

CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY
South Asia
Annual Report 2019-2020



About the Center

Mission

The Center for Contemporary South Asia (CCSA) promotes research, teaching and public engagement on key issues of modern South Asia in an interdisciplinary framework and in a historically and culturally grounded manner.

About

CCSA is based at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University. The Center supports faculty, graduate and undergraduate research and teaching on the region and is home to the South Asian Studies concentration.

CCSA functions within the larger framework of the Watson Institute, which is seeking to define a new approach to regional studies for the 21st century. Anchored in the social sciences, this new approach is problem driven, comparative and multidisciplinary. Our multidisciplinary will include sustained interaction of social scientists with the humanities on the one hand and disciplines such as medicine and public health on the other.

Research & Programs

At this time, the Center's programmatic and research themes focus on inequalities, development, urbanization, democracy and pluralism & diversities.

Cover Image: View from Akashnala Ecotourism Park, Shyamnagar, Satkhira, Bangladesh, photo by Danielle Falzon, Sociology PhD candidate

Message from the Director

The year 2019-20 was among our most unusual years, as it undoubtedly has been for higher education all over the country. Indeed, the exceptionalism was neither confined to education nor to the US. Most of the world experienced a grave public health emergency, which forced unexpected changes and required new adjustments.

Our programs were running smoothly until the middle of March, when COVID-19 struck. Teaching went online and the standard seminar offerings had to be suspended. We quickly reoriented our Friday seminar schedule to run a six-week special series on COVID-19 in South Asia. Using a Zoom-based format, we were able to hear, among other things, Kerala-based experts on how their state handled the pandemic so impressively, as well as a first-hand account from Barkha Dutt, a senior journalist who had spent nearly 50 days on the road covering the pandemic in India. Some of our Zoom sessions were also attended by large virtual audiences from the US, Europe and South Asia.

In the fall, Raghuram Rajan, currently professor at the University of Chicago and formerly the 23rd Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, was our OP Jindal lecturer. His two lectures on the problems and prospects of Indian economy ended up getting widely discussed in India. The discussants included Professor Abhijit Banerjee (MIT), who received the Nobel Prize in Economics less than three days after his appearance at our Center.

We had two Meera and Vikram Gandhi Fellows this year, both in the spring (until the pandemic cut short their stay). Gopal Gandhi, a scholar statesman, who served as Governor of West Bengal and India's Ambassador to South Africa and Sri Lanka in a distinguished career, used his time to work on some rare biographical materials on Mahatma Gandhi, his grandfather. And Menaka Guruswamy, who played a



a pivotal legal role in the de-criminalization of same-sex relationships in India, led a study group on constitutions and politics in divided democracies.

Our other regular offerings continued. And our student sponsored seminars acquired a larger canvas and scale. We also awarded seven graduate fellowships. Initially envisioned as summer grants, these fellowships had to be re-engineered in light of COVID-induced travel restrictions. Our students can use the fellowship any time during the year, including the next summer, when it should be possible to travel to South Asia again.

Madhur Jaffrey, an internationally recognized food critic based in New York, and Mani Shankar Aiyar, an Indian politician and intellectual, also visited us to give well-attended talks.

Finally, we said goodbye to Sarah Besky, who left Brown to join the faculty at Cornell. As our director of undergraduate studies and programs, she was vitally important to our collective life. Luckily, we have Finnian Moore-Gerety as her replacement for the next year. Finnian brings to us his already established popularity among undergraduates and multi-faceted programming abilities.

We will resume our activities online in September.

Ashutosh Varshney

Director, Center for Contemporary South Asia
Sol Goldman Professor of International
Studies and the Social Sciences
Professor of Political Science

OP Jindal Distinguished Lecture Series

To promote a serious discussion of politics, economics, social and cultural change in modern India, Sajjan and Sangita Jindal have endowed, in perpetuity, the OP Jindal Distinguished Lectures by major scholars and public figures.

Raghuram Rajan

FALL 2019

Raguhram Rajan is the Katherine Dusak Miller Distinguished Service Professor of Finance at Chicago Booth. He was the 23rd Governor of the Reserve Bank of India between September 2013 and September 2016. Between 2003 and 2006, Dr. Rajan was the Chief Economist and Director of Research at the International Monetary Fund.



Dr. Rajan’s research interests are in banking, corporate finance, and economic development, especially the role finance plays in it. The books he has written include *The Third Pillar: How the State and Markets are leaving Communities Behind* (2019), *I do What I do: On Reform, Rhetoric, and Resolve* (2017), and *Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy*, for which he was awarded the Financial Times-Goldman Sachs prize for best business book in 2010.

Dr. Rajan is a member of the Group of Thirty. He was the President of the American Finance Association in 2011 and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In January 2003, the American Finance Association awarded Dr. Rajan the inaugural Fischer Black Prize for the best finance researcher under the age of 40. The other awards he has received include the Infosys prize for the Economic Sciences in 2012, the Deutsche Bank Prize for Financial Economics in 2013, Euromoney Central Banker Governor of the Year 2014, and Banker Magazine (FT Group) Central Bank Governor of the Year 2016.



OCTOBER 9
India’s Economy: How Did We Get Here and What Can be Done?
Commentator:
Arvind Subramanian, Kennedy School, Harvard

OCTOBER 11
India in the World: The “Vision” Thing
Commentator:
Abhijit Banerjee, MIT



Top left to right: Rajan, Banerjee, Varshney
Middle left to right: Rajan, Varshney, Subramanian
Bottom: Rajan with graduate students working on South Asia



Meera and Vikram Gandhi Fellowship

Meera and Vikram Gandhi Fellowships enable major journalists, public figures and scholars working on India to undertake substantial projects while in residence at Brown. The fellowships are funded by a gift from Meera & Vikram Gandhi.

Spring 2020

Menaka Guruswamy

At Brown in February and March, Menaka Guruswamy led a weekly study group with 25 participants titled, “Divided Democracies: Constitutions and Politics in the United States, India, and Iran.” She also held weekly office hours.

Menaka Guruswamy is a Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court of India. Through her litigation practice, she has successfully sought reform of the bureaucracy in the country through fixed tenure, defended federal legislation that mandates that all private schools admit disadvantaged children, and most recently overturned section 377 the colonial-era law that criminalises consensual same-sex relations. Guruswamy is *amicus curiae* appointed by the Supreme Court in a case concerning 1528 alleged extra-judicial killings by security personnel. In her private law practice she litigates in the areas of civil law, commercial law and white collar crime.

She was on *Foreign Policy* magazine’s list 100 most influential Global Thinkers for 2019 and along with Arundhati Katju on *Time Magazine*’s 2019 list of 100 most influential people. In 2017, her portrait was unveiled at Rhodes House in Oxford University.



Guruswamy has also advised the United Nations Development Fund, New York and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), New York and UNICEF South Sudan on International Human Rights Law and has also supported the constitution-making process in Nepal.

Guruswamy was educated at Oxford University, Harvard Law School and the National Law School of India. She was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and a Gammon Fellow at Harvard. She has been visiting faculty at Yale Law School, New York University School of Law and University of Toronto Faculty of Law. She was the B.R Ambedkar Research Scholar and Lecturer in Law at Columbia Law School from 2017-2019, where she taught constitutional design in post conflict democracies.



Gopalkrishnan Gandhi

While in residence at the Center in February and March, Gopalkrishnan Gandhi worked on illuminating yet to be highlighted autobiographical writings of his grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi for a forthcoming publication, recorded a conversation on his research and held weekly office hours for the community.

Professor of History and Politics at Ashoka University, Gopalkrishnan Gandhi is, by training, an administrator. His working career has included public administration, diplomacy and the exercise of constitutional responsibility. He served in various capacities, including Governor of West Bengal (2004-2009), High Commissioner to South Africa, during President Nelson Mandela’s leadership (1996-1997), and as Secretary to the President of India (1997-2000).

Born in 1945, he read English Literature and History at St Stephen’s College, Delhi, and through the system of competitive examinations, joined the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in 1968. He served as an IAS officer for nearly twenty-five years.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi took voluntary retirement from the IAS in 1992 and set up the Nehru Centre of the High Commission of India, London, and became its founding Director. The Nehru Centre, which he headed for four years (1992-1996), is now an established forum for Indo-British mutuality in the cultural, literary and academic fields.

His published works include: a novel, *Saranam* (1985), republished in English as *Refuge* (1989 and 2010); a play, *Dara Shukoh* (1993 and 2010), on the tragic story of that Moghul prince; a translation into Hindustani of Vikram Seth’s novel *A Suitable Boy*, as *Koi Achchha Sa Ladka* (1998); *The Oxford Gandhi* (2007); *A Frank Friendship: Gandhi and Bengal* (2007); *Of a Certain Age – Twenty Life-Sketches* (2011); *My Dear Bapu – Correspondence between C. Rajagopalachari and Mohandas K. Gandhi* (2012); *The Tirukkural* (translated into English 2015); and *The Death Penalty* (2016).

He received the Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Award of the University of Mysore in 2016, the Lal Bahadur Shastri Award in 2016 and the Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award in 2018.

His honorary degrees include: a Doctorate of Laws *honoris causa* by the University of Natal, South Africa, in 1999; a Doctorate of Letters *honoris causa* by the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, in 2001; a Doctorate of Literature *honoris causa* by the University of North Orissa, India, in 2012; a Doctorate of Literature *honoris causa* by the University of Calcutta, India, in 2019.

MARCH 30

Gandhi: His life in his words beyond ‘The Story’



COVID-19 Series

Overnight the spread of the novel coronavirus altered life. In response, CCSA created a series of six seminars tackling questions around the effects of and response to the virus in South Asia.

Spring 2020

APRIL 3

Roshan Kishore, Hindustan Times
Ashutosh Varshney, Brown University
COVID-19 and India's Political Economy

APRIL 10

Anindita Adhikari, Brown University
Esha Sraboni, Brown University
Ieva Zumbyte, Brown University
Patrick Heller, Brown University
Rajeesh Veeraraghavan, Georgetown University
How are governments in South Asia tackling the Covid-19 Crisis? Reports from the Field

APRIL 17

Adnan Khan, London School of Economics
Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak, Yale University
Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Centre for Policy Alternatives
COVID-19 in South Asia: Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka

APRIL 24

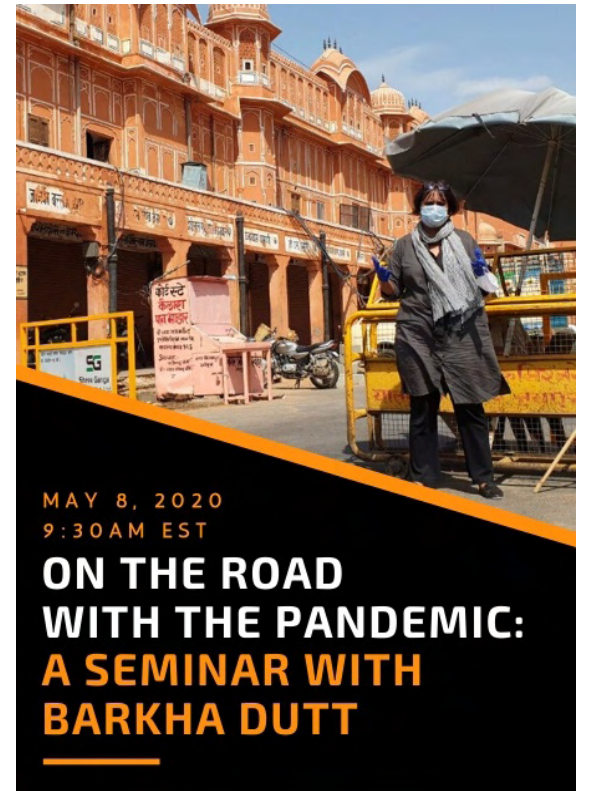
S.M. Vijayanand, Former Chief Secretary of the state of Kerala
Dipa Sinha, Ambedkar University
How are the States responding to the COVID crisis in India?

MAY 1

Reuben Abraham, IDFC Foundation and Institute
Shamika Ravi, Brookings
COVID-19 in South Asia: India's National Trends, Mumbai as a Hotspot

MAY 8

Barkha Dutt, Journalist
Anindita Adhikari, Brown University
Bhanu Joshi, Brown University
Patrick Heller, Brown University
Ashutosh Varshney, Brown University
On The Road with the Pandemic: A Seminar with Barkha Dutt



Speakers of the COVID-19 series in chronological order.

South Asia Seminar

This series of public lectures facilitates a convergence of figures from across the lines of academia, civil society, literature, public policy, and journalism to contribute to the discourse on contemporary South Asia.

FALL 2019

SEPTEMBER 13

James McHugh, University of Southern California
The History of Alcohol and Drugs in Pre-modern South Asia

SEPTEMBER 20

Aatish Taseer, Author
Karan Mahajan, Brown University
The tyranny of place: A conversation

SEPTEMBER 27

Mani Shankar Aiyar, Former Cabinet Minister, Government of India
Recent Developments in Kashmir

OCTOBER 4

Andrea Jain, Indiana University
Peace, Love, Yoga: The Politics of Global Spiritual



Mani Shankar Aiyar



Andrea Jain

OCTOBER 25

Zia Mian, Princeton University
Crossing the Line: Kashmir, Pakistan and India Under the Nuclear Shadow

NOVEMBER 8

Namita Dharia, Rhode Island School of Design
The Politics of Pyaar (love) in India's Construction Industry

NOVEMBER 15

Shandana Khan Mohmand, University of Sussex
Crafty Oligarchs, Savvy Voters: Democracy Under Inequality in Rural Pakistan

DECEMBER 6

Jayita Sarkar, Boston University
The Ploughshares and Swords in India's Nuclear Explosion of 1974



Sahana Ghosh



Marko Geslani



SPRING 2020

FEBRUARY 14

Sahana Ghosh, Brown University
Four Weddings and a Rice-eating ceremony: A biography of the India-Bangladesh border

FEBRUARY 21

Marko Geslani, University of South Carolina
King's Body, Nature's Sign: Gender and Ornament in the Astral State

FEBRUARY 28

Niloufer Siddiqui, University of Albany, SUNY
Under the Gun: Explaining Party Violence in Karachi

MARCH 6

Ellen Gough, Emory University
What Makes a Jain not Hindu? Religious Identity and the Indian Festival Calendar

MARCH 18

Sahana Ghosh, Brown University
Menaka Guruswamy, Brown University
Arundhati Katju, Columbia University
Roshan Kishore, Hindustan Times
India's Citizenship Debate

APRIL 3

Feroz Khan, Naval Post Graduate School
Regional Security and Strategic Stability in Southern Asia

APRIL 10

Nosheen Ali, New York University
Delusional States: Empire, Literature and Affective Histories of Kashmir

MAY 8

Sameer Lalwani, Stimson Center
Second Coming? Testing the Nuclear Revolution in Pakistan's Strategic Debates

Programs in lighter color were planned for 2019-2020, but postponed or cancelled due to coronavirus.

Brown-Harvard-MIT Joint Seminar on South Asian Politics

The Brown-Harvard-MIT Joint Seminar on South Asian Politics approaches some of the big questions of politics, political economy and security, on which the South Asian region offers engaging perspectives. The series is co-sponsored by CCSA, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and Lakshmi Mittal South Asia Institute at Harvard University, and the MIT Center for International Studies.

SEPTEMBER 6

Pradeep Chhibber, University of California, Berkeley

Sarah Khan, Yale University

Milan Vaishnav, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Ashutosh Varshney, Brown University

Perna Singh, Brown University
Indian Elections Panel

OCTOBER 4

Sushant Singh, Indian Express

India's Emerging National Security Challenges

OCTOBER 25

Ashan Butt, George Mason University

Secession and Security in South Asia

NOVEMBER 8

Rachel Brule, Boston University

Property, Power, and Women: Positive and Perverse Consequences of Indian Reforms for Gender Equality

NOVEMBER 22

Thibaud Marcesse, Boston College

Patronage Guaranteed? The Local Politics of the Right to Work

FEBRUARY 7

Rumela Sen, Columbia University

Rebel Retirement Through Informal Exit Networks: Evidence From India

MARCH 13

Tanvi Madan, Brookings

Fateful Triangle: How China shaped US-India relations during the Cold War

APRIL 10

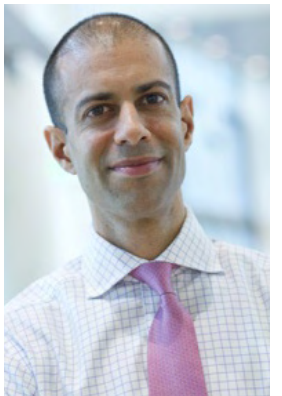
Gautam Nair, Yale University

Business, Voters, and Distributive Politics in Developing Democracies

MAY 1

Rikhil Bhavnani, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Gandhi's Gift: Successful Mass Nonviolence and India's Decolonization



ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

CHAIR

Ashutosh Varshney

Sol Goldman Professor of International Studies and the Social Sciences, Brown University

CO - DIRECTORS

Emmerich Davies

Assistant Professor of Education, Harvard University

Patrick Heller

Professor of Sociology and International Studies, Brown University



Perna Singh

Mahatma Gandhi Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Studies, Brown University

Vipin Narang

Associate Professor of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Book Adda

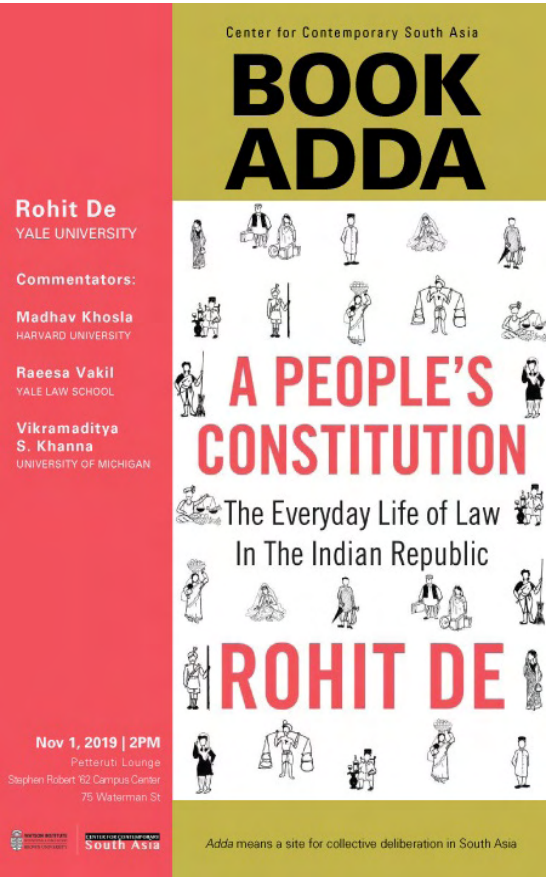
Adda means a site for collective deliberation in South Asia. This series features panel discussions of important new books written by our colleagues, or those significantly involved with us as intellectual interlocutors.

NOVEMBER 1

A People’s Constitution: Law and Everyday Life in the Indian Republic

Author:
Rohit De, Yale University

Commentators:
Ashutosh Varshney, Brown University
Madhav Khosla, Columbia University
Raeesa Vakil, Yale University
Vikramaditya S. Khanna, University of Michigan



Left to right: Subramanian, Paik, Tompkins, Smith

JANUARY 31

The Caste of Merit: Engineering Education in India

Author:
Ajantha Subramanian, Harvard University

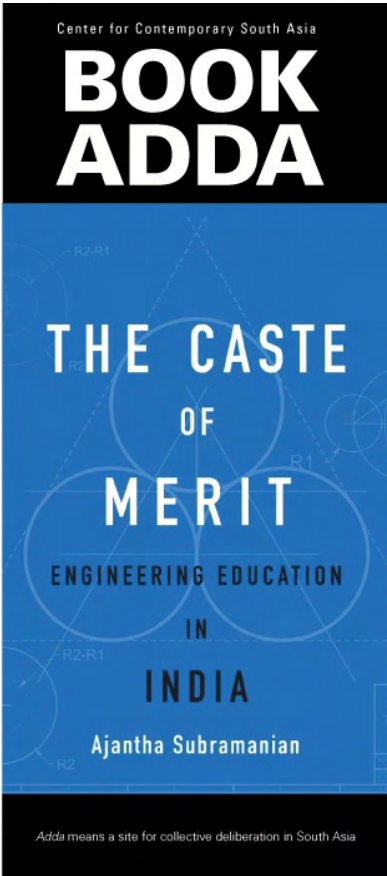
Commentators:
Christien Tompkins, Rutgers
Sara Smith, University of North Carolina
Sarah Besky, Brown University
Shailaja Paik, University of Cincinnati



Ajantha Subramanian
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Commentators:
Sara Smith
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
Christien Tompkins
RUTGERS
Shailaja Paik
UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

Jan 31, 2020 | 2PM
Joukowsky Forum
Watson Institute
111 Thayer St



Additional Programs & Films

The Center continues to host film screenings and co-sponsor events with many departments across campus.

FALL 2019

OCTOBER 11

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, Barnard College
Forum with Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi

OCTOBER 22

Madhur Jaffrey, Actress & Author
A Life in Food: A Conversation with Madhur Jaffrey

NOVEMBER 12

Michael Rakowitz, Northwestern University
Artist Talk with Michael Rakowitz



SPRING 2020

JANUARY 29

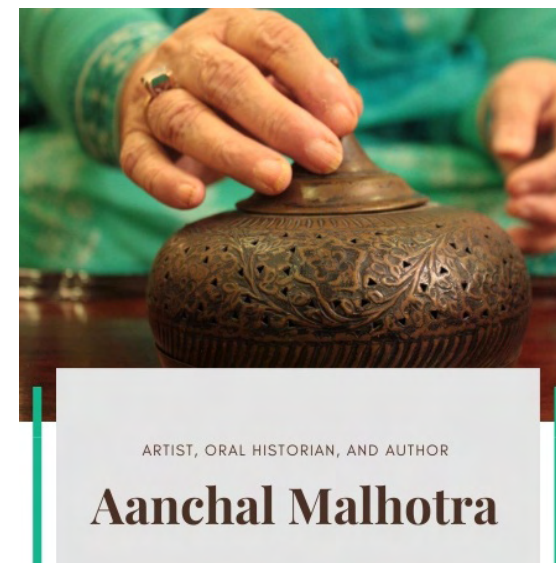
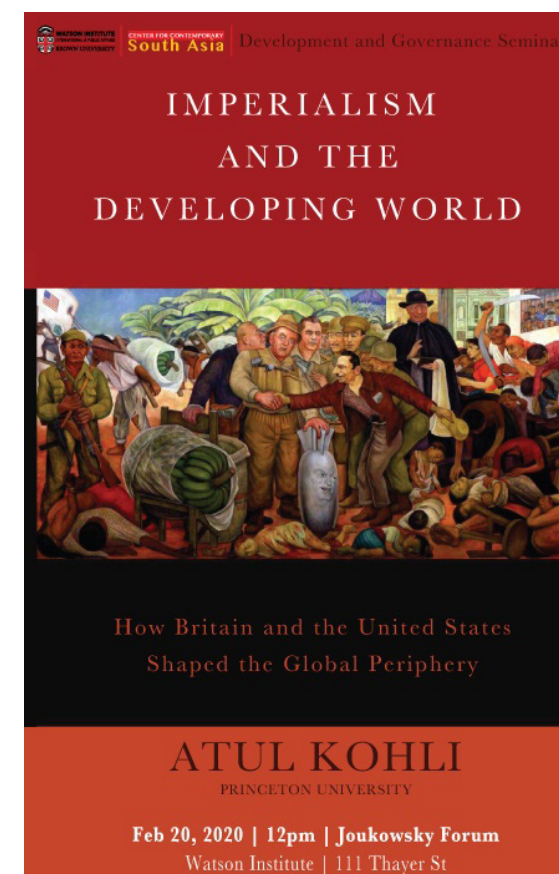
Sugata Ray, University Of California, Berkeley
Breakfast Forum on Geoaesthetics

FEBRUARY 20

Atul Kohli, Princeton University
Imperialism and the Developing World: How Britain and the United States Shaped the Global Periphery

FEBRUARY 27-28

Translation Across Disciplines Conference



MARCH 13

Ankur Tewari, Musician
SASA Cultural Show: Featuring Ankur Tewari

APRIL 3

Art History, Postcolonialism and the Global Turn

APRIL 6

Lalit Vachani, Filmmaker
Recasting Selves Screening & Discussion with Director

APRIL 8

Aanchal Malhotra, Filmmaker
The Things they Carried: Objects from the Partition of India

APRIL 30

Narendar Pani, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru
Distance Dualism: Rural Workers in India's Urbanization

Programs in lighter color were planned for 2019-2020, but postponed or cancelled due to coronavirus.

South Asian Studies & South Asia in the World

South Asian Studies is an interdisciplinary concentration in which students work across the humanities and social sciences, geographical locations and historical periods.

Through their coursework, SAST concentrators work across the humanities and social sciences, geographical locations and historical periods. The concentration emphasizes both the diversity of South Asia as a region, as well as the long-term historical connections among people and places in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka.

THESIS PRIZE

Liam Greenwell, South Asian Studies & History
Frontier Visions: Urban Landscapes, Identity Formation, and the Battle Over Images in Imphal, Manipur

PAPER PRIZE

Eli Grossman
Elementary Forms of Meditation: The Magical and Religious Dimensions of Insight Meditation



Sarah Besky, Director of Undergraduate Studies

Departmental Undergraduate Group (DUG) & Programing



Luqqman Borkharty '21



Rhythm Rastogi '22

Muskaan Garg '22, not pictured

CCSA's DUG leaders inspire undergraduate driven programming that focuses on creating informal learning environments where students can learn about the research and experiences of professors and postdocs, critically analyze popular culture by examining films and share their own research with the Brown community. The 2019-2020 group placed emphasis on expressions of South Asian identity through the Arts.

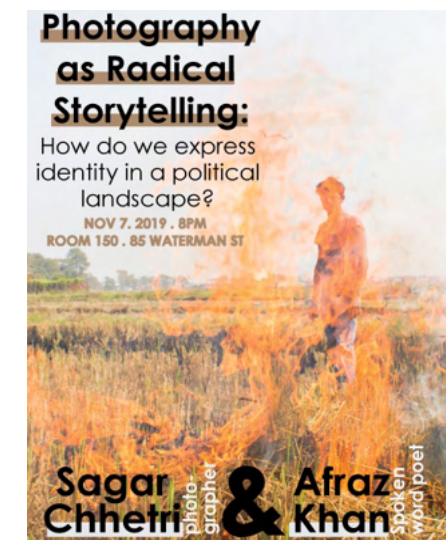
NOVEMBER 7

Poetry and Photography as Radical Storytelling: How do we express identity in a political landscape?

MARCH 13

Ankur Tewari, Musician

Poetry for Peace: Ankur Tewari in solidarity with ongoing protests in India



Graduate Student Programing

Graduate students from across the disciplines working on South Asia are a vital part of the CCSA community. Students present their own work, recieve fellowships to support their research and invite speakers to be part of the South Asia Seminar Series. In 2019-2020, two political science graduate students, Sanne Verschuren and Beenish Pervaiz planned and chaired a series of speakers focused on international security in South Asia.

EVENTS ORGANIZED BY GRADUATE STUDENTS

OCTOBER 25

Zia Mian, Princeton University
Crossing the Line: Kashmir, Pakistan and India Under the Nuclear Shadow

DECEMBER 6

Jayita Sarkar, Boston University
The Ploughshares and Swords in India's Nuclear Explosion of 1974

APRIL 3

Feroz Khan, Naval Postgraduate School
Regional Security and Strategic Stability in Southern Asia

MAY 8

Sameer Lalwani, Stimson Center
Second Coming? Testing the Nuclear Revolution in Pakistan's Strategic Debates



Ambedkar Statue in Chhattisgarh near fieldwork site of PhD candidate Aarushi Kalra



Gathering, Chhattisgarh near fieldwork site of PhD candidate Aarushi Kalra

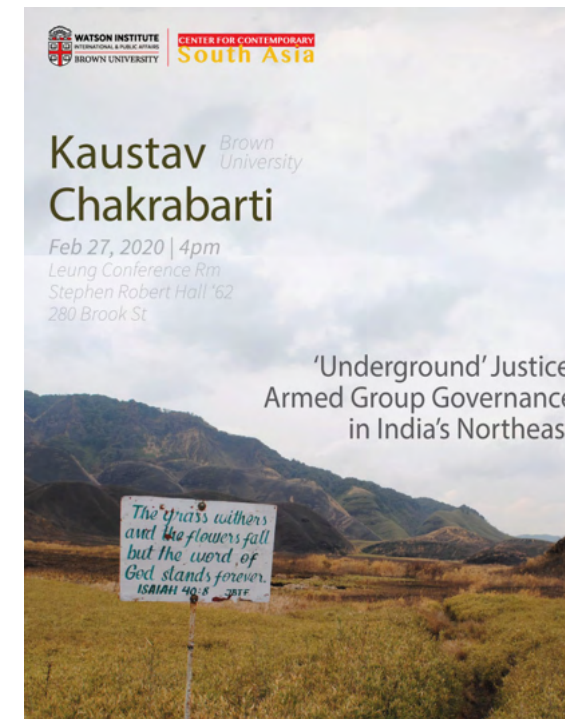
PRESENTATIONS BY GRADUATE STUDENTS

SEPTEMBER 26

Rehan Rafay Jamil, Political Science
Social Policy and Changing Citizenship Boundaries in Pakistan

NOVEMBER 14

Suvid Yaseen, History
Poetry, Piety, and Politics: The Early Ahl-i-Hadith Movement in Kashmir



FEBRUARY 8

Kaustav Chakrabarti, Political Science
'Underground' Justice: Armed Group Governance in India's Northeast

APRIL 16

Anisa Bhutia, Fulbright Visiting Scholar
The Social Life of Roads: An ethnography of 10th Mile in Kalimpong

CCSA Summer Fellows

Projects selected represent a variety of research topics related to social, political, cultural and economic change in South Asia.

In the fall, student fellows from the previous year presented their work in two workshops.

Travel Restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges to CCSA's fellowship program, for example, we were not able to fund undergraduate travel. In 2019-2020 year the Center awarded funds for research projects to seven graduate students, which they will be able to utilize until September 2021. In addition to their awards, students received \$1,000 to help offset increased cost of living and unanticipated pandemic related expenses. Should travel be possible for undergraduate students in January 2021, it is possible an additional pool of funds will be open at a later date.

RETURNING FELLOW PRESENTATIONS:

SEPTEMBER 26

Returning Undergraduate Fellow Presentations

NOVEMBER 7

Returning Graduate Fellow Presentations



Presentation by returning undergraduate fellow & SAST thesis prize winner, Liam Greenwell

GRADUATE FELLOWS 2020



Arnav Adhikari, English
Language Training in Urdu



Kaustav Chakrabarti, Political Science
Underground Justice: Armed Group Governance in India's Northeast



Nabila Islam, Sociology
Imam Training Programs and the Islam Problem: Contrasting Evidence from Europe and Bangladesh



Bhanu Joshi, Political Science
Variation in Services in India Cities



Radhika Moral, Anthropology
Shifting Sands: Migrants and Mobilities in the Brahmaputra Valley



Geetika Nagpal, Economics
Impacts of Sewer Provision and the Last Mile Problem



Ike Uri, Sociology
Technocratic knowledge and neoliberal planning: the role of consultants in urban climate adaptation in India

Visiting Faculty & Postdoctoral Fellow



Finnian Moore-Gerety

In the fall of 2018, Finnian Moore-Gerety joined CCSA as a visiting assistant professor for a three year term. Professor Moore-Gerety works on texts, rituals, and the senses in South Asian religions, with a focus on Hindu traditions of India. He is especially interested in Sanskrit mantras: how they are performed, textualized, and passed on; how they are embodied and sensed; how they are reflected upon and interpreted; how they are transformed in the digital age; and how they influence identity, community, and heritage within religious traditions. He will teach classes in South Asian Studies, Contemplative Studies and Religious Studies.



Sahana Ghosh

A postdoctoral fellow at the Watson Institute in 2019-2020, Sahana Ghosh is a social anthropologist whose research uses ethnographic and historical methods to study the intersections of gender, mobility, borders, and policing in contemporary South Asia. She is interested in ethical and political questions of ethnographic practice from an intersectional feminist perspective.

Her academic writing has appeared or is forthcoming in the American Anthropologist, Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Gender, Place & Culture, and the Economic and Political Weekly. She also writes to critically engage a broader public on topics of her expertise.

She received her PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Yale University in 2018.

Research Partnerships



JANAAGRAHA PARTNERSHIP WITH ASHUTOSH VARSHNEY & PATRICK HELLER

Professors Patrick Heller and Ashutosh Varshney received a second grant of \$200,000 from the Ford Foundation for their ongoing project on Citizenship and Urban Governance in India. An earlier grant from Ford had allowed them to do research in several Indian cities, including Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Kochi. With this newer grant, the research will be extended to Northern and Eastern cities as well. Work had already begun in Lucknow and Bhopal, when COVID-19 caused an interruption. Once possible to resume work the following cities will be covered: Delhi, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Ajmer, and Jalandhar. In India, the project is based at Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship & Democracy, Bangalore. Professor Siddharth Swaminathan (Azim Premji University), an annual visitor to CCSA and Watson Institute, is the third academician associated with the project.

The project has two aims: (i) construction of various measures of effective citizenship across caste, religion, class and gender; and (ii) examination of the determinants of public service delivery in urban India.



AIIMS PARTNERSHIP WITH BHRIGUPATI SINGH

Since 2015-16, Bhri Gupta Singh has partnered with the psychiatry department at AIIMS to explore how the idea of “quality of life” is understood. In summer 2020, Singh and his partners are preparing a second round of surveys in urban poor neighborhoods in Delhi based on the World Health Organization's Quality of Life instrument, [WHO-QOL BREF], a 26-item questionnaire created in 1991 with the aim of creating “an international cross-culturally comparable quality of life assessment instrument.” The second round of surveys will include questions regarding the impacts of COVID-19 in these communities.



BIARI NEW DELHI: UNPACKING THE CHALLENGE OF STATE CAPACITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Along with Centre for Policy Research co-conveners, Yamuni Aiyar and Mekhala Krishnamurthy, Brown's Patrick Heller organized a Brown International Advanced Research Institutes (BIARI) seminar titled, “Seeing the State.” Held in New Delhi from January 8-14, 2020, this institute focused on the challenge of state capacity in India today. Junior and senior scholars from around the world gathered together to explore the theme through a series of lectures that explore the challenge of state capacity through multiple frames including: bureaucracy and administrative reforms (at the elite and frontline); federal structures (specifically local governments); core welfare functions and emerging challenges - urbanisation and climate change/energy and building regulatory institutions. An important aspect of this BIARI was to bring together the Watson Institute Global Partners to explore the challenge of state capacity through different country experiences. The objective was to place on going debates in India within a comparative perspective, draw lessons and most crucially exploring collaborative research projects aimed at deepening current understandings of the challenge of state capacity.

Steering Committee



- 1 Ashutosh Varshney**
Director, CCSA
Sol Goldman Professor of International Studies and the Social Sciences
Professor of Political Science
ashutosh_varshney@brown.edu
- 2 Andrew Foster**
George S. and Nancy B. Parker Professor of Economics, Director of Social Science Research Institute
andrew_foster@brown.edu
- 3 Leela Gandhi**
Associate Director, CCSA
John Hawkes Professor of Humanities and English
leela_gandhi@brown.edu
- 4 Patrick Heller**
Lyn Crost Professor of Social Sciences
Chair, Department of Sociology
patrick_heller@brown.edu
- 5 Prerna Singh**
Mahatma Gandhi Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Studies
prerna_singh@brown.edu
- 6 Sarah Besky**
Director of Undergraduate Studies, CCSA
Assistant Professor of Anthropology & International and Public Affairs
sarah_besky@brown.edu

Staff



- Stephanie Abbott-Pandey**
Center Manager
stephanie_abbott@brown.edu
- Grace Cardogno**
Administrative Coordinator
grace_cardogno@brown.edu

Center for Contemporary South Asia
Watson Institute
Brown University

280 Brook St
Box 1970
Providence, RI 02912
+1 401.863.5059

www.watson.brown.edu/southasia
southasia@brown.edu



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South Asia