

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FIFTH BIENNIAL

**GRADUATE STUDENT  
CONFERENCE ON SOUTH  
ASIAN RELIGIONS**

October 3-4, 2019

OCTOBER 3 | UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA  
OCTOBER 4 | UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ST. GEORGE



Study of Religion  
**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**



8:30-9:30

## **Meet at 170 St. George, travel to UTM**

9:30-10:00

## **BREAKFAST**

10:00-10:05

## **OPENING REMARKS**

10:05-11:15

## **EARLY CAREER PANEL**

*Respondent: Dr. Luther Obrock, University of Toronto*

*Chair: Nabeel Jafri, University of Toronto*

-Kiran Singh (Toronto, Undergraduate) "Colonizing India: The Impact of Colonization on Hindus and Muslims"

-Aleesha Noreen (Toronto, Undergraduate) "The Historical Use of Indic Forms by Muslims for the Formation of Identity and the Conveyance of Authority"

-Ambika Sharma (Toronto, Undergraduate) "India's National Pastime: A Look at Visual Culture and the Projection of Religious Nationalism in India."

-Mayadevi Murthy (Toronto, Undergraduate) "Tamil Identity Through Tamil Devotion in Thiruvilayadal"

-Amanda Ng (Toronto, Undergraduate) "The Complicity, Comfort, and Coerciveness of Karma for Thai Buddhist Women"

11:20-1:15

## **COLONIAL GENRES OF RELIGION**

*Respondent : Dr. Tony Stewart, Vanderbilt University*

*Chair: Janani Comar, University of Toronto*

-Sujata Chaudhary (McGill, PhD) "Private versus Public Temples in India: The complexities of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act of 1863"

-Rohit Dutta Roy (Cambridge, PhD) "Reconciling the Theologian and the Historian through the works of Sivanath Sastri: Analyzing the model of Ecclesiastical Histories in Early Twentieth Century India"

-Lori Noel (Concordia, MA) "Exhibiting the Sacred: The Museum and Temple Identities of Religious Objects"

-Sahaj Patel (Vanderbilt, PhD) "Refiguring Mantra: Meaning Making in the Early Swaminarayan Community"

# GCSAR 2019

1:15–2:15

## LUNCH

2:15–3:45

## EARLY MODERN TEXTS

*Respondent: Dr. Ajay Rao, University of Toronto*

*Chair: Annie Heckman, University of Toronto*

-Rohini Shukla (Columbia, PhD) "When Krishna Writes Janī's Songs: Gendered Authorship in Early Modern Maharashtra"

-Anusha Rao (Toronto, PhD) "Madhva's Draupadī: Deification and The Question of Qualification in Madhva's Theology"

-Anna Lee White (McGill, PhD) "Rāmānand's Sanskrit Texts and Debates on Social Reform"

3:45–5:15

## ANTHROPOLOGY OF SOUTH ASIAN RELIGIONS

*Respondent: Dr. Frank Korom, Boston University*

*Chair: Stephanie Duclos-King, University of Toronto*

-Kalpesh Bhatt (Toronto, PhD) "Theistic Hope in Everyday Precarity: Secular Apprehensions in the BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu Tradition"

-Helena Reddington (McGill, PhD) "Eighteenth Century Satire for a Twenty-First Century Audience: The Tuḷḷal Performance Tradition in Contemporary Kerala"

-Nimisha Thakur (Syracuse, PhD) "River Song: Intersections of Caste, Gender, Indigeneity and Relational Citizenship in the Brahmaputra River Valley, Assam"

5:15–6:00

## TRAVEL to Dinner

6:00

## DINNER

*"The Host," 33 City Centre Dr, Mississauga, ON*

8:00

## TRAVEL to Downtown Toronto

# GCSAR 2019

**DAY 2**  
**FRIDAY, OCT 4**

*University of Toronto St. George*  
*Jackman Humanities Building, 317-318*

8:30-9:00

## **BREAKFAST**

9:05-10:55

## **PRE-MODERN TEXTS AND THEIR AFTERLIVES**

*Respondent: Dr. Srilata Raman, University of Toronto*

*Chair: Jesse Pruitt, University of Toronto*

-Heleen De Jonckheere (Ghent, PhD) "Laugh and Learn: Humor at the center of a Jain didactic narrative"

-Mirela Stosic (Toronto, PhD) "Caste Representations of Alvars"

-Jason Smith (Harvard, ThD) "Model Readers: Ethics, Audience, and the Tirukkural"

-David Monteserin Narayana (Yale, MA) "Of pots and skies: on the study of conceptual metaphors in Indian thought"

11:00-11:15

## **COFFEE BREAK**

11:15-1:05

## **SIKHI: BODY, TEXT, AND MEMORY**

*Respondent: Dr. Julie Vig, University of Toronto*

*Chair: Jonathan Peterson, University of Toronto*

-Brittany Puller (Michigan, PhD) "Reimagining the 'Archive:' State History as Sikh History"

-Sukhbinder Singh Sandhu (Leeds, MA) "The Digital Guru: How does Digitised Gurbani Affect the Religious Practices of Sikhs?"

-Damanjit Singh Gill (UPenn, MA) "Paintra: The Mobilization of Bodies through Gatka in the Late Nineteenth Century"

-Manvinder Gill (McMaster, MA) "For the Culture: Culture, Masculinity, and the intergenerational persistence of problem drinking among Sikh-Canadians"

# GCSAR 2019

1:05–2:05

## LUNCH

2:05–3:35

## NEW VOICES IN NEWAR STUDIES

*Respondent: Dr. Christoph Emmrich, University of Toronto*

*Chair: Krissy Rogahn, University of Toronto*

-Ian Turner (Toronto, PhD) "Facebook Farmers and Urban Entrepreneurs: Politics of the Sacred in the Place-Making and Place-Claiming of the Kathmandu Valley"

-Andrea Wollein (Toronto, PhD) "Provincializing Mesocosm: Buddhism in Bhaktapur"

-Austin Simoes-Gomes (Toronto, PhD) "Decentering the Shaman: An Exploration of the Role of the Audience in Newar Healing Rituals"

3:35–3:45

## COFFEE BREAK

3:45–5:15

## ENCOUNTERING RĀMA: THE PATH OF THE DIVINE

*Respondent: Dr. Arti Dhand, University of Toronto*

*Chair: Anusha Rao, University of Toronto*

-Tamara Cohen (Toronto, PhD) "Rāma's Virtue"

-Tarinee Awasthi (Cornell, PhD) "The Quest of (for) Rāma: Adhyatma-Rāmāyaṇa and the Rāmcaritmānas of Gosvāmī Tulsidās"

-Aditya Chaturvedi (Emory, PhD) "Path 'of/to' Rama : Mithila Rameśvaracarita and Tantra Caryā"

5:15–5:30

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

# GCSAR 2019

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

*Jackman Humanities Building, 318*

5:30–6:45

**DR. AYESHA IRANI**

*Assistant Professor, University of Massachusetts Boston*

### Making Religious History: Lessons from Bangladesh and Islamic Bengal

This presentation explores how Persianate historical writing and experiences with Sufi communities in Bangladesh invite reflection upon the manifold ways in which religious history is made and remade with the establishment of Islam in new communities. What roles do Sufis and their saintly dead play in reiterating or remaking history? Can poets renew prophecy? Can they “refresh the shari‘ah”? And what roles do translators play in renewing sacred history? What do their representations of the past tell us about religious people’s aspirations for their community? In exploring these questions, this lecture elucidates ways in which social actors marshal the memory of the past not only to make it relevant to the present, but to create what they consider to be a better future for self and community.

6:45–8:30

**DINNER**

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا الْفَضْلِ الْعَبَّاسِ يَا أَبَا الْجَوَادِ

## PLANNING COMMITTEE

Nabeel Jafri and Krissy Rogahn

## MODERATORS

Janani Comar, Stephanie Duclos-King, Annie Heckman, Jesse Pruitt,  
Jonathan Peterson, Anusha Rao

## SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Centre for South Asian Civilizations, UTM

Dean's Office, UTM

Department of Historical Studies, UTM

Asian Institute at the Munk School of Global Affairs

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Robert Ho Centre for Buddhist Studies

Institute of Islamic Studies

Department for the Study of Religion

## SPECIAL THANKS

Professor Srilata Raman, Professor Karen Ruffle, Professor Ajay Rao

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<https://religion.utoronto.ca/programs/graduate/gsa/conference-south-asian-religions/>