

Spring Lecture Series 2009

February 5 - Noon - 1 PM
206 Ingraham Hall

Lalita du Perron
Associate Director, Center for South Asia

"The Context and Song texts of North Indian Art Music"

The vocal genres khyal and thumri in North Indian Art (Hindustani) music are, on the modern stage, almost always performed by middle-class performers. Although in some strata of society being a professional performer is not considered an appropriate career for women, the stigma attached to being a woman on stage is slowly decreasing. Most modern audiences are unaware of the colourful history of the genres they patronise, a history firmly rooted in courtly and courtesan milieus.

In this presentation we will look at some modern video footage of traditional performers, and analyse how the texts of the songs they sing have been altered through the ages to fit in with the respectable image that Hindustani music has in the modern era.

Lalita du Perron received her PhD from SOAS at the University of London. The resulting book, *Hindi Poetry in a Musical Genre*, was published by Curzon Routledge in 2007. She is the linguistic contributor to *The Songs of North Indian Art Music* which will be published by Ashgate in 2010. Lalita has recently joined UW-M as the Associate Director of the Center for South Asia.

February 12 - Noon - 1 PM
206 Ingraham Hall

J. Mark Kenoyer
Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology and Director, Center for South Asia

"Textile Traditions of the Indus Valley and Ancient South Asia "

Excavations in both India and Pakistan have provided new information of the importance of textiles in the early economic and cultural history of South Asia.

This illustrated lecture will present the most recent discoveries relating to the production of textiles in the ancient South Asia, with a focus on the Indus civilization, 2600-1900 BC. Highlights of the presentation will be the early use of cotton, along with various types of wool, as well as the recent discovery of the use of wild silk at the site of Harappa and at Chahudaro, Pakistan.

Dr. Kenoyer has been excavating at Harappa, Pakistan since 1986. His main focus is on the Indus Valley Civilization and he has worked in both Pakistan and India since 1974. He has a special interest in ancient technologies and crafts, socio-economic and political organization as well as religion. These interests have led him to study a broad range of cultural periods in South Asia as well as other regions of the world. His publications include monographs on the Indus civilization as well as numerous articles, a grade school book on ancient South Asia and even a coloring book on the Indus cities for children. His work is featured on the website www.harappa.com.

He was Guest Curator with the Asia Society for the exhibition on the Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization, which toured the U.S. in 1998-1999. He was a special consultant for the Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 2002.

February 19 - Noon - 1 PM
206 Ingraham Hall

Pravina Shukla
Associate Professor, Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology
Indiana University

"The Grace of Four Moons: Bodily Adornment in India Today "

In this lecture, Shukla looks at dress and adornment in contemporary India, taking us to the holy city of Banaras where makers – goldsmiths and sari weavers – interact with merchants and the female customers who create art on their bodies. Investigating the male realms of production and commerce, in addition to the female realm of creative adornment, she conceptualizes a total model for the study of body art, tracing -- in a certain time and place, with regard to a particular sphere of material culture -- an artifactual life history.

February 19 - 7 PM
104 Van Hise Hall

Henry Glassie
Professor, Department of Folklore, Indiana University

"Material Spirits: Traditional Art in Contemporary Bangladesh"

Henry Glassie, recently retired College Professor of Folklore at Indiana University, has received many awards for his work, including the Chicago Folklore Prize, the Haney Prize in the Social Sciences, the Cummings Award of the Vernacular Architecture Forum, the Kniffen and Douglas awards of the Pioneer America Society, and formal recognition for his contributions from the ministries of culture of Turkey and Bangladesh. Three of his works have been named among the notable books of the year by The New York Times.

Glassie has lectured throughout the United States and Canada, and in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, France, Germany, Turkey, Israel, Kuwait, India, Bangladesh, China, and Japan. He is the author

of Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States, Folk Housing in Middle Virginia, All Silver and No Brass, Irish Folk History, Passing the Time in Ballymenone, Irish Folktales, The Spirit of Folk Art, Turkish Traditional Art Today, Art and Life in Bangladesh, Material Culture, The Potter's Art, Vernacular Architecture, and The Stars of Ballymenone. He is currently completing a book on the life and art of the Nigerian artist Prince Twins Seven-Seven.

This lecture is co-sponsored by the Folklore Program, Department of Anthropology, and the Material Cultures Program

February 26 - Noon - 1 PM
206 Ingraham Hall

John McLeod
Professor and Chair, Department of History, University of Louisville

"The Parsi and the Queen: A Study in Indian Microhistory"

In 1877, a Gujarati translation of Queen Victoria's Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands was published in Bombay. The translator was a young Parsi named Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownaggee, who two decades later went on to fame (or notoriety) as the second Indian member of the British Parliament. McLeod's talk uses Bhownaggee's book to explore the nature of identity and political sentiment in Victorian India, and in the process complicates our understanding of Indian history.

John McLeod is a native of Toronto, Canada, and earned a Ph.D. in Indian history from the University of Toronto. In 1995, he joined the Department of History at the University of Louisville, where he is now Professor and Department Chair.

March 5 - Noon - 1 PM
206 Ingraham Hall

Justice Christopher Weeramantry
former Judge and Vice-President of the International Court of Justice

"Equality and Freedom in the Culture of the Developing World"

Sri Lankabhimanya Christopher Gregory Weeramantry former Justice of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka is a world-renowned legal scholar who has played a crucial role in strengthening and expanding the rule of international law. His work demonstrates how international law can be used to address current global challenges.

Justice Weeramantry served on the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka from 1967-1972. He was a Judge of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) from 1991-2000, and was Vice-President of the ICJ from 1997-2000. Judge Weeramantry serves on the Legal and Human Rights Advisory

Board of the Genetics Policy Institute. He is currently Emeritus Professor at Monash University, having previously served as Sir Hayden Starke Chair of Law from 1972 to 1991.

This lecture is co-sponsored by the Global Legal Studies Center with support from the Division of International Studies, Global Studies, South Asia Legal Studies Working Group

March 12 - Noon - 1PM
336 Ingraham Hall

Jayashree Watal
Counsellor, Intellectual Property Division, World Trade Organization

"The Trips Agreement and Access to Medicines"

Jayashree Watal is presently a Counsellor in the Intellectual Property Division of the World Trade Organization (since February 2001). Before this she was a visiting scholar with the Center for International Development at Harvard University. From October 1998 to August 2000, she was a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for International Economics in Washington DC. She was also a visiting scholar at the George Washington University Law School from 1997 to 2000. She has more than twenty-two years of experience in government in India, of which ten years of experience were in policy, diplomacy, research and administration on intellectual property rights, which includes having researched and published on issues related to intellectual property rights, including a book *Intellectual Property Rights in the WTO and Developing Countries* (Oxford University Press, India and Kluwer Law International, 2001). She has also consulted for the World Bank, UNCTAD and the UNDP in these areas.

This lecture is co-sponsored by Global Studies and the Global Studies Legal Center.

March 26 - Noon - 1:00PM
206 Ingraham Hall

Simona Sawhney
Associate Professor, Asian Languages & Literature, University of Minnesota

"The Sanskrit Text in the Modern World: A Paradigmatic Case?"

In the modern world, Sanskrit texts have elicited the attention of several different groups of readers including devout (and in-search-of-devotion) Hindus, nationalist artists and writers, Orientalist scholars, and right wing Hindu nationalists. The tensions between different approaches to early Sanskrit texts reveal that readers always bring to these texts a set of political interests and theoretical assumptions, though these are rarely articulated in a clear way. Contemporary academic engagement with Sanskrit texts also does not take place in a vacuum, but participates in the fraught political arena of modernity. In this paper I attempt to articulate some of the theoretical-political questions that emerge in the study of early Sanskrit texts today. Discussing, on the one hand, the work of Romila Thapar and Sheldon Pollock, both of whom have written extensively about ways of approaching Sanskrit texts, and on the other, the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, who have paid particular attention to matters of textuality,

temporality, and reading, I contend that the “case of Sanskrit”—minor and marginal as it may seem—may allow us to perceive some central questions confronting literary studies and the Humanities today.

Simona Sawhney teaches South Asian Literature and literary theory at the University of Minnesota. Her book, *The Modernity of Sanskrit*, has recently been published by the University of Minnesota Press and Permanent Black, New Delhi.

[top of page](#)

Wednesday, April 1, 5-5:30 PM
in the hallway outside Rm. 333
School of Human Ecology, 1300 Linden Dr.

Dr. J. Mark Kenoyer
Professor & Chair, Department of Anthropology

“Silks of South Asia”

Professor Kenoyer will give an informal lecture in front of the hallway cases displaying his collection of wild-silk cocoons, implements, and textiles. Dr. Kenoyer has excavated the world’s oldest-known silk fiber from the Indus Valley site of Harappa; the objects on exhibit represent this tradition. You will have a chance to touch the different wild silks. (The display will be up through Spring term and we encourage you to view it on your own, as well.)

April 2 - Noon - 1:00PM
206 Ingraham Hall

Christine Garlough
Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Arts

"The Risks of Acknowledgment: Grassroots Feminist Performance in South Asia and the Diaspora"

South Asian feminists, at home and abroad, often employ vernacular cultural traditions and life testimonies in grassroots political performances. How do these performances invite interest from audiences in issues of social justice and human rights? Why do these artistic transformations encourage deliberation and debate in the public sphere? Drawing upon and extending scholarship in rhetoric and recognition studies, Professor Garlough suggests that the persuasive potential of these performances stems from the ways that life testimonies and vernacular folk practices serve as hermeneutical resources for rhetorical invention, what she terms *critical play*. This transfiguration of artistic forms invites involvement from audiences, who are witnesses and participants in its remaking. She first explores this through her fieldwork with members of feminist groups in Gujarat, India, who write, distribute, and perform street plays to encourage deliberation about issues such as sex-selection abortion, dowry death, and communal violence. Turning to her fieldwork in San Francisco, CA with the diasporic feminist collective South Asian

Sisters, she also considers the ways an annual performance of Yoni ki Baat (Our Vaginas Speak) encourages community members to re-consider issues of rape, domestic violence, and incest. She asserts that in both contexts, through *critical play* with traditional tropes, figures, and life narratives, these women engage in striking acts of social resistance and political advocacy.

Professor Garlough's research, most broadly, engages with rhetorical theory, critical social theory, feminist theory, and performance/performativity theory. Through these frameworks, she explores the ways that marginalized groups with political agendas use the cultural resources at their disposal to advance various modes of identification, encourage deliberation and debate, and broaden political consciousness and engagement. That is, why she is particularly interested in how people seek to persuade others in the public sphere using means other than traditional platform oratory, relying instead on transformations of traditional and popular culture for rhetorical ends. In looking at these issues, Professor Garlough has focused her research on the rhetorical performances of feminist groups in India and diasporic South Asian communities in the United States. In both cases, she uses ethnographic fieldwork methods to gather data.

Monday, April 6, 4:00-6:00 PM
Rm 8417 Social Science Bldg

Imran Aslam
President, Geo TV, Pakistan (ex editor of Star and The NEWS)

“Pakistan in Transition: The Role of the Media and its potential”

The rapid changes in Pakistan political and social life in the past two years calls for a fresh analysis and thinking about the country's future. Imran Aslam will provide a deep analysis of the major changes in Pakistan's political corridors during these past two tumultuous years starting from the dismissal of the Supreme Court judges to the present day uncertainties. As the Director of Geo TV he has had a front seat view of Pakistan's many political transitions in the past two decades. This presentation will include time for questions and discussion by the participants. Tea and Samosas will also help people relax.

Co-Sponsored by the Center for South Asia, Department of Anthropology, American Institute of Pakistan Studies

Wednesday, April 8 Noon – 1 PM
Rm 5230 Social Science Bldg

Nisha Yadav
Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics
Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

““The Structure of Indus Script””

April 9 - Noon - 1:00PM
206 Ingraham Hall

Mayank Vahia
Professor, Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics
Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai

"Origin and Growth of Astronomy in India "

A study of origin and growth of astronomy provides a unique window to study the intellectual growth of a civilisation. In the present talk, we will discuss the development of astronomy from the megalithic period to the present. We will show how the growth of astronomy can be divided into distinct phases, each of which has their own characteristics and significant cultural impact.

Prof. Vahia's main contribution is in 3 different areas such as Space Astronomy instrumentation and High-Energy Astrophysics Studies in the Origin and Growth of Astronomy in India and Science Education and Popularisation.

Prof. Vahia was a co-investigator in the experiment - ANURADHA flown on NASA's Space Shuttle Space Lab 3 Mission in 1986 and two major astronomical telescopes flown on Indian satellites, namely IXAE (1996) and SOXS (2003). In Astronomy Astrophysics, he has also contributed to the understanding of the charge particle interaction in solar flares as well as X-ray emission from a whole host of astrophysical objects.

His most recent and significant contribution is his initiation of the project "Archaeo Astronomy in Indian Context" which has been a path breaking work in understanding the origin and growth of astronomy in the Indian context. This programme has identified several potentially astronomical observatories amongst south Indian Megaliths, identified the structure and grammar of the Indus script and has mapped the growth and decay patterns in Harappan Civilisation. The programme has also taken major initiatives in understanding the Astronomy in the Kashmir region and other places.

Mayank Vahia has also contributed to Science Popularisation by initiating and running Indian Astronomy Olympiad Programme for more than ten years and has ensured that Indian performance is amongst the top 3 internationally over the entire period, and in the last 7 years Indian team's performance was the best amongst all the participating nations. He also initiated Science Popularisation and Public Outreach programmes of TIFR including involvement of a whole spectrum of communities from School and College students to Ph D students and general public. He was also Director of Nehru Planetarium for a year from January 2000 to January 2001. He has been the Chairman of the Bombay Association for Science Education from 1996 to 2008. This fully voluntary organisation is involved in improving science communication between Scientists and School and College science teachers. He was also General Secretary of Indian Physics Association from 2004 to 2008 and National Coordinator for the Indian celebrations of the World Year of Physics.

Apart from his affiliation with the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research for 30 years, he is associated with the Centre for Excellence in Basic Sciences Mumbai, University, Manipal Advanced Research Group of the Manipal University and Kashmir University.

He has published more than 150 research papers and has given over a hundred public lectures, apart from organising several national and international conferences.

April 16 - Noon - 1:00PM
206 Ingraham Hall

Susan Seizer

Associate Professor of Gender Studies and Communication & Culture, Indiana University

"Women with Swords, Women with Guns: Fierce Funny Women in South India and the U.S."

In "Women with Swords, Women with Guns," Professor Seizer presents and analyzes two quite different performances by women on the comedy stage. Her examples are drawn from North American and South Indian live performance contexts. Their analysis opens up into a much larger comparative discussion of both the practical and cosmological dimensions of women's lives in the U.S. and Asia. The aim of the paper is to argue for the importance of attending to cultural specificity -- a linchpin of humor -- at a time when violent global flows and their attendant worldwide woes threaten to lock us into ways of thinking and seeing that overlook our capacity for reflexivity. Recognizing differences amongst ourselves should instead be a means of us keeping us humble and humane. Seizer argues that it behooves us to pay attention to the cultural specificities of humor, a pleasurable way to learn about worlds we might not otherwise imagine.

Professor Seizer (Ph.D. Anthropology 1997, University of Chicago) joined the faculty at Indiana University in 2006. Her research and teaching interests include: Humor in Use, Stigma & Subjectivity, South Asia through Performance, Queer Ethnographic Narrative, and Disability Studies. Her recent book, *Stigmas of the Tamil Stage: An Ethnography of Special Drama artists in South India* (Duke University Press 2005), focuses on the lives of Tamil popular theater artists onstage and off. Prior to beginning her academic career, Professor Seizer was a performer of dance, theater, and circus. Many of her scholarly interests follow threads she first explored as a performer: improvisation; the way comedy can be used to do just about anything; and the particular exhilaration many women find in transgressing normative gender roles through public performance. Professor Seizer has published in journals as diverse as *Public Culture*, *American Ethnologist*, *Cultural Anthropology*, *Transition*, *Heresies*, and *Indian Folklife*. You can visit her website at <http://www.stigmasofthetamilstage.com>.

April 23 - Noon - 1:00PM
206 Ingraham Hall

Abigail McGowan

Assistant Professor, History Department, University of Vermont

"Convict Carpets: Jails and the Revival of Historic Carpet Design in Colonial India"

Much recent work has explored the politics of visual culture in British India, linking posters, art schools and more into colonial and anti-colonial ideologies and movements. Visual culture was also, however, just as intimately tied into economics—a connection that has not attracted as much attention in recent years. Drawing on her larger work investigating how cultural understandings about crafts shaped development agendas in colonial India, in this talk McGowan will explore the intersection of art and economics through the specific example of jail carpets. Jail carpet factories were founded with direct economic goals: to earn money for jails and to build skills so that convicts could earn a living upon release. Those same factories were also, however, intimately involved in late nineteenth century cultural debates about design, craftsmanship, and Indian tradition. Jails thus played a pivotal and yet conflicted role in the colonial revival of Indian carpet weaving. Poised at the center of new exchange networks of design ideas and skills, jails were laboratories for redefining Indian labor and productivity under the eyes of the colonial state. As such, they provide an ideal site for examining the economic context for the emerging design industry, and for the fate of ‘traditional’ handicrafts in modernizing India.

Abigail McGowan is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Vermont where she teaches the history of South Asia, with a particular focus on visual and material culture. Her first book, *Crafting the Nation in Colonial India* (Palgrave, 2009) examines the politics of craft development in colonial western India; she has also published on late nineteenth century revivals of traditional Indian design, artisanal education, and feminized consumption in colonial India. Her new research explores the changing material practices of domestic space in early twentieth century India, including the role of consumption in family life.

April 30 - Noon - 1:00PM
206 Ingraham Hall

Phyllis Granoff

Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Yale University

"Telling Tales: Jains and Śaivaites and their Stories in Medieval South India"

In this paper, Professor Granoff argues that Jains and Saivaites borrowed liberally from each other's stories to create a dense network of allusions and arguments that they used in their efforts to discredit each other and promote their own cause.

Professor Granoff is currently the Lex Hixon Professor of World Religions at Yale University. She also serves as the editor of the *Journal of Indian Philosophy*. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Far Eastern Languages from Radcliff College, she earned her Ph.D. in Sanskrit, Indian Studies and Fine Arts from the Harvard University. She is fluent in numerous Indian languages, including Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali, Ardha Magadhi, Bengali, Hindi, Assamese, Gujarati and Oriya. Professor Granoff's work has focused on Indian mythology, cults, image worship, art, literature, poetry, and medieval Indian law codes. With her husband, Professor Koichi Shinohara, she has written, translated and edited several books, and has published more than 70 journal articles on various topics.

This lecture is sponsored by the University Lectures Committee