UVIC | Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives

A Decade of the **Global South Colloquium**

2016-2025

Contents

ABOUT THE GLOBAL SOUTH COLLOQUIUM 2

THEMES AND TOPICS 4

- 2016 -2017 Religion and Secularism 4
- 2017 -2018 Migration in Global History 6
- 2018 -2019 Worldliness, World Systems & World History 7
- 2020 - 2021 Decolonization and Worldmaking 9
- 2022 - 2025 Punjab in the World: History, Politics, and Migration 10
- 2023 - 2025 Workshop Series: Indian Ocean Perspectives 12

PAST WRONGS, FUTURE CHOICES 18

SPECIAL GUESTS 19

- Amitav Ghosh 19
- Prabhat Patnaik 20

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS 21

10 YEAR CELEBRATION 23

FUTURE DIRECTIONS 28

We acknowledge and respect the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees and Xʷsepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Design - **Sanikka Gupta**

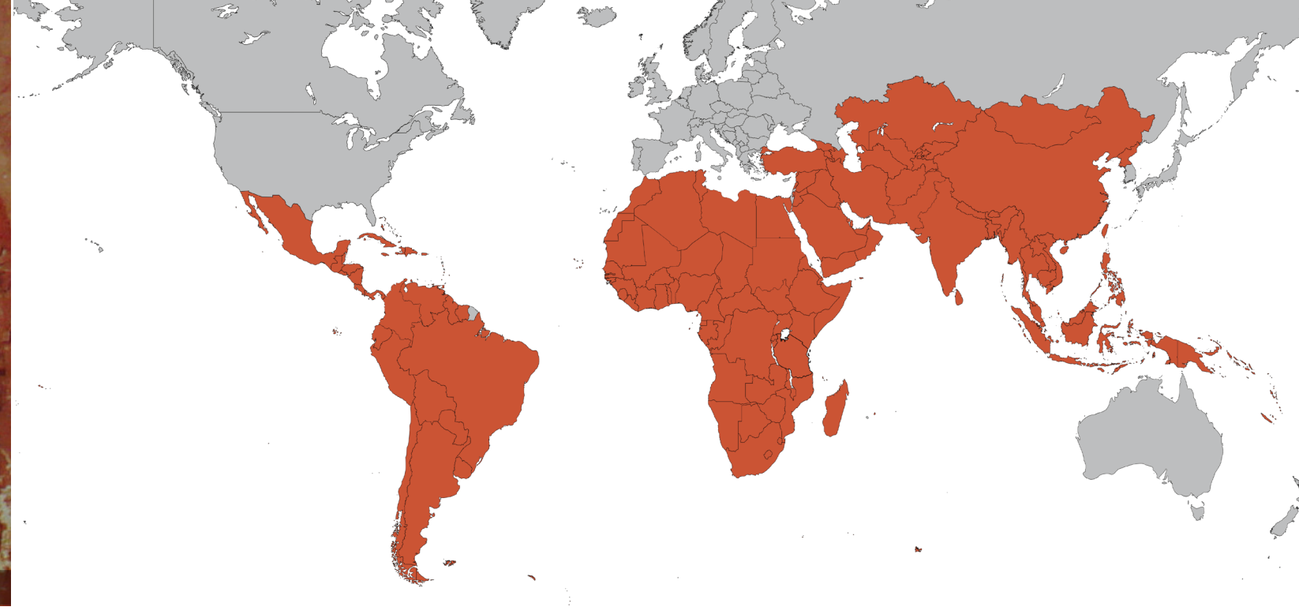
All photographs by - **Katie Dey & Jonathan Woods** (unless otherwise credited)

Cover artwork - James B. Fraser, *A View of the Botanic Garden House and Reach*, 1824

UVIC | Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives

About
The Global South Colloquium

Photo: Wanguo Quantu or the Complete Map of the Myriad Countries



CAPI's **Global South Colloquium** centres the Global South within ongoing conversations about the making of the modern world. Established as part of CAPI's research and programming initiatives, the Colloquium serves as a forum for faculty, students, and members of the wider community to engage critically with histories, cultures, and political formations across South Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. More than a geographical designation, the Global South functions as an intellectual and analytical framework. It invites reflection on empire, migration, religion, law, decolonization, and global political economy, foregrounding regions and actors often marginalized in dominant narratives of globalization. By placing the Global South at the centre of inquiry, the series reorients discussions of the world system toward questions of power, inequity, and historical transformation.

Since its inception, each year of the Colloquium has revolved around a distinct theme in the history of globalization. These have included Religion and Secularism in the Global South, Asian Migrations in Global History, Empire and Decolonization in Global Perspective, Punjab in the World, Globalization and Islamic Finance, and Asia in World History through Indian Ocean perspectives. Through lectures, workshops, edited volumes, and collaborative research initiatives, the series has fostered sustained interdisciplinary dialogue and international engagement.

The **Global South Colloquium** is organized in conjunction with the **Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives** at the **University of Victoria**. Established in 1988, CAPI is a research centre dedicated to research, education, and community engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. Through conferences, collaborative research projects, experiential learning opportunities, and public programming, CAPI acts as a vital link between the University of Victoria and the Asia-Pacific.

The Colloquium reflects CAPI's commitment to interdisciplinary, innovative, and globally engaged scholarship. It aligns with CAPI's mission to inspire creative research, cultivate a diverse intellectual community, and serve as the university's intellectual home for Asia related inquiry. Through its emphasis on collaboration, academic freedom, and inclusive dialogue, the Colloquium embodies CAPI's core values of creativity, integrity, courage, and diverse perspectives.

Convened by **Neilesh Bose**, Professor in the Department of History at the University of Victoria and former Tier II Canada Research Chair in Global and Comparative History, the Global South Colloquium reflects a sustained commitment to rethinking global history from the vantage point of South Asia and the broader Global South. A cultural historian of modern South Asia, Bose's scholarship examines colonial India, decolonization, nationalism, religion, secularism, migration, and comparative intellectual history.

His work explores how ideas travel across regions and how intellectual traditions in South Asia have shaped global conversations. His recent book, ***Chips from a Calcutta Workshop: Comparative Religion in Nineteenth Century India*** (Cambridge, 2025), reconsiders the origins of comparative religion by tracing its development within Indian reform movements rather than exclusively European Christian contexts. Earlier works, including ***Recasting the Region: Language, Culture, and Islam in Colonial Bengal*** (Oxford, 2014) and edited volumes such as ***India after World History: Literature, Comparison, and Approaches to Globalization*** (Leiden, 2022), and ***South Asian Migrations in Global History: Labor, Law, and Wayward*** Lives (**Bloomsbury, 2020**), foreground questions of language, law, migration, empire, and world history.

The Global South Colloquium emerges directly from this intellectual trajectory. Under Bose's leadership, it has convened scholars across disciplines and continents to examine empire, migration, religion, finance, decolonization, and Indian Ocean worlds. Through lectures, workshops, collaborative research, and edited publications, the Colloquium has become an anchor for global and comparative historical inquiry at UVic, bridging institutional, regional, and disciplinary boundaries.

Themes and Topics

Photo: 1790 world map by William Faden, titled New World, or, Western Hemisphere; Old World, or Eastern Hemisphere.

2016 -2017 Religion and Secularism

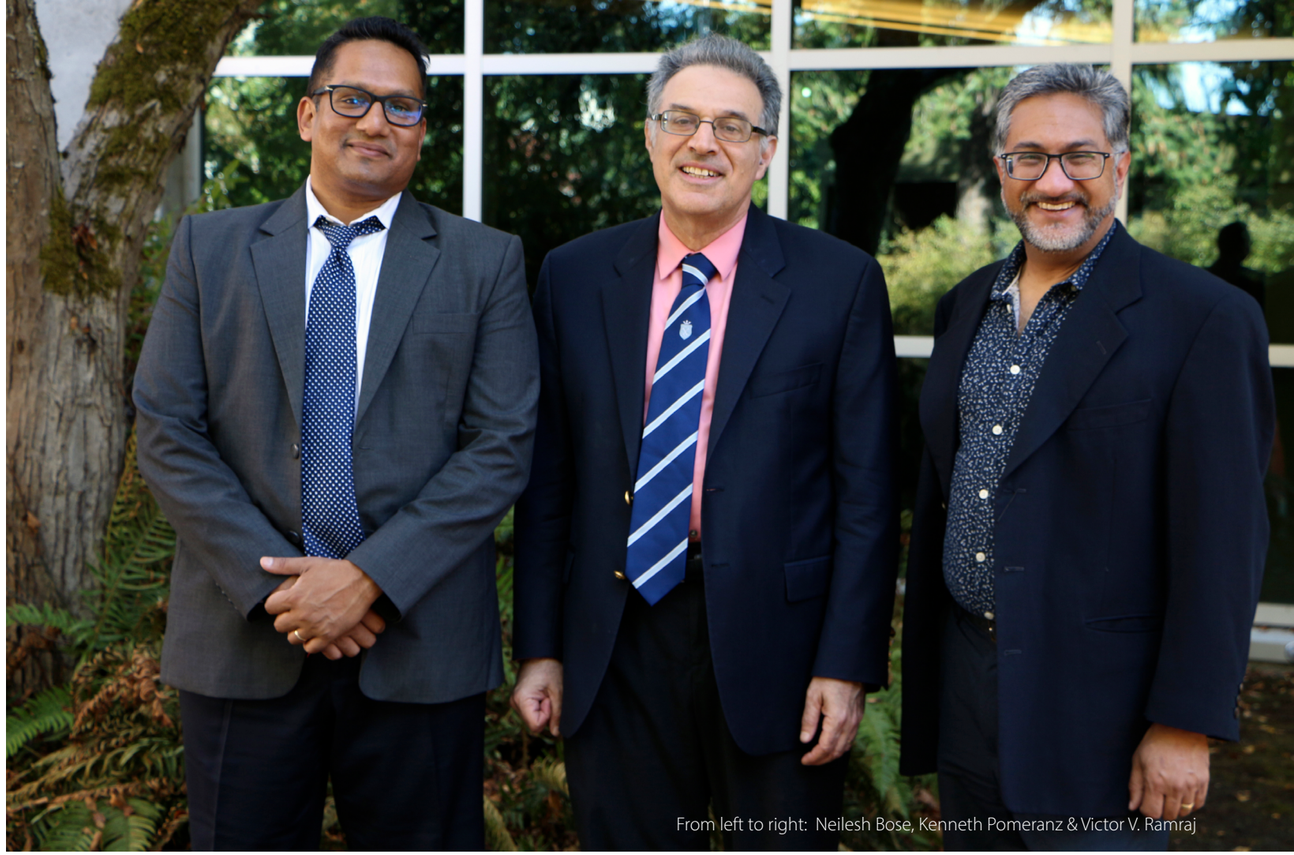
The inaugural **2016–2017** Colloquium explored the theme **Religion and Secularism in the Global South**, bringing together leading scholars to examine the historical and contemporary intersections of religion, politics, and globalization. The program featured distinguished speakers including **Dr. Nile Green, Dr. Smriti Srinivas, Dr. Sam Moyn, Dr. Mayanthi Fernando**, and **Dr. Susannah Heschel**, whose research spanned Islam, Christianity, Judaism, urban history, human rights, and global religious movements. Through public lectures and seminars, participants explored topics such as the migration and transmission of Islam across regions. Our deliberations that year focused on the meaning of religion and secularism in global Southern locales, such as Bangladesh and India. While the colloquium had also begun planning a visit from the late **Saba Mahmood**, whose groundbreaking work on religion and secularism in South Asia would have greatly enriched the series, her untimely passing prevented the visit from taking place.

DATE	TITLE	TYPE OF EVENT	PRESENTER
27 October 2016	The Making of Muslim Evangelism: Islam in the Religious Marketplace from America to Japan	Lecture	**Nile Green**, Professor of History, University of California, Los Angeles
28 October 2016	"Religious Economy and Global History"	Seminar	
17 Nov 2016	The Garden and the City: Urban Designs, Theosophy and South Asia	Lecture	**Smriti Srinivas**, University of California, Davis
18 November 2016	Cities of the Past, Cities of the Present, and the City as Utopia	Seminar	
26 January 2017	Christian Human Rights	Lecture	**Sam Moyn**, Professor of Law and History, Harvard University
27 January 2017	Human Rights and History	Seminar	
09 February 2017	Unpredictable Futures: Islam, Citizenship, and Political Possibility in France	Lecture	**Mayathi Fernando**, Professor of Anthropology, UC-Santa Cruz
10 February 2017	The Republic Unsettled: Secularism and Islam in France	Seminar	
23 March 2017	History of Jewish Scholarship on Islam: The Story of a Fascination	Lecture	**Susannah Heschel**, Professor of Jewish Studies, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire
24 March 2017	Lecture: "Judaism, Orientalism, and Empire"	Seminar	

2017 -2018 Migration in Global History

The **2017–2018** Colloquium explored the theme **Asian Migrations in and out of the Global South**, examining the movement of people, ideas, and cultures across interconnected regions. Framed by a seminar on migration in global history from a South Asian perspective, the program brought together leading scholars and writers whose work illuminated the diverse experiences of migration, displacement, and diaspora. Highlights included presentations by journalist and author **Gaiutra Bahadur** on Indian indentured migration to Guyana, Sana Aiyar (MIT) on the histories of Indians in Kenya, **Anneeth Kaur Hundle** on remigration and repatriation between India and East Africa, and **David Chang**, whose work expanded discussions of migration across the Pacific. A two day workshop on South Asian migrations in global history further enriched the year's program, fostering conversations on themes such as interactions with Indigenous peoples of the Pacific, the legacies of indentured labour, and the interconnected histories of South Asian communities across the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic Oceans.

DATE	TITLE	TYPE OF EVENT	PRESENTER
12 October 2017	**Hawaiian Indians and Black Kanakas: Racial Trajectories of Native Hawaiian Diasporic Laborers in the Nineteenth Century**	Lecture	**David Chang**, Associate Professor of History, University of Minnesota
26 October, 2017	**Conjure Women and Coolie Women**	Lecture	**Gaiutra Bahadur,** Guyanese-American writer
27-28 October, 2017	**South Asian Migrations in Global History**	Conference	• **Sana Aiyar**, MIT • **Sara Shneiderman**, University of British Columbia • **Anneeth Kaur Hundle**, UC Merced • **Renisa Mawani**, University of British Columbia • **Marina Martin**, University of Frankfurt • **Victor V. Ramraj**, University of Victoria • **Nilanjana Bhattacharjya**, Arizona State University • **Ajay Bhardwaj**, University of British Columbia • **Seema Sohi**, University of Colorado-Boulder • **Gajendra Singh**, University of Exeter • **Johanna Ogden**, Independent Historian • **Samip Mallick**, South Asian American Digital Archive/ SAADA • **Davina Bhandar**, Centre for Policy Studies on Culture and Communities • **Bikrum Singh Gill**, University of Aberystwyth • **Andrea Wright**, William and Mary • **Neha Vora**
23 November, 2017	**Yoga as Politics: An Alternative History**	Lecture	• **Sunila S. Kale**, Associate Professor in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle • **Christian Lee Novetzke**, Professor of South Asia Studies, Religious Studies, and International Studies at the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington



From left to right: Neilesh Bose, Kenneth Pomeranz & Victor V. Ramraj

2018 -2019 Worldliness, World Systems & World History

The **2018–2019** Colloquium explored the theme **Worldliness, World Systems, and World History**, bringing together scholars from the humanities and social sciences to examine evolving approaches to global history and globalization. The year's program featured keynote lectures, interdisciplinary panels, workshops, and seminars that revisited foundational debates such as the Great Divergence and Europe's role in the Industrial Revolution, while introducing new perspectives on the Muslim world, global literature, security and terror, Islamic finance, and South–South relations. Highlights included **Kenneth Pomeranz's** keynote lecture, Beyond the "Great Divergence" Debate, a two day interdisciplinary workshop on Globalization, Global, and World: History and Literature held in collaboration with the University's Centre for Global Studies and Communication, and panel discussions on Islam, Law, and the State in the Modern World and The Idea of the Muslim World. The colloquium also welcomed distinguished speakers including **Priya Satia, Eli Jelly Schapiro, and Dror Yinon**, whose presentations explored the Industrial Revolution, security and terror in the Americas, and Islamic finance. Together, these events fostered rich interdisciplinary dialogue on the many ways global connections have shaped societies, histories, and ideas across the world.

DATE	TITLE	TYPE OF EVENT	PRESENTER
05 September 2018	**Beyond the "Great Divergence" Debate: What Have We Learned About the Origins of Modern Economic Growth?**	Lecture	**Kenneth Pomeranz**, Professor of Modern Chinese History, University of Chicago. .
06 September 2018	**Angles on Asia in the World**	Panel 1: History	• **Kenneth Pomeranz**, University of Chicago • **Neilesh Bose**, University of Victoria, History • **Greg Blue**, University of Victoria, History Emeritus • Chair: **Victor V. Ramraj**, CAPI Director
		Panel 2: Literature	• **Kedar Kulkarni**, Flame University, India • **Alex Beecroft**, University of South Carolina • **Chris Chekuri**, San Francisco State University • Chair: **Neilesh Bose**, University of Victoria, History
07 September 2018	**Globalization, Global, and World: History and Literature,** *in collaboration with Northwestern University's Center for Global Culture and Communication*	Lecture	• **Neilesh Bose**, University of Victoria • **Jonathan Arac**, University of Pittsburgh • **Alex Beecroft**, University of South Carolina • **Sara Beam**, University of Victoria • **Harris Feinsod**, Northwestern University • **Kedar Kulkarni**, FLAME University, Pune, India • **Stephen Ross**, University of Victoria • **Radha Kumar**, Syracuse University • **Chris Chekuri**, San Francisco State University • **Rita Dhamoon**, University of Victoria • **John Pincince Loyola**, University Chicago • **Susan Andrade**, University of Pittsburgh • **Peyman Vayabzadeh**, University of Victoria
28 November 2018	**Islam, Law, and the State in the Modern World**	Panel 1: Islam, Law and the Modern State	• **Arif Jamal**, National University of Singapore • **Cemil Aydin**, University of North Carolina • **Amal Ghazal**, Simon Fraser University, • **Neilesh Bose**, UVic History • Chair: **Victor V. Ramraj**, CAPI Director
		Panel 2: The Idea of the Muslim World	• **Arif Jamal**, National University of Singapore • **Cemil Aydin**, University of North Carolina • **Megan Robb**, University of Pennsylvania • **Ali Qadir**, University of Tampere, Finland • Chair: **Kathy Chan**, UVic Law
16 January 2019	**Empire of Guns and the Industrial Revolution**	Lecture	• **Priya Satia**, Stanford University
31 January 2019	**Security and Terror in the Making of American Modernity**	Lecture	• **Eli Jelly-Schapiro**, University of South Carolina Respondents: • **Rachel Cleves**, University of Victoria, History • **Stephen Ross**, University of Victoria, English
04 March 2019	**Beyond Debt: Islamic Experiments in Global Finance**	Lecture	• **Daromir Rudnyckyj**, UVic, Anthropology Respondents: • **Greg Blue**, University of Victoria History Emeritus, • **Neilesh Bose**, University of Victoria History

2020 - 2021 Decolonization and Worldmaking

The **2020–2021** Colloquium explored the theme **Empire and Decolonization in World History**, examining how empire, colonialism, and decolonization have shaped the modern world through global and comparative historical perspectives. Bringing together scholars from history, political theory, and area studies, the series considered the diverse political, intellectual, and social legacies of decolonization beyond the nation state. Highlights included **Adom Getachew's** lecture on worldmaking and self determination after empire, **Manu Karuka's** exploration of Indigenous nations, Chinese workers, and the transcontinental railroad, **Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz's** examination of the Philippine Revolution in a global context, and **Sujit Sivasundaram's** work on the Indian Ocean and new histories of revolution and empire. Together, these presentations explored themes of anti colonial thought, transnational movements, global solidarities, and alternative political futures, highlighting the enduring significance of decolonization in understanding the interconnected histories of the Global South and the wider world.

DATE	TITLE	TYPE OF EVENT	PRESENTER
15 October 2020	**Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination**	Lecture	**Adom Getachew**, Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Political Science and the College at the University of Chicago
05 November 2020	**Empire's Tracks Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad**	Lecture	**Manu Karuka**, Assistant Professor of American Studies at Barnard College
11 March 2021	**Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A Global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887–1912**	Lecture	**Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz**, Research Fellow, Clare Hall, University of Cambridge; Executive Director, Toynbee Prize Foundation
08 April 2021	**Sujit Sivasundaram Waves Across the South: A New History of Revolution and Empire**	Lecture	**Sujit Sivasundaram**, Professor, Faculty of History; Fellow, Gonville and Caius College; Director, Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge

Photo: Book cover: *Asian Place, Filipino Nation,* by Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz (Harvard University Press, 2020).

2022 - 2025 Punjab in the World: History, Politics, and Migration

The **2022** Colloquium explored the theme **Punjab in the World**, examining the modern history of Punjab and Punjabi migrations through global and transnational perspectives. Bringing together historians, anthropologists, and scholars of religion and culture, the series explored the region's rich historical legacy and its enduring influence across the world. Highlights included **Priya Atwal's** examination of women and power in the Kingdom of Lahore, **Navyug Gill's** research on religious conversion and Dalit communities in colonial Punjab, **Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra's** discussion of museums, memory, and public history in British Columbia, and **Zabeen Khamisa's** exploration of Sikh popular culture and religious identity. Together, these presentations addressed topics including the Sikh Empire, colonial Punjab, contemporary farmers' protests, migration, and visual and popular culture, demonstrating how Punjab's history continues to shape global conversations on identity, mobility, and cultural exchange.

DATE	TITLE	TYPE OF EVENT	PRESENTER
20 January 2022	**Royals and Rebels: The Rise and fall of the Sikh Empire**	Lecture	**Priya Atwal**, Community History Fellow, Faculty of History, University of Oxford
27 January 2022	**Philology of another Future: Revisiting Ernst Trumpp and German Orientalism**	Lecture	**G.S. Sahota**, Associate Professor, Aurora Chair in Sikh and Punjabi Studies, Department of Literature, UC Santa Cruz
03 February 2022	**Reading the Embattled Text: Reflections on Reading the Voices of Punjabi Soldiers**	Lecture	**Gajendra Singh**, Senior Lecturer, History, University of Exeter
10 February 2022	**The Amritsar Massacre in Historical Context**	Lecture	**Kim Wagner**, Professor, School of History, Queen Mary University of London
16 February 2022	**Remnants of Partition: Migration Histories**	Lecture	**Aanchal Malhotra**, Author and Historian
17 February 2022	**Caste, Anti-Caste Politics, and Punjabi History**	Lecture	**Navyug Gill**, Professor, Department of History, William Paterson University
03 March 2022	**Sikh Studies in an Era of University/ World-Making**	Lecture	**Anneeth Kaur Hundle**, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, UC Irvine
10 March 2022	**Punjabi Migration and BC Histories**	Lecture	**Satwinder Bains**, Associate Professor, Social, Cultural, & Media Studies, University of the Fraser Valley Mary Anne Vallianatos, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Law, University of Victoria
17 March 2022	**Archiving Punjabi Migrations**	Lecture	**Rajbir Judge**, Assistant Professor, Department of History, California State University, Long Beach
24 March 2022	**Farmer Protests: Updates and Approaches**	Lecture	**Natasha Behl**, Associate Professor, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arizona State University
31 March 2022	**Performing Punjab, Punjabi, Punjabiat**	Lecture	**Anjali Gera Roy**, Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology
07 April 2022	**Sikh Art and Activism in the Contemporary Era**	Lecture	**Melia Belli Bose**, Associate Professor, Art History & Visual Studies, University of Victoria

Photo: Jagmeet Singh the leader of the federal NDP party on a parade float during Toronto's annual Pride parade.

The **2025** Punjab in the World Lecture Series continued to examine **Punjabi history, culture, and politics** through historical and contemporary perspectives. Bringing together scholars from history, museum studies, religious studies, and gender studies, the series explored questions of memory, identity, decolonization, and public engagement while highlighting Punjab's place within broader global conversations. Featured presentations included **Dharitri Bhattacharjee's** documentary on the limits of historical practice and contested histories in South Asia, **Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra's** vision for a decolonized South Asian Canadian Museum in British Columbia, **Zabeen Khamisa's** exploration of Sikh solidarities and progressive political movements in Canada, and **Anshu Malhotra's** reflections on gendered histories, archives, memory, and storytelling during the Covid 19 pandemic. Together, these lectures demonstrated how the study of Punjab continues to illuminate questions of history, migration, identity, and social justice across local and global contexts.

DATE	TITLE	TYPE OF EVENT	PRESENTER
24 February 2025	**The Limits of History: A hopeful future for the discipline of history**	Lecture	**Dharitri Bhattacharjee**, Western Washington University
3 March 2025	**Are Museums Still Relevant? Demystifying a Decolonized Vision for Our Space in British Columbia**	Lecture	**Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra**, University of Fraser Valley
24 March 2025	**Woke Jathas: Sikh Solidarities and the Progressive Left in Early Twenty-First Century Canada**	Lecture	**Zabeen Khamisa**, University of Winnipeg
31 March 2025	**The Archival Turn, Sedimented Stories, and Covid 19: The Many Possibilities of Gendered Histories**	Lecture	**Anshu Malhotra**, University of California-Santa Barbara

2023 - 2025 Workshop Series: Indian Ocean Perspectives

Indian Ocean Perspectives: Culture, Conflict, and Coordination - A Workshop for Emerging Scholars 2023

The first Indian Ocean workshop, held at the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives on June 15-16, 2023, set out to explore new ways of thinking about world and transregional history through the lens of the Indian Ocean. Opening the proceedings, Neilesh Bose framed the Indian Ocean not simply as a bounded region, but as an entry point into broader questions of circulation, exchange, and historical connection. The workshop's opening session, featuring **Sebastian Prange** and **Renisa Mawani**, focused on recent directions in Indian Ocean Studies and helped establish the conceptual terrain for the discussions that followed. Drawing on their respective work, Prange emphasized the material bases of networks and exchange, while Mawani highlighted the political and legal conditions that shaped mobility, securitization, and imperial regulation across maritime space. Their reflections encouraged participants to think beyond abstract connectivity and to attend instead to the concrete structures, hierarchies, and forms of power that sustained Indian Ocean worlds. The discussion broadened this agenda further by stressing the importance of caste, race, gender, indigeneity, and geopolitics in shaping oceanic histories. **Smriti Srinivas's** keynote deepened these concerns by calling for a more interdisciplinary vocabulary capable of capturing the porousness and flexibility of Indian Ocean worlds. In particular, Srinivas challenged the field's tendency to privilege ports and islands by showing how inland sites such as Bangalore might also be understood within wider oceanic networks.

The workshop's main session, featuring emerging scholars working in literary criticism, intellectual history, and labour history, generated three linked themes. First, participants approached the Indian Ocean as a method, arguing that it should serve not only as an object of study but also as an analytical framework for rethinking transregional history, unsettling Eurocentric and nation-centred narratives, and opening transoceanic comparison. Second, the discussions highlighted the Indian Ocean as a geopolitical arena shaped by imperial rivalry, frontier-making, and contemporary shifts in global power. Participants noted the value of recovering smaller and often erased histories alongside larger political transformations, while also reflecting on the renewed importance of naval, strategic, and multipolar dynamics. Third, the workshop raised important methodological questions about how scholars might capture the multiplicity, scale, and porousness of Indian Ocean worlds over time. Participants discussed biography, archaeology, ethnography, network tracing, public engagement, imagination, and archival research as possible ways of tracing movement, connection, and lived experience across maritime and littoral spaces. At the same time, they emphasized that each method has its limits, especially when dealing with fragmentary, uneven, or state-shaped records. Particular attention was given to the problem of the archive and to the difficulty of recovering minor, obscured, or deliberately concealed histories from colonial sources. In this respect, the workshop encouraged scholars not only to broaden the spatial frame of Indian Ocean Studies, but also to reflect more critically on the evidentiary and interpretive tools used to study it. The workshop aligned closely with the broader aims of the Global South Colloquium by using the Indian Ocean to rethink mobility, empire, and historical connection beyond conventional regional and disciplinary boundaries.

The 2023 Indian Ocean Perspective Workshop in session.

The 2023 Indian Ocean Perspective Workshop group.

Participants

Neilesh Bose, Associate Professor of History and Canada Research Chair of Global and Comparative History at the University of Victoria.
Smriti Srinivas, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California-Davis.
Renisa Mawani, Professor of Sociology and Canada Research Chair of Colonial Legal Histories at the University of British Columbia
Sebastian Prange, Associate Professor of History at the University of British Columbia
Neelofer Qadir, Assistant Professor of English at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.
Taushif Kara, Lecturer of Theology and Religion at Kings College London.
Ritesh Jaiswal, Assistant Professor of History at Delhi University.
Wilson Jacob Chacko, Professor of History at Concordia University
Neelima Jeychandran, Assistant Professor in African Visual Cultures in the Department of Art History at Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar
Victor Ramraj, Professor of Law, CAPI Chair in Asia-Pacific Legal Relations, and Director of the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives
Pooja Parmar, Associate Professor of Law and President's Chair in Law and Indigeneity in a Global Context
Arunima Datta, Assistant Professor of History at Idaho State University
Andrew Wender, Associate Teaching Professor of History and Political Science and Director of Religion, Culture, and Society program at the University of Victoria
John Rogers, Director of the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies
Dharitri Bhattacharjee, Assistant Professor of History at Western Washington University

Indian Ocean Perspectives: Geopolitics - A Workshop for Emerging Scholars 2024

The second Indian Ocean workshop, held at the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives on November 21-22, 2024, built on the conversations initiated in the inaugural 2023 meeting and continued to explore the Indian Ocean as a productive site for rethinking world and transregional history. In his opening remarks, Neilesh Bose emphasized the Indian Ocean's value as a framework for examining circulation, connection, and historical complexity, while noting that this year's workshop would deepen discussion of aesthetic forms, transcultural exchange, and geopolitical change. Across the sessions, participants explored how the Indian Ocean can illuminate not only patterns of mobility and contact, but also the political, cultural, and intellectual formations that emerged through those encounters.

Several linked themes shaped the workshop's discussions. **Deepthi Murali's** presentation on ivory tankards as transcultural objects examined how material culture, symbolic power, and political performance intersected across Indian Ocean worlds. The discussion highlighted the need to place art historical questions within broader oceanic and imperial contexts, including extractivism, environmental history, caste, and kingship, while suggesting that princely India remains an understudied dimension of Indian Ocean Studies. **Carolien Stolte's** paper turned to Pan-Asianism and anti-colonial thought, presenting the Indian Ocean as a space of cosmopolitan exchange and horizontal solidarity, even as such solidarities were often shaped by hierarchy and contradiction. The discussion that followed reflected on the value of the Indian Ocean as both a conceptual frame and an archive for recovering twentieth-century internationalism, peace movements, and regional political imagination.

Other sessions extended these concerns in complementary ways. **Shobhana Xavier's** presentation on Sri Lankan Islam examined sacred geography, contestation, and cosmology, arguing for an interpretive approach that gives greater attention to narrative and transoceanic religious connection than to linear historical reconstruction alone. The discussion underscored the importance of situating local Muslim histories within wider

The 2024 Indian Ocean Perspective Workshop group.

The 2024 Indian Ocean Perspective Workshop in session.

Indian Ocean Islamic networks, especially in light of the limits of available archives. **Manjeet Pardesi's** session on geopolitics offered a more explicitly theoretical intervention, using comparisons between Roman hegemony and the eastern Indian Ocean world to argue for a 'multiplex' rather than hegemonic understanding of order. In discussion, participants considered the relationship between maritime exchange, violence, and decentralized forms of stability, and reflected on the relevance of these historical patterns for contemporary multipolar politics. **Ned Bertz's** presentation on mobility and decolonization similarly encouraged participants to view decolonization as an open-ended and translocal process rather than a discrete event. The 2024 workshop reinforced the broader aims of the Global South Colloquium by using the Indian Ocean to rethink culture, empire, mobility, and political order beyond conventional regional and disciplinary boundaries.

Participants

Carolien Stolte, Associate Professor of History, Leiden University
Shobhana Xavier, Associate Professor of Religion, Queen's University
Deepthi Murali, Assistant Professor of Art History, George Mason University
Manjeet Pardesi, Associate Professor, Political Science and International Relations; Director, Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University Wellington
Ned Bertz, Associate Professor of History, University of Hawaii-Manoa
Melia Belli Bose, Associate Professor, South Asian Art History University of Victoria
Nikhita Obeegadoo, Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Francophone Studies, University of Chicago
Scott Watson, Professor of Political Science, University of Victoria
Neilesh Bose, Associate Professor of History, Canada Research Chair of Global and Comparative History, University of Victoria
Dulma Karunarathna, Associate, Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives, University of Victoria
Andrew Wender, Associate Teaching Professor of History and Political Science; Director, Religion, Culture, and Society Program, University of Victoria
Thiti Jamkajornkeiat, Assistant Professor of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Victoria

The 2025 Indian Ocean Perspective Workshop group.

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Indian Ocean Migrations - A Workshop for Emerging Scholars 2025

The third Indian Ocean workshop, held at the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives on December 4, 2025, continued the Global South Colloquium's effort to build an intellectual community around the Indian Ocean as a vital site for rethinking Asia in world history. In his opening remarks, Neilesh Bose situated the workshop within the broader intellectual aims of the Global South Colloquium, emphasizing the Indian Ocean as a generative framework for rethinking transregional history. The presentations reflected this ambition through an explicitly interdisciplinary conversation that moved across history, literary studies, art criticism, environmental thought, and migration studies. At its core was a shared concern with how Indian Ocean lives might be narrated when archives are fragmentary, disciplinary boundaries prove limiting, and conventional methods struggle to capture movement, displacement, and layered belonging.

Wilson Jacob Chacko's presentation, 'Writing a Speculative History of the Indian Ocean World, or Putting Words in the Subaltern's Mouth?', raised searching methodological questions about how to recover subaltern lives that appear only partially in the archive. Distinguishing speculative history from alternative history, Chacko explored how historians might work through available evidence while also pushing beyond its limits to reconstruct worlds shaped by rebellion, religious authority, and environmental experience. The discussion highlighted the paper's challenge to positivist assumptions, its engagement with uncertainty and incompleteness, and its attempt to bring Islamic thought, metaphysics, and environmental history into a shared analytical frame. **Nicole Ranganath's** conversation on Rupy C. Tut similarly drew attention to lives and experiences that often evade conventional historical visibility. Through a discussion of feminism, migration, water, and artistic materiality, the session examined how art can render displacement, partition, gendered memory, and oceanic connection in ways that exceed strictly documentary modes of analysis.

The discussion also raised important questions about visibility, patronage, class, and the politics of cultural production.

Nikhita Obeegadoo's presentation extended these concerns by asking how Indian Ocean narratives might account for submerged, more-than-human, and multilingual worlds. Her intervention challenged simplified representations of the Indian Ocean by emphasizing disconnection alongside connection, and by bringing together questions of clandestine migration, neocolonial power, interspecies violence, and literary form. Across the workshop, participants repeatedly returned to the problem of method: how to connect different disciplinary perspectives, how to think from the ocean rather than simply about it, and how to make room for emerging work by junior scholars. The 2025 workshop reinforced the broader aims of the Global South Colloquium by using the Indian Ocean to rethink migration, culture, power, and historical method beyond conventional regional and disciplinary boundaries.

Participants

Aaron Windel, Associate Professor of History, Simon Fraser University
Andrew Wender, Associate Teaching Professor of History and Political Science; Director, Religion, Culture, and Society Program, University of Victoria
Melia Belli Bose, Associate Professor, South Asian Art History, University of Victoria
Neilesh Bose, Associate Professor of History; Canada Research Chair of Global and Comparative History, University of Victoria
Nicole Ranganath, Assistant Professor of History, University of California, Davis
Nikhita Obeegadoo, Neubauer Family Assistant Professor of Francophone Studies, University of Chicago
Thiti Jamkajornkeiat, Assistant Professor of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Victoria
Wilson Jacob Chacko, Assistant Professor of History, Concordia University

The 2025 Indian Ocean Perspective Workshop in session.

Japan bound, 1946. Photo: Odamura Family Collection. Nikkei National Museum

Special Guests

Past Wrongs, Future Choices

In addition to collaborating with centers such as the CSRS, CFGS, and faculties of Humanities, Business, Social Science, and Law, another collaboration featured Dr. Neilesh Bose's fellowship with the **Past Wrongs, Future Choices** project.

The Global South Colloquium and the Past Wrongs, Future Choices (PWFC) partnership shared a commitment to examining histories of displacement, migration, empire, and citizenship through comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives. Building on the colloquium's broader conversations about globalization and the Global South, Dr. Neilesh Bose's fellowship with PWFC explored how histories of dispossession are connected across regions rather than confined within national boundaries.

This collaboration resulted in two co-authored publications. The first publication features a book chapter co-authored by Neilesh Bose and **Andrea Mariko Grant** for the edited book Nikkei Uprooting in Global Perspective. Edited by **Jordan Stanger-Ross** and **Audrey Kobayashi**, this book contains a series of case studies of Nikkei uprooting across Canada, the USA, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, and other regions. Bose and Mariko Grant's contribution examines the promises and limitations of comparative history by placing South Asian migration histories alongside the experiences of Nikkei dispossession during the Second World War. Another journal article – in review as of this writing – authored by Neilesh Bose, Jordan Stanger-Ross and **Masumi Izumi** explores the meanings of citizenship, belonging, and nationalism by comparing the experiences of Japanese Canadians with perspectives drawn from South Asia and its diasporas, highlighting the ambiguity and complexity of identity in periods of political transition.

Together, the Global South Colloquium and PWFC demonstrated the value of bringing diverse historical experiences into conversation, showing how comparative histories of empire, migration, and displacement can deepen our understanding of citizenship, memory, and global justice.

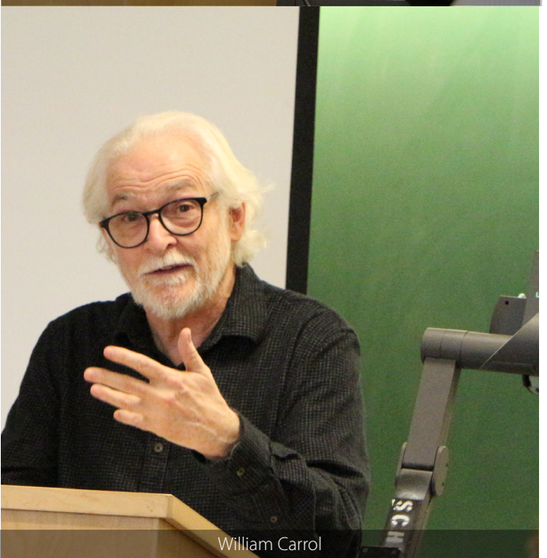
Amitav Ghosh

As part of **CAPI's 30th anniversary celebrations** in 2018, the Global South Colloquium collaborated with partners across the University of Victoria to welcome internationally acclaimed novelist **Amitav Ghosh** to campus. Best known for his Ibis Trilogy, Ghosh's work explores the intertwined histories of the Opium Wars, Indian indentured labour, colonialism, and the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, offering new ways of understanding globalization and empire. His visit featured a special dinner lecture that examined how literary narratives can illuminate the global histories of migration, trade, and imperialism. By connecting the experiences of communities across Asia, Africa, and the Atlantic world, Ghosh demonstrated how storytelling can deepen historical understanding and challenge conventional perspectives on the making of the modern world.

Dr. Neilesh Bose (left) and Amitav Ghosh (right) at the CAPI 30th anniversary celebration.

Prabhat Patnaik

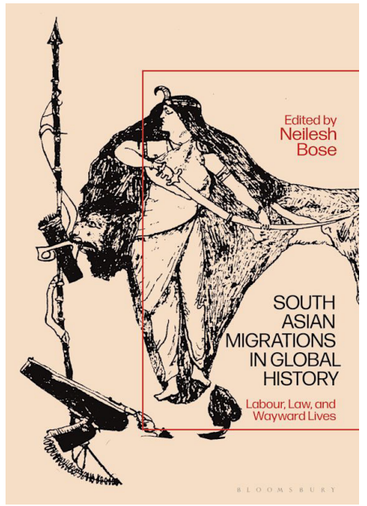
Jutta Gutberlet


William Carrol

Prabhat Patnaik

The Global South Colloquium also welcomed renowned economist **Prabhat Patnaik** for an interdisciplinary discussion of A Theory of Imperialism, co authored with **Utsa Patnaik**. Co hosted with the UVic History Department's World History Caucus, the event brought together scholars from economics, geography, sociology, and history to examine the continuing dynamics of global inequality. The discussion explored how patterns of trade between the Global North and Global South have sustained unequal economic relationships and shaped the development of modern capitalism. Respondents **Jutta Gutberlet** and **William Carroll** joined Professor Patnaik in examining the contemporary relevance of imperialism, neoliberalism, and alternative pathways toward more equitable global development. The event reflected the Global South Colloquium's commitment to fostering interdisciplinary conversations on pressing global issues.

Books and Publications



South Asian Migrations in Global History
Labor, Law, and Wayward Lives
Neilesh Bose (2020)

South Asian Migrations in Global History: Labor, Law, and Wayward Lives is an edited collection that explores how South Asian migrations in modern history have shaped key aspects of globalization since the 1830s. Drawing on original research from colonial India, Fiji, Mexico, South Africa, North America, and the Middle East, the volume examines indentured labour and its legacies, law as a site of regulation, and the use of historical biography to understand mobility and migration.

The collection includes recent scholarship on the legacy of issues such as consent, sovereignty, and distinctions between skilled and unskilled labour that emerged from the history of indentured labour migrations. By bringing these themes together, the volume highlights a range of historical changes that can only be fully understood by studying South Asian migrants within a globalized world system.

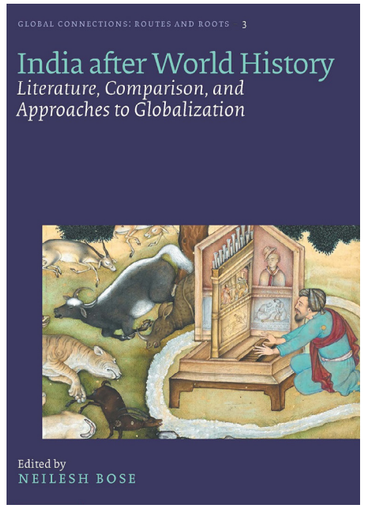
The book opens with a Foreword by **Victor V. Ramraj**, followed by a Prologue titled "Archives, Paper Regimes, and Mobility" by **Uma Dhupelia Meshtrie**, and an Introduction by **Neilesh Bose**. The volume is organized into three parts. **Part I, "Impacts of Indentured Labor,"** includes chapters by **Goolam Vahed** on Gokhale, Polak, and the end of Indian indenture in South Africa, 1860 to 1911; **Andrea Wright** on labor, security, and oil production in the Arabian Peninsula; and **Ashutosh Kumar** on legal discourse concerning migration from India to the sugar colonies between 1837 and 1922.

Part II, "Law in Migration Histories," features work by **Riyad Koya** on slavery, abolitionism, indentured labor, and the problem of exit in colonial India, and

by **Marina Martin** on the legal and political framing of Indian South Africans between 1860 and 1960.

Part III, "Historical Biography," includes Neilesh Bose's study of Taraknath Das; **Daniel Kent Carrasco's** examination of Pandurang Khankhoje's transition from British colonial subject to Mexican naturalizado between 1924 and 1954; and **Devarakshanam Govinden's** account of Senthamani Govender. The volume concludes with an Epilogue, "Oceanic Currents and Wayward Crossings," by **Renisa Mawani.**

Centering South Asian migrations as a site of analysis in global history, the contributors offer a lens into the ongoing regulation of labourers after the abolition of slavery and its intersections with histories in both the Global North and Global South. Through archival research and historical biography, the collection presents experiences from below and foregrounds a world history that moves beyond empire and nation.



India after World History
Literature
Comparison, and Approaches to Globalization
Neilesh Bose (2022)

In the twenty first century, terms such as globalization, global, and world function as key words at the cusp of new frontiers in both historical writing and literary criticism. While history and literature may appear closely intertwined in pre and early modern contexts, the emergence of Anglophone world history in the twenty first century marked a divergence between the disciplines. In recent years, works such as Martin Puchner's The Written World, Maya Jasanoff's The Dawn Watch, and Amitav Ghosh's Ibis Trilogy have renewed a global register of engagement between history and literature.

India after World History examines recent scholarship reflecting on global history and world literature in the wake of these developments, with a primary focus on India as a site of extensive theoretical and empirical advances in both fields. Bringing global history and world literature into conversation, the book offers reflections on their meeting points alongside original research in areas including Neo Platonism in world history, histories of violence, and literary histories addressing indentured labor and capitalist transformation.

The volume includes a Foreword by **Patrick Manning** and an Introduction by Neilesh Bose, "Globalization, Global, and World as Keywords for History and Literature." Chapters include **Alexander Beecroft's** "Can We Have a Global Literary History?", **Jonathan Arac's** "World History Needs a Better Relationship with Literary History," **Kedar Kulkarni's** "Re Gifting Theory to Europe: The Romantic Worlds of Nineteenth Century India," **Nandini Dhar's** "Violence, Indenture and Capitalist Realism in Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies," **Radha Kumar's** "Vacant Villages: Policing Riots in Colonial India," Jos Gommans's "The Neoplatonic Renaissance from the Thames to the Ganges," J. **Daniel Elam's** "Radical Presentism," and Christopher J. Lee's "Liberating World Literature: Alex La Guma in Exile." The book concludes with an Afterword by **B. Venkat Mani.**

By placing global history and world literature in sustained dialogue, the book reflects on conceptual advances in the study of globalization while foregrounding India as a critical site of inquiry.

10 Year Celebration

As part of the Global South Colloquium's 10th Anniversary Celebration, three presentations reflected on the histories, ideas, and scholarly collaborations that have shaped the program over the past decade. Together, the talks traced the development of world and global history at the University of Victoria, examined the historical roots and contemporary implications of surveillance technologies in colonial and postcolonial contexts, and explored the intellectual foundations, achievements, and future directions of the Global South Colloquium itself. Moving from the emergence of world history at UVic to contemporary debates surrounding technology, governance, and the Global South, the presentations highlighted the value of interdisciplinary scholarship in understanding the complex connections that have shaped our global past and continue to influence the present.

From left to right: Gregory Blue, Midori Ogasawara, Neilesh Bose & Victor V. Ramraj

Ten Years of Global South Colloquium and Beyond - Neilesh Bose

Neilesh Bose's presentation reflected on the intellectual foundations, development, and future directions of the Global South Colloquium over its first decade. Situating his remarks in relation to the shift from world history to global history, Bose emphasized the importance of centering the Global South not simply as a geographic category, but as a field of interconnected histories shaped by colonialism, postcolonial transformation, and shared political and intellectual struggles. He noted that the term can refer to regions in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East marked by common experiences of colonialism, but also to solidarities forged through struggles against empire and capitalism across different spaces. Drawing on his own scholarship on religion, nationalism, and intellectual history in South Asia, Bose highlighted the importance of tracing circulations of ideas, identities, and forms of belonging that extend beyond the nation-state and complicate more conventional political or territorial frames.

Bose then turned to the history of the colloquium itself, established in 2016 and later incorporated into the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives. He described the colloquium as shaped by a sustained interest in empire, nationalism, decolonization, and global intellectual exchange, and outlined its core activities, including speaker series, workshops, and collaborations across departments, faculties, and research centres. Over the past decade, the colloquium has engaged a wide range of themes, including religion and secularism, migration, and decolonization in global perspective. Bose highlighted visits by prominent scholars and writers, including Amitav Ghosh, whose work on the linked histories of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans captured the kind of trans-regional historical thinking that the colloquium has sought to foster. He also recalled discussions of major works on imperialism, political economy, and global religious and intellectual traditions, emphasizing the colloquium's role as a site of lively interdisciplinary exchange.

A central theme of Bose's presentation was the colloquium's recent focus on the Indian Ocean as an analytical space through which to rethink many of these themes. These workshops brought together junior and established scholars working on religion, migration, environmental history, literature, culture, and geopolitics, while highlighting the region's plural histories and contemporary significance within the 'Indo-Pacific.' Bose presented the Indian Ocean as a site that sheds light on alternative histories of circulation, decolonization, and state formation, while also opening fresh perspectives on culture and everyday life. He concluded by reflecting on future directions for the colloquium, noting areas that remain underexplored, including the history of science and technology, gender and sexuality, and indigeneity in the Global South. He closed with a call to continue examining how new

Neilesh Bose presenting at the GSC 10 year celebration.

Midori Ogasawara presenting at the GSC 10 year celebration.

forms of power, including digital technologies, biometrics, and data-driven governance, are reshaping the postcolonial present.

Promoting World History at UVic: the First Phases - Gregory Blue

Gregory Blue's presentation, 'Promoting World History at UVic: the First Phases', traced the early development of world history at the University of Victoria and the intellectual foundations that helped shape the environment in which the Global South Colloquium later emerged. Blue began by defining world history broadly as an approach that moves historical analysis beyond Europe and North America through comparison, connection, and cross-cultural inquiry. He stressed that it should be understood not as a total history of everything, but as one important lens for interpreting the past. Two UVic units played especially important roles in this development: Art History and Visual Studies, and the History Department. In the former, Alan Gowans played a foundational role by building a cross-cultural and comparative approach into the department's identity, faculty hiring, and curriculum from the late 1960s onward. In the History Department, by contrast, world history developed more gradually, with **Ralph Croizier** emerging as a central figure in broadening the department's horizons and in advocating the value of world history as both a field of research and an area of teaching.

Blue also emphasized that the growth of world history at UVic depended on a favourable combination of wider academic change and local institutional opportunity. He pointed to the rise of the 'new world history' movement, strong student interest in the subject, and the university's efforts to expand research and international engagement during the late 1980s and 1990s. These developments supported new appointments, graduate training, and a broader range of teaching initiatives. Particularly important was the World History Caucus, which brought together scholars across departments and helped establish a sustained interdisciplinary community around world and comparative history. Through invited speakers, workshops, newsletters, and conference activity, the caucus raised UVic's profile well beyond campus. Blue identified UVic's hosting of the World History Association's 1999 annual conference, 'Colonialism: its Impact and Legacy,' as a major milestone in that process. He concluded by linking these earlier efforts to later institutional developments, including the establishment of the Canada Research Chair in

Global History, which helped bring Neilesh Bose to UVic and created the conditions for the work celebrated at this anniversary event.

Surveillance, Technology & Global South **- Midori Ogasawara**

Midori Ogasawara's presentation, 'Surveillance, Technology & Global South,' examined the historical roots of modern surveillance technologies and argued that many of the systems saturating digital life today were developed in colonial contexts. Ogasawara emphasized that surveillance should not be understood simply as a contemporary technological issue, but as a longer historical process shaped by imperial science and colonial policing. Drawing on examples such as anthropometry, fingerprinting, and biometric documentation, Ogasawara showed how techniques of classification and monitoring emerged through colonial rule and were tied to efforts to categorize, manage, and control subject populations. In this sense, the presentation connected present-day debates on digital surveillance to deeper histories of empire, coercion, and administrative power.

A particularly striking part of the presentation focused on biometric identification under the Japanese occupation of northeast China, or 'Manchukuo,' from 1932 to 1945. Through images of identification technologies, identity documents, and testimonies describing fingerprint collection, monitoring, and coercion under Japanese rule, Ogasawara showed how registration and identification served both modern nation-building and colonial management. Ogasawara argued that these documentation practices functioned as instruments of control, with profound human consequences for the populations they classified and disciplined. The presentation then shifted to the contemporary implications of these historical patterns, arguing that the Global South has become a major site for the marketing and expansion of biometric technologies and large-scale data collection. By juxtaposing historical and contemporary cases, Ogasawara raised a broader normative and political question about how governments and technology industries can be held accountable for the uses of these tools.

Left: Kalpana Jha (2026 Student Fellowship Recipient), Right: Shubham Arora 9 Harold Coward India Research Fellow)

Left to Right: Victor V. Ramraj, Neilesh Bose, Midori Ogasawara & Gregory Blue

Gregory Blue presenting at the GSC 10 year celebration.

Left Jordan Stranger Ross; Right Sara Beam

Future Directions

Photo: Longhouse and Canoes in Tahiti, by Tupaia, 1769. British Library.

Potential directions for research, reflection, and fellowship on themes related to the Global South and its many histories must grapple with a range of changes in the world system that have taken place over the last decade. Since the convening of the colloquium in 2016, the rise of religious majoritarianism, and challenges to secularism in the guise of resurgent, muscular nationalism has taken root across the Global South, and across the world.

Recent work by convenor Neilesh Bose on this resurgence points to potential new thematic focus on the nature of populism and majoritarian power in the Global South. Another potential route toward new work is the pivot toward the Indo-Pacific, a topic of interest within Canada, the USA, and the world, and various political and socio-cultural dimensions of this region within the world system.

As an Indo-Pacific Faculty fellow, Bose is currently investigating the case of the Rohingya and their displacement in Bangladesh, Thailand, and India from Myanmar, as a lens into the larger issue of statelessness in the Indo-Pacific, a condition intensifying in the last decade. These two foci – populist majoritarianism and statelessness – form two areas of potential investigation in the next iteration of the Global South Colloquium.

Additionally, developments within the University of Victoria, such as the creation of the Critical Humanities Commons, enables potential future partnerships for interdisciplinary research aimed at capturing Global Southern conversations and communities into the twenty-first century.

Rohingya Muslim refugees wait to proceed after crossing the border from Myanmar into Bangladesh. Photo: Kevin Frayer/Getty Images

UVIC