I write this at the end of an exciting summer for the Center for South Asian Studies (CSAS). We ran pilots of two new international student programs, one with the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune (IISER), and the other with Habib University, Karachi (see more details on p. 3). These programs are the outcome of an effort at the CSAS over the past few years to expand our network of institutional collaborations in India and Pakistan, in order to create new opportunities for students and faculty—both at U-M and at the institutions we are engaging. As my tenure as Director draws to a close—this is my fifth and final year—I am pleased that the CSAS now has established relationships with Ashoka University, Delhi University, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), and Shiv Nadar University; all in and around Delhi; and Habib University in Pakistan. We envision sending our students to these institutions, welcoming their students to U-M, and collaborating with them.

Our summer activity came on the heels of an active year at the CSAS. In 2016-17, we hosted five conferences, four in Ann Arbor and one in New Delhi: Sound and South Asia (see p. 4); the IIT-U-M South Asian Studies Workshop (see p. 7); a graduate Student Conference (see p. 7); and the 7th Annual U-M-Pakistan Conference on Gender and Sexuality (see p. 5); and in conjunction with other area studies centers, Endangered Heritage (see p. 6). In between, we hosted the Consul General of Pakistan (Chicago), the former (and perhaps future) President of the Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed, thirteen eminent scholars, and a filmmaker. The CSAS also co-sponsored a diverse array of events, including two dance performances and the annual South Asia Awareness Network Conference, organized by our undergraduate students. This year promises to be another robust one. Our year kicked off with a lecture by our own Vineet Nadireddy Khanna of the law school, who will be speaking on down in India on September 8. This will be followed by a major international conference, “Seeking Social Justice in South Asia” (see p. 6), which we are grateful to Ranvir and Arshad Tehrani for their support, which allows us to bring together leading lawyers, activists, scholars, and journalists to consider this important theme. We also look forward to welcoming His Excellency Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry (Ambassador of Pakistan to the US), a range of scholars in our 2017-18 Lecture Series (see p. 16 for details), a filmmaker, and to hosting a performance, “ Lucknow in Letters: Endosporas, Achievements, and Toadies.” We will also host our second Graduate Student Conference (January 26-27, 2018) and the 8th Annual U-M Pakistan Conference (April 5, 2018). In the pages that follow you’ll find more information on the Center’s activities over the past year as well as those we have planned for the coming year. You’ll also read about research on and engagement with South Asia from across U-M. As 2017-18 ends my tenure as Director, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff, faculty, and students for their support of the CSAS. Directing the Center has been a challenge and a privilege. It has been a challenge because of the precarious times we live in, with the Department of Education’s Title VI programs that fund the Center under threat. The CSAS currently holds National Resource Center and Foreign Language Area Studies Grants from the Department of Education. The former allows for the work of the Center, and the latter allows it to fund undergraduate and graduate students to study South Asian languages (for the last 4 years we distributed $1.2 million in student fellowships). Given geopolitics, the work of the Center—producing, enhancing, and disseminating knowledge about South Asia—is as critical as ever, at U-M, nationally, and globally. Putting the CSAS on a more solid financial footing is imperative if it is to continue its important work.

At the same time, directing the Center has surely been a privilege. Working with staff, students, and colleagues on the collective and interdisciplinary project of South Asia studies has been extremely rewarding intellectually and personally and I’d like to especially thank Janelle Fosler, the Center’s Program Specialist, not least because she is also my wife. The Center’s financial health has surely been a privilege. Working with staff, students, and colleagues on the collective and interdisciplinary project of South Asia studies has been extremely rewarding intellectually and personally and I’d like to especially thank Janelle Fosler, the Center’s Program Specialist, not least because she is also my wife. The Center’s financial health has been extremely rewarding intellectually and personally.

The Center is fortunate to have had this opportunity to work with you and to promote South Asia Studies at U-M. I am extremely grateful to have had this opportunity to work with you and to promote South Asia Studies at U-M. Sincerely,

Farina Mir
Associate Professor
Department of History

CSAS International Student Programs

The agreement with Habib University—a newly established private liberal arts university—allows select students to enroll in summer semester courses at U-M’s Ann Arbor campus. In summer 2017, four Habib students joined us on campus: Maisam Hyder Ali, Infer Khalid Baig, Fatima Hamdini, and Safian Haq.

“Travelling on my own for the first time, experiencing life in a different country, and meeting some of the kindest and most compassionate people in Ann Arbor have been truly remarkable.”—Infer Baig

When asked about her experience, Infer Baig shared: “The Michigan summer term 2017 has been by far the greatest growing experience of my life. Here at the University of Michigan, I am taking inspiring courses on ‘Anthropology of the Senses’ and ‘Gender in the Middle East,’ which are very relevant to my academic interests. But I am also learning so much about myself. Travelling on my own for the first time, experiencing life in a different country, and meeting some of the kindest and most compassionate people in Ann Arbor have been truly remarkable. I know that when I go back home, I will be carrying with me some of the most wonderful memories, friendships, connections, and wisdom that life has to offer.”


In 2016, the Center for South Asian Studies signed agreements with Habib University (Karachi) and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) (Pune), providing an opportunity for their students to study and/or do research at U-M. Both programs are ongoing for the first time in Spring/Summer 2017. In late May, we welcomed six undergraduate students from IISER to Ann Arbor and sent three U-M students to IISER’s Pune campus under the auspices of the Michigan-IISER Science Exchange Program. IISER students were placed in research labs to work alongside U-M students and faculty for approximately 10 weeks. Preliminary feedback from both students and faculty has been very positive, and we hope to have many more such students at U-M in 2018. We were pleased that three U-M students were able to take advantage of a reciprocal opportunity to study with faculty at IISER. We hope to see more U-M students take advantage of this opportunity to study science and the humanities in an international context and work with IISER’s renowned faculty in the future.
The Center for South Asian Studies hosted an international conference on “Sound and South Asia” on October 7-8, 2016. The study of what we hear has conventionally been reserved for the medical specialist, the acoustician, and the ethnomusicologist. However, in recent years the life of sounds—from the most refined classical music to the most irritating of street noises—has become a topic for disciplines as diverse as history, law, economics, performance studies, and film studies.

The conference sought to highlight the role of gender and sexuality in shaping varied experiences of everyday life in Pakistan.

After brief opening remarks by Farina Mir (Department of History) and Salman A. Hussain (Institute of Business Administration) articulated future directions for the study of Indian cinema through their work on All-India Radio’s Urdu service and on the use of postcards (University of Iowa), participants explored alternative soundstudies are a burgeoning field across disciplines, and in the South Asian context it has focused most insistently on the famous sonic conventions of Indian commercial cinema. In keeping with this strong sub-field, the conference staged two conversations on film sound. The first panel on the topic considered the sonic conventions of particular historical moments in Indian filmmaking, whether in the silent and sound periods of non-digital filmmaking in the early and mid-twentieth century as in the research of Reema Majumdar (University of Pittsburgh), or in the digital environment of commercial filmmaking today, as explored by Madhuka Mukherjee (Jadavpur University, Kolkata). The second panel, on the topic of performance, featuring Pavitra Sundar (Hamilton College) and Corey Creekmur (University of Iowa), articulated future directions for the study of Indian cinema sounds, considering the bodily sound associated with particular singers and the imagined sound of history.

The conference concluded with a discussion of the valuation of sound, through the work of Michelle Frieder (Stony Brook University) and Jayson Beaster-Jones (University of Pennsylvania) and Amanda Weidman (Bryn Mawr College). Both focused on the musical repercussions of gender: Soniji on the seemingly continuous but continually reinvented world of traditional performance, and Weidman on the musical repercussions of gender: soneji on the seemingly continuous but continually reinvented world of traditional performance, and Weidman on the musical repercussions of gender: soneji on the seemingly continuous but continually reinvented world of traditional performance, and Weidman on the musical repercussions of gender: soneji on the seemingly continuous but continually reinvented world of traditional performance, and Weidman on the musical repercussions of gender: soneji on the seemingly continuous but continually reinvented world of traditional performance, and Weidman on the musical repercussions of gender: soneji on the seemingly continuous but continually reinvented world of traditional performance, and Weidman on the musical repercussions of gender: soneji on the seemingly continuous but continually reinvented world of traditional performance, and Weidman on the musical repercussions of gender: soneji on the seemingly continuous but continually reinvented world of traditional performance, and Weidman on the musical repercussions of gender.

The conference presented work on gendered experiences of moving through spaces, transit, roads, shrines, and religious gatherings, and how these spaces and encounters are negotiated through relations of power that are themselves shaped, mediated, and regulated through notions of masculinity and femininity. The presentations generated questions about how gender ideologies traverse state programs and society at large, and how these notions are both contested, negotiated, manipulated, and actively (re)produced by individuals and groups in various situations. Asilin Arondekar (University of California, Santa Cruz) concluded the conference by leading a lively discussion with the audience which considered the place of gender and sexuality in the study of Pakistan, and also how scholarship on Pakistan could impact the field of Gender and Sexuality Studies.

The conference was made possible by generous support from the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, as well as the U-M Institute for Research on Women & Gender, Islamic Studies Program, Residential College, Rackham Graduate School, LSA Central Student Government, Institute for the Humanities, Multicultural Student Affairs, Residence Halls Association, Newberry-Barbour Hall Council, East Quad Office of Multicultural Initiatives, Asian, Pacific Islander American Studies, Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design; and the departments of: Anthropology, Asian Languages and Cultures; Communication Studies, History, History of Art, and Women’s Studies. This conference was also funded in part by the Center’s Title VI federal grant from the US Department of Education.
Seeking Social Justice in South Asia

Conference on Interdisciplinary Conference on South Asia

The Center for South Asian Studies is pleased to host an international conference on September 21-23, 2017: “Seeking Social Justice in South Asia.” The aim of the conference is to focus on the complex cross-border implications of social justice, including religious and ethnic polarization, gender and sexuality, caste politics, minority rights, urbanization, and displacement, and to consider a range of interconnected struggles and producers of media (journalists/filmmakers) nationally-renowned lawyers, activists, academics, and Caribbean studies, Middle eastern and North african studies, and southeast asian studies to hold a two-day symposium to establish a dialogue around the world share many of the same concerns, even as specific regions, such as the international institute, Kelsey Museum of archaeology, Museum of anthropology, asian languages and Cultures, history of art, Near eastern studies, and the Centers for latin america and the arts.

Conference began with a film screening of Destruction of Memory, which tells the story of the “war against culture” in Syria and Iraq, looking not just at the ongoing actions of ISIS (ISIS), but also revealing past decisions that touched upon many of the themes that had arisen during the day-long conversations on the student papers. Professor Haynes’ audience was able to pick up on the resonances of the various thematic conversations that had emerged earlier in the day and later to follow-up on conversations in the informal setting of a conference dinner sponsored by the Center.

The successful outcome of the day found both the university community and Professor Haynes exposed to the kind of work undertaken by our students and the student presenters exposed to the range of faculty expertise on campus, beyond their individual disciplines, from which they might potentially in the future draw. The success of the conference owed to the willingness of the student presenters to share their work as well as to the faculty students, guests, and visitors who gave their time, many for the entire day to take part in the conference. The enthusiasm and support of the graduate student volunteers, notably Leslie Hempson (History), Zehra Hashmi (Anthropology and History) and Salman Hussain (Anthropology and History), who chaired individual sessions at the conference were imperative to the success of the conference.

Endangered Heritage Conference

War, climate change, globalization, and economic development pose significant threats to the world’s natural and cultural heritage. Societies around the world share many of the same concerns, even as specific regions, such as the international institute, Kelsey Museum of archaeology, Museum of anthropology, asian languages and Cultures, history of art, Near eastern studies, and the Centers for latin america and the arts.

The Center for South Asian Studies (CSAS) collaborated with the Museum Studies Program, Asian Studies Center and the Centers for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Middle Eastern and North African Studies, and Southeast Asian Studies to hold a two-day symposium to establish a dialogue surrounding global heritage. International experts and the U-M community were invited to identify threats to heritage and develop strategies to mitigate these dangers in both global and local contexts. The CSAS sponsored two speakers to share their expertise on the South Asian region. Gurmeet Rai (Director, Cultural Resource Conservation Initiative, New Delhi) discussed the importance of working with local communities in appreciating both the tangible and intangible aspects of heritage. Uthara Suvrathan (Bard Graduate Center) participated on a panel on “Expanding Heritage,” and shared perspectives gained from her involvement in preserving archaeological heritage in Southern India. The conference began with a film screening of Destruction of Memory, which tells the story of the “war against culture” in Syria and Iraq, looking not just at the ongoing actions of ISIS (ISIS), but also revealing past decisions that played a role in allowing for the destruction of heritage sites. The conference was comparative in scope, with speakers representing South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, Latin America, and Africa and the Middle East who presented on topics related to preserving global heritage in their various regions. This conference provided a much-needed conversation on the complexities and challenges of protecting heritage around the world.

The Endangered Heritage conference was made possible by the Departments of Anthropology, Asian Languages and Cultures, History of Art, Near Eastern Studies, and the International Museum of Archaeology, and the Museum Studies Program. This conference was also funded in part by Title VI Federal grants from the US Department of Education.

Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference on South Asia

The Center for South Asian Studies hosted an interdisciplinary conference on South Asia for graduate students on March 24, 2017. Graduate students from any discipline at the University of Michigan were invited to present papers that focused on any period or aspect of the study of South Asia. Presenters represented several different academic departments and were at different stages in their graduate careers. The following abstracts are based on the presentations of the students who participated in the conference.

The success of the conference owed to the willingness of the student presenters to share their work as well as to the faculty students, guests, and visitors who gave their time, many for the entire day to take part in the conference. The enthusiasm and support of the graduate student volunteers, notably Leslie Hempson (History), Zehra Hashmi (Anthropology and History) and Salman Hussain (Anthropology and History), who chaired individual sessions at the conference were imperative to the success of the conference.

Agrawal, Aniket Aga, 8(3), 2016.

of language and cultures, was awarded a Michigan Humanities Award with salutatory leave in 2016–17 to write her latest book project, Generous of the book is based on research conducted in India in 2013–14, which was supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities and the interdisciplinary Study of Asia, (Verge: Studies in Global Asia 3.1, Spring 2017), and completed Feminists Relativise the Nationalist State: Inequality, Exclusion and Change (New York University Press, forthcoming 2018). Fernandes served as a member of the American Institute for Indian Studies and continues to serve as the South Asia editor of Critical Asian Studies.

Mamulagum, Department of Psychology, was promoted in 2016–17 from Associate Professor to Professor. Mahalingam was selected by the USA Executive Committee for 2017 John Dewey Award for his ongoing commitment to the education of undergraduate students. Winners of the Dewey award model the full range of John Dewy's own considerable talents: scholarly productivity, provision of leadership, and engagement with and care for students.

Christi A. Merrill, Associate Professor, Department of Comparative Literature and Asian Languages and Cultures, was awarded a Michigan Humanities Award with salutatory leave in 2016–17 to write her latest book project, Generous of the book is based on research conducted in India in 2013–14, which was supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities and the interdisciplinary Study of Asia, (Verge: Studies in Global Asia 3.1, Spring 2017), and completed Feminists Relativise the Nationalist State: Inequality, Exclusion and Change (New York University Press, forthcoming 2018). Fernandes served as a member of the American Institute for Indian Studies and continues to serve as the South Asia editor of Critical Asian Studies.

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Savithry Namboodiripad will join U-M this fall as a Collegiate Postdoctoral Fellow in the College of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts and the National Center for Institutional Diversity. In fall 2019, she will be a tenure-track position in the U-M Linguistics Department. Namboodiripad’s research interests include language contact, language use in post-colonial societies and immigrant communities, and language emergence and change. She completed her Ph.D. in 2017 from University of California, San Diego. In her Ph.D. thesis, she conducted field experiments in Kerala, India, measuring variation in Malayalam word order. She is interested in how language use and contact can lead to language change, focusing on how use of English is resulting in changes to Malayalam phonology, lexicon, and syntax. Future work will investigate the relationship between language use and language structure by comparing immigrant speech communities to different communities of Malayalam-speakers in India. A native speaker of Malayalam who grew up in Minnesota, Savvi received her Bachelors and Masters degrees in Linguistics from the University of Chicago. She is looking forward to returning to the Midwest after her time in Southern California.

Meha Jain received an Assistant Professor in the School for Environment and Sustainability and is also part of the Sustainable Food Systems Initiative at the University of Michigan. Jain’s research examines the impacts of environmental change on agricultural production and strategies that farmers adopt to reduce negative impacts. Her work combines remote sensing of satellite imagery and geospatial analyses with household-level and census datasets to examine farmer decision-making and behavior across large spatial and temporal scales. To date, her work has focused on the impacts of weather variability and groundwater depletion on agricultural production in India, and whether smallholder farmers are able to adapt their cropping practices to mitigate these impacts. Jain currently has several ongoing projects related to sustainable agriculture in India, including (1) examining the impacts of more efficient fertilizer use in Bihar; (2) identifying the impacts of warming temperatures on wheat yields across the Indo-Gangetic Plains (IGP) and how farmers may be able to adapt to reduce negative impacts; and (3) the effects of groundwater depletion on agricultural production in the IGP and how farmers are adapting to falling water tables.

The Center for South Asian Studies co-sponsored two major curriculum outreach programs this year—The World History & Literature Initiative (WH&LI) and the UM-University of Puerto Rico Symposium. The aim of these programs is to connect experts in world area studies with K-12 teachers to build a more global curriculum. Teachers who attended either program were given a resource bank compiled over the past years, including videos, photos, presentation slides, data bases, and other resources suggestions by area studies experts.

The 12th World History & Literature Initiative (WH&LI) Conference was held at the University of Michigan’s School of Education on June 21-23, 2017. Titled “Resistance & Rebellion in World History & Literature,” the conference drew participation of over 40 teachers from the local area, Chicago, and Puerto Rico. The conference was partially funded by Title VI federal grants and a collaboration between the Office of Education and the five National Resource Centers in the International Curriculum. Presentations on South Asia were made by Farina Mir (History), who spoke on “Gandhi and His Historical Significance;” and by Zehra Hashmi (Anthropology and History), who spoke on “Feminist Resistance to Military Dictatorship in Pakistan.”

The third annual UM-University of Puerto Rico Symposium focused on “Citizenship & Identity in the Classroom,” and was held at the University of Puerto Rico on March 2-3, 2017. The symposium featured presentations by scholars from various disciplines, with expertise on different aspects of the political and historical periods. The conference sought to create a space in which faculty and graduate students from the University of Michigan and the University of Puerto Rico could share the innovative and diverse ways in which they have been studying the concept of citizenship with over 45 teachers and teacher candidates from San Juan, Puerto Rico, and surrounding areas. South Asia content was provided to the group by Siriam Mohan (Department of Communication Studies), who spoke on “The Photoshop State: Image Manipulation, Visual Culture and Electoral Politics in Digital India;” and Zehra Hashmi (Program in Anthropology and History), who gave a talk entitled, “Biometric Belonging: Identification and Security in Urban Pakistan.”

Teach-in: Disappeared Activists in Pakistan
Salman A. Hussain

On January 16, 2017, South Asia Solidarity in Michigan (SASM)—a network of graduate students at the University of Michigan—and the Center for South Asian Studies hosted a teach-in on the disappearances of activists and bloggers in Pakistan. Between January 4-7, 2017, four Pakistani bloggers and an activist were missing: Salman Haider (poet, actor, playwright, writer, and a lecturer at the Fatima Jinnah University in Rawalpindi); Ahmed Waqas Goraya (medical anthropologist); Asmaa Saeed (IT specialist); Ahmad Naqeeb Raza (shopkeeper); and Samir Aliaab (rights activist, and President of Civil Progressive Alliance Pakistan). Goraya, Saeed, and Raza had each been involved in online activity. At the time of the teach-in, all were unaccounted for, however all were returned to their homes one month after their abduction.

The teach-in began with Salman A. Hussain (Program in Anthropology and History) providing an overview of the specific cases of the five disappeared activists/bloggers, and a brief history of the blasphemy law that was mobilized in the Pakistani media to malign these activists after their disappearance. Farina Mir (History) described the vibrant culture of dissent in urban Pakistan, the particularities of the spaces of dissent, and how the crackdown on urban activism has presented a troubling new development in the history of state-civil society relations in Pakistan. Zehra Hashmi (Program in Anthropology and History) discussed what the implications of the disappearances and the securitization of cyber spaces for intellectual and political freedom in Pakistan and elsewhere. The discussion that followed these three presentations was enriched by BrunoReniers (Program in Anthropology and History) comments on enforced disappearances in Latin America. The teach-in addressed the specificity of enforced disappearances and the victimization of political activists in Pakistan, while also placing these issues in a global context of the increasing repression of dissent.

Being Brown in Trump’s America: A Roundtable on Hate Crimes Against South Asians in the United States
Salman A. Hussain

In the aftermath of a racially motivated shooting that killed one Indian-American and wounded another in February 2017, the Center for South Asian Studies co-sponsored a roundtable discussion on the political climate for South Asians in the United States. Organized by two U-M student organizations, Tricontinental Solidarity Network (TCSN) and South Asia Solidarity in Michigan (SASM), the roundtable was held on March 20, 2017. Panelists included: Manan Desai (American Culture), Heela Kanjed (History & Women’s Studies), Salman A. Hussain (History & Anthropology), and Shama Lakdawala (Chai Tea Party). Discussion was moderated by Tapas Malhotra (History).

In introductory remarks, Hussain presented a brief sketch of the post 9/11 escalation in hate crimes against South Asians, and connected this history to the immigration-related state measures that target them. He then argued that the term “South Asian” ought not elide the many differences that exist among South Asian communities and individuals, urging that South Asian-American solidarity be based on the acknowledgement of these differences. Kanjed focused her comments on growing up as a Muslim South Asian woman in the US. She connected the post 9/11 increase in Islamophobia and state surveillance targeting Muslims to US foreign policy. She also highlighted some of the political postures and positions Muslim-Americans have adopted in this context. Desai deepened the discussion by bringing contemporary events by talking about three moments: the Asian Barred Zone Act of 1937, the Bhagat Singh Three case of the early twentieth century, and the late-twentieth century wave of anti-South-Asian violence known as “hot busting.” Lastly, a South Asian cultural and media activist spoke about the shockwaves of Trump’s election. These brief comments were followed by a robust discussion.

#extrastrong Rebekah Modrak

#extrastrong was an online curatorial project generating a collection of artworks inspired by, and created in response to, the current state of the art world, by the users of eBay. The artists creating the artworks-as-auctions on #extrastrong used the eBay interface and listing template as the tool for production of their work. Launched on January 15, 2017, #extrastrong presented a new artwork-as-auction each day until April 8, 2017. The project is the creation of Rebekah Modrak, UM Stamps School of Art & Design and Maralyn Ghidisi, a curator who teaches at the Sirishi Institute of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore, India. All #extrastrong works are archived online at extrastrong.com. A book documenting #extrastrong was published in July 2017 by Maize Books, with support from the Center for South Asian Studies.

FLAS Fellowship Awards
The CSAS is pleased to announce that 10 undergraduates and 6 graduate students have been awarded Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships for the 2017-18 academic year. The Center for South Asian Studies offers FLAS awards in Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu.

UNDERGRADUATES

Hanshia Arora (Hindi) Sophomore, Computer Science and Data Science Major
Ruchika Chandnani (Hindi) Junior, Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience Major
Vaidhika Dhongre (Hindi) Senior International Studies Major
Sara Forogouhi (Urdu) Sophomore, Intended Chemical Science Major
Shreyasi Gangal (Hindi) Junior, Business Major
Ibrahim Jilali (Urdu) Senior, Public Policy Major
Tarana Joshi (Hindi) Junior, Asian Studies Major
Syedah Mahmood (Urdu) Senior, Sociology Major
Shriya Suresh (Hindi) Junior, Gender and Health Major
Rohan Mege (Hindi) Junior, Comparative Literature Major

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Shahile Forghadi (Urdu) is a PhD student in Near Eastern Studies Department.
William Hall (Persian) is pursuing a Master’s degree in South Asian Studies from the Center for South Asian Studies.
Rachel Hirsch (Hindi) is pursuing a Master’s degree in South Asian Studies from the Center for South Asian Studies.
Salman A. Hussain (Hindi) is a PhD student in the Interdepartmental Program in Anthropology and History.
Sierra LaPoint (Hindi) is a junior majoring in Public Policy.

Janaki Phillips (hindi) is a Phd student in the department of Anthropology.
Sona Hakeem Grewal is an Assistant Professor of World Literature in the Department of English at MacEwan University in Edmonton, Canada. She was awarded a PhD by the Department of Comparative Literature in 2016. Her dissertation, “Urdu Through Its Others: Ghalai, Canonization, and Translation,” examines the codification of Urdu language and literature around a highly popular form of poetry called the ghazal. By analyzing both academic scholarship and popular narratives that link the ghazal to proximate literatures and cultural studies, Dr. Grewal explores the boundaries of the Urdu language itself and renews the role of comparison and translation.

Harjeet Singh Grewal received a PhD from the joint program in History and Women’s Studies at the University of Michigan in 2017. This year he will join Lakehead University in Edmonton, Canada. He is currently engaged in an assistant professor of South Asian History at the Department of Anthropology and Politics of a State Formation in a Divided Territory (1947–63),” examines the state-building practices of the early postcolonial Kashmiri state in the aftermath of its disputed accession to India. He will be joining Lafayette College in Fall 2017 as an Assistant Professor of South Asian History.

John Mathias’ dissertation, “Contentious Ethics: Creativity and Persuasion Among Environmental Organizers in South India” is an ethnographic study of activists in Kerala’s “people’s struggles,” a mode of grassroots community organizing primarily concerned with the impacts of industrial pollution, land rights, and other environmental conflicts. His dissertation focuses on how as they transform their own ethical lives—learning protest songs, going to marches instead of going to work, giving up tea and Western medicine—and also as they attempt to persuade others with magazine articles, radio speeches, and guided tours of pollution. Describing the entanglements of changing one’s self and changing others in people’s struggle for political empowerment, Mathias attempts to push beyond binaries between freedom and determinism, and also as they attempt to persuade others with magazine articles, radio speeches, and guided tours of pollution. Describing the entanglements of changing one’s self and changing others in people’s struggle for political empowerment, Mathias attempts to push beyond binaries between freedom and determinism, and also as they attempt to persuade others with magazine articles, radio speeches, and guided tours of pollution. Describing the entanglements of changing one’s self and changing others in people’s struggle for political empowerment, Mathias attempts to push beyond binaries between freedom and determinism.

Leslie Hesperson, a PhD candidate in the Department of History, is completing her dissertation, “Making the Khadi Economy: A Political Economy of Non-Violence for Twentieth-Century India.” She will be teaching a course in the History Department in Fall 2017 on Islam and Muslim communitie and cultural studies. The volume stems from a preliminary ethnographic fieldwork in 2015 in Shimla hills through the lenses of pollution, memory, colonization, enchantment, and the supernatural. In addition to her research, Khare received a summer FLAS award for Hindi at MSU’s program in Java, as well as an academic year FLAS award for Hindi 2017-18.

Zeher Hashmi, a PhD candidate in the Program in Anthropology and History, received the Social Science Research Council’s International Dissertation Research Fellowship. Women-Women Foundation for Anthropoloy Research Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, and the National Science Foundation’s Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant for her dissertation. Hashmi will be in Pakistan conducting research during the 2017-18 academic year.

Alexander Persaud won the New Researcher Prize at the 2017 Economic History Society, an assistant for Christi Merrill (Comparative Literature; Asian Languages and Cultures), to create an archive of Hindi Dalit literature connected to the Translations networks digital projects.

Zwanim Khare is a PhD student in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures. Her PhD project focuses on nonfiction accounts of imprisonment produced by political prisoners in India. Her work is concerned with the way the Indian state responds to figures who challenge mainstream political discourse, and how this dynamic is chronicled within accounts written in Urdu and Hindi. Khare spent the summer of 2017 in Lucknow and New Delhi working as a Research Assistant for Christi Merrill (Comparative Literature; Asian Languages and Cultures), to create an archive of Hindi Dalit literature connected to the Translations networks digital projects.

Sangita Sahi is a PhD student in the Joint Program in History and Women’s Studies. She is interested in exploring daily domestic practices and new family relationships produced in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Bengali households. She received an International Individual Fellowship for summer archival research in India. She was also awarded a Commerce of Scholars fellowship for summer 2017 in the Institute for Research on Women and Gender.

Janaki Phillips is a doctoral student in the Department of Anthropology. This summer Phillips began doing preliminary research for her dissertation project in Himachal Pradesh. Her summer project investigated encounters with British ghosts and local spirits in the Shimali Hills through the lenses of memory, colonization, enchantment, and the supernatural. In addition to her research, Phillips received a summer FLAS award for Hindi at MSU’s program in Java, as well as an academic year FLAS award for Hindi 2017-18.

Syed Abdul Aqib Shah is a visiting graduate student in Anthropology at the University of Michigan, writing his dissertation “Practices and Perceptions of Bengali Corruption: An Ethnographic Study of Land Revenue Administration in Pakistan.” He is interested in a detailed description of how the Pakhtar system which is notoriously perceived as corrupt works today and how bureaucratic structures and policies, state administration, and socio-political and economic organization of post-colonial Pakhtun society facilitate and create room for corruption in Pakistani bureaucracy. Syed is the recipient of a four-year Split PhD Scholarship under the faculty development program of Quaid-I-Azam University Islamabad, Pakistan.
Organized in 2006 with a generous donation from an anonymous donor, the Summer in South Asia Undergraduate Fellowship (SSUSA) has provided 83 students with funding for research and internships in India. Please join us on October 6th for the Summer in South Asia Symposium or visit the blog (ssusa2017.lla.umich.edu) to learn more about the 2017 SSUSA fellow’s time in India.

Natalie Andraske is a senior with a major in International Studies and minors in Program in the Environment and Asian Languages and Cultures. Natalie spent two months interning with Frontier Markets in Jaipur, Rajasthan where she researched how Frontier Markets addresses rural electrification by partnering with local entrepreneurs and training rural women to sell their solar products to other women in a program called Solar Sahelis.

Christopher Olson is a junior majoring in Political Science and minor in Community Action and Social Change. Chris conducted independent research on urban planning, examining the master plans of Bangalore and Amritsar to learn what values are motivating planning in the two respective cities and why those motivations are present.

Marianne Datta is a sopho- more with an intended major in Public Policy with minors in Community Action & Social Change and Gender & Health. Marianne was in New Delhi at Prerna, an NGO devoted to enriching the lives of children through art, dance, and meditation programs. Marianne’s final project explored how creative activities benefit children living in need of care.

Adissoon Kamba is a senior double-majoring in Biology and Creative Writing & Literature. She was in Dharmshala working for Lha Charity, the largest organization serving the Tibetan refugees living in the area. Addison served as a contributing writer to their magazine along with teaching English and leading conversation classes.

Caroline Richburg is a junior studying Biomedical Science and Anthropology. Caroline was in Mumbai with the Foundation for Mother and Child Health (FMCH), an organization focused on neonatal care for malnourished infants, community education, and support for local mothers. Caroline’s project explores what is meant by the term “actionable knowledge,” as used by stakeholders, and the uniformity of knowledge dissemination to local clinics.

Neel Swamy is a senior studying Neurosciences with a minor in Gender & Health. Neel interned with Swasth on the Avahan India AIDS Initiative, an HIV prevention and health resource centre in Bangalore that focuses on structurally and systematically addressing the health needs of marginalized populations, initiated by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Neel’s project focuses on the ways in which the initiative have proven to be successful and how Swasth has empowered individuals through community engagement.

Neha Tiwari is a senior with a minor in International Studies and a minor in Biochemistry. Neha was in Goa working with San- gath, an NGO dedicated to improving health by empowering existing community resources to provide appropriate physical, psychological, and social therapies. Neha’s research explores the integration of community-based lay counseling in a traditional mental health treatment program.
CSAS Lecture Series 2017-18

September 8, 2017
Vikramaditya Khanna, University of Michigan School of Law
Changes in Dowry Practices?: Insights on Dowry and Its Regulation
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

September 21, 2017
P. Sainath, People’s Archive of Rural India
Telling the stories of 833 million Indians in the digital age: The People’s Archive of Rural India
4pm • North Quad Space 2435

September 22-23, 2017
Seeking Social Justice in South Asia Conference

September 29, 2017
Ronit Ricci, Department of Asian Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Sarandib, Lanka, Ceylon: Banishment and Belonging
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

October 6, 2017
Summer in South Asia Fellowship Symposium
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

October 11, 2017
Mohsin Hamid
Exit West: A Novel
4:30pm • Rackham Amphitheatre

October 13, 2017
Farhana Ibrahim, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi
Marriage, ‘Trafficking’ and the Transnational Family: Moral and Legal Regulation of Nineteenth Century Women’s Mobility in the Western Indian Ocean
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

October 20, 2017
Veena Das, Department of Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University
Inordinate Knowledge: Intimacy and Publicity in a Slum in Delhi
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

November 2, 2017
Ifat Fatima, Filmmaker
Film Screening and discussion of Khoon diy Baarav (Blood Leaves its Trail)
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

November 6, 2017
Thirumalachari Ramasami
Policy Talks at the Ford School
4pm • Annenberg Auditorium

November 13, 2017
Ranjani Mazumdar, School of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University
The Highway, Automobility and New Promises in 1960s Bombay Cinema
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

November 17, 2017
Nathan Tabor, Department of History, Western Michigan University
Eating the Audience’s Brain: Persianate Sociability in 18th-Century Delhi’s Poetry Salons
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

December 1, 2017
Chitralekha Zutshi, Department of History, College of William & Mary
Self and the World in a Life Narrative: Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah’s Aatish-i-Chinar
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

December 8, 2017
Kajri Jain, Department of Visual Studies, University of Toronto
“Minimum Government, Maximum Governance”: Modi’s Statue of Unity and the Sense of Scale
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

January 8, 2018
Nayanjot Lahiri, Ashoka University
India’s Archaeological Heritage Since Independence: Challenges and Dilemmas
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

February 2, 2018
Asher Gheirn, Department of Geography, Rutgers University
Atmospheric Citizenship: Distributions of Life in the Wake of Delhi’s Airpocalypse
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

February 16, 2018
S.V. Srinivas, Azim Premji University
Reactive Viewing: Screens and Publics in 21st Century India
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

March 9, 2018
Sanjay Muttoo and Saman Habib
Lucknow in Letters: Endeavors, Achievements, and Tragedies
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

March 30, 2018
Munis Faruqi, Department of South & Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley
The Rise of the Imperial Eunuchate under Emperor Aurangzeb, 1658-1707
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

April 6, 2018
8th Annual UM-Pakistan Conference

April 13, 2018
Amita Baviskar, Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi
Consumer Citizenship: The Social Life of Industrial Foods in India
4pm • Room 110 • Weiser Hall

2017 Regents of the University of Michigan
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This newsletter is funded in part by a Title VI NRC grant from the U.S. Department of Education.