting History Through Antagonistic Humor.*** Paper presentation at AI & Extreme Speech: International Counterathon Workshop held by For Digital Dignity. July 2021. Virtual.
- ***The Burden of White Guilt.*** Paper presentation at the annual conference of the ICA. May 2021. Virtual.
- ***Reclaiming #Prejudice: The Alt-Right Way.*** Presenter and panel organizer at the annual conference of the ICA, May 2019, Washington D.C.
- ***Whose Feminism is it Anyway? The 'Empowered Woman' in Bollywood.*** Paper presentation at the annual conference of the ICA. May 2019, Washington D.C.
- ***The Joke's On You: Hillary Clinton as the memetic monstrous feminine.*** Paper presentation at the annual conference of the National Communication Association (NCA). November 2018, Salt Lake

City.

- ***Feminist Representations in the Television Show Archer.*** Paper presented at the annual conference of the NCA. November 2017, Dallas.
- ***Toxic love: An intersectional reading of familial relations and romantic gaze in popular Bollywood cinema.*** Paper presented at the annual conference of the NCA. November 2017, Dallas. Principle Author: Dr. Ishani Mukherjee.
- ***Bollywood's Leading Ladies: Feminist Representations through a Patriarchal Lens.*** Paper presented at the annual conference of the Midwest Popular Culture Association. October 2017, St.Louis.

## Teaching Experience

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- **Graduate Student Instructor** | University of Michigan, Ann Arbor | 2019 – 2021
  - COMM 306: Gender and Popular Culture
  - COMM 290: Public Speaking in the Digital Age (Online & In-Person)
    - Discussion section lead
    - Ideating and executing learning material, activities, and subjects for class discussions
    - Synchronous instruction during COVID-19 which included taking on lead instructor duties
- **Graduate Teaching Assistant** | University of Illinois at Chicago | 2016 – 2018
  - COMM 301: Communication Research
  - COMM 200: Communication Technologies
  - COMM 102: Introduction to Interpersonal Communications
  - COMM 101: Introduction to Human Communication (Online)
    - In charge of grading, student guidance and liaison
    - Mentorship of students including assistance with grammar, writing, and argumentation
    - Aided Instructor of Record with classroom logistics, management, and facilitating student learning during in-classroom projects
- **Teaching Lead** | Gujarat Research Society, India | 2012
  - Workshop on Contemporary Journalism for Working Professionals
    - Lead instructor for course

## Select Grants & Awards

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- **University of Michigan Digital Studies Institute Graduate Research Award (2024)**
- **University of Michigan Communication & Media Department Graduate Student Diversity Teaching & Service Award (2023)**
- **University of Michigan Departmental Dissertation Research Award (2023)**
- **University of Michigan Library Diversity Council Anti-Racism Toolkit Team Award (2023)**

## Select Professional Affiliations

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- **Institute for Research on Women & Gender (IRWG) Graduate Student Affiliate** | Present
- **Center for Ethics, Society, and Computing (ESC) Graduate Research Affiliate** | Present
- **International Communication Association (ICA) Student Member** | Present
- **South Asian Humor Studies Collective** | Present
- **Digital Inquiry Speculation Collaboration Optimism Network Graduate Scholar** | 2023-2024

- **Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life (CITAP) Graduate Affiliate** | 2021-2022

## Academic Service

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- Co-Chair, Communications Committee, **Graduate Employees' Organization** | May 2022-Jan 2023
  - Conceptualized social media content plan & calendar
  - Collaboratively facilitated content creation with a team of 5
  - Supervised creatives for merchandise and flyers
  - Department Steward for 2 years prior
- Peabody Awards Screening Committee Member, **University of Michigan** | Dec 2022-Feb 2023
  - Reviewed 20 submissions in the Arts/Entertainment/Documentary/Children's Section
  - Drafted 4 reviews for final Peabody submissions under the guidance of Dr. Devon Powers
- Ad hoc reviewer, **International Journal of Communication, New Media & Society, and Television & New Media** | Ongoing

## Industry Experience (India)

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- Media & Communications Professional, **Self-Employed** | Mar. 2012-July 2016
  - Feature film script analysis for AKFC, a film and TV production house
  - Social media consultancy and content development for marketing agency, Brand Ripples
  - Social media management for Max Life Insurance's rebranding campaign
- Client Servicing, **Nine Winds Media** | Feb. 2010-June 2011
  - Marketing & media consultancy to independent film producers
  - Negotiations with partner vendors, content integration, publicity & promotion deals, PR & marketing ideation, media planning, event management & monitoring creative team output
  - Cost-revenue analysis of Hindi feature films released between '09 & '11
- Broadcast Journalist, **Various** | Feb. 2006-Dec. 2009
  - Conceptualized, researched & produced feature shows on the media & entertainment sector.
  - Conducted one-on-one interviews with notable personalities of the Hindi film industry for prime-time television.
  - Hosted a weekly show on the business of entertainment, the first of its kind on an English news channel in the country
  - Reviewed Hindi & English language films
  - Comprehensive daily news coverage of the biggest Media & Entertainment sector stories