



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Public Policy and Global Affairs

Institute of Asian Research



# 2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT

## CENTRE FOR INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH

**CENTRE FOR INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH**  
Institute of Asian Research, School of Public Policy and Global Affairs

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## THE CENTRE

The Centre for India and South Asia Research (CISAR) promotes interdisciplinary research related to South Asia, disseminating knowledge through seminars, lectures, and conferences. The Centre seeks to create and promote institutional and scholar-to-scholar linkages between UBC and institutions in South Asia and beyond, and between UBC and South Asian communities in British Columbia. CISAR is part of the Institute of Asian Research within UBC's School of Public Policy & Global Affairs.





## CO-DIRECTORS' MESSAGE

It has been a busy year at CISAR in 2018-2019. As is visible in this report, CISAR has hosted an array of programs representing diverse research interests in South Asia, addressing music, text, history, development, and contemporary social issues in the region. Although much of our programming focuses on India, we were proud this year to host events about Pakistan and Nepal, and related to the South Asian Diaspora. We also drew broad connections across campus with our annual celebration of International Mother Language Day, with this year's keynote highlighting Indigenous languages. A new aspect of CISAR's annual program is the emphasis on graduate student research: student recipients of the CISAR travel awards were invited to present their research in a panel discussion, and the student recipient of the 2017 Nehru Humanitarian Award, Sameer Shah, presented a colloquium on his doctoral research. CISAR will continue this support for graduate students studying South Asia at UBC.

We are particularly excited about our ongoing work in building partnerships with other universities. For example, CISAR has been in conversations with Ambedkar University Delhi to develop a Go Global student mobility program, and UBC and Punjabi University Patiala initiated a special undergraduate research conference in February 2019 that enabled students from the two universities to work together. Closer to home, a Cascadia Engagement Fund Research Mobility Award from UBC's Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation, supported faculty and students from UBC and the University of Washington to meet in a workshop setting and to develop strategies for cross-border student mobility and research collaboration.

The coming year promises to be a busy one as well, with a special partnership with the Green College series, "Mehfil: Music, Text and Performance of South Asia" that will bring together performers and experts from the local community and South Asia to enrich our experience of South Asia here on campus. We will also collaborate with the new Interdisciplinary Histories Research Cluster at UBC, funded by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation, to bring a wide range of talks about and visitors from South Asia. We are particularly excited to welcome our colleagues at UBC Okanagan in the 2019-2020 event series through the Cluster. And, as always, we will continue to work with our community partners and work with the CISAR Research Associates to develop our programs.

Anne Murphy will continue as Director of CISAR in the coming year, until 30 June 2020. Sara Shneiderman's tenure as Co-Director ended on 1 July 2019, as she will be on study leave for part of the coming academic year to concentrate on research and writing related to her SSHRC Partnership Development Grant about post-earthquake reconstruction in Nepal. She will continue to stay involved on CISAR's Executive Committee.

We wish you well for the coming year and hope to see you at a CISAR event in the Winter session of 2019.

Anne Murphy  
Sara Shneiderman



## CO-DIRECTORS



Anne Murphy (Ph.D. Columbia) is Associate Professor in the Department of Asian Studies and will be Director of CISAR in 2019-20. Current research pursues two related lines of inquiry: modern Punjabi cultural production in the Indian and Pakistani Punjabs and the diaspora, and the early modern history of Punjabi's emergence as a literary language. She is the author of *The Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition* (OUP, 2012), and has published two edited volumes and numerous articles in *History and Theory*, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, *South Asian History and Culture*, *the Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, and other journals. Her translation of short stories by Lahore-based Punjabi-language author Zubair Ahmed will be published from Athabasca University Press in 2020.



Sara Shneiderman (Ph.D. Cornell) is Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology and the School of Public Policy & Global Affairs. She is the author of *Rituals of Ethnicity: Thangmi Identities Between Nepal and India* and co-editor of *Darjeeling Reconsidered: Histories, Politics, Environments*. She has also published widely on the themes of ethnicity, mobility, citizenship, and borders in the Himalayas and South Asia. Her current transdisciplinary research partnership funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) focuses on the social and political dimensions of post-earthquake reconstruction in Nepal. She is also Co-Coordinator of UBC's Himalaya Program.



## Executive Committee

Anne Murphy

*Co-Director, CISAR, 2017-19; Director, CISAR, 2019-20; Associate Professor, Department of Asian Studies*

Sara Shneiderman

*Co-Director, CISAR, 2017-19, ongoing CISAR Executive Committee member; Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology and the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs/Institute of Asian Research*

Nemkumar Banthia

*CISAR Executive Committee member; Professor and Distinguished University Scholar, Department of Civil Engineering*

Mandakranta Bose

*Professor Emerita; Former Director, CISAR*

Sebastian Prange

*CISAR Executive Committee Member; UBC Representative to Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute; Associate Professor, Department of History*

Adheesh Sathaye

*CISAR Executive Committee Member; Associate Professor, Department of Asian Studies*

Sunera Thobani

*CISAR Executive Committee Member; Associate Professor, Department of Asian Studies and Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice*



## Research Associates

Vidyut Aklujkar

*Independent Scholar*

Sanzida Habib

*Independent Scholar*

Vijaya Jammi

*Inter-disciplinary Researcher*

Raghavendra Rao K.V.

*Multidisciplinary Visual Artist; Artistic Director, South Asian Canadian Histories Association*

Douglas Ober

*Sessional Lecturer, Departments of History and Asian Studies, UBC*

Rina Pradhan

*Public Health Researcher*

Hannelore Roos

*Anthropologist; Postdoctoral Fellow at Simon Fraser University*

Habiba Zaman

*Professor, Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, Simon Fraser University*

## South Asia programs at UBC

There is a strong South Asian presence within the UBC student body, at approximately 9% in 2012. This reflects a demographic reality in Canada overall: speakers of South Asian languages comprise approximately 4.3% of the population of Canada, and 6% of the population of British Columbia. Research and teaching on South Asia is located in diverse Faculties and Departments across UBC: Arts; Applied Science; Forestry; Medicine and others. The Faculty of Arts holds the greatest concentration of expertise regarding South Asia and South Asian Canada. Notable among them is the Department of Asian Studies, which is the premiere department in Canada dedicated to the study of Asia, and is responsible for teaching a wide range of languages and their literatures, cultural history, and linguistics. Faculty with interests in South Asia are well represented in the Department, and more than 3700 students enrolled in South Asia-related content classes in the Department from 2013-2018. Punjabi Studies occupies a central place in the Department's South Asia program—reflecting the numerical dominance of Canadians of Punjabi heritage in BC and in Canada—and represents one of the largest and longest-standing Punjabi-language programs in the world, outside of South Asia: the Department offers a full four-year Punjabi language program. Hindi and Urdu also have a strong footing in the Department, as does Sanskrit. Persian—both with a focus on historical Indo-Persian cultural production, and that spoken in present-day Iran—is also a particular strength. Nepali and Tibetan are taught through special summer intensive, community-engaged language learning programs in collaboration with the UBC Himalaya Program, with Tibetan also offered year-round. Other Departments in the Faculty of Arts with strong South Asia faculty expertise include the Departments of History and Anthropology, as well as the new School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, within which CISAR is housed.



## Go Global: UBC students go to Indian Punjab



### IC-IMPACTS: India-Canada Centre for Innovative Multidisciplinary Partnerships to Accelerate Community Transformation and Sustainability

IC-IMPACTS is the first, and only, Canada-India Research Centre of Excellence, dedicated to the development of research collaborations between Canada and India. IC-IMPACTS began its journey in 2012 when Dr. Nemy Banthia was awarded federal funding to create a Canada-India Research Centre of Excellence.

Dr. Banthia who is serving as IC-IMPACTS Chief Executive Officer and Scientific Director, is a Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of British Columbia. He is also a Distinguished University Scholar and a Senior Canada Research Chair in Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Sustainability. Dr. Banthia believes that the most effective way of improving lives of global citizens is through nationally supported research collaboration in science and technology. Through his leadership, IC-IMPACTS has demonstrated that such collaborations bring about innovations that transform lives. Since its inauguration, IC-IMPACTS work has resulted in:

- 52 bilateral projects and 21 technology deployments
- 27 patents and invention disclosures
- 7 start-ups
- 970 publications and 950 Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) trained

Dr. Banthia invites universities, industry partners, and research institutes to explore future opportunities with IC-IMPACTS for Canada-India partnerships that improve the lives of people in Canada, India, and around the world. Follow IC-IMPACTS on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn for updates on calls for proposals and international collaboration opportunities!

### UBC-PUP Joint Undergraduate Research Forum, February 16 – 23, 2019

Over reading week 2019, 15 UBC students led by Dr. Anne Murphy, boarded a plane to India to take part in a week-long conference, coordinated by Go Global. There, they joined colleagues at Punjabi University Patiala to explore heritage and memory in the Punjabi landscape. Through the week, students and faculty worked collaboratively through lectures, site visits, and frequent debrief sessions to help unpack the complex history and contemporary life of the region. Students were invited to form research clusters with both UBC and PUP students represented in each group. At the end of the forum, students presented original research projects that they had spent the week developing.

Funding for this project was made possible via the newly created Global Innovation Grant (GIG), supported by the office of the Vice-Provost International, which allows faculty members to submit proposals for new and innovative programming. UBC is committed to supporting faculty members in the development and creation of student-focused international learning opportunities.

"I feel that being with them [PUP students] it is easier to communicate. It's something that we never could have done over email or WhatsApp."

- Karolina Lagercrantz - Year 4, Geography

"It's one thing to read about a culture, but another to explore it first-hand... I learned more from the sites I saw and the ways I interacted with the overall environment than from what a textbook can teach."

- Eric Mann – Year 4, Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies

"Seeing how they [PUP Students] approach and understand the discipline of history and research was so interesting...seeing how we all came up with ideas collectively has been an amazing experience. I'm beginning to understand the value of being able to experience history through other sources and it will definitely inform my future academics."

- Harsimran Sachdeva – Year 4, Honours Asian Language and Culture



## Connecting South Asian and Himalayan Research Communities Across Cascadia



In 2018-2019, CISAR received a grant from the Office of UBC's Vice President for Research & Innovation through the Cascadia Engagement Fund Research Mobility Award program to build collaboration between students and faculty at UBC and University of Washington on South Asian and Himalayan research. As a part of this project, an intensive 2-day workshop involving 33 faculty and graduate students from UBC and UW was held at UBC on November 2-3, 2018. This workshop provided opportunities for conversation, planning and exchange on multiple scales: from full-group plenaries to working-group level discussions to small breakout sessions and shared meals. The two thematic working groups were titled Health, Infrastructure and Social Transformation (HIST) and Early Modern Literary Cultures (EMLC) in the proposal. During the workshop, the HIST working group was structured organically into non-mutually-exclusive sub-groups focused on: 1) disaster, heritage and conflict; 2) health; and 3) diaspora communities across Cascadia. During the workshop, the EMLC group renamed itself Literary Cultures and Circulation (LLC) and concrete plans were made to facilitate ongoing exchange among faculty and students across the border through regular workshops. Each of these focus areas represent strong areas of research at UBC and/or UW, where collaboration and exchange can be deployed to maximum effect.

As a result of productive engagement throughout the workshop, participants from both universities discovered synergies among their varied research goals, which they are keen to explore through future collaboration. During the workshop's final session, participants explored the ways that UBC and UW can support each other with resources for learning South Asian languages, study and research abroad, and student exchange between the two universities.

## Forestry Field School



The complexities of managing conservation and forest resources affect millions of people around the world, disproportionately impacting some of the most vulnerable people in societies. Governance, management, policy, and livelihoods of forested areas can present conflicts with indigenous rights and biodiversity conservation. First-hand examination of these sorts of 'wicked problems' presents an opportunity for students to appreciate the challenges that other societies face.

The International Conservation and Forest Resources Management Field School (CONS 453), led by UBC faculty member Suzie Lavalée, provided an opportunity for students to study these issues in North and South India from 2013 to 2018, taking them from the peaks of the Himalayan foothills to the subtropical forests of the Cardamom Hills. Learning objectives focused on advanced scientific writing and oral presentation skills, as well as interviewing for data collection in the social sciences. Through hands-on workshops, interviews with local people, and discussions with government representatives, students developed their critical thinking and interviewing skills. Students also conducted a monitoring study of dry tropical forests in Northern India, one of the most endangered forest ecosystems globally, enabling them to do calculations of important measures like carbon sequestration and density of non-timber forest products.

CONS 453 is currently being revised for studies in Ecuador, starting in Summer of 2020.



## World Sanskrit Conference



Held once every three years, the World Sanskrit Conference (WSC) is the premier forum where professional Sanskrit scholars, students, and specialists meet to share new ideas, strengthen international networks, and promote the public appreciation of Sanskrit learning and culture. From 9-13 July 2018, the 17th WSC was held in Canada for the first time, hosted by the Department of Asian Studies at UBC.

During the WSC, more than 600 delegates from all over the world shared cutting-edge research on a range of topics related to Sanskrit and classical India, including literature, religion, philosophy, and culture. Two gala events, produced in partnership with the Indian Summer Festival, enhanced public appreciation of Sanskrit learning and culture: a major public lecture on yoga by the celebrated scholar and practitioner, James Mallinson, as well as a landmark performance at the Chan Centre by the group Nepathya, which performed Kutiyattam, an intricate 1,000-year-old form of Sanskrit dance theatre that continues to survive in the South Indian state of Kerala.

The 17th WSC was made possible through financial and in-kind support from SSHRC, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, International Buddhist Society, ICCR, CGI-Vancouver, UBC Faculty of Arts, the Centre for India and South Asia Research at UBC, All-India Sweets, Click-on Tours, SFU, Hari Sharma Foundation, and a wide range of other academic, local, and international partners, along with a dedicated and hard-working team of students and community volunteers. Further information, video footage, and the online Proceedings can be found at the conference website ([wsc.ubcsanskrit.ca](http://wsc.ubcsanskrit.ca)).

AUGUST -  
DECEMBER  
2018



SEP 18  
2018

## The Literary Anthology and Readership in Colonial India

Lecture

This lecture discussed the most reprinted book in the Marathi language, *Selections of the Marathi Poets*, first published in 1854 under the auspices of the Bombay Education Society. The work has been continuously in print since then, most recently reprinted in 2014. Within its colonial milieu, *Selections of the Marathi Poets* underwent significant transformations in its first three decades, as literati, educationalists, and the public sought out a standardized format for literary anthologies, a format that both departed from and retained the residual characteristics of a manuscript. The lecture compared some manuscripts from the 18th century to their printed versions in various editions. Dr. Kulkarni argued that it is in the cross-media comparison, between manuscript and book, that we can most closely identify the significance of *Selections of the Marathi Poets* for transformations of literary experience and practice. His reading of *Selections* reveals the way poetry is created as an object on the page, and the strong editorial hand that assembled, arranged, and presented poetic materials to the reader. By examining various printed editions of *Selections* as well as a few manuscript sources, this lecture traced the evolution of institutions, practices, and readership in colonial India.



Kedar A. Kulkarni is Assistant Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies at FLAME University, in Pune, India. His current research focuses on literary transitions between early modern and colonial India, from orally-recited poetry to playwright-centered drama.

Sept 27  
2018

## A Musical Welcome: CISAR Rings in the New Academic Year with the Virasat Foundation

Concert

With Dilshad Khan, Abhisek Lahiri, and Subrata Bhattacharya

This concert featured sarod, sarangi, and tabla with acclaimed musicians. The event was preceded by the CISAR Annual Reception at the Liu Institute for Global Issues.

Dilshad Khan is a renowned Sarangi player and belongs to the Sikar Gharana of music, which has given several stalwarts to Indian classical music. He is known today for his excellent command and mastery on this difficult instrument. Abhisek Lahiri is one of the youngest President Award Winning "A" Grade Sarod artist of All India Radio and National Television of India. His music is well-known for maturity, depth and perfection. Subrata Bhattacharya is an acclaimed professional tabla player in the North Indian classical tradition. He is known for his experimentation with and reinterpretation of Indian traditional music and culture.



OCT 11  
2018

## Annual Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture Dr Ambedkar's Legacy – Our Campaign to Outlaw Caste Discrimination

Annual  
Lecture

The third Annual Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture with Ms. Santosh Dass MBE focused on the campaign to outlaw caste discrimination in the UK. Dass discussed why a law on caste discrimination was necessary; shared evidence of caste-based discrimination in the UK; described what the campaign has involved at a domestic and UN level; shared what has worked and the opposition the campaign has faced; described the status of the law now; and identified take-away messages from the experience. The talk also addressed Dr Ambedkar's legacy through the Ambedkarite movement in the UK. This year's lecture was dedicated to Raju Kamble, Shital Anmol, and others who dedicated their lives to the creation of an inclusive world. Lectures were held at SFU, as well as at UBC, and Ms. Dass took part in multiple community events during her visit.

The Ambedkar Annual Lecture is a recurring event co-sponsored by CISAR and the Institute for Asian Research, Chetna Association of Canada, Dr. Hari Sharma Foundation, the Department of Asian Studies, the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhism and Contemporary Society (何鴻毅家族基金佛學與當代社會課程), and SFU Institute for the Humanities.



Ms. Santosh Dass MBE is a human rights and equality campaigner living in London. She is an ex-civil servant and held a number of senior roles at the Department of Health (DH) including leading on Better Regulation and Risk Management. Santosh is one of the leading figures in the campaign to outlaw caste-based discrimination in the UK. She has taken up this issue and that of the rising atrocities against Dalits in India at the United Nations. Santosh is the Chair of the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) and President of the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK. She is the co-founder of CasteWatch UK and the ACDA. In September 2014, Santosh put forward and pursued a proposal to the then Congress-led and then the BJP Government of Maharashtra (GOM) in India that they fund the purchase of the £3.1million London house where Dr B R Ambedkar lived in between 1921-22 and turn it into a memorial. This house was purchased by GOM in September 2015 and has been refurbished and opened to the public. Santosh is a member of the Ambedkar House London Memorial Advisory Committee. In 2007 Santosh was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for her services to Better Regulation at DH.



NOV 1  
2018

Lecture

## More-Than-Human Democracy: On the Political Lives of Gods, Rivers, Trees, and Animals in India's Central Himalaya

This talk examined the ways in which nonhumans – mountains, rivers, cows, and gods – are drawn into politics as intentional, subjective actors in India. Through an examination of the inclusions and exclusions at the heart of this process, it probed the possibilities and limits of more-than-human democratic politics. This event took place at the Department of Anthropology as part of their regular colloquium, co-sponsored by CISAR and the UBC Himalaya Program, with special support from the Cascadia Engagement Fund Research Mobility Award, "Connecting South Asian and Himalayan Research Communities Across Cascadia"

Radhika Govindrajan is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Washington. Her book, *Animal Intimacies: Interspecies Relatedness in India's Central Himalayas*, was published by the University of Chicago Press in 2018. She is beginning work on a new project that examines the ways in which democratic politics in India contends with nonhumans.

NOV 1  
2018

Lecture

## The Dead and Maimed: A Postscript to Jallianwalla Bagh and the Punjab Disturbances



In 1922, the Government of Punjab distributed nearly 22 lakh rupees to Punjabi families of the dead and maimed at Jallianwalla Bagh (Amritsar) and Gujranwala on the insistence of local Indians. The compensation was (perhaps) the first of its type offered to colonial subjects on a larger scale in history. This presentation explored not only the historical aspects related to the the debates for compensation — how and why they emerged — but also placed these compensation efforts into a wider conversation on reparations, colonial violence, justice, and law.

Hardeep Dhillon is a Ph.D. Candidate in the History Department at Harvard University with a secondary specialization in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGS). Her dissertation project, titled *Indians on the Move*, explores the movement of Punjabi men in the early twentieth century to write a larger history of border and boundary making, mobility, race, law, and dissent.

NOV 15  
2018

Lecture

## Punjab's Drug Epidemic: Women and Children in Its Shadow

Drug abuse is a concern for various reasons, but what often goes unnoticed and unresolved is the agony of the people living in the immediate shadow of drug abusers: their family members. Within the family, the maximum impact is generally faced by women. This talk focused on effects of drug abuse on dependent women & children; prevention, treatment, social rehabilitation; and most importantly the need for the integration of concern for women's wellbeing in tackling the drug menace.

This event was co-sponsored by the Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology and Special Education, and Punjabi University.

Dr. Nimarta Mann serves as Assistant Professor at Punjabi University since 2012. Her major field of specialization is Banking & Finance, and minor is E-Business and HRM. Her present field of active research is focused on psychological and social health of all stakeholders of a business, and is committed to social justice through research and teaching of business ethics. She gave the lecture while serving as Visiting Faculty at the Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology and Special Education while pursuing collaborative research with Dr. Robinder Bedi (UBC) pertaining to the scope of Corporate Social Responsibility in addressing the socio-economic vice of drug abuse.



NOV 16  
2018

Workshop

## Studio Sessions with Kishan Patel



This event featured a live recording session of Indian classical vocals with visiting musician Kishan Patel from the Society for Indian Music and Arts. Kishan is a young Portland native who is an active practitioner of Dhrupad/Dhamar, Khayal, Thumri, and Tappa. Suresh Ramaswamy played Tabla, and Akhil Jobanputra played Harmonium.

The event was co-sponsored by the Indian Classical Music Society of Vancouver (ICMSV) and UBC Asian Studies.

JANUARY - MAY  
2019



JAN 17  
2019  
Lecture

## Quality Education and the Role of Digital Technology in Nepal

Technological innovations have revolutionized the ways we communicate, exchange knowledge and ideas, and deliver goods and services. However, this progress has yet to touch the lives many around the world, and the disparity between the privileged and the disadvantaged has been rising. There is an urgent need to leverage technology to level the playing field and provide equitable access to education and opportunities for all. Despite right intentions and large investments, the progress has been slow, and much needs to be done to improve policies and practices. This talk focused on Nepal's case to highlight the challenges and lessons of using technology to uplift the lives of people. This talk was co-sponsored by the Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED), UBC Language Sciences, and the Nepal Library Foundation. Mr. Karmacharya also participated in a workshop about technology, education and development at LLED during his stay at UBC.

Rabi Karmacharya is a social entrepreneur who helped launch OLE Nepal with the vision to use technology to improve the quality of primary education in Nepal's public schools, and to transform the way children learn through engagement, exploration and experimentation. He has extensive experience in technological innovation and management, and a conviction that young educated Nepalis have a critical role to play in nation-building. He holds Masters of Engineering and Bachelors of Science degrees in Electrical Engineering & Computer Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and is the Asia Society's Asia 21 Young Leader (2010) and Asia 21 Fellow (2011).



FEB 14  
2019  
Annual Event

## Celebrate Language: 3rd Annual International Mother Language Day Celebration

UNESCO proclaimed International Mother Language Day (IMLD) in 1999 to celebrate and protect the diverse languages of the world. IMLD represents an effort to honor people's right to speak their mother tongues, to preserve their culture and identity, and to safeguard the many endangered languages of the world. In more specific terms, it is also a tribute to the sacrifices of many in the movement for the preservation of the Bengali language in Bangladesh. Since 2000, IMLD has been celebrated around the world as well as in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. CISAR has joined in, and for the past three years has celebrated IMLD with multilingual presentations, performances, and multicultural festivities. This year's programming included welcome remarks by President Ono, presentations about local and global language issues with scholars, teachers, and activists, and a facilitated discussion around language and identity. The event was co-sponsored by Project Kavi, UBC Asian Studies, UBC Centre for Korean Research, UBC Centre for Community Engaged Learning, UBC Centre for Chinese Research, UBC Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies, and UBC Bangladeshi Students Association.

Dr. Candace Kaleimamoowahinekapu Galla, Assistant Professor, Language and Literacy Education, Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies (Opening Keynote) and Mohammad Aminul Islam, Language Activist and President, Mother Language Lovers of the World Society, Surrey (Closing Keynote).

JAN 31  
2019  
Lecture

## The Making and Unmaking of "Drought-Free" Citizens: A Political-Ecological Analysis of Maharashtra's Drought Protection Campaign

This talk by the 2017 Nehru Humanitarian Award winner was based on the speaker's doctoral research, which critically explores the political-ecology of water and water infrastructures in the making of "drought free" villages in rural areas of Maharashtra (India). Drawing on and learning from interviews with households and experts, the talk demonstrated how decentralized infrastructure overlays with social, economic, and political difference in the making of "drought-free" citizens, and argued that the focus must turn to improving access (an institutional phenomenon), rather than solely maintaining efforts to improve its availability (a biophysical phenomenon).

Sameer Shah is Liu Scholar, SESYNC Graduate Research Fellow, and Governor General Gold Medalist at The University of British Columbia's Institute for Resources, Environment, and Sustainability and their Program on Water Governance. He specializes in water security and governance at the rural-urban divide, with a keen focus on developing evidence-based policy recommendations to protect vulnerable peoples facing socio-hydrological change in global South regions. .



FEB 28  
2019  
Lecture

## Ambedkar's Idea of Religion

Much of the existing scholarship on Ambedkar's idea of religion has focused on his critique of Hinduism and on his distinct approach and endorsement of Buddhism. While such a critique and endorsement are a significant part of his oeuvre, they are premised on a wider recognition of the role and place of religion, or, better still, a distinct notion of religion. Dr. Ambedkar considers such an idea of religion foundational to the constitution of one's self as well as social life. Without foregrounding it, public life grounded on principles is not viable. Such an idea of religion leads him to develop not merely a sociological but theological critique of Christianity and Islam, as well as Hinduism. His reading of Buddhism is inextricably bound with this idea. This lecture explored the idea of religion that informs Ambedkar's writings and assessed its relevance for a deeply plural society. The talk was co-sponsored by The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhism and Contemporary Society (何鴻毅家族基金佛學與當代社會課程) and the Department of Asian Studies.

Dr. Valerian Rodrigues is Ambedkar Chair at Ambedkar University Delhi, and was a Visiting Professor at Simon Fraser University in the spring 2019 term.



MAR 14  
2019  
Annual Event

## The 2019 Harjit Kaur Sidhu Memorial Program Celebrating Punjabi Language and Culture at UBC

The Harjit Kaur Sidhu Memorial Program celebrates every year the rich life of Punjabi language and culture and its importance in BC, in memory of a woman who shared such passions. In 2019, the eleventh instance of the program, we celebrated the life of Gurcharan Rampuri, a major figure in the BC Punjabi literary community of BC, who passed away in 2018. Every year, this event also features awards to winners of a student Punjabi-language essay contest; a lifetime achievement award for a BC-based Punjabi language writer, which this year went to senior writer, Joginder Shamsher; and lively performances by UBC Punjabi language students. The event was organized by the Department of Asian Studies, with the support of CISAR and the Office of the Dean of Arts.

MAR 14  
2019  
Annual Event

## The 2019 Harjit Kaur Sidhu Memorial Program Celebrating Punjabi Language and Culture at UBC



MAR 28  
2019  
Lecture

## Spotlight on Graduate Student Research Talks by the winners of the 2018 CISAR graduate student travel

### Numerology as a Way of Explanation: the *Panchatūryanāda* Classification of Musical Instruments in Buddhist Sri Lanka

The concept of *panchatūryanāda* refers to a five-fold classification scheme of musical instruments that is found in Sri Lankan Buddhist tradition. Although the term has appeared in Pali and Sinhala texts since the seventh century, its connotations have varied in different eras, and recent scholars have been unable to agree on the precise criteria of the groupings. In this paper, Peiris examined the idea of five-fold categorization in the context of Buddhist and South Asian thought, arguing that numerical equivalences in seemingly unrelated taxonomies constituted a way of explanation that created meaning within particular cosmological worldviews. Through this lens, he showed what the function and significance of *panchatūryanāda* categorization might have been for Sri Lankan ritual musicians prior to the twentieth century.



Eshantha Peiris is a student of ethnomusicology at the University of British Columbia. He is currently writing a doctoral dissertation about processes of change in the Up-Country drumming tradition of Sri Lanka.

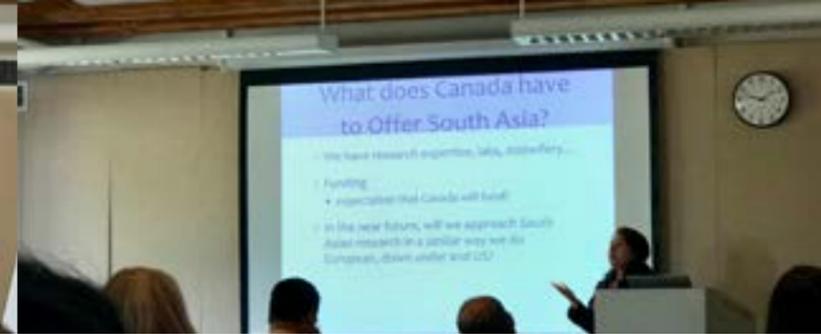


### Women Photographers and the Business of Photography in North India (1950s-1980s)

Through the archives of commercial photo-studios, this paper examined the conditions that led to the emergence of professional women photographers in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in post-Independence India. It critically addresses the politics of invisibility by looking at why the history of women photographers remains a 'lost-history' in India despite their presence in the dark rooms and as camera assistants in commercial photo-studios.



Sameena is a student of Art History at the University of British Columbia. She is currently pursuing her doctoral research on practices of analog photography within commercial studios in India in the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory (AHVA).



The workshop "Building South Asian Studies in Canada" brought together faculty and students from institutions across Canada: Athabasca University, University of British Columbia, University of the Fraser Valley, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, McGill University, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Université de Montréal, Mount Royal University, Université du Québec à Montréal, Queens University, University of Saskatchewan, University of Toronto, and University of Waterloo. Made possible by a Connection grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, with additional support from a Congress 2019 Subvention grant and the Institute for Asian Research and the Centre for India and South Asia Research at UBC, the workshop was designed to enable faculty and students to think through what is needed to support South Asian Studies at Canadian institutions. Participating faculty members contributed both new ways of thinking about these issues and a sense of what has happened in the past. The meeting culminated with a brainstorming session that ended in concrete plans for the founding of a new Canadian South Asian Studies Association (CSASA) with associated Listserv and website. The group plans to meet every two years, perhaps concurrently with the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. This workshop meeting was scheduled as a "pre-conference" meeting for Congress 2019, which was held at UBC.

JUNE 1  
2019  
Workshop &  
Roundtable

## Building South Asian Studies in Canada Caste in Canada: A Community Roundtable



The day-long workshop culminated with an exciting dialogue on "Caste in Canada," which featured activists, students, and scholars to discuss the enduring influence of caste in Canadian society and strategies for addressing it: Jai Birdi of the Chetna Association of Canada, an anti-caste discrimination activist group; Sasha Sabherwal, Ph.D. candidate at Yale University whose work centres on caste and gender dynamics in the greater Vancouver South Asian community; Satwinder Bains, Director of the South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley; Anita Lal, Community Relations Specialist at Windmill Microlending and widely involved in community development and advocacy; and Inderdeep Dhaliwal, recent UBC graduate in International Relations; it was moderated by Dr. Anne Murphy, Co-Director, Centre for India and South Asia Research. Short presentations by panel members were followed by spirited discussion with the audience, which filled Room 120 in the C.K. Choi Building, on ways to address caste discrimination and caste privilege.