

Call for Papers

The 17th Annual South Asia Graduate Student Conference

University of Chicago

5-6 March, 2020

Keynote Speakers:

Rosalind O'Hanlon (University of Oxford)

Akshaya Mukul (Independent researcher and journalist)

Reception, Tradition, and Canonization: Pasts and Presents in South Asia

The organizing committee of the South Asia Graduate Student Conference (SAGSC-XVII) at the University of Chicago is pleased to announce the seventeenth annual conference, *Reception, Tradition, and Canonization: Pasts and Presents in South Asia*. The conference will take place on March 5-6, 2020. We invite papers from graduate students from all over the world, across disciplines and stages of graduate study.

This conference aims to examine traditions in premodern and modern South Asia and seeks to interrogate formations of knowledge about traditions through processes of transmission and canonization. A focus on canon formation - literary, religious, philosophical, and political - reveals underlying modes of thinking that inform the consolidation of traditions, and allows for a deconstruction of what comes to be understood as normative knowledge. The conference will bring together graduate students who are interested in the different life-stages of traditions and canons, and in the work of agents who participate in shaping, carrying, maintaining, and expanding them. Thus, it will participate in ongoing scholarship on the construction of South Asian traditions, identities, and communities.

We welcome a broad interpretation of 'texts,' such that would incorporate different media including, but not limited to, traditions of performance, cinema, visual and material art, and music, thus accommodating textual practices of the past together with their contemporary counterparts. In thinking through broader theoretical questions, this conference aims to generate new categories and prisms through which we can examine forms of knowledge creation and constitution of traditions across linguistic, geographical, or historical boundaries.

This conference will explore the roles and processes of canonization in the establishment of traditional knowledge; innovation within traditions; intellectuals' and practitioners' awareness of their place within their traditions; engagements with the past and visions of the future; processes of marginalization and privileging that accompany the consolidation of canons; competing interpretive modes of received traditions; formations of and challenges to political traditions; and traditions' place in constituting religious, linguistic, and national communities. We particularly

encourage abstracts which explore intersections of South Asian intellectual and linguistic cultures with those of the Middle East and neighbouring regions; engage with reception history with reference to gender and caste; and which concern regions and languages on the margins of the traditional boundaries of South Asian studies.

Potential paper topics could include:

Tensions between tradition and innovation | The place of the individual within social and intellectual traditions | Agents of canonization and community-formation; the role of networks in canon formation | Interaction and transmission between traditions across space and region | Reception as subversion | Reception and interpretation in new media (theater, cinema, music, etc.) | Translation, retelling, and commentary writing | Censorship | Canons and their relationship to marginalized reading communities | 'Minor' textual traditions and canon-creation | Politics of receptions and representations of the past | The role of genres in the making of tradition | Political tradition and nationhood in South Asia

We invite graduate students from a wide range of departments including Anthropology, South Asian Studies, Archaeology, Art History, Comparative Literature, Film Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, History, Law, Linguistics, Philosophy, Political Science, and Religion. Abstracts for individual papers of **no more than 250 words**, should be sent via this [submission form](#) by November 30th, 2019. Panel proposals will not be considered. Applicants will be notified of a decision by the end of December 2019.

Food and lodging will be provided by the University of Chicago. We will assist with travel reimbursement, but we encourage students to also seek support from their home institutions. If you have any questions please write to us at sagsc2020@gmail.com.

Organizing Committee:

Ayelet Kotler, South Asian Languages and Civilizations

Itamar Ramot, South Asian Languages and Civilizations

Akshara Ravishankar, South Asian Languages and Civilizations

Faculty advisor: Anand Venkatkrishnan, Assistant Professor, Divinity School