A Conversation with Nakul Sawhney

On April 1, 2016, the CSAS welcomed Nakul Sawhney to U-M for the screening of his latest documentary, Musafar: Baap Ki Haai (Musafar: Baap Ki Haai—Eventually), on the anti-Muslim massacre that broke out in 2013 during the run-up to the 2014 elections in Muzaffarnagar. Sawhney is an established Indian documentary filmmaker, whose credits include the highly acclaimed Izatnagari ki Asabhya Betiyan (The Immoral Daughters in the Land of Honour).

Can you tell us a little bit about your film and your decision to become a documentary filmmaker?

By the time I went to FTII, I was already quite sure I wanted to make documentary films. I went to Bombay after that for a couple of years, but I just didn’t enjoy working in the film industry. It was good that I went there because I went back to my first love. I could see more clearly that this is what I wanted to do.

Coming to Izatnagari ki Asabhya Betiyan (The Immoral Daughters in the Land of Honour), how did you come to make this film? There are these powerful women in the film, how did you find them and get them to speak to you on the camera?

There was such happening at the time in the region—these so-called honor killings were all over the media, and coming from Delhi, it was so close to home. I was keen to see this, explore this a little more. I went there and I began shooting and then I traveled extensively and met a lot of people. One recurrent feature was young women. How did you negotiate the gender field as a male filmmaker speaking with women and men on a topic so controversial?

One learns from one’s mistakes. I remember walking into a school, a girls’ school where there were just three of us men as a part of the film crew, and they were very uncomfortable. That was an experience I took with me and when I went to Muzaffarnagar for the next film, I took this lesson with me. That said, the protagonists of the film Izatnagari were very forthcoming. The protagonists were already familiar with being in the public glare as well.

In our earlier conversations, you spoke about the connection between Izatnagari ki Asabhya Betiyan and Musafar: Baap Ki Haai. How did you see the two films, the Izatnagari and Musafar: Baap Ki Haai, fit together to just fascinate me about this form.

Out brilliantly in the two films are the changes within the Jat agrarian economy. Your films tease this aspect out, such that gender and religion do not become simply cultural components but are also very strongly linked to the political economy of the region. I am curious to have you talk a bit more about this.

When I was working on Izatnagari in December 2010, I had also traveled to Muzaffarnagar then. My aim was to understand what was happening in the Jat left outside of Haraya. Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts (in western Uttar Pradesh) also have a strong Muslim population.

One could sense, then, that this kind of Jat identity politics, which had shown itself to be anti-women and anti-Dalit in Haraya, could be channeled to become anti-Muslim as well, and it would have a lot to do with gender issues, where the diktas by khap panchayats against inter-caste marriages and so forth at a time when inter-caste marriages were on the rise. Now in western Uttar Pradesh where you have a strong Muslim population the same diktas would be issued against inter-religious marriages.

That’s where the whole concept of “honour” which a woman is supposed to bear—community honor, family honor—on and so forth—these would fit well into the diktas against “love jihad” mounted by the VHP. All this found a resonance with each other. I wasn’t very surprised when I heard about the riots and especially when it was all instigated in the name of “ Exodus” protecting Hindus honor from “ Muslim” and “Musilm” allegedly “to the core.”

When I saw the two films, Izatnagari and Musafar: Baap Ki Haai, it felt like the films needed to be seen together even though they are separated by three years, that they tell two sides of the same story where the agrarian economy, gender and religion are closely tied to each other. Am I right in thinking this way?

I think Muzaffarnagar Baap Ki Haai is very much a sequel of Izatnagari ki Asabhya Betiyan. Yes, absolutely. It happened very unconsciously. I came to Muzaffarnagar largely because of Izatnagari. And as a result, I had some understanding of what had transpired in the riots in Muzaffarnagar. I did not know it would become a documentary, or what kind of a documentary when I first went there after the riots.
The Center for South Asian Studies co-sponsored a two-day conference, Land Transactions and their Social-Ecological Impacts, on April 20–21, 2016. This workshop brought together nineteen scholars from Denmark, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Sweden, Vietnam, Liberia, and the US who work on land transaction issues globally. The workshop was intended to discuss the state of research on land transactions, identify key areas for future research, and fill the gap in the land transactions literature by bringing together researchers studying land transactions from very different epistemological and methodological perspectives.

The past decade has seen a surge in efforts aimed at gaining control of land and land-based resources all over the world. Over this period, food, energy, finance and environmental crises have led to large scale investments in land for conservation, resource extraction, commercial production, and/or speculation by international and national actors. Although the motivations for the investments vary, they all involve new, distant actors (be they domestic or international) who seek control over lands in ways that change existing land use patterns and affect the livelihoods of local residents. As research on land transactions has blossomed in the last decade, it has generated new research findings about the antecedents, structure, and outcomes of land transactions globally. Many aspects of land transactions and land grabbing have been explored in detail. Yet, some aspects have received relatively less attention.

On the first day, papers by Kennedy Gustafson, Namita Wahl, and Laura German reviewed legal frameworks on tenure that guide land transactions, and presented case studies in India, Tanzania, and Mozambique. The following three papers by Jens Fris-Stad, Sai Bakalarshnan, and Patrik Oskarsson investigated the causes and impacts of land tenure change through different types of interventions such as conservation laws in Tanzania and urbanization in India. On the second day, Ian Baird, Nja Dao, Miles Kennedy-Lazar, and Kevin Woods provided in-depth analysis of dynamics in causes and consequences of land transactions in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. In contrast, Suyun Jung, Chuan Lai, and Kersten Nolte studied patterns and environmental and livelihood outcomes of land transactions by looking into existing large datasets on land transaction boundaries/attributes and livelihood indicators and using statistical and simulation methods.

The conference report includes case studies presented by the Center for South Asian Studies, African Studies Center and Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Michigan, as well as NASA, for their financial and/or staff support.

The Center for South Asian Studies hosted a two-day conference, Digital South Asia, on October 2-3, 2015. The conference was made possible with support from Ranvir and Adarsh Tewari and the Global Media Studies Initiative of the Department of Communication Studies. Thirteen outside scholars from institutions in the US, India, and the UK participated in four panels over the course of this two-day conference. They were joined by several University of Michigan faculty from a variety of departments, including the School of Information and departments of Communication Studies, History, Anthropology, English, and Psychology, who served as chairs and discussants for the panels. The panels, which were attended by members of the university community as well as the public, addressed various dimensions of digital culture and politics across South Asia.

Home to about one fourth of the world’s population and the largest demographic youth across the globe, South Asia continues to stay outside the purview of scholarship concerned with how digital culture and politics are reshaping societies and states. South Asian nations’ location at the cusp of a colonial past and a globalizing present, their burgeoning and heterogeneous citizenry, and diverse and fractious polities make them particularly rich sites for studying the ways in which digital affordances enable and constrain social and cultural politics.

This conference brought together an international array of scholars with a shared interest in the rise of digital and mobile media technologies, the ongoing transformation of established media industries, and emergent forms of media practice and use that are reconfiguring socio-cultural, political, and economic terrains across the Indian subcontinent. Taking a comparative approach, speakers explored the study of digital and mobile media in South Asia at the intersections of a range of technologies, institutions, cultural practices, and spaces: old and new, state and private, elite and popular, rural and urban, national and regional.

The Web, as a number of scholars have come to recognize, is better understood as a mosaic of online regional cultures that associate in complex and contingent ways with physical places. Giving the sheer scale and complexity of ‘regional cultures’ such as digital South Asia, this conference marked an important step towards mapping and analyzing the relationship between digital media on the one hand, and on the other hand, ‘South Asia’ as an imagined regional, political, and cultural construct. The challenge facing participants in this conference was to locate various platforms, infrastructures, and practices within global contexts, while retaining a keen awareness of how the particularities of national, regional, and border-spaces in South Asia open up opportunities to generate more nuanced, and in the process, more expansive accounts of how digital media are reshaping our world. In doing so, papers at this conference also offered a timely snapshot of accumulated developments in media and technology environments over the last 30 years in a region that has shifted from being a strategic backwater for the West to a home to key global players in the information age. Over the course of two days, speakers investigated this re-shaping by examining a range of networked digital technologies with consequences beyond South Asia, while being rooted in the specific historical trajectories of digital media within and across the boundaries of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka.

The papers presented at this conference also spanned a wide methodological range, taking stock of new forms of commercial and popular media production and use in these spaces, speakers presented industry and policy analysis, thematic analyses of digital and mobile media artifacts and infrastructures, discourse analysis of various online forums, and other approaches focused on understanding audience/user practices. Each presentation combined first-hand research with multi-disciplinary perspectives to offer original insights on the fast-changing landscape of Digital South Asia.

The papers presented at this conference will be published in an open-access volume entitled Digital South Asia (currently under review at the University of Michigan Press, co-edited by Aswin Punathanbaker and Sriram Mohan).

The organizer of this conference, Aswin Punathanbaker from the University of Michigan, wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the support from the Center for South Asian Studies.

**Suhyun Jung**

The Sound and South Asia Conference

**October 7-8, 2016**

The Center for South Asian Studies is pleased to announce an international conference titled Sound and South Asia on October 7-8, 2016. The study of what we hear has conventionally been reserved for the medical specialist, the acoustic engineer, and the ethnomusicologist. However, in recent years the life of sounds—from the most refined of classical music to Urdu poetry recitation known as the mushaira or the Tamilian dance forms of sadir and chandamaram?—and might south asian film and moving image media, with their distinctive song-and-dance traditions, provide a distinctively subcontinental approach to the study of sound.

Aswin Punathanbaker, Conference Director

**October 7-8, 2016**

The conference was made possible with support from the Center for South Asian Studies, Center for Digital Media Culture, CoE for Ethics, Art, and Culture, and the John H. Saltmarsh III University Center for Digital and Mobile Media Technologies. Support was also received from the Department of Communication Studies and the Department of History, as well as the School of Information and Departments of Anthropology, Communication Studies, English, History, and Psychology. A number of outside scholars from institutions in the US, India, and the UK were invited to participate in the conference.

This conference brought together an international array of scholars with a shared interest in the rise of digital and mobile media technologies, the ongoing transformation of established media industries, and emergent forms of media practice and use that are reconfiguring socio-cultural, political, and economic terrains across the Indian subcontinent. Taking a comparative approach, speakers explored the study of digital and mobile media in South Asia at the intersections of a range of technologies, institutions, cultural practices, and spaces: old and new, state and private, elite and popular, rural and urban, national and regional.

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The 6th Annual Pakistan Conference, organized by the Organization of Pakistani Students and the Center for South Asian Studies, was held on April 8, 2016. The panelists, academics and artists from Pakistan and the United States, focused on the theme of infrastructure and development. From the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to the Ravi River in Lahore, the development of infrastructure in Pakistan has rapidly transformed the country’s landscape. This process has been accompanied by both critique and approval within Pakistani society. Through a conversation between artists and academics, conference participants engaged in discussion about the role of development projects in Pakistan. snap@U-M welcomed his Excellency, Arun K. Singh, ambassador of India to the United States on April 8, 2016, at the annual Pakistan Conference, which was held on April 8, 2016. The conference included a panel discussion on the role of development projects in Pakistan. The panelists, academics and artists from Pakistan and the United States, focused on the theme of infrastructure and development.

The conference began with an introductory talk titled “Infrastructure and Development in the 21st Century in Industrializing Pakistan,” by Naushreen Anwar from the Institute of Business Administration in Karachi, Pakistan. Her talk analyzed the relationship between infrastructure and industrial development in the 21st century through the prism of Pakistan’s past-independence history, industrialization, and the present discourse of an “infrastructure crisis” in the context of a globalizing Pakistan. This talk was followed by a panel on “Infrastructure, Identity, and Place.” The session on development projects in Pakistan was presented by Majed Akhter (Department of Geography, Geography University) and Hameez Jamali (School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Habib University, Karachi). Akhter’s paper examined the series of development projects collectively labeled the Chine-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The “Infrastructure and Development” theme was followed by a presentation on the role of development projects in Pakistan. The conference participants engaged in discussion about the role of development projects in Pakistan. The panelists, academics and artists from Pakistan and the United States, focused on the theme of infrastructure and development. The conference ended with a roundtable discussion on the role of development projects in Pakistan. The participants engaged in discussion about the role of development projects in Pakistan. The conference ended with a roundtable discussion on the role of development projects in Pakistan.
Anun Agrawal, Professor at the School of Natural Resources & Environment, was awarded the STEWARD Best Paper Award from the American Political Science Review. Agrawal co-authored “Carbon, Biodiversity and Livelihoods in Forest Communes: Synergies, Trade-offs, and Implications for REDD+” in Environmental Research Letters. He is currently co-principal investigator for the National Science Foundation-funded funded investigation titled "Global Dependence of Livelihoods on Forests and the Impacts of Forest Investments: Disaster Recovery in Nepal." 

Nasibet Chanchani, Assistant Professor of South Asian Art, Architecture, and Visual Culture, received a Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences Gonda Fellowship and spent six months in residence at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden. He gave invited talks at many venues including the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Mumbai; Jawharlar Lal Nehru University, Delhi; University of Delhi; Telun Murti Museum and Library, Delhi; University of Leiden, University of Borne, and the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. Chanchani organized and chaired two scholarly panels at the 104th annual conference of the College Art Association in Washington, DC, while also jointly guest-editing volume 4 of Arts Orientales. Publications include chapters in anthologies, and an essay in the main editorial and opinion page of the respected newspaper.

Juan Cole, Richard P. Mitchell Professor of History, was the keynote speaker at the 76th Hindustani History Congress Annual Session that took place at Gour Banga University in Malda, West Bengal. His keynote lecture addressed the ways in which Persian poetry and Sufism, especially Qalandari works, became a vehicle for secular and heretical sentiments in Islam.

Manon Desai, Assistant Professor of American Culture, is on the Board of Directors of the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), where he contributes original archival research, assists in building digital collections, and serves as an editor and contributor to TOCS, the online publication of SAADA. Desai authored “The Indian Wants the Bronx” and "D.W. Griffith Presents: The Hindoo Dagger" for the South Asian American Digital Archive. He was a keynote speaker for the South Asian Awareness Network Conference in January 2016.

Jatin Dua, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, co-edited a special collection for the Journal of East African Studies (Volume 9: 3; 2015) entitled “Pirates, preachers and politics: Security, religion, region and networks along the Indian Ocean coast.” This volume featured an article by Dua titled, “After Piracy? Mapping the means and ends of maritime predation in the Western Indian Ocean.” Dua also published an article titled, “Close Encounters” in a special issue of Transition on Afro-Asian Worlds. In April, Dua was awarded an NSF grant to begin a new research project on global chokepoints of trade. Dua will begin fieldwork in the summer of 2016 in the Gulf of Aden on the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and rethinking the boundaries of South Asia and Africa in the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean.

Tarif Faizullah, Delbarco Visiting Professor of Creative Writing, authored Seam (Southern Illinois University Press, 2014), a work of poetry which focuses on women being raped by Paki- stan soldiers during the Liberation War of 1971. Faizullah received several awards for this book: the 2015 Great Lake College Association New Writers Awards, the 2015 VIDA Award in Poetry, and the 2015 Blumberg Institute Milton Krassor Poetry Book Award.

Leela Fernandes, Gonda Dicker Collegiate Professor of Women’s Studies and Political Science, has been working on two projects: The first is an edited volume, Feminists Rethink the Post-Liberalizational State: Inequality, Exclusion and Change (NYU Press, forthcoming). The second is based on new research she is conducting in India for a book project, Public Works: India in a Post-Liberalizational State: Urbanization, Inequality and the Politics of Work in India. Fernandes is the South Asia editor of the Journal of Critical Asian Studies and serves on the selection committee for the American Institute for Indian Studies.

Matthew S. Hull, Associate Professor of Anthropology, published a feature in Herald, the leading Pakistani news magazine, titled, “Peace Reform: Tweaking the journey of the humble government file” (February 2015).


Joyjeet Pal, Assistant Professor of Information, was awarded the 2015 Documentary Film for the Love of a Man, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival in September 2015, and was later screened at the Mumbai Film Festival. This film follows fans of Tamil cinema’s ‘superstar’ Rajkumar, and documents ways in which their fandom often becomes integral to their identities and to the identities of the people around them. For the Love of a Man will be available on Netflix. Pal also recently co-authored the article “Twitter and the Rebranding of Narmada Mod” in the Mumbai-based journal, Economic & Political Weekly.

Farina Mir, Associate Professor of History, spent 2015-16 as the Jane and Norman Katz Fellow at G.V. Institute of the Humanities, where she worked on her research project, “Producing Modern Muslims: Everyday Ethics in Late Colonial India.” In 2015, she published “Introduction: AHR Forum on ‘The Archives of Decolonization’” in the American Historical Review and “Muslim Religious Reform Movements,” in Keywords in Modern Indian Studies.

Shobita Parthasarathy, Associate Professor of Public Policy, is conducting new research on grassroots innovation projects that encourage Indian people with limited education and resources to develop low tech and low-cost innovations to benefit their communities.

Parthasarathy is also exploring policy frameworks to foster such projects, and how these openness to innovation can contribute to the public interest, and how it might challenge or expand our traditional approaches. She has received seed grant funding for the project from U-M’s Institute for Research on Women and Gender, and plans to begin her fieldwork in India at the beginning of the Winter, 2017 academic term.

Prakalpana Sinha, Alice Freeman Palmer Professor of History and Professor of English and Women’s Studies, was awarded a 2016-2017 Faculty Fellowship from the Institute for the Humanities and is a Nominated Senior Fellow for the Michigan Society of Fellows. She is currently working on two book projects. Complete Political Independence: The Curious Genealogy of a Nationalist Indian ‘Demand’ examines the historical run-up to the momentous 1929 decision by the official anti-colonial movement in India to demand a nation-state of its own. The other book project is a study of M.K. Gandhi’s politics that eschews “In- ternalist” accounts of his unique perspective on nationalism and attempts to place his views in relation to the political context of his times. Recent publications include: “Preamonitions of the Past” in Journal of Asian Studies and “Crooked Lines and ZigZags: From the Nonviolence to the Colonial” in New Empire Shaped Us.

CSAS Executive Committee

The Center for South Asian Studies (CSAS) is pleased to announce that Manan Desai (Assistant Professor, American Culture) and Aswin Punnamadhakar (Associate Professor, Communication Studies) have been elected to the CSAS Executive Committee for the 2016-17 academic year. Yaron Bhatia (Assistant Professor, Asian Languages and Cultures) will serve in the second year of her two-year term. The Center would like to thank Syed Elektor Ali (Director, South Asian Language Program, Asian Languages and Cultures) for his service on the Executive Committee during the 2015-16 academic year.
In early 2015 and 2016, more teams went back to work on the stove-building techniques they hoped would improve the living standards. BLIP is dedicated to assisting in the development of the process, and not simply importing modern stoves. The team worked with local women, men, and children to first learn their techniques before working together to improve those techniques. Improvements were made and various prototypes were built using new designs with existing local techniques. Drawing the triple digit temperatures time and again, the stove team built and rebuilt stoves, working to decrease smoke inhalation and improve efficiency. With local contribution, the team was able to research material costs, functional needs, and construction techniques that would make new stoves affordable, efficient, and sustainable.

Combining high-tech engineering tools and research with local materials provided some challenges for the team, such as figuring out exactly which of the available materials would be best for their needs. Various materials were used for different stoves, and time will be the next variable in determining what works best for the stoves in the future. After iterations on the design, the more advanced technology came out to measure carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter. The team discovered that they had drastically reduced the members, providing much safer and more efficient methods of cooking in the homes of Dolatpura. More data analysis will be done over the coming year, but the team is excited about the work they have done with the community members and the progress they have made together. Understanding the existing toilets in Dolatpura was also a priority during travel. The concerns over privacy and sanitation are important to local community members. Short and long term goals were coordinated with families in Dolatpura.

These discussions also revealed complex social standards about how human waste is viewed. Composting toilets were selected to address the need for toilets while respecting social practices. Research was conducted in India, as well as back in the United States, producing valuable information. Working with contractors and suppliers, the toilet team put their plans together. After speaking to several contractors, one was hired and construction plans for the compost bins andouthouse were made. There was a quick turnaround as the foundation for the outhouse was laid within days. The full construction was completed with the BLIP team and the local community helping the construction crew at every turn ensuring the build would stay on schedule.

The effectiveness of the new composting toilet in Dolatpura will be assessed through data collection and ongoing communication with the family. One of the goals over the coming year is to work with the Setco Foundation to develop sanitation education with the goal of increasing adoption of toilet technology.

Reflecting on his time in BLIP, Sai Bolla remarked, “Over the past few years, we have developed incredible bonds and ongoing relationships with people in Dolatpura and the Setco Foundation that lead to lasting experiences and connections.” Gifts, laughs, and tears were shared as the BLIP team said goodbye to the people of Dolatpura and the crew at Setco Automotive and the Setco Foundation. The work will continue back in Ann Arbor as well as India, preparing for the next steps of their collaboration over the coming years.

School of Law: Research, Training, and Educational Collaborations with India

The University of Michigan Law School (Michigan Law) has been expanding its activities in India over the few years. Michigan Law and Jindal Global Law School at DIP (Jindal Global University Jindal) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Joint Centre for Global Corporate and Financial Law & Policy.

Professor C. Raj Kumar, O.P., Jindal Global University’s Vice Chancellor and Dean of Jindal Global Law School (center) with Michigan Law Dean Evan Caminker and Professor Vikramaditya Khanna during a visit. This provides the framework for Michigan Law and Jindal to develop collaborative initiatives on faculty and student exchange programs, teaching and research initiatives, conferences, publications and continuing legal education programs. Professor Vikramaditya Khanna, William W. Cook Professor of Law at Michigan Law, is Co-Director of the Joint Centre. Among the areas of study are the regulation of financial markets and corporate governance in the United States, India, and other jurisdictions. The Centre’s activities primarily focus on research and legal policy analysis, facilitating development of collaborative research and teaching, and organizing lectures, conferences and symposia. As one of the first steps toward developing this collaboration, Professor Khanna was appointed a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Jindal for 2010-2011 and taught a course, Law & Economic Development in India, which had students from both Michigan Law and Jindal enrolled. The classes were conducted offering live via web-based video conferencing to facilitate interaction and engagement between classrooms in India and Michigan. Also, Michigan and Jindal jointly held a Conference in March 2011 on Global & Comparative Corporate Governance and Professor Khanna organized a Workshop on Responses to Impediments to Doing Business in India in February 2011.

Complementing its interactions with Jindal, Michigan Law has also had some of its students complete externships at a variety of organizations in India including the Alternate Law Forum (http://altlawforum.org/) and the Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access to Legal Education (IDIA) initiative (http://idialaw.com/) amongst others. Further, along with the Law & Economic Development in India course at Michigan Law, Professor Khanna also offers a mini-seminar on Hollywood, Bollywood and the Law: The Globalizing Media and Entertainment Industry.

CSAS is pleased to announce that 8 undergraduates and 6 graduate students have been awarded Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships for the 2016-17 academic year. FLAS Fellowships provide tuition support and a stipend to students studying designated foreign languages with area studies or international aspects of professional studies. The Center for South Asian Studies offers FLAS awards in Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, and Urdu.

Amanda Allen (Hindi) Senior, International Studies and Asian Languages and Cultures majors.
Sabrina Billimoria (Urdu) Senior, Psychology and International Studies majors.
Ibrahim Ijaz (Urdu) Junior, Public Policy major, South Asian Studies and Law, Justice and Social Change minors.
Syeda Zainab Mahmood (Urdu) Junior, Sociology major, Asian Studies and Linguistics minors.
Fatima Nasir (Urdu) Junior, Interdisciplinary major with an minor in International Studies.
Novena Thota (Hindi) Junior, International Studies major, South Asian Languages and Culture minor.
Komalpreet Tur (Punjabi) Sophomore, Interdisciplinary Studies, Cognition, and Neuroscience major.
Anisha Yande (Hindi) Sophomore, Neuroscience major, Business minor (interdisciplinary).

CSAS Students

Fall 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Home Language</th>
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<td>Rachel Nikhil</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>College of Literature, Science, and the Arts</td>
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<td>Janaki Phillips</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Sociocultural Anthropology</td>
<td>Rackham Graduate School</td>
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<td>Solaiman Khan</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>College of Literature, Science, and the Arts</td>
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<td>Erik Goeke</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Urban Planning</td>
<td>Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning</td>
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</tbody>
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Professor Vikramaditya Khanna teaching a course at Jindal Global University with students participating via live web-based video conferencing from U-M Law School.

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Graduate Students

Rachel Nikhil (Hindi) is pursuing a Master’s degree in South Asian Studies from the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.
Solaiman Khan (Punjabi) is pursuing a Master’s degree in Area Studies from the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.
Ojaswi Ashok (Hindi) is pursuing a Master’s degree in Public Health from the School of Public Health.
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Erik Goeke (Hindi) is pursuing a Master’s degree in Urban Planning and Urban Design from the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

CSAS Students

Amanda Allen (Hindi) Senior, International Studies and Asian Languages and Cultures majors.
Sabrina Billimoria (Urdu) Senior, Psychology and International Studies majors.
Ibrahim Ijaz (Urdu) Junior, Public Policy major, South Asian Studies and Law, Justice and Social Change minors.
Syeda Zainab Mahmood (Urdu) Junior, Sociology major, Asian Studies and Linguistics minors.
Fatima Nasir (Urdu) Junior, Interdisciplinary major with an minor in International Studies.
Novena Thota (Hindi) Junior, International Studies major, South Asian Languages and Culture minor.
Komalpreet Tur (Punjabi) Sophomore, Interdisciplinary Studies, Cognition, and Neuroscience major.
Anisha Yande (Hindi) Sophomore, Neuroscience major, Business minor (interdisciplinary).

Graduate Students

Rachel Nikhil (Hindi) is pursuing a Master’s degree in South Asian Studies from the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.
Solaiman Khan (Punjabi) is pursuing a Master’s degree in Area Studies from the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.
Ojaswi Ashok (Hindi) is pursuing a Master’s degree in Public Health from the School of Public Health.
Erik Goeke (Hindi) is pursuing a Master’s degree in Urban Planning and Urban Design from the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.
Chirumamila is interviewing and working with television repairmen and cable television operators and focusing her studies on the factors that affected the swift popularity of television in this area. She was awarded a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad grant and a Werner Geyer Dissertation Fieldwork grant for this work.

Zehra Hashmi is a PhD student in the Interdepartmental Program in Anthropology and History. Her dissertation project examines the intersection of information and security in urban Pakistan, focusing on the encounter between Pashtun migrants in Islamabad and the state-run biometric identification scheme. Hashmi is interested in the historical continuities between the current state of security and colonial identification practices; through the territorialization of the northwest frontier and tribal areas in Pakistan. She has received an International Institute Individual Fellowship, a Rackham Summer Research Grant and Rackham International Student Fellowship for preliminary ethnographic fieldwork and archival research.

Drew Husky, PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology, is currently conducting fieldwork on land, debt and household economies in Kathmandu. In particular, his research explores the boundary between formal and informal economic practices within family economic planning, and how this border area has shifted in the aftermath of the April 25th earthquake in Nepal. Based on multi-sited ethnography, his project explores the ethical dimensions of bureaucratic paperwork, the nature of familial ownership in post-disaster Nepal, and the strategies employed for organizing kin within a changing urban environment. Husky’s research is currently funded by the University of Michigan, the Werner Geyer Foundation and the National Science Foundation. He will be returning to Ann Arbor in the Fall of 2016 to begin writing his dissertation.

Leslie Humpson, PhD Candidate in the Department of History, is completing her dissertation, “Making the Khilji Economy: A Political Economy of Non-Violence for the Twelfth-Century India.” Humpson received the Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship for the 2016-17 academic year.

Rachel Hirsch joins the Department of South Asian Studies this fall as an MA student. This past year, she worked as a research assistant in the South Asian Department of the Smithsonian’s Freer and Sackler Galleries and began studying Hindi at SASLI in Madison, Wisconsin. Her research interests pivot around the cross-cultural dimensions of South Asian visual material.

Randeep Singh Hoti, a graduate student in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, was awarded a fellowship to carry out his project, “Global Dissentions of Sikhs: An Ethnographic Study of Sikh Television Production in Punjab.” Hoti’s fellowship is funded by a grant from the U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.

Janaki Phillips joins the Depart- ment of Anthropology. Her future research interests include the intersection of urban studies, religion, and environmentalism in India. Phillips hopes to engage with and unsettle ideas surrounding the disenchantment of modernity.

Puninder Singh is a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology. Singh has been based in Amritsar, Punjab, India for the last two years, conducting fieldwork for his doctoral dissertation project, entitled “Living the Wort Language, Symbol, and Experience in Sikh Devotional Practice.” The project examines the Sikh concept of shabad (which translates most literally as “language/song”) as a semi-otic/linguistic phenomenon. The study further takes an ethnographic look at Sikh devotees’ practices around shabad: gufis that are thought to mediate the relationship between the mind/self/ego and the sensory world, with the aim of transcending their apparent phenomenological differences.

PhD Candidate in Communication Studies and 2015-16 FLAS recipient for Hindi, was named the 2016-17 John Mathias Graduate Fellow by the Institute for the Humanities. She studies the intersection of digital media and second-generation Asian Americans tracing their roots back to the subcontinent, and how this is related to a rising popular awareness of the idea of being South Asian. In doing so, she offers a careful study of the mundane and unremarked digital labor that sustains new imaginaries of belonging and coalition building, and reframes connectivity, arguing it as much a cultural process and practice—of endless, mundane ‘technical’
Summer in South Asia Fellows 2016

The Summer in South Asia (SiSA) Fellowship program was established in 2006 with a generous endowment from an anonymous donor. Each summer CSAS supports select undergraduates students to conduct independent research projects—usually in conjunction with an organization in India. Please join us on September 30, 2016 at noon in room 1348 of the School of Social Work Building for the Summer in South Asia Symposium.

Grace Beckman is a junior with a major in English and a minor in Community Action and Social Change. Grace spent six weeks in Japan volunteering with Pratham’s Second Chance program, which provides women who dropped out of school with the opportunity to complete their secondary education. Grace’s final project explored the factors that led women participating in the Second Chance program to drop out of school and, in turn, what motivated them to enroll in this program.

Hanna Dougherty is a sophomore with a major in International and Comparative Studies and a minor in Community Action and Social Change. Hanna spent 32 weeks in India volunteering with the Jayamang Foundation, an organization dedicated to equal educational opportunities and literacy for girls and women in the Indian Himalayas. Hanna explored native perspectives of the most pressing issues concerning education that exist in the region, and how international humanitarian aid has helped or harmed the path to improvement of the educational sector.

Aurun Chandrajescsher is a second year student with a major in Philosophy and a minor in Mathematics. Aurun will be traveling across the country, exploring the relationship between wealth and textile accessibility. Considering the diversity of clothing options—from madras cloth to shopping-malls to luxury Western fashion houses— Aurun studied the factors associated with textile industrialization in order to determine whether they follow the general Indian wealth disparity trend.

Vaidushi Dongre is a sophomore majoring in International Studies with a focus on Southeast Asian political economy and development. After graduation, she is interested in obtaining a JD/MA in International Law. Vaidushi worked with scholars in Pune for four weeks exploring the difference in relationships between female-employers and female maids depending on age group and income level.

Matthew Greydanus is a freshman that is pursuing a degree in Political Science and focusing his studies on a pre-medical track. Matthew spent five weeks interning on the Lifeline train that has performed surgery on more than 100,000 people in rural India completely free of cost. Matthew’s final project explores whether mobile health care is safe, effective and efficient and how this type of care could fill a needed void in rural outreach of health care systems in developed and developing nations alike.

Samuel McMullen is a junior with a double major in Cellular and Molecular Biology and Philosophy. Samuel travelled throughout India for four months to visually document the effects of waste generated by the production of goods across India.

Tikumoni Nwosu is a junior with a double major in Bice Performance and International Studies. Tikumoni spent seven weeks in Vanuasi volunteering with LUMAM, an NGO with a focus on the development and patronage of the arts. Tikumoni’s final project focuses on how the arts program benefits children’s overall education.

Hanna Pfershy is a sophomore pursuing a degree in Biomedical Engineering. Hanna spent five weeks interning in Kasaragod with the Institute of Applied Dermatology, an organization focused on research and application of integrative medicine—combining the benefits of Allopathy other traditional Indian medicines. Hanna’s final project focused on how this organization has innovated and modernized Ayurveda medicine to fit the present conditions and needs of its patient populace.

India Solomon is a junior with a major in Public Policy focused on Comparative Urban Policy and Sustainable Development and a minor in Crime and Justice. India spent four weeks in Bangalore volunteering with Bubbles Centre for Autism, a specialized school for children on the Autism spectrum. India’s final project explored how grassroots alternatives to treatment and education are improving the future prospects for children attending this school.

Madeline Stagner is a junior with a major in Public Policy focused on Comparative Urban Policy and Sustainable Development and a minor in Urban Policy and Social Development. Madeline’s major collaboratve initiative is aimed at addressing the current scarcity of digital resources pertinent to South Asian studies and at making collections and services more widely accessible both to north american scholars and to researchers elsewhere in the world. Sampa Dai will address needs in all academic disciplines, from the humanities through the sciences. With an initial emphasis on colonial-era materials from South Asia, a carefully curated collection of resources will fill gaps in available online collections. Several criteria will be used to select and prioritize resources for digitization, including:

- Value to research
- Utility for a broad population of users
- Uniqueness (not available through other, credible, sustainable sources)
- At-risk—due to condition, environmental or sociopolitical factors, or other threats
- Complementarity to other resources

This project is a great move forward in terms of opening South Asian materials to researchers throughout the world. The University of Michigan Library is proud to be involved in this initiative,”

Jeff Martin, Librarian for South Asia & Anthropology

Stay tuned for more information on this development from Jeff Martin or feel free to contact him should you have questions regarding this new resource (jmartin@umich.edu).

Hilda Porter and Ralph Stewart's wedding in 1954 in Punjab.

Both Ralph Randles Stewart and his second wife, Hilda, spent four weeks in India volunteering with Pratham’s second Chance program, which provides women who dropped out of school with the opportunity to complete their secondary education. Hilda’s final project focused on how the arts program benefits children’s overall education.

In spring 2016 Shahnaz Rouse, Professor of Sociology at Sarah Lawrence College, conducted archival research at the University of Michigan. While in Ann Arbor, Rouse worked with the Stewart Family Papers, which are part of the holdings at the Bentley Historical Library.

Hilda spent six weeks in Jaipur volunteering with Pratham’s second Chance program to drop out of school and, in turn, what motivated them to enroll in this program.

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CSAS Lecture Series 2016–17

September 16, 2016

Jatin Dua, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan
Encounters at Sea: Piracy and Protection in the Indian Ocean
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

September 30, 2016

Summer in South Asia Fellowship Symposium
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

October 7-8, 2016

Sound and South Asia Conference
9:00am - 5:00pm
Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

October 14, 2016

Joyojeet Pal, Assistant Professor, School of Information, University of Michigan
Screening and discussion of his film, For the Love of Man
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

November 11, 2016

Laura Bear, Associate Professor, London School of Economics
For the Vitality of Labour
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

November 18, 2016

Cynthia Talbot, Associate Professor, South Asia Institute, University of Texas at Austin
Royal Rage in Rajputana: The Politics of Anger in Mughal India
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

December 2, 2016

Tariq Ali, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
The Making of the “Comilla Model”: Experiments in Rural Development in East Pakistan, 1959-1971
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

January 20, 2017

Humeira Iqtedar, Associate Professor, Department of Political Economy, King’s College London
Justice and Tolerance in Islamic Thought: Maududi’s Al-Jihad fi Islam
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

February 3, 2017

Jonardon Ganeri, Professorial Research Associate, Department of Philosophy, New York University
Attention as the Key to Early Buddhism’s Understanding of the Human Mind
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

February 17, 2017

Mitra Sharafi, Associate Professor of Law, University of Wisconsin Law School
Fear of the False: Sex Crimes and Medical Jurisprudence in Colonial India
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

March 10, 2017

Christian Novetzke, Associate Professor, South Asia Program; Comparative Religion Program; International Studies Program, University of Washington
Sonic Equality: Religion, Social Justice, and Everyday Life in the Nascent Public Sphere in Medieval India
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

March 17, 2017

Nitin Govil, Associate Professor of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California
Technicolor Transnationalism: Film Technology between Hollywood and Bombay in the 1950s
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

March 31, 2017

Ajantha Subramanian, Professor, Department of Anthropology and South Asian Studies, Harvard University
Meritocracy and Democracy: the Social Life of Caste in India
4pm • Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

April 7, 2017

U-M Pakistan Conference
9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Room 1636 • School of Social Work Building

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