

**Canadian South
Asian Studies
Association**

**Association canadienne
d'études sud-asiatiques**

Congress 2023 Programme

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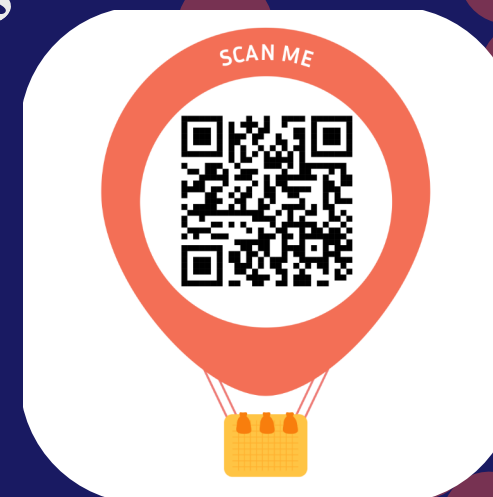
York University Map



Campus Eats



Exploring Toronto @ the GTA



Association Supporters

The Canadian South Asian Studies/ Association canadienne d'études sud-asiatiques is indebted to various scholars and institutions who have helped support the association over the year.

Raj Balkaran has helped spread the word about the association through his interviews this year and last, with CSASA-ACESA's President and Vice-President/Treasurer, Julie Vig and Andrea Farran. See the latest interview from May 2023 on the New Books Network's Indian Religions podcast [here](#).

This event is co-sponsored by:

- Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies at York University (LA&PS)
- York Centre for Asian Research (YCAR)
- Department of Humanities at York University

Land Acknowledgement

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

CSASA-ACESA Organizing Committee 2023



Julie Vig
CSASA-ACESA
President, Congress
Programme Co-Chair

Julie Vig is Assistant Professor of Humanities, Religious Studies, and South Asian Cultures at York University. Her research focuses on premodern Sikh and Punjabi cultural production and how it relates to wider cultural worlds and networks of premodern North India (c.1500-1850). Her particular focus is on gurbilās literature and its interactions with broader Brajbhasha literature in the early modern period. She also has secondary research interests in the reception of early modern Sikh texts in the colonial period and women, gender, and sexuality within the Sikh tradition.

Timothy Lorndale
Conference
Convenor

Timothy Lorndale is the Bhagavan Shitalnath Postdoctoral Fellow in Jain Studies at the University of Toronto, Mississauga. He received his PhD in South Asian Regional Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in 2022. His research focuses on the reception and transmission of the Mahābhārata in the Kannada speaking parts of South India between the 10th and 18th centuries. He is currently working on a book-length study of Karṇapārya's Nemināthapurāṇa – a highly influential, but little studied, version of the epic – and the pivotal role it played in the creation of a Jain Mahābhārata tradition in Kannada. Outside of his work on epic literature, he is also interested in epigraphy, Sanskrit kāvya, and South Indian history.



Sloane Geddes
Conference Convenor

Sloane Geddes is a doctoral candidate in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. She works on Sanskrit poetry and is interested in poetics, gender, narrative, and intra-religious literary interactions. Her dissertation, “A Poem for a King: Poetics, Power, and Wonder in the Kapphiṇābhyudaya,” investigates the portrayal of a Buddhist arhat/king through narrative adaptation and wonder. Sloane is the 2023 recipient of the Congress Graduate Merit Award.

Andrea Farran
CSASA-ACESA
Treasurer and
Vice-President;
Congress
Programme Co-
Chair



Andrea Farran is Associate Professor in South Asian Religions at McGill University in the Faculty of Arts. She first studied South Asian civilization as an undergraduate at McGill in the Faculty of Religious Studies (B.A.); then in India (Banaras Hindu University, Adv. Diploma in Hindi) and the United States (M.A., University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Ph.D., Columbia University). She has taught in India (Antioch College and S.I.T.), and Singapore (National University of Singapore); her research languages are Hindi-Urdu and Sanskrit. She serves as Vice-President of CSASA-ACESA, the Canadian South Asian Studies Association / Association canadienne d'études sud-asiatiques.

May 27th

Panel 1—Evocations and Receptions of Desire in Premodern South Asia

May 27 @ 9:00 am–10:45 am; Kaneff Tower, room 519

Ajay Rao, University of Toronto (in-person)
Eroticism and Untouchability

Sloane Geddes, University of Toronto (virtual)
Love, Longing, and Commentary in Sanskrit Poetry

Aqsa Ijaz, University of Toronto (in-person)
Inhabiting the Ruins: The Poetics of Desire in the Longue
Durée of a Persian Poem's Afterlife in Hindustan

Kiran Sunar, University of British Columbia (in-person)
Ordinary Objects and Ordained Vernaculars of Desire: The
River, the Pot, and the Thigh in the Sohni Mahinwāl
Narrative Tradition

Panel 2—Caste and Conflict in South Asia

May 27 @ 11:15 am–12:30 pm; Kaneff Tower, room 519

Ashima Sood, Anant National University (virtual)
Caste and Religiosity in the Indian City

Shalini Mariyathas, University of Toronto (in-person)
Politics of Postwar development: Subaltern subjectivities'
struggles for liberation in postwar eastern Sri Lanka

Masihullah Hanif, York University (in-person)
A Critical Assessment of the Sources of Armed Conflict and
State Violence Among Communities in Afghanistan

Panel 3—Migration and South Asian Experiences

May 27 @ 1:30 pm–2:45 pm; Kaneff Tower, room 519

Zbyněk Mucha, Charles University (in-person)
Migration Imaginaries, Social Media and International Labour
Recruiters: The Case of Bangladesh

Josephine Francis Xavier, York University (in-person)
Indian Immigrant, First-time Parents' Voices on Fathering and
Fatherhood in the Perinatal Period: A Straussian Grounded
Theory Approach

Attia Khan, York University (in-person)
The Diasporic Experiences of Immigrant Pakistani Youths at the
Intersection of Overlapping Identities and Mental Health

Panel 4—South Asian Cattle, Dairy, and the Politics of Social Purification

May 27 @ 3:15 pm–5:00 pm; Kaneff Tower, room 519

Moderator: Rachel Berger, Concordia University (in-person)

Ridhima Sharma, University of Toronto (in-person)
Gaai per Charcha: Caste, Gender and Labour in a Cow-Shelter

Koyna Tomar, University of Pennsylvania (virtual)
Purifying Empire: Military Experiments with Milk in Colonial
South Asia

Sanchia deSouza, University of Toronto (in-person)
The Impure *Gavli*: Cattle, Caste, and Labour around Colonial
Bombay

May 28th

Panel 5—From the Post-Colonial to Post-Covid

May 28 @ 9:00 am–10:45 am; Kaneff Tower, room 519

Bill Mak, University of Hong Kong (virtual)

Hindu Cemetery in Hong Kong—An Unusual History and its Post-Colonial Legacy

Arafaat Valiani, University of Oregon (in-person)

Critical Genetic Histories of Postcolonial India

Catherine Larouche, Université Laval (in-person)

Keeping Religion in the Backstage: Christian Associations and Covid-19 Relief in Delhi

Luz Vazquez, York University (in-person)

Nasteho Hasan, York University (in-person)

Asian Canadian Exclusionary Experiences in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Centering the Voices of Youth Through Arts-Based Methodologies

Panel 6—Scripts, Print, and North Indian Literary Cultures

May 28 @ 11:15 am–12:30 pm; Kaneff Tower, room 519

Shobna Nijhawan, York University (in-person)

Visualizing Literary Worldliness in the Hindi Print Sphere of the Early 20th Century: A Case Study of Ganga Pustak Mala and Sudha

Hamad Abdullah Nazar, University of British Columbia (in-person)

The *Ishq* of Baba Bulleh Shah and the Pre-Colonial Place of Punjabi

Anne Muphy, University of British Columbia (virtual)

Tohid Ahmad Chattha, Government College University Faisalabad (virtual)

New Verses and the Interplay of Scripts: Waris Shah's Sufi Narrative *Hir* in the Textual Evidence

Panel 7—Business Meeting CSASA-ACESA

1:00 pm–1:45 pm; Kaneff Tower, room 519

Convenors: Julie Vig and Andrea Farran

Format: Hybrid

All CSASA-ACESA members are warmly encouraged to attend!

Panel 8—Reciprocity and Prestations

May 28 @ 2:15 pm–3:30 pm; Kaneff Tower, room 519

Liwen Liu, University of Toronto (in-person)

Grace and Divine Agency—The Apologetics of Violence in Tantric Shaivism

Andrea Farran, McGill University (in-person)

Sharing sweetness in Montreal Sikh communities

Julie Vig, York University (in-person)

Gifting practices in gurbilās literature: bheṭ, prasād, and dāna

Panel 9—Reimagining Social Justice: South Asian Literature of Resistance

May 28 @ 4:00 pm–5:15 pm; Kaneff Tower, room 519

Asma Sayed, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (in-person)

The Role of South Asian Activist Art in Advancing Climate Justice

Kritish Rajbhandari, Reed College (in-person)

Little Magazines and Nepalbhasa Language Resistance

Pushpa Raj Acharya, Toronto Metropolitan University (in-person)

Resistance in the Works of Nepali Canadian Women Writers

May 29th

Panel 10—Subjectivities and Narrative

May 29 @ 9:00 am–10:15 am; Accolade West, room 106

Irfana Majumdar, York University (virtual)
Warlords: Power and Agency in a Solo Performance

Nabila Huq, Queen's University (in-person)
“Are you From...?": Autoethnography of a Bangladeshi-Canadian

Rebecca Peters, Florida State University (in-person)
Women Filming Bollywood: How Directors Actively De-Gender Film Sets

Panel 11—Esoteric Epics and Narrative Texts

May 29 @ 10:45 am–12:00 pm; Accolade West, room 106

Timothy Lorndale, University of Toronto (in-person)
Notes on the place of Karṇapārya's Nemināthapurāṇa in the Jaina Mahābhārata Tradition

Mahnour Lone, University of British Columbia (in-person)
The Meaning and Experience of Beauty in Two Persianate Texts

Sushil Patel, McGill University (in-person)
Locating Commentaries in Esoteric Narratives: The “Inner” Telling of an “Outer” Rāmāyaṇa

Panel 12—Transgender and Queer Perspectives

May 29 @ 12:30 pm–1:45 pm; Accolade West, room 106

Uzma Zafar, University of Virginia (virtual)
Legal Documentation and its Others: The Fragmented Authenticity of Transgender Bodies

Lovepreet Kaur, York University (virtual)
Moving beyond Taboos and Shame: Transforming Family Law Narratives around LGBTQ+ Rights in India

Aditya N. Bhattacharjee, University of Pennsylvania (virtual)
From Anxious Adolescent to Ganesh Guru: The Polyontological Properties of Queer, Thai Religion

Roundtable 1—Beginning with Us: Teaching about Caste in Decolonial Classrooms

May 29 @ 2:15 pm–3:15 pm; Accolade West, room 106

Convenors: Dia Da Costa, University of Alberta (virtual)
Shaista Aziz Patel, University of California, San Diego (virtual)

Roundtable 2—The South Asian Studies Classroom: Pedagogical, Social, and Academic Responsibilities

May 29 @ 3:45 pm–5:30 pm; Accolade West, room 106

Convenors: Shobna Nijhawan, York University
Format: Hybrid
Participants: Shobna Nijhawan (York University), Jay Ramasubramanyam (York University), Sheema Khawar (York University), Zahra Sabri (Institute of Business Administration)

Presenters



Ajay Rao
**University of Toronto,
Mississauga**

Ajay Rao is Associate Professor of Historical Studies and Vice Dean Graduate at the University of Toronto Mississauga. His research areas include Sanskrit intellectual history, Sanskrit literature, and religion in Southern India. His first book, *Re-figuring the Ramayana as Literature: A History of Reception in Premodern India* focused on traditional hermeneutics and the pre-colonial prehistory of the modern emergence of this epic as a foundational religious text. His current research focuses on representations of gender and sexuality in early Sanskrit prose poetry. He leads a collaborative research project on the “Age of Vedanta”.



Sloane Geddes
**University of Toronto,
Mississauga**

Sloane Geddes is a doctoral candidate in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto. She works on Sanskrit poetry and is interested in poetics, gender, narrative, and intra-religious literary interactions. Her dissertation, “A Poem for a King: Poetics, Power, and Wonder in the Kapphiṇābhyudaya,” investigates the portrayal of a Buddhist arhat/king through narrative adaptation and wonder. Sloane is the 2023 recipient of the Congress Graduate Merit Award.



Aqsa Ijaz
**University of Toronto,
Mississauga**

Aqsa Ijaz specialises in classical Persian poetry and studies its reception in mediaeval and early modern North India. Born and raised in Lahore, Pakistan – Aqsa is trained in Indian classical music and specialises in the vocal forms of thumri and ghazal. As a scholar of Persian, Urdu, and Punjabi, Aqsa’s doctoral research focuses on the reception of the 12th century Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi and examines the formative role of Nizami’s poetry in shaping the language of love in premodern North India. Besides her scholarly work, Aqsa is an essayist and a translator and writes for various international publications such as *The World Literature Today*, *The Herald*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Aqsa is committed to sharing academic research in the field of South Asian Humanities with audiences across the globe for which she serves on the editorial board of *The Marginalia Review of Books* in Los Angeles. Currently, she teaches Urdu at the Department of Language Studies and is co-manager of *The Global Past Research Initiative* at the University of Toronto Mississauga.



Kiran Sunar
**University of British
Columbia**

Kiran K. Sunar is a limited-term Assistant Professor in the Department of Language Studies and the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Toronto-Mississauga. Their research focuses on literary narratives and performance traditions from early modern to contemporary cross-border Punjab and its diasporas. Their PhD project entitled “Situating Sohni: Regional Ecologies of Gender and Sexuality in Punjabi Narrative Traditions” traces the transformations of narrative and performance within the Sohni Mahīnwāl story tradition.



Ashima Sood
Anant National
University



Masihullah Hanif
York University

Masihullah Hanif is an MA student in Political Science, with a focus on international relations and comparative politics at York University. He obtained his honours Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto Mississauga, majoring in Political Science and History. His research focuses on governance and issues of security and human rights in Afghanistan. He also focuses on the regional geopolitics of Pakistan and China. His major research thesis is looking at Afghanistan's regional neighbors and their roles in fostering stability and instability in Afghanistan over the last two decades.



Zbyněk Mucha
Charles University

Zbyněk Mucha is a doctoral student in History and Asian Studies at the Institute of Asian Studies, Charles University in Prague and a research award recipient at the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies, University of Alberta. His research focuses on the role of native brokers in facilitating student and labour migration from Bangladesh to Central Europe and historical labour mobility in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. His dissertation combines historical research, anthropological methods and a critical reflection on policy-making. Zbyněk holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in Indian Philology, specializing in Bengali language and literature.

Shalini Mariyathas
University of Toronto

Shalini Mariyathas is a doctoral candidate at Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto. Her PhD research is focused on postwar development in eastern Sri Lanka in which, through ethnographic fieldwork, she investigates the processes that give form to the rationalities of development, and the tensions and struggles resulted when the development interacts with existing social and political relations in eastern Sri Lanka. She mainly focuses on racial political economy and contestations in her work. Shalini has a Master's degree in urban planning from Ball State University, USA and a B.Sc (Hons) degree in planning from University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.



Josephine Francis Xavier
York University

Josephine Francis Xavier is a nursing scholar and researcher with expertise in maternal and child health, lactation promotion, fatherhood, and nursing education. She is currently undertaking her Doctorate in Nursing at York University, Canada, and has featured her work in nursing publications and newsletters. She has presented her research to audiences at national and international gatherings, notably the Gulf Corporation Council Nursing Conference, South Asian Mental Health Network, and the International Infant Feeding and Nutrition Conference. Her research interests include exploring the impact of COVID-19 on fathers' mental health, social support for first-time fathers, South Asian parents' experience, and immigrant parents' experiences using grounded theory and intersectional approaches.



Attia Khan
York University

Dr. Attia Khan is a Postdoctoral Visitor at the Office of the Women's Health Research in Mental Health, Faculty of Health, York University. Dr. Khan has a PhD in Health Policy and Equity and is also an internationally trained medical doctor. She teaches as a contract faculty at the University of Toronto and York University. She also completed a Postdoctoral fellowship at Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Dr. Khan engages in both community-based research and clinical research focusing on mental health of immigrants, the health of young adults with developmental disabilities, quality of life of people living with HIV, racialized youths' mental health and identity, and maternal healthcare.

Rachel Berger
Concordia University

Rachel Berger is Associate Professor of Modern South Asian History at Concordia University. She is currently at work on two food-related history projects: one on the rise of new food technologies, and their attendant cultural, political and economic valences in early 20th century India, and a second on South Asian diasporic foodways in Quebec.

Ridhima Sharma
University of Toronto

Ridhima Sharma is a PhD student at the Department for the Study of Religion at University of Toronto. Her research is at the intersection of Hindu nationalism, labour, caste and animals, and she is more broadly located within the field of anthropology of religion. She is also an amateur/ aspiring documentary filmmaker and her last film, *Dil Tuta Aashiq/ The Heartbroken Lover* won the Gold Award from the Public Service Broadcasting Trust in New Delhi.



Koyna Tomar
University of
Pennsylvania

Koyna Tomar is a PhD candidate at the department of History and Sociology of Science, University of Pennsylvania. Her dissertation project, tentatively titled, “Dairy Democracy: Food and Technopolitics in Modern South Asia”, is a social and environmental history of dairy development in colonial and postcolonial South Asia.

Sanchia deSouza
University of Toronto

Sanchia deSouza recently defended her PhD dissertation in the Department of History at the University of Toronto. Her doctoral research project was a social and environmental history of urban milk in Western India, focusing on Bombay in the 20th century. She has previously worked on archiving and oral history projects and as a newspaper columnist discussing history through archival sources.

Bill M. Mak
University of Hong
Kong

Dr. Bill M. Mak completed his linguistic training at McGill University (B.A. Hons.) in 1996, specialising in Sanskrit and East Asian languages. His research interests include history of science in Asia, historical Sino-Indian exchange, and Buddhist philology. After he received his Ph.D. from the Department of Oriental Languages, Peking University in 2010 and completed his second doctoral program in Indology at Kyoto University in 2013, Mak was appointed Associate Professor at the same university. He is author of over 30 academic articles in peer-reviewed journals and co-editor of *Overlapping Cosmologies in Asia*, published by Brill in 2022. He is currently Fellow of the Jao Tsung-I Petite-École of the University of Hong Kong, Research Associate of the Needham Research Institute, and Director of Chinese Research Center, ISF Academy.

Arafaat Valiani
University of Oregon

Dr. Arafaat A. Valiani is a medical sociologist and historian of science and genetics in South Asia. His current intellectual interests focus on questions of decolonization regarding biomedicine, specifically history of genetics, difference and precision medicine, especially among South Asians and other racialized peoples. His teaching and scholarship contribute to transdisciplinary debates about difference, social justice and biomedicine; history of science and genetics; gender and South Asian Studies. He is founder and principal investigator of the Precision Health Equity Project and by co-producing these forms of knowledge sharing strives to productively impact understandings of medical history, Postcolonial Science Studies and health equity for racialized communities.



Catherine Larouche
Université Laval

Catherine Larouche is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Université Laval, Quebec. Her research focuses on religion, philanthropy, humanitarian aid and the politics of welfare in India. She has conducted her main ethnographic research on Islamic philanthropic associations in India, analyzing how being part of a religious minority influences their discourses and practices. Her current research focuses on the mobilization of Christian associations during the COVID-19 pandemic in India, as part of a larger research project on the organization of care in times of crisis and the involvement of different religious minority groups and organizations in emergency aid provision.



Luz Maria Vazquez
York University

Luz Maria Vazquez, PhD, is contract faculty at the Department of Social Science and at the Department of Human Rights and Equity Studies at York University. She is also a research associate at the Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health in the Faculty of Health at York University. During the last years she has conducted research on three Research Programs: Disability, Gender and Migration; Immigrant Youth Identities; and Gender-based Violence. She is currently conducting research on the SSHRC IG project that explores the experiences of Asian-Canadian youth in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic using an arts-based methodologies.



Nasteho Hasan
York University

Nasteho Hasan BSc, is a second year Master's Thesis student in the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, York University. She completed a BSc in Psychology from the University of Toronto and a BScN from Trent University. Nasteho is currently working as a Public Health Nurse in Toronto, focusing on health promotion among school age children and youth. She is currently supporting the SSHRC project "Canadian exclusionary experiences in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic: Centering the voices of the youth through arts-based methodologies" which studies the experiences of Asian Canadian Youth during the COVID-19 pandemic using an arts-based methodology.



Shobna Nijhawan
York University

Shobna Nijhawan is Associate Professor of Hindi at York University (Toronto). She is the author of *Women and Girls in the Hindi Public Sphere. Periodical Literature in Colonial North India* (OUP 2012), *Hindi Publishing in Colonial Lucknow. Gender, Genre and Visuality in the Creation of a Literary 'Canon'* (OUP 2018), editor of *Nationalism in the Vernacular* (Permanent Black 2010) and co-editor of *Literary Sentiments in the Vernacular. Gender and Genre in Modern South Asia* (Routledge 2022). She has published a variety of articles on gender, language and history in late-colonial India as well as on teaching (heritage) language, literature and culture.



**Hamad Abdullah
Nazar**
**University of British
Columbia**

Hamad is a recent graduate from History department at UBC and his MA thesis focused on Punjabi oral tradition of Vār. He is interested in the early modern literary and cultural histories of North India with a special focus on Punjab/Punjabi.



Anne Murphy
**University of British
Columbia**

Anne Murphy (Ph.D. Columbia) teaches in the Department of History at the University of British Columbia. She is a cultural historian whose work focuses on the Punjab region of India and Pakistan, with interests in language and literary cultures, religious community formations in the early modern and modern periods, oral history, commemoration, historiography, and material culture studies. Current research concerns modern Punjabi literature in the Indian and Pakistani Punjabs, and the early modern history of Punjabi's emergence as a literary language. Her book-length translation of the short stories of Punjabi-language writer Zubair Ahmed, *Grieving for Pigeons: Twelve Stories of Lahore* (Athabasca University Press) was published in 2022. In spring/summer 2023 she is releasing the results of the "Punjabi in BC" Oral History research project. She is co-primary investigator with Dr. Suraj Yengde (Oxford) of the "Caste in Canada" oral history project, which will be released in October 2023.



Tohid Ahmad
**Government College
University Faisalabad**

Dr. Tohid Ahmad recently completed his Ph.D. from the Department of History, University of Punjab on the revolutionary party, Kirti Kissan Party. He is the founder of Kuknas organization which promotes the mother language Punjabi and editor of Kuknas magazine which publishes translated literature of various languages into Punjabi for Punjabi readers. He is the chief organizer of the first-ever Punjabi literary festival conducted annually in Lyallpur (Faisalabad, Pakistan), to promote the Punjabi language and literature in Pakistan. He is General Secretary of the Lyallpur Young Historians Club (LYHC) which is creating a digital archive of the history of Punjab in Punjabi language to create awareness of Punjabi in Pakistan and beyond by inviting scholars, researchers, and social scientists from around the world to share their research in Punjabi through online talks. He currently teaches history of Punjab and revolutionary movements at Government College University, Faisalabad. Recent presentations include his work on Hir at the 136th Annual History Meeting 2023 at the AHA.



Liwen Liu
University of Toronto

Liwen Liu is a PhD candidate in the field of South Asian Religions at the University of Toronto. Her research interests include ritual studies, Sanskrit intellectual history, and Tantric studies. Her dissertation examines the sacrificial violence in Hindu traditions by analyzing ritual theories and ritual texts composed in medieval India. Reflecting on the relationship between doctrine and practice, she investigates how the ritual of killing is constructed on the one hand, and how sacrificial violence is doctrinalized and conceptualized in Sanskrit scriptures.



Andrea Farran
McGill University

Andrea Farran is Associate Professor in South Asian Religions and an Associate Member in the Department of History and Classical Studies at McGill University. Since 2019, Andrea serves as the Vice-President and treasurer of CSASA-ACESA (Canadian South Asian Studies Association-Association canadienne d'études sud-asiatiques) and is the Academic Director of the SAS minor program at McGill University and student advisor for the SAS minor. Her current SSHRC IDG funded research, "Imperial Infrastructure and Himalayan Pilgrimage in India's 'Land of Gods' (1808-2013)," focuses on religious travel and the history of cartography in late colonial India.



Julie Vig
York University

Julie Vig is Assistant Professor of Humanities, Religious Studies, and South Asian Cultures at York University. Her research focuses on premodern Sikh and Punjabi cultural production and how it relates to wider cultural worlds and networks of premodern North India (c.1500-1850). Her particular focus is on gurbilās literature and its interactions with broader Brajbhasha literature in the early modern period. She also has secondary research interests in the reception of early modern Sikh texts in the colonial period and women, gender, and sexuality within the Sikh tradition.



Asma Sayed
Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Dr. Asma Sayed is the Canada Research Chair in South Asian Literary and Cultural Studies in the Department of English, and interim Associate Vice President for Anti-Racism, at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on Indian Ocean Studies, Postcolonial Studies, and South Asian diaspora in Canada. She is currently the past President of CAPS: the Canadian Association of Postcolonial Studies (formerly CACLALS) after serving as its President for 3 years (2019-22). Her current research projects examine the contributions of South Asian writers and filmmakers in Canada to the discourse of social justice. Her publications include five books and numerous articles in academic journals, anthologies, and periodicals.



Kritish Rajbhandari
Reed College

Kritish Rajbhandari is Assistant Professor of English and Humanities at Reed College, Portland, Oregon, USA. His research interests lie at the intersection of South Asian and African literature, Indian Ocean cultures, postcolonial theory, and critical ocean studies. His publications have appeared or are forthcoming in *Research in African Literatures*, *Comparative Literature*, *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, and *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. He is currently working on a book project examining contemporary narratives of cross-cultural encounter, migration, and exchange in the Indian Ocean. He has translated poems of Newar poets Durgalal Shrestha and Purna Vaidya to English. His translation of Shrestha's seminal collection of children's poetry *Chiniyāmah Kisichā* was published by Safu publications, Kathmandu in 2023.



Pushpa Raj Acharya
Kwantlen Polytechnic
University

Dr. Pushpa Raj Acharya is a postdoctoral fellow working with the Canada Research Chair in South Asian Literary and Cultural Studies at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. He holds a PhD in Comparative Literature and South Asian Studies from the University of Toronto. His research focuses on the South Asian literature, Global Anglophone literature, Indian Ocean Studies, and African literature.



Irfana Majumdar
York University

Irfana Majumdar is a director, performer, and filmmaker specializing in devised and physical theatre, cross-cultural work, and the decolonization of Theatre and Performance Studies. She studied theatre at the University of Chicago and has also trained in Hindustani music, Corporeal Mime, Suzuki and Viewpoints, Clowning, and body work. She has made three documentaries. Her debut feature film, *Shankar's Fairies* (2021), was selected and awarded at many film festivals around the world. She is the founding artistic director of the NIRMAN Theatre and Film Studio in Varanasi, India. Among other projects, she is creating a forest of 10,000 trees on the banks of the river Ganga.



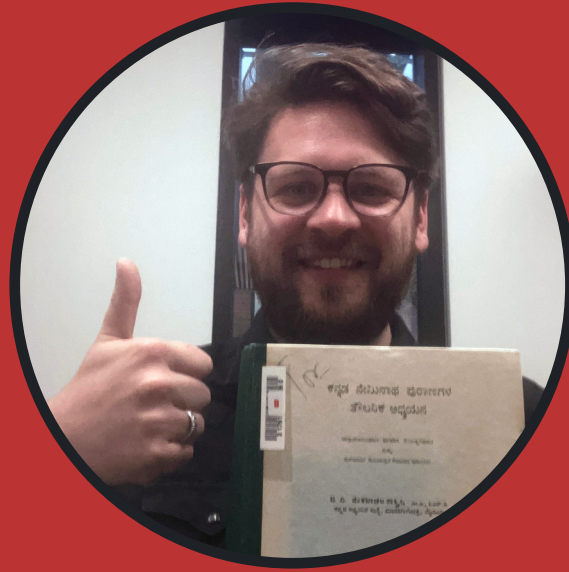
Nabila Huq
Queen's University

Nabila Huq is a first generation immigrant and a PhD student in the programme of Cultural Studies at Queen's University in Canada. She is an aspiring writer. She is interested in exploring the relation and interactions between Indigenous peoples and people of colour in Canada. She is keen on understanding multi positionalities of both individuals and peoples within the given border of a state and if and/or how these different positionalities are conflicting or complimentary to one another. She enjoys having a strong cup of black tea mixed with the right amount milk and with a bite of Bannock.



Rebecca Peters
Florida State
University

Ms. Rebecca Peters is a PhD candidate in the Religion Department at Florida State University. Her work focuses on women directors in Bollywood and the resulting representation on their films. She uses an interdisciplinary approach and has published in the areas of film studies, gender studies, and religion in South Asia. In 2019, Ms. Peters was awarded the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award to conduct fieldwork in India. She has also helped organize the South Asian Media and Cultural Studies Conference at FSU since 2017. Prior to her PhD, Ms. Peters held a visiting faculty position in Humanities at FSU.



Timothy Lorndale
University of Toronto,
Mississauga

Timothy Lorndale is the Bhagavan Shitalnath Postdoctoral Fellow in Jain Studies at the University of Toronto, Mississauga. He received his PhD in South Asian Regional Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in 2022. His research focuses on the reception and transmission of the Mahābhārata in the Kannada speaking parts of South India between the 10th and 18th centuries. He is currently working on a book-length study of Karnapārya's Nemināthapurāṇa – a highly influential, but little studied, version of the epic – and the pivotal role it played in the creation of a Jain Mahābhārata tradition in Kannada. Outside of his work on epic literature, he is also interested in epigraphy, Sanskrit kāvya, and South Indian history.



Mahnoor Lone
University of British
Columbia

I am pursuing an M.A. in Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. My current research project attempts to critically study the texts and people involved in the British colonial state's encounter with Persianate writing practices at Fort William College in early nineteenth century India. My broader interests also include pre-colonial Persian and Urdu poetry and their relationship to expressions of Islamic devotion.



Sushil Patel
McGill University

I am a second year PhD student at the School of Religious Studies at McGill University. My research interests cover the intersection between Sanskrit intellectual traditions, vernacular philosophy, and scholasticism. My doctoral research broadly explores the ideals of intellectual mastery in the late medieval and early modern period, while focusing on the Swaminarayana tradition and its intellectual moorings through the discourses delivered by its founder Sahajanand Swami in 19th century Gujarat.

Uzma Zafar
University of Virginia

I am a medical anthropologist and lawyer who studies public health initiatives for minoritized citizens. Currently, I am working on the legal and medical bureaucracy assembled around the citizenship category of 'transgender' and 'khwaja sira' in Pakistan. I am particularly interested in Islamic understandings of nature, the body, and related psychiatric and surgical practices. My work uses interdisciplinary methods to attend to the intersections of gender, race, sexuality and class at play in relation to human rights development and public health strategies in postcolonial South Asia.



Lovepreet Kaur
York University

Lovepreet Kaur is a visiting fellow at the Nathanson Centre, Osgoode Hall Law School, and a visiting scholar at the Centre for Feminist Research (CFR), York University, Canada. She holds a B.A. LL.B. (Hons) degree from Panjab University, Chandigarh and an LL.M in Criminal Law from Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab, where she was a topper and University Gold Medalist, awarded with 4 Gold Medals. Her Ph.D. thesis is on the “Protection of Rights of LGBT: A Comparative Study of India and Canada”. Her areas of expertise include Law, Human Rights, Queer Studies, LGBT rights, gender and sexuality studies.



Aditya N. Bhattacharjee
University of Pennsylvania

Aditya Bhattacharjee is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Titled, ‘Global Ganesh: Mapping a Divine Diaspora,’ his dissertation centers on the religious experiences of devotees of the Hindu god Ganesha in the metropolitan areas of Bangkok, Mumbai, and New York. More recently, his research has also explored intersections between queerness, Buddhism and the myriad Hindu-influenced traditions that are practiced in contemporary Thailand. He received the inaugural Congress Graduate Merit Award from the Canadian South Asian Studies Association in 2022.



Dia Da Costa
University of Alberta

Dia Da Costa is a Professor of Social Justice and International Studies in Education at the University of Alberta. Her current work is focused on the relationship of caste, multiple colonialisms and the reproduction of Brahminical domination within transnational feminism, higher education and development.



Shaista Aziz Patel
University of California, San Diego

Shaista Aziz Patel works as an Assistant Professor of Critical Muslim Studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies at UCSD. Her scholarly and all other political investments are in several questions that draw upon theories in critical Muslim, Indigenous (to North America and South Asia), Black, Dalit, anti-caste, and transnational feminist studies.



Sheema Khawar
York University

Sheema Khawar is a Doctoral candidate in Politics with a focus on decolonial feminist thought, Critical Surveillance Studies, and South Asian studies. Previously on the Fulbright grant, she completed her MA in Gender Studies from San Diego State University. Her MA thesis explored feminist thought and organizing around the crisis of public space access in urban Pakistan. Her current dissertation project examines the impact of the War on Terror on Pakistani university campuses. She seeks to examine how securitization measures impact marginalized ethnic and gendered communities in Karachi. Sheema can be reached at sheemakh@yorku.ca



Zahra Sabri
Institute of Business Administration

Zahra Sabri is Lecturer in Indo-Islamic History and Urdu Literature at the Department of Social Sciences and Liberal Arts at the IBA, Karachi. She received her MA degree from the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University in the City of New York. She has taught History and Urdu Literature at McGill University, Canada, the Aga Khan University, Pakistan, and the University of Karachi's Pakistan Study Centre. Her research focuses on Mughal History and the influence of the Persianate on Indo-Muslim languages, cultures, and traditions of learning, as well as on politics of identity centred around Urdu in South Asia. Her most recent academic publication is an article on the Mughal poet Mir Taqi Mir's Persian hagiographical/historiographical writing (*The Medieval History Journal*, 2015). She is the curator of *Koozah* -- an anthology of Urdu short stories by new and little-known Pakistani writers (Oxford University Press, 2015). She is a literary translator, and has translated folk and classical poetry from almost a dozen Pakistani languages for eleven seasons of the popular music programme Coke Studio, Pakistan. She has also worked as a journalist for the *Herald* magazine (Dawn), winning the Zubeida Mustafa Award for Journalistic Excellence (2013). She has contributed articles to Pakistan's national press on diverse political and educational issues.

Jay Ramasubramanyam
York University

Dr. Jay Ramasubramanyam is Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Science (York University). Teaching in the area of refugee and forced migration studies, Ramasubramanyam realizes the importance "to strike a balance between ensuring people understand the ideological shift in India versus ensuring that students don't demonize India entirely as there are progressive voices that are also important to consider." His presentation is titled "Thou shall not talk about the Citizenship Amendment Act: The challenges with teaching 'subcontinental perspectives' on migration." (jayram@yorku.ca)