

NEETI NAIR

Professor of History

University of Virginia

Charlottesville, VA 22904

nn2v@virginia.edu

Academic Appointments

University of Virginia, Corcoran Department of History

Professor, fall 2023 to present

Associate Professor, fall 2012 to summer 2023

Assistant Professor, fall 2006 to summer 2012

University of Virginia, Department of Middle Eastern & South Asian Languages & Cultures

Affiliate Faculty, fall 2006 to present

University of Virginia, Department of Women, Gender & Sexuality

Affiliate Faculty, fall 2023 to present

Tulane University, Department of History, Assistant Professor, spring 2006

Brown University, Department of History, Visiting Instructor, spring 2004 and spring 2005

Harvard University, Department of History, Head Teaching Fellow, fall 2001

Tufts University, Department of History, Teaching Assistant, 1999 - 2004

Education

Ph.D. in History, Tufts University, November 2005

Thesis: Between Homeland and Nation: The Politics of Punjabi Hindus, 1907 – 1947

M. A. in History, Tufts University, May 2005

B.A. in History (Honours). St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi. 1998. First Class

Select Awards and Honors

Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington D.C., 2017 - 2018; 2024 - 2025

University of Virginia Sesquicentennial Fellowship, 2009 - 2010, spring 2016, 2024

Global Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2018 - 2020; 2023 - 2024

Global Center Grant, Center for Global Inquiry + Innovation, UVA, 2023

UVA Faculty Summer Stipend for Research, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2020

UVA Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, 2008, 2010, 2015, 2021

Mellon Humanities Fellow, Institute of the Humanities and Global Cultures, UVA, 2020 - 2021

Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Research Grant, fall 2020

Public Voices Fellowship, The Op-Ed Project, fall 2019

American Council of Learned Societies, Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship, John W. Kluge

Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 2016 - 2017

National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, 2016

American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Short-term Research Fellowship, 2014 - 2015

Mellon-MIT Inter-University Program on International Migrations, 2002 - 2003

Columbia University, Taraknath Das Foundation, Southern Asian Institute, 2002

Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Derek Bok Center for Teaching, 2002

Tufts University Graduate School Student Award for Outstanding Academic Performance, 2001

Publications

1. Monographs

[*Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia*](#), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2023

- Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy Book Prize, Association for Asian Studies, 2025
- Shortlisted for the [*Karwaan Book Award*](#), 2024
- Book launch at [Woodrow Wilson Center](#); Book discussion at [Netaji Research Bureau](#)
- Interviewed in [Open Magazine](#), [Public Anthropologist](#), [Socio-Legal Review](#)
- **Reviews** in *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *Asian Affairs*, *Biblio: A Review of Books* (review essay), *Business Standard*, *Doing Sociology*, *Frontline*, *The Indian Express*, *Journal of Church and State*, *Journal of Law and Religion* (review essay), *Reading Religion*, *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* (SAMAJ), *South Asian Review*, *Postcolonial Studies*, *The Book Review* (India), *The Friday Times* (Pakistan), *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, *The News* (Pakistan), *The Telegraph* (India), *The Tribune* (India).
- Book Roundtable on [Socio-Legal Review Forum](#) (three review essays)
- Essays on related themes: *Current History*, *The Daily Star* (Bangladesh), *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, *Newslaundry*, *The Print*
- Hindi translation with Rajkamal Prakashan (under contract)

[*Changing Homelands: Hindu Politics and the Partition of India*](#), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2011, Paperback 2016

- [A Washington Post WorldViews Recommended Book](#), 2013
- **Reviews** in *American Historical Review*, *Contemporary South Asia*, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* (review essay), *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, *Social History*, *Asian Affairs*, *Journal of Genocide Research*, *India International Centre Quarterly*, *The Book Review*, *The Hindu*, *South Asian Review*, *Oral History Review*, *Indian Historical Review*, *H-Net Reviews*, *Journal of World History*, *Canadian Journal of History*, *Asian Journal of Social Science*.
- Featured in [Dhaka Tribune](#), [Indian Express](#), [Hindustan Times](#)
- Invited essays on related themes: *India Today*, *Seminar*, *Page 99 Test*

2. Books in Progress

Capitals in the Margins: South Asia Since Partition, book being researched at Wilson Center (2024-25)

India's Partition: Politics, Culture, Memory, under contract with Cambridge University Press

3. Edited Books

[*Citizenship, Belonging, and the Partition of India*](#), Routledge, 2024. Originally published as *Asian Affairs*, 53:2, 2022

- Reviewed in [The News](#) (Pakistan)

[*Ghosts from the Past? Assessing Recent Developments in Religious Freedom in South Asia*](#), coedited with Michael Kugelman, Routledge, 2022, Paperback 2023. Originally published as *Asian Affairs*, 49:2, 2018

4. Select Articles

In Edited Volumes

'The Unravelling of the Partition Consensus' in Ian Talbot, Sarah Ansari, and Udit Sen eds., *Routledge Handbook of the Partition of India*, in preparation

'Dialogue and Silence in Partition's Shadow: The Muslim Question in Asghar Wajahat's Fiction' in Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal eds., *Nation, Partition, Federation: South Asia's Freedom in Global Perspective*, Routledge, forthcoming

'Introduction' to 'Citizenship, Belonging, and the Partition of India,' in Neeti Nair ed., *Citizenship, Belonging and the Partition of India*, Routledge, 2024

'Introduction' to 'Ghosts from the Past? Assessing Recent Developments in Religious Freedom in South Asia,' in Neeti Nair and Michael Kugelman eds., *Ghosts from the Past: Assessing Recent Developments in Religious Freedom in South Asia*, Routledge, 2022

'Toward mass education or an "aristocracy of talent": non-alignment and the making of a strong India' in Gyan Prakash et al eds., *The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia*, Bloomsbury, 2018

Articles on 'Hindu Mahasabha', 'Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya', 'Rangila Rasul', 'Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh', 'Sanatan Dharm', 'Shuddhi', 'Swami Shradhanand', in Ayesha Jalal ed., *The Oxford Companion to Pakistani History*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2012

'*riyaz, saadhana, taiyyari*: life practices', in Ananya Vajpeyi ed., 'A Country of Our Own: A Symposium on re-imagining South Asia', *Seminar* No. 632, April 2012, 27-30

In Journals

'Indo-Pak Relations: a Window of Opportunity that has Almost Closed', *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 20, 2014, Vol. 49, No. 51

'Delhi University's Undergraduate Programme: Notes from the Archives', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Special Series on 'Debating DU', May 25, 2013, Vol. 48, No. 21

['Beyond the "communal" 1920s: the problem of intention, legislative pragmatism, and the making of Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code'](#), *IESHR*, July 2013, Vol. 50, No. 3, 317-340

- Republished in *The Law Weekly* 2016-3-LW, Vol. 199, 1 JS - 20 JS and *The Law Weekly (Criminal)* 2016-1-LW (CrI) 48 JS - 68 JS
- Cited in the Law Commission of India Report on [Hate Speech](#), March 2017
- Cited in the International Commission of Jurists Report [On Trial: The Implementation of Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws](#), November 2015
- Featured in *The Diplomat*, *Mint*, *The Print*, *The Telegraph*, *Open Magazine*

'Partition and Minority Rights in Punjabi Hindu Debates, 1920-1947', Special Articles, *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 24, 2011, Vol. 46, No. 52, 61-69

'Bhagat Singh as "satyagrahi": The Limits to Non-violence in Late Colonial India', *Modern Asian Studies*, May 2009, Vol. 43, No. 3, 649-681

5. Select Opinion Pieces

[‘A death on the altar of inclusive India: Remembering Gandhi in 2024’](#), *Newslaundry*, January 30, 2024

[‘A brief history of India’s present’](#), *The Hindu*, August 15, 2023 [pdf] [invited]

[‘1976 and 1993 – the two moments in Indian history that show secularism’s fall from grace’](#), *The Print*, April 5, 2023 [book excerpt]

[‘A Discussion from the Indian Parliament in 1970: Who Begins A Riot?’](#) *The Wire*, March 18, 2023 [book excerpt]

[‘1971 and the case for secularism in Bangladesh and India’](#), *The Daily Star*, September 12, 2022

- Republished in [The Print](#), September 13, 2022

[‘What might Gandhi have done today?’](#) *The Hindu*, May 2, 2022 [invited]

[‘The will to secular practice’](#) *The Indian Express*, December 30, 2021

[‘A Historian’s Fears’](#) *The Indian Express*, June 12, 2021

[‘For Congress, A History Lesson’](#) *The Indian Express*, August 29, 2020

[‘Haksar’s advice to Indira Gandhi can help Sonia steer Congress in the right direction’](#) *The Print*, March 13, 2020

[‘Missing Rahul in Delhi’](#) *The Indian Express*, March 3, 2020

[‘For the first time, India is seeing secularism go from a top-down decree to a street slogan’](#) *The Print*, January 3, 2020

[‘Modi’s Kashmir move is biggest test for Indian democracy’](#) *The Print*, August 5, 2019

[‘In 1964, calling Godse patriot led to uproar in Parliament. Now Pragya Thakur gets approval’](#) *The Print*, May 19, 2019

[‘Old Laws for New Reasons: The Limits to Free Speech in India’](#), Berkley Forum, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, Georgetown University, August 23, 2018 [invited]

- Republished in [The Print](#), August 26, 2018

[‘Secularism and India’s Electoral Democracy’](#), *Asia Dispatches*, Wilson Center Blog, June 2018 [invited]

[‘Rising Religious Intolerance in South Asia’](#) *Current History*, April 2018 [invited]

[‘In many significant ways, Nehru’s vision for India seems passé’](#) *The Print*, November 14, 2017 [invited]

[‘What does Nawaz Sharif’s disqualification mean for democracy in Pakistan and its politics’](#) *The Print*, July 28, 2017 [invited]

[‘Heroes of Hindu Nationalism’](#) Up Front, *India Today*, January 12, 2015 [pdf] [invited]

[‘The uniformity project’](#) *The Indian Express*, June 26, 2014

'Restraint vs. Denial: The Struggle between India and Pakistan,' *Harvard International Review*, Web Perspectives, February 6, 2009 [invited]

['The Truth of Geography'](#) *Outlook India*, December 4, 2008

Translations of Select Pieces

[1971 ki jang aur kyun Bangladesh aur Bharat ke hit dharmnirapekshata mein nihit hain](#), *The Print Hindi*, September 14, 2022

[Bangladesh celebrated their golden jubilee of their liberation war](#), *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, September 16, 2022

[Haksar ki Indira Gandhi ko di gayi salaah Congress ko patri par lane mein Sonia ki madad kar sakti hai](#), *The Print Hindi*, March 13, 2020

[Dharmnirapekshata ki udghoshana pehli baar bharat ki sadkon par naaron ke roop mein goonj rahi hai](#), *The Print Hindi*, January 3, 2020

[Inquilab zindabad echoing through the streets of different parts of India](#), *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, January 4, 2020

[Kashmir par Modi ki pahal bharatiya loktantra aur maun udaarvaadiyon ke liye sabse badi pareeksha hai](#), *The Print Hindi*, August 6, 2019

[Sadhvi Pragya calling Nathuram Godse a patriot is not surprising at all](#), *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, May 19, 2019

['English has now become an Indian language'](#) *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, August 7, 2014

'Bhagat Singh as "satyagrahi": The Limits to Non-violence in Late Colonial India', Translated into Hindi by Krishna Chaitanya for *Filhaal*, September - October 2021, pp. 25-39

6. Select Book Reviews

['An Emergency Today'](#), Review of *Emergency Chronicles: Indira Gandhi and Democracy's Turning Point* by Gyan Prakash, *The New Rambler: An Online Review of Books*, September 2019 [invited]

'Looking Back: Filling in the gaps of Partition,' Review of *Looking Back: The 1947 Partition of India 70 Years On* ed., Rakhshanda Jalil, Tarun K. Saint and Debjani Sengupta, *The Print*, October 1, 2017 [invited]

Review of *Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy since Independence* by Steven I. Wilkinson, *The American Historical Review*, 121, 1, 2016, 218-219 [invited]

['Freedom and Faith in India'](#) Review of *Pluralism and Democracy in India: Debating the Hindu Right* eds. Wendy Doniger and Martha Nussbaum, *Current History*, South Asia, April 2015 [invited]

Review of [Strictly Personal: Manmohan & Gursharan](#) by Daman Singh, *The Sunday Tribune - Spectrum*, 21 September 2014 [invited]

Review of *Women, War, and the Making of Bangladesh: Remembering 1971* by Yasmin Saikia, *The American Historical Review*, 118, 1, 2013, 169-170 [invited]

Review of *Pedagogy for Religion: Missionary Education and the Fashioning of Hindus and Muslims in Bengal* by Parina Sengupta, *Social History*, 37, 3, 2012, 341-343 [invited]

Review of *The Partition of India* by Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 21, 3, 2010, 464-467 [invited]

Review of *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction* by Tarun K. Saint, *Seminar* 610, June 2010, 57-61 [invited]

Review of *Shameful Flight: the last years of the British Empire in India* by Stanley Wolpert, *Journal of British Studies*, 47, 2, 2008, 475-476 [invited]

Review of *Precolonial and Colonial Punjab: Society, Economy, Politics and Culture* ed., Reeta Grewal and Sheena Pall, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 66, 2, 2007, 568-71 [invited]

Review of *India: A National Culture?* ed. Geeti Sen, *Contemporary South Asia*, 14, 1, 2005, 113-15

Review of *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* by Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *Seminar* 534, February 2004, 74-76

Select Invited Presentations

Roundtable on ‘The Past and Present of Hindutva’, American Historical Association Annual Meeting, New York City, January 2025

‘The Idea of South Asia’, Robert D. Cross Memorial Lecture, University of Virginia, October 2024

‘Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia’, Book Talk, South Asia Speaker Series, Georgetown University, October 2024

‘[Secularism and Belonging in South Asia](#)’, Book Discussion with Sugata Bose, Netaji Research Bureau, Kolkata, 2024

‘Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia’, Book Discussion, Center for Studies of Plural Societies (CSPS), New Delhi, 2024

‘Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia’, Book Conversation with Editorial Board Members, *Socio-Legal Review*, and Karthick Ram Manoharan, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, 2023

Roundtable with J. Barton Scott on ‘Secularism, Emotion, and the Law in South Asia’, Global Religion and Politics Research Group, Northwestern University, 2023

‘Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia’, Book Talk, Center for South Asian and Indian Ocean Studies, Tufts University, 2023

‘Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia’ – New Books Panel, Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2023

'Dialogue and Silence in Partition's Shadow: the Muslim Question in Asghar Wajahat's Fiction,' Conference on *Empire, Nation, Federation: South Asia's Freedom in Global Perspective*, Harvard-Tufts Conference on the 75th Anniversary of Independence and Partition, 2023

'Hurt Sentiments and the Making and Unmaking of Indian Secularism,' Book Talk, Center for the Advanced Study of India (CASI), University of Pennsylvania, 2023

'Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia', [Book launch](#) with Michael Kugelman and commentators Tarunabh Khaitan, Ali Qasmi, and Ali Riaz, Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, 2023

'Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia' – Book conversation with Gyan Prakash and Harini Kumar, M. S. Chadha Center for Global India, Princeton University, 2023

Roundtable on *Hindutva and Violence: V. D. Savarkar and the Politics of History* by Vinayak Chaturvedi at Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2022

Discussant, 'The Failure of Federation: The Cases of Jammu & Kashmir and the Northeast,' Conference on *Empire, Nation, Federation: South Asia's Freedom in Global Perspective*, Harvard-Tufts Conference on the 75th Anniversary of Independence and Partition, October 2022

'The Problem of Belonging After the Partition of India,' Mellon Fellow Symposium Series, Institute of the Humanities & Global Culture, University of Virginia, 2021

'Three Moments in the History of Indian Secularism,' Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, 2019

'Five Moments in the History of Human Rights in India,' International Human Rights Clinic, University of Virginia School of Law, 2019

We are Ayodhya: The Life and Times of a Festival for Secularism, Liu Institute for Asian Studies and the South Asia Group, University of Notre Dame, 2019

'Godse's legacy for Gandhian secularism' for a panel titled *Rethinking the Murder of the Mahatma: Political Assassinations and the Burdens of History*, Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018

'The Objectives Resolution of Pakistan: Islam, Minorities, and the Making of a Democracy,' Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University, 2018

'The Challenge and the Promise of the Objectives Resolution of Pakistan,' South Asian University, New Delhi, 2017

'Case laws, testimonies, and the everyday life of blasphemy laws in India and Pakistan,' Annual Conference of the Law and Society Association, Mexico City, 2017

'The Historian as Judge: Free Speech Case Laws in Postcolonial India and Pakistan,' Washington and Lee University, 2016

'Section 295A: The Unexpected Afterlives of a Colonial Piece of Legislation,' for a panel titled *Afterlives: Postcolonial Laws and their Colonial Antecedents in South Asia*, Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Seattle, 2016

'Towards mass education or a "natural aristocracy of talents"?: Manpower needs and the virtues of "non-alignment"' Conference on *The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia*, Princeton University, 2015

'Ideas of Justice and Unity in Indian Higher Education,' Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC-AAS), University of Virginia, 2015

'Debates over intention, the intention behind debates: legislative pragmatism and the making of Section 295-A of the Indian Penal Code', *Conference on Religion, Patronage and Reform in Modern South Asia*, Department of South Asia Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 2012

Discussant, 'The Coast of Tantura: 1948 and after' by Alon Confino, paper for *1948 in Palestine: An Interdisciplinary Symposium*, University of Virginia, 2011

'The Problem of Return for Partition's Punjabi Hindu Refugees,' Center for South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011

'Surprise, Disbelief, and the Telos of Partition,' Indian Council of Historical Research Delhi, 2011

'*Om shantih, ameen*: between communalism and anti-colonial nationalism,' Workshop on *Radical Politics in 20th century Punjab*, European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, University of Bonn, 2010

""*Kehte bain naasur hai*"": memory and the search for meaning in post-Partition Delhi,' Ambedkar University Delhi, 2010

Roundtable on *Specters of Mother India: the global restructuring of an Empire* by Mrinalini Sinha at Mid-Atlantic Conference on British Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, 2009

'Gandhian *satyagraha* as terrorism: the limits to non-violence in late colonial India,' Conference on *Terrorism and Modernity: Global Perspectives on Nineteenth Century Political Violence*, German Historical Institutes and the Department of History, Tulane University, 2008

'*Om shantih, ameen*: religiously informed anti-colonial protest,' Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008

""Unity cannot be purchased at the cost of Hindu rights"": the Nation debated as Hindu,' Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Atlanta, 2008

'Bhagat Singh as *satyagrahi*: a "Clash of Principles" and a "Question of Humanity,"' Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting San Francisco; Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; University of Delhi, 2006

'Religion, Democracy, and their Discontents,' Summer Program on Understanding Globalization - Focus on South Asia, Programs in International Educational Resources, Yale University, 2005

""Things happen to upset plans"": the problem of responsibility and Partition violence,' Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004

""We left our keys with our neighbors in 1947"": private memories, public histories and the making of a new India,' Center for International Studies, MIT, 2004

'Crafting a Nation: The Political Identities of Lala Lajpat Rai, 1882 – 1928,' Graduate Students Interdisciplinary Studies Symposium, Tufts University, 2001

Teaching

Undergraduate

History of Modern India
Twentieth-century South Asia
India's Partition: Literature, Culture, Politics
Free Speech and Blasphemy in South Asia
Imperial Encounters: Rules and Lives in Colonized India
The Partition of India: Problems and Perspectives
Histories of Education and Nation-making in India
The Subaltern in Literature and History (with Mrinalini Chakravorty)
War and Peace in South Asia (planning)

Graduate

Contemporary South Asia
Social History of Modern India
Readings in Indian Ocean Studies
Readings on Twentieth-century South Asia
Readings on the Partition of India
Memory and Archive in South Asian History

Dissertation Committees:

Smriti A. Sharma, University of Virginia, PhD student, advisor
Rashmi Banerjee, University of Virginia, PhD student, advisor
T. C. A. Achintya, University of Virginia, PhD student, committee
Yuchen Zhao, University of Virginia, PhD student, committee
Arya Mack-Gilson, University of Virginia, MA 2024, committee
Rohail Salman, George Washington University, PhD 2022, external committee
Stanley Blakeley Winslow, University of Virginia, PhD 2010, committee
Hillary Jean Bracken, University of Virginia, PhD 2007, co-advisor (with Richard B. Barnett)

Additional Teaching Experience

Tulane University, Department of History, Assistant Professor, spring 2006
History of Modern South Asia to 1947
Imperial Encounters: Rules and Lives in Colonized India
The Partition of India: Problems and Perspectives

Brown University, Department of History, Visiting Instructor, spring 2004; spring 2005
History of Modern India

Service to the Profession

Elected Member, South Asia Council, Association for Asian Studies, 2025 - 2028

Member, Alumni Advisory Board, John W. Kluge Center, Library of Congress, 2021 - 2023

External Reviewer, American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship Selection Committee, 2023 - 24

External Reviewer, Royal Society for Asian Affairs Travel Awards, 2024

External Reviewer, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Fellowship Selection Committee, 2018 - 2019

External Reviewer, National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend Fellowship Selection Committee, 2014 - 2015

External Reviewer, Faculty Tenure and Promotion Files: Amherst College; Ashoka University (India); Lahore University of Management Sciences (Pakistan); Princeton University; St. John's University; University of Colorado - Colorado Springs; University of Massachusetts - Amherst

Compiled a book of essays by Meeto (Kamaljit Bhasin-Malik), *In the Making: Identity Formation in South Asia*, Delhi: Three Essays Collective, 2007

Conference, Lecture and Symposia Planning

Organizer, Book Talk on *The Migration-Development Regime: How Class Shapes Indian Emigration* by Rina Agarwala, Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University, 2023

Organizer, Symposium on Citizenship, Belonging, and the Partition of India, cosponsored by the Institute of the Humanities and Global Cultures, University of Virginia, and the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, 2021

Organizer, Conference on Ghosts from the Past? Assessing Recent Developments in Religious Freedom in South Asia, cosponsored by the Asia Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington D.C., and the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, 2018

Organized session on 'Rethinking the Murder of the Mahatma: Political Assassinations and the Burdens of History,' South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018

Organized session on 'Constitutions and Minority Rights: Case Studies from South Asia,' American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Washington D.C., 2018

Organized session on 'Religious Boundaries in North India, 1830 - 1930,' Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008

Organized session on 'Arguing for a Hindu India? c. 1900 - 1930,' Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Atlanta, April 2008 (with Vinayak Chaturvedi)

Organized session 'On violence, migration and the state: new perspectives from Punjab, Bengal and Kashmir,' Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004

Organized lectures for the South Asia Center, University of Virginia, 2007 - 2016

Organized programming for events hosted by the Center for South Asian and Indian Ocean Studies, Tufts University, 2000 – 2002

Select Guest Lectures and Public Outreach

Panelist, '[Unpacking India Elections: Implications and Next Steps](#)', Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2024

Panelist, '[India's Dance with Democracy](#)', A Discussion on India's Elections at South Asian Studies Council, Yale University, 2024

'[Secularism and Belonging in South Asia](#)', Book Discussion with Sugata Bose, Netaji Research Bureau, Kolkata, 2024

'Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia', Book Talk, *Voyages Into the Past*, Presidency University, Kolkata, 2024

'The History of Blasphemy Politics in South Asia,' Silk Road Seminar, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington D.C., 2022

Chair and Moderator, Symposium on [Citizenship, Belonging, and the Partition of India](#), Royal Society for Asian Affairs, Taylor & Francis, and Institute of the Humanities & Global Culture, University of Virginia, 2021

Guest Speaker, 1947 Partition and the Making of Modern India, Area Studies Division, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State, 2020 - 2021

Citizenship Amendment Act - National Register of Citizens: A Teach-In, Charlottesville Alliance for Refugees and Tamil Students Union, University of Virginia, 2020

A Conversation on Human Rights in India, Inaugural Human Rights Week, University of Virginia School of Law, Report in *Virginia Law Weekly*, 2019

Ideas of India: What's at Stake in India's Elections, Washington Literary Society and Debating Union, University of Virginia, 2019

Chair and Moderator, Conference on [Ghosts from the Past? Assessing Recent Developments in Religious Freedom in South Asia](#), Royal Society for Asian Affairs, Taylor & Francis, and Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington D.C., 2018

Guest lecture, 'Religious Nationalism and Its Legal Dimensions,' Timothy Lubin's *Law & Religion*, Department of Religious Studies, Washington & Lee University, 2016

Free Speech in India, Inaugural session of *Chit Chaat: A Night of Indian Cultural Literacy*, Indian Students Association, University of Virginia, 2015

Guest lecture, Oral History for Mark Thomas' *Approaches to Historical Study*, Department of History, University of Virginia, 2014

Partition and its Implications, Indian Student Association and Pakistan Student League Conference, University of Virginia, 2011

Guest speaker, Partition of India for Alon Confino's *Forced Migration in the Modern World*, University of Virginia, 2008

Collective Memories and Political Identities, Conversazione Series Dinner, International Residence College, University of Virginia, 2008

Thinking through Mumbai: A Panel Discussion and Teach-In, University of Virginia, 2008

Guest lecture, 'Jinnah, the Red Shirts, and the Partition of India' for Mehr Farooqi's *Remembering India's Partition*, University of Virginia, 2007

Service in the name of Gandhi, Gandhi Day, Indian Students Association, University of Virginia, 2010, 2006

Journal Referee

Agricultural History, Asian Affairs, Asian Politics and Policies, Asian Studies Review, Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, Contemporary South Asia, Economic and Political Weekly, History of the Present, Indian Economic and Social History Review, IZSAF: Interdisciplinary Journal for South Asia Research, Journal of Asian Studies, Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, Journal for the Study of Radicalism, Modern Asian Studies, Modern Intellectual History, New Literary History, Oxford Bibliographies, Radical History Review, South Asian History and Culture, South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, Studies in History

Book Referee

Cambridge University Press
Oxford University Press
Routledge
Stanford University Press
Yale University Press
Reader, Manuscript Workshop, Nikhil Menon, Planning Democracy: India's Cold War Experiment, University of Notre Dame, September 2019

Editorial

Editorial Board, Anthem Impact in Social History for South Asia, 2024 - present
Editorial Board, *Asian Affairs*, 2017 - present

Service to the University of Virginia

Member representing College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, GEO Fellowship Committee, UVA Global Affairs, 2024

Member representing College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Teaching Award Committee, 2021 - 2023

Member of Search Committees in History of South Asia; Indian Ocean World, Modern British History, East Asian Studies, History of the Middle East, 2007 - 2023

Member, Committee for Third Year Review, Departments of Women, Gender & Sexuality, and History, 2022 - 2022

Reviewer, UVA-NEH Summer Stipend Program, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2024; Harrison Undergraduate Research Awards, 2016, 2022

Member, Working Group on Area Studies after Area Studies, spring 2015

Member, Ad-hoc Committee for General Faculty review, Women, Gender & Sexuality Program, 2014

Senator for History Department, Faculty Senate, 2012 - 2013, 2019 - 2020

Member, Steering Committee, Department of History, 2010 - 2012, 2021 - 2023

Faculty Associate, lower-division advising, College of Arts and Sciences, 2010 - 2013, 2019 - 2020

Major Adviser, Department of History, 2007 - 2015, 2018 - present

Book jacket blurbs

Chitralekha Zutshi, *Sheikh Abdullah: The Caged Lion of Kashmir*, Yale University Press, 2024

Shahla Hussain, *Kashmir in the Aftermath of Partition*, Cambridge University Press, 2021

Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*, Routledge, 2018

Languages

Hindi: fluent; Urdu: conversational, basic reading; Tamil: conversational

Professional Memberships

Association for Asian Studies (Elected Member, South Asia Council, 2025-28)

American Historical Association

Law and Society Association

European Association for South Asian Studies

Netaji Research Bureau

Select Interviews

Interview with Manimugdha Sharma, '[Mornings with Mani](#)', *Sher-e-Punjab*, South Asian News Talk Radio, Vancouver, January 22, 2025

Interview on [Hurt Sentiments](#) with Siddhant Mishra, Divya Sethuraman and Dr. Karthick Ram Manoharan, *Socio-Legal Review*, February 11, 2024

Interview with Saumya Pandey, '[Feelings of hurt and hate in post-partition South Asia](#)', *Public Anthropologist*, May 4, 2023

Interview with Ullekh NP, '[It is a historian's task to explain how things fall apart or come together](#)', *Open Magazine*, April 14, 2023

Interview with Steve Paikin, '[Is India's Democracy in Crisis?](#)', *The Agenda*, TVO Today, March 6, 2023

Interview with Lauren Frayer, '[India's Supreme Court Steps in after Hindu leaders call for violence against Muslims](#)', *NPR*, January 21, 2022

Interview with Matthew Berkman, [“Hurt Sentiments” and Forbidden Speech in India](#), The Andrea Mitchell Center for the Study of Democracy, University of Pennsylvania, January 21, 2021

Starr Forum, [‘Democracies on the Rocks?’](#) MIT Center for International Studies, October 24, 2020

Interview with G. S. Mudur, [‘CAA-NRC a road to Hindu Rashtra’](#) *The Telegraph*, December 17, 2019

Interview with G. S. Mudur, [‘Ayodhya case verdict: Secularism not easy to crush’](#) *The Telegraph*, November 9, 2019

Interview with Rukun Advani, [Event, Metamorphosis, Memory: Opening the Curtain on a Minority View of Partition](#), *Permanent Black Blog* January 5, 2011

Cited in News Media and Analyses

Shahrukh Alam, [The end of reason: When judges and courts fail, can ideas of justice be found in our everyday?](#), *Scroll.in*, November 10, 2024

Vandana Menon, [The self-pitying Hindu has a litany of woes – evolution to Taj Mahal](#). Yogi’s UP is their balm, *The Print*, February 5, 2024

Karthick Ram Manoharan, [Samadharma: Periyar’s Idea for India](#), *Frontline*, September 21, 2023

Deepansh Duggal, [Partition and the Inheritance of Loss](#), *Hindustan Times*, September 15, 2023

Sapan News Network, [Historian Neeti Nair deconstructs religious identity and secularism](#) in South Asia, June 10, 2023

Subhash Gatade, [Aggressors Claim Hurt Sentiments While Victims Face Trial](#), *Newslick*, May 24, 2023

Rakhi Bose, [Between Competitive Communalism and Suitable Secularism: Where India Stands Today](#), *Outlook Magazine*, November 10, 2022

Krishna Kumar, [The idea of a South Asian solidarity still has the potential to detoxify the legacies of 1947](#), *The Indian Express*, September 9, 2021 [pdf](#)

Podcast with Matthew Berkman, [“Hurt Sentiments” and Forbidden Speech in India](#), Andrea Mitchell Center, University of Pennsylvania, January 29, 2021

[Democracy in Distress?](#) Global Trend of Democratic Governments That Collapse from Within, *MIT News*, November 1, 2020

Faizur Rahman, [Are Indian Muslims victims of their “victim mindset”?](#), *Daily O*, August 28, 2020

Syed Badrul Ahsan, [The lingering pain of partition, 1947](#) *Dhaka Tribune*, August 5, 2020

Syed Badrul Ahsan, [1947: A flute to Pakistan, A drum to India](#) *Dhaka Tribune*, August 13, 2020

Bharat Dogra, [India must remember Das’ sacrifice](#), *The Statesman*, September 15, 2019

Madhav Khosla, [Amarinder Singh’s sacrilege bill shows no Indian political party will fight for free speech](#), *The Print*, August 25, 2018

- Michael Caster, [Myanmar's Religious Hate Speech Law](#) *The Diplomat*, May 5, 2016
- Gautam Bhatia, ['Blasphemy' law and the constitution](#) *Mint*, March 19, 2016
- Pratap Bhanu Mehta, [The Crooked Lives of Free Speech](#), *Open Magazine*, January 30, 2015
- Sunanda K. Datta-Ray, [Booked, But Not Read – When the law is used for a private agenda](#) *The Telegraph*, February 15, 2014
- A. G. Noorani, Gandhi's No to Satyagraha, *Frontline*, August 26, 2011

Reviews of *Changing Homelands: Hindu Politics and the Partition of India*, Harvard University Press and Permanent Black, 2011

- Nikhil Govind, *India International Centre Quarterly*, June 2011
- Geoffrey Kain, *South Asian Review*, June 2011
- J. Sri Raman, [Punjabi Hindus and Partition](#) *The Hindu*, July 19, 2011
- Uditi Sen, *Journal of Genocide Research*, December 2011
- Roger D. Long, *Choice*, January 2012
- Ian Talbot, *The American Historical Review*, February 2012
- Hilal Ahmed, *The Book Review*, March 2012
- Kavita Daiya, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, March 2012
- Irfan Ahmad, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* [review essay], July 2012
- Syed Badrul Ahsan, [Memories of a Mad August](#), *The Daily Star*, August 2012
- Sahana Ghosh, *Contemporary South Asia*, November 2012
- Priyanka Singh, *Canadian Journal of History*, Fall 2012
- Sohini Majumdar, *Refugee Watch Online*, January 2013
- Arnab Roy Chowdhury, *Asian Journal of Social Science*, March 2013
- Anshu Malhotra, *Social History*, May 2013
- Syed Badrul Ahsan, *Asian Affairs*, June 2013
- Rama Lakshmi, *Oral History Review*, July 2013
- Rohit Wanchoo, *H-Net Reviews*, November 2013
- Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Indian Historical Review*, June 2014
- Kavita Datla, *Journal of World History*, September 2014
- Indivar Kamtekar, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, September 2014
- Nikhil Rao, *Journal of Asian Studies*, May 2015
- Taj Hashmi, *Countercurrents.org*, August 2016

Extracts of published reviews are available [here](#)

Reviews of *Hurt Sentiments: Secularism and Belonging in South Asia*, Harvard University Press, 2023

- Radhika Ramaseshan, [Contextualization of present in past](#), *The Tribune*, April 2, 2023
- Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, [Religious Sense and Sensibilities](#), *Business Standard*, April 17, 2023
- Paranjay Guha Thakurta, [Getting to the root of the poison](#), *The Telegraph*, June 2, 2023
- Mani Shankar Aiyar, [‘To be secular is to belong fearlessly’](#), *Frontline*, June 19, 2023
- Manisha Sethi, [‘We, the perpetually offended’](#), *Biblio: A Review of Books* [review essay], April-June 2023
- Paromita Chakrabarti, [How did we get here?](#), *Eye, The Sunday Express Magazine*, July 2, 2023
- Iymon Majid, [A Review of Hurt Sentiments](#), *Doing Sociology*, July 7, 2023
- Yasser Latif Hamdani, [Hurt Sentiments in the Islamic Republic](#), *The Friday Times*, July 12, 2023
- Shreya Das, [Hurt Sentiments](#), *South Asian Review*, August 17, 2023
- Vanya Vaidehi Bhargav, [Hurt Sentiments](#), *H-Soz-Kult*, December 8, 2023
- Ammad Ali, [The minorities question in South Asia](#), *The News*, December 10, 2023
- Sunny Kumar, [Hurt Sentiments](#), *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 60, (4) 2023, 481-483
- Humeira Iqtidar, [Hurt Sentiments](#), *Asian Affairs*, 54, (4) 2023, 801-803
- Shefali Jha, [‘Secularism in South Asia: A Historical Analysis’](#), *The Book Review*, 47, 12, December 2023
- Shahin Kachwala, [Hurt Sentiments](#), *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, #31, 2023
- Prathiksha Srinivasa, [Hurt Sentiments](#), *Reading Religion*, February 26, 2024
- Benjamin Siegel, [Hurt Sentiments](#), *Journal of Church and State*, February 27, 2024
- Parvati Sharma, [Modern \(Un\)Belonging and Imperial Inclusion](#), *Socio-Legal Review* Book Roundtable, June 6, 2024
- Siddharth Narain, [Towards a Subcontinental Understanding of Secularism, Hurt Sentiment, and the Law](#), *Socio-Legal Review* Book Roundtable, June 6, 2024
- Arvind Elangovan, [A Battle for the Soul of Postcoloniality?](#), *Socio-Legal Review* Book Roundtable, June 6, 2024
- Carimo Mohamed, [Becoming Modern and Secular: A Review Essay](#) on Recent Work on Islam and South Asia, *Journal of Law and Religion* [review essay], August 27, 2024, pp. 1-15
- Ranabir Samaddar, [Hurt Emotions and Anger](#), *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, September 14, 2024
- Yashasvi Krishna, [Hurt Sentiments](#), *Postcolonial Studies*, February 2025

Extracts of published reviews are available [here](#)

Revised February 2025