



# DAVIS HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

2022-2023 NEWSLETTER

**UCDAVIS**  
HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

JUNE 2023

# WHAT WE DO

The UC Davis Humanities Institute (DHI) is the campus hub for research and outreach in the humanities, arts, and humanistic social sciences. Through grants, working groups, research clusters, and programs in the public humanities, we foster innovative initiatives in arts and humanistic fields undertaken by our faculty and students across disciplines, colleges, campuses, and communities.

Our Graduate Public Scholars and PhD Unlimited series introduce and prepare graduates for meaningful careers inside and outside the academy, while our collaborations with campus and community partners enable us to host a robust set of public programs, including book chats, art events, film festivals, and conversations on topics of contemporary relevance. Through this multi-faceted approach, the DHI acts as the university's leading advocate for the value and relevance of the arts and humanities to our campus community and beyond.



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# WHO WE ARE

## DHI STAFF



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ELLIOT  
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Webmaster

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ELMIRA  
LOUIE

Graduate Student  
Researcher



KACEYLEE  
KLEIN

Graduate Student  
Assistant



EMILY  
RICH

Graduate Student  
Assistant



JUSTIN  
KAY

Graduate Student  
Researcher

# WHO WE ARE

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## DHI ACADEMIC STUDENT EMPLOYEES



ROSETTE  
SIMITYAN

Graduate Student  
Assistant



STACEY ANH  
BARAN

Graduate Student  
Assistant



NATALIE  
ROBERTSON

Graduate Student  
Assistant

## PUNJABI WEEK INTERNS



AMANDEEP KAUR  
DHALIWAL

DHI Intern



JASJOT KAUR  
SANDHU

DHI Intern

# WHO WE ARE

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## DHI FACULTY ADVISORY BOARD



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ÁVILA

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American Studies



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Studies



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of English



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of Comparative  
Literature



CHUNJIE  
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Associate Professor  
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# WHO WE ARE

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Executive Director  
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SWAY

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gayle  
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# RESEARCH & AWARDS

**UCDAVIS**  
HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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# RESEARCH & AWARDS

## 2022-2023 FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOWS

The Faculty Research Fellowship is aimed at helping ladder-rank faculty make progress on a major research or creative project. The purpose of the fellowship is to further the research or creative activity of the individual recipients and to enable faculty to meet and work with colleagues in other disciplines and departments.



### LUCY CORIN

Lucy Corin is fiction author and Professor of English at UC Davis. She is the recipient of the American Academy of Arts and Letters Rome Prize, a literature fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and will be a MacDowell Fellow this summer.

Professor Corin's project, *Les and Rae*, is a novel about a mild bourgeois woman who, when her spouse joins a gun group, leaves in order to live in the woods on edge of their neighborhood. While leaving is the gesture of survivalists, Professor Corin writes that her narrator attaches no conscious ideology to the act. Leaving is also the gesture of having no desire to find a moral path within society. The ethics of this desire are suspicious, and the narrator's experience is a response to the failure of the government, the failure to access real community, and a failure of the species. Professor Corin's *Les and Rae* also received a Guggenheim Fellowship, which you can read more about on [page 22](#).

### ERIN GRAY

Erin Gray is Assistant Professor of English at UC Davis teaching interdisciplinary courses in critical theory, cultural studies, and poetics. Her current project, *In the Offing: Law-Founding Violence and the Moving Image of Lynching*, engages the circulation of lynching's material, discursive, and affective remains from 1839 to the present, in order to contest narratives of U.S. lynching culture's post-civil rights demise. It follows Ashraf Rushdy's identification of the political origins of "end-of-lynching" discourse in Progressive-era antilynching reform movements to trace how the ruling-class consolidation of liberal antilynching discourse in the early Cold War period bolstered the visual power of the nascent neoliberal security state.

Recuperating radical left articulations of legal lynching as a form of class warfare, the book theorizes lynching photographs as dialectical images that illuminate the constitutive relationship of racial terror to global capitalism. *In the Offing* devises an anti-racist framework for apprehending lynching as a fungible form of violence and regime of sensibility that continues to structure U.S. imperial power.



# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## 2022-2023 FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOWS



### AMY MOTLAGH

Amy Motlagh is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Middle East and South Asian Studies, and she is the inaugural Bitá Daryabari Presidential Chair in Persian Language and Literature at UC Davis. Her current book project, *Invisible Men: A History of Racial Thinking in and about Modern Iran* critically examines the cultural history of Blackness in Iran and the Iranian diaspora through literature and cinema. *Invisible Men* argues that Iranian humanity emerges as a consequence of the erasure simultaneously of the history of slavery and of Black personhood.

Informed by methodologies from critical race scholarship, cultural studies, and comparative literature, Dr. Motlagh's *Invisible Men* examines a range of prominent Iranian authors and filmmakers to explore the way in which the delineation of what is “modern” in Iran is connected to the suppression of Black subjectivity and the strategic use of Blackness, and the way in which these understandings have been not only been transmitted into the Iranian diaspora, but also challenged in the new cultural spaces of that diaspora, where diasporic Iranians themselves are viewed as racially liminal and non-white.



### EMILY CELESTE VÁZQUEZ ENRÍQUEZ

Emily Vazquez Enriquez is Assistant Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at UC Davis. Focused on Central and North America, her research studies the intersections between the Environmental Humanities and the fields of Border and Migration Studies.

Framed within the fields of border and migration studies and the environmental humanities, her book project, *Border Biomes: Coexistence and Interference on American Migration Trails*, interrogates traditional conceptualizations of geopolitical boundaries and examines how connections between the ecological aspects of border regions and the mechanisms of border-making processes intensify human-nonhuman relations. Situating these concerns in the Central America-United States regarding the material reality of border landscapes. Geopolitical borders tend to be envisaged as linear and fixed inanimate containment devices, leading to the blurring of the ecological realities surrounding the land over which a territorial limit has been imposed. While conceptual orientations regarding borders tend to focus on human-centered approaches, Dr. Enríquez's book draws on these foundational frameworks to put them into dialogue with the ecological realities of border landscapes.



# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## 2022-2023 FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOWS



### BENJAMIN WEBER

Benjamin Weber is Assistant Professor of African American & African Studies at UC Davis and an interdisciplinary scholar of African American History, Critical Carceral Studies, and Black Social and Political Thought. His current project, *American Purgatory: Prison Imperialism and the Rise of Mass Incarceration*, explains how mass incarceration arose out of successive eras of empire-building across North America, the Caribbean, the Pacific, and around the globe.

Drawing on archival research from current and former sites of empire in the Pacific Northwest, Panamá, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico, it shows how prisons developed as a system of racial-colonial control rooted in slavery and imperialism. Like other colonial practices, the prison system has produced racial hierarchy, in ever-adapting ways, over the past four hundred years. By centering Black critique, Dr. Weber's book uncovers the root causes and continued workings of America's carceral empire and amplifies a powerful protest tradition demanding a global view of solutions to this ongoing crisis.



### LI ZHANG

Li Zhang is Professor of Anthropology at UC Davis and a 2008 John Simon Guggenheim Fellow. She is the author of three award-winning books: *Strangers in the City*, *In Search of Paradise*, and *Anxious China*. Her research concerns social, political, spatial and psychological repercussions of the market reform in China.

Dr. Zhang's project, *Encountering Aging and the Digital Divide in Globalizing China*, addresses how the aging population is arguably one of the most pressing issues facing China today. Recent integration of digital and smart technologies into everyday life has been hailed by many for enhancing the quality of life. However, a huge gap is emerging among Chinese citizens in terms of their ability to access and engage these novel and often complicated technologies. It is widely reported that millions of seniors are simply falling behind such fast-paced developments and are unable to meet their basic needs of life. Dr. Zhang's research explores the subjective experience and ethical dilemma of an aged-based digital divide in a rapidly aging China—a serious problem that not only deprives senior citizens of enjoying digital technological innovations, but also prevents them from participating in essential daily activities.



# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## FORTHCOMING 2023-2024 FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOWS

### FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOWS 2024

- **JULIE WYMAN, CINEMA & DIGITAL MEDIA**  
• *INVENTING A NEW GAZE: RE-IMAGINING CINEMATOGRAPHY FROM LP PERSPECTIVES*
- **VERONICA LERMA, SOCIOLOGY**  
• *CRIMINALIZING CHICANAS: INTERSECTIONAL CRIMINALIZATION AND RESISTANCE IN CALIFORNIA'S PRISON ALLEY*
- **MAIRAJ SYED, RELIGIOUS STUDIES**  
• *COMPUTATIONAL HADITH STUDIES*
- **MIKE CHIN, CLASSICS**  
• *DIOCLETIAN: A RECKLESS AUTOBIOGRAPHY*
- **ELISA WHITE, AFRICAN AMERICAN & AFRICAN STUDIES**  
• *NEVER HELPED: A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER*



# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## 2022-2023 NETWORK COLLABORATION AWARD: GA YOUNG CHUNG

The DHI Network Collaboration Fellowship supports UC Davis faculty who wish to collaborate with colleagues outside of the UC. The program represents a high-impact investment that fosters research or creative networks, raises the profile of our faculty, and seeds future grant proposals.

### LEGACIES OF ANTI-AAPI HATE AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: KOREAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ETHNORACIAL IDENTITY SHIFTS AND THE ROLE OF U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr. Ga Young Chung is Assistant Professor of Asian American Studies at UC Davis. Her research focuses on the surge of dislocation, precarity, and (im)mobility in the era of uneven globalization. Also affiliated with Cultural Studies, Human Rights Studies, and the School of Education, her work unpacks how the meaning of citizenship is dismantled, rearticulated, and reassembled in the Asia-Pacific. This collaborative project examines how the anti-AAPI hate and Black Lives Matter movements impacted Korean college students' ethno-racial identity shifts in the US during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and qualitative research, the collaborators at UC Davis, Purdue University, and City University of New York investigate how Korean students' legal status, class, gender, sexuality, and educational institution influenced the (re)formation of their ethno-racial identities. Their research includes US citizens, permanent residents, undocumented students with Korean heritage, and Korean international college students attending US public universities. Emphasizing the role of public higher education in addressing racial equity and supporting students of color, this study identifies policies and practices to enhance racial and social justice.

The COVID-19 pandemic and racist incidents exacerbated racial, social, and health inequities among Asian Americans and Asians in the US, leading to college students with Asian heritage, whose lives were often shaped by the model minority trope, to experience greater disadvantages in their daily lives. In particular, the Atlanta spa shootings and other incidents targeting Korean Americans brought trauma and fear to Korean communities. While there are approximately 1.82 million Korean Americans, making them the country's fifth-largest Asian American subgroup, and over 60,000 Korean international students in the US, their struggles during the pandemic have not been widely reported.

The project aims to remedy these struggles and explore shifts in ethno-racial identity and the role of intra-racial othering, racial distancing, and/or ethno-racial identifications among diverse groups (e.g., Chinese, Black, White) during the events of 2020-2021. The researchers aim to identify the resources, mentoring, and pedagogical support students receive from educational institutions and examine their effect on ethno-racial identity reformation. Centering on educational institutions and their role in addressing racial equity and supporting students of color, this study identifies more inclusive policies intended to enhance the role of public higher education in advancing racial, social, and educational justice.

To raise awareness about this issue, Dr. Chung and the other researchers will present their work at one of the collaborating universities in the fall. The DHI Network Collaboration Award is beneficial in helping to expand Dr. Chung's network and scholarly activities as a junior faculty. She and her colleagues look forward to continuing their project and bringing meaningful outcomes, hoping to contribute to enhancing racial and social justice.

# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE TEACHING AWARD: MARGARET RONDA

This year, Dr. Margaret Ronda has received the College of Letters & Science Teaching Award. Dr. Ronda describes her teaching philosophy as an inquiry-based approach that promotes asking questions to facilitate deeper understanding of a lesson's relevant texts or themes. She encourages students to attend to their curiosity, following it wherever it may lead. Dr. Ronda also strives to foster trust and belonging in every aspect of her courses, from course design to discussion facilitation to creative, hands-on learning experiences.

According to Dr. Ronda, one-on-one mentoring relationships shaped her own education at a small liberal-arts college, so she works hard to cultivate this individualized teaching model at large universities. Her goal in this endeavor is to help undergraduate students realize that they are an integral part of the class, no matter how large the lecture hall. To this end, she often meets with individual students and reaches out to them.

Margaret Ronda has also written two collections of poetry, *For Hunger* (2018) and *Personification* (2010). Reflecting on the Relationship between her poetry and pedagogy, Dr. Ronda explains that being a practitioner and critic of poetry has trained her to pay attention to form, process, and making, which influences how she teaches close reading in the classroom. Writing poetry has taught her how creativity, improvisation, and play enrich the learning process, and she tries to encourage these same practices in her students.

She emphasizes that there is always a need for continual readjustment when balancing the demands of research and teaching. Even in her busiest teaching quarters, she schedules time to write weekly, which helps her check in with her work and become a better teacher. This year, navigating the service demands of her new role as the English Department's Director of Undergraduate Studies has made her appreciate the different kinds of work that academics perform.

Dr. Ronda has also worked with the Graduate Mentoring Initiative (GMI) for several years and currently serves as a Mentoring Fellow. In these times of great challenge for higher education, the GMI coordinates sessions on holistically mentoring graduate students for faculty across the university. In her own words, the conversations and resources fostered through this program have taught her a great deal, particularly in terms of promoting the well-being of graduate students, especially those from underrepresented groups.

By listening to graduate students and learning from their ways of thinking, Dr. Ronda seeks to help them articulate their strengths and develop the unique qualities that they bring to intellectual and creative conversations. Although she recognizes the difficulties that humanities graduate students face, she is inspired by how they actively reimagine education. She hopes to support students toward their next steps beyond graduate school.

For the 2023-24 academic year, Dr. Ronda will teach a graduate seminar for writers on Writing West/Writing California and an undergraduate class on Love and Desire in American Poetry.



*Written by Rosette Simityan*

# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## 2022 MARGRIT MONDAVI GRADUATE SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS

The Margrit Mondavi Fellowships are offered through the College of Letters and Science, made possible by a bequest from the late Robert and Margrit Mondavi. The awards provide funding to support research, workshops, and travel for graduate students in PhD and MFA programs in the humanities, arts, and cultural studies.



### LAMIA MEZZOUR-HODSON

Lamia is a PhD candidate in French and Francophone studies. Her project focuses on gendered spaces and their boundaries in North Africa and its diaspora in France. Her work explores the physical and immaterial boundaries that surround women of North African descent while shedding light on the ways in which gendered spaces have been in flux throughout the history of the region. She carries out this project by deconstructing the commonly-perceived concept and association of women to certain spaces.

### MARCY WACKER

Marcy's work acknowledges and amplifies forgotten objects, people, and ideas, investigates how they reveal and influence our human experience, and reimagines how we teach design and why. Her current research focuses on creating design teaching resources with educators and students. Funds from the Fellowship allowed Marcy the time and space to continue developing Design History Dossier, a graphic design history teaching resource that leverages the immediacy and accessibility of the photo and video-sharing social networking platform Instagram.



### EMILY MASUDA

Emily is a second-year MFA student in Creative Writing. Before going back to school to focus on her writing, she taught English at high schools in Winters, California, and Gifu, Japan. She writes fiction and is interested in preserving stories of immigration, assimilation, and biculturalism through writing and, in particular, documenting as authentically as possible the experience of Japanese Americans. She received the Margrit Mondavi Fellowship in 2022 to research the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony located outside of Placerville.

### BROOKE KIPLING

Brooke is a sixth-year PhD candidate in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Her research asks how disability is experienced and redefined from the Global South and engages critical disability studies and migration studies by analyzing Central American migrant cultural productions. Brooke's project, "Digital Storytelling of Disabled Migrants," addresses the lack of scholarship on disability and migration by recording the diverse narratives of disabled migrants in Tijuana, Mexico and Los Angeles, California, speaking to the unexpected ways in which migrants create new collective relations via disability.



# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FACULTY FELLOW: CHRISTOPH LYNN HANSSMANN

The DHI presents this fellowship opportunity in an effort to support faculty who wish to pursue a community-engaged research or creative project that has a substantive community tie-in. The DHI is proud to have Professor Christoph Lynn Hanssmann as our 2023-2024 Public Engagement Fellow.



Dr. Hanssmann is Assistant Professor in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at UC Davis. He studies the politics of health, science, and medicine, focusing on relationships between biomedicine and social movements. Recently, he completed a manuscript entitled *Care Without Pathology* about the transnational emergence of transgender health care as an institutionalizing field and a public good. Dr. Hanssmann works collaboratively with researchers and activists in feminist, queer, and transfeminist health and justice, and he has published articles in *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, and *Social Science and Medicine*.

Dr. Hanssmann is currently working on the Feminist Health Justice Meta-Syllabus, a resource created by the Feminist Health Justice Collective (FHJC), a group of students, faculty, and community members. In creating this resource, the FHJC took inspiration from the emergence of the public syllabus or "hashtag syllabus" in 2020, which provided interactive resources for communities seeking to engage collectively with topics like racial justice and the COVID-19 pandemic. With the Feminist Health Justice Meta-Syllabus, Dr. Hanssmann and his colleagues at the FHJC aim to provide individuals, classrooms, and communities with a tool that highlights the structural causes of health disparities by combining feminist intersectional social theory with health justice perspectives.

The meta-syllabus is an interactive repository of articles, videos, and other publications that are organized by a series of overarching structural frameworks. These frameworks seek to underscore the systemic sources of inequities in public health, ranging from housing justice to coloniality and decolonization. The FHJC incorporates creative contributions and feedback from those at the forefront of health and social justice, and the DHI fellowship will enable Dr. Hanssmann and his colleagues to build community-contributed videos and narratives for the Structural Frameworks of the resource's landing page. More information about the FHJC can be found [here](#).

*Written by Rosette Simityan*

# RESEARCH & AWARDS

## RESEARCH CLUSTERS

Research clusters offer faculty and graduate students the opportunity to collaborate across disciplines and areas of expertise. They facilitate exchanges, encourage experimentation, and seek to broaden the aims of faculty research at UC Davis.

### QUEER, TRANS, & FEMINIST STS (SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY) RESEARCH



The Queer, Trans, & Feminist STS research cluster is led by Performance Studies PhD student Diana Cage and joined by Drs. Elizabeth Freeman, Kalindi Vora, Joe Dumit, and Maxe Crandall (Stanford University), and graduate students Seon-Hye Moon, Willa Smart, and Cavar. The cluster is designed as a lab and collaboratory which intervenes in the challenges that come with working in transgender studies, queer/crip studies, and adjacent fields. They are committed to studying transfeminist and queer performance and media as sites of knowledge production and scientific inquiry.

Guiding questions in the cluster's research include: how can we use strategies from trans and queer studies, medical anthropology, performance studies, and STS to innovate social change? And how can students organize to do interdisciplinary work where formal support systems do not always exist? The cluster designs its collaborations as incubators for co-authored articles, books, conference papers, and edited collections.

### SEE|HEAR|SAY: NEW WORK WITH VOICE, BODIES, SOUND & WORD

Over the course of four academic years, Professor of Music Dr. Kurt Rohde has created a series of collaborative projects engaging graduate students from Music, Creative Writing, and Theatre and Dance to make original music-sound-text-dramatic works together. These collaborations have allowed students who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to create work together to have conversations and shared practices with the values of respect, egalitarianism, invention and innovation, and consent.

Special guest interdisciplinary artists have included Brooklyn Art Song Society, The Living Earth Show, composer-performer Zachary Watkins, soprano Ann Moss, graduate student performers, and Drs. Lucy Corin of Creative Writing and Margaret Kemp of Theatre and Dance. Past collaborations can be found [here](#).



# RESEARCH & AWARDS

## RESEARCH CLUSTERS

### HERITAGE SPANISH: A FORUM FOR LANGUAGE, LEARNING & TEACHING



The Heritage Spanish research cluster is led by Professor Agustina Carando of Spanish & Portuguese, and is collectively composed of faculty members and graduate students from the College of Letters & Sciences and the School of Education. They share an interest in studying the language features, learning experiences, and teaching practices related to heritage speakers of Spanish in the United States. Heritage speakers are members of a language community who grow up with exposure to the language primarily in home and community contexts, not in academic and institutional contexts.

While the field of heritage language studies has flourished over the past twenty years, advances in our knowledge about the challenges facing heritage speakers often fail to reach practitioners “on the ground” and translate into actual pedagogical innovations. The cluster's overarching goal is to both contribute to inter-college research on heritage Spanish and to serve as a forum of, and a bridge into, our community's bilingual classrooms.

### CRITICAL MILITARIZATION, POLICING, AND SECURITY STUDIES (CRITMIL)

Led by Professor Javier Arbona of American Studies, the CRITMIL research cluster is a working group of scholars at UC Davis that emerged as a response to burgeoning forms of military power. By militarization, the group imagines both military interventions and the securitization of everyday life. To this end, the cluster pursues research that foregrounds the production of subjects under practices of militarization, the technologies that facilitate surveillance and state power, and the contestations to such forms of violence. The group creates an interdisciplinary space where all the various cultural and social implications of contemporary militarization can be considered, discussed, and held accountable.



# RESEARCH & AWARDS

## RESEARCH CLUSTERS

### GOLD AND BLUE BEYOND BLACK AND WHITE



This research cluster is led by Professor of History Gregory Downs along with Drs. Beth Rose Middleton Manning, Gabriel Jack Chin, and Mary Louise Frampton, and joined by graduate students Yutong Zhang and Wendy Garcia Nava. The group examines the history of race and the UC Davis campus and community and began preliminary archival collection in the prior year based upon university holdings and past student publications. They also sponsored a mini-conference on campus history of race in western states, where faculty members from several institutions discussed the distinct challenges and opportunities for this work.

This year, the expanded cluster aims to inventory expanding groups of archival holdings, to begin a study of campus naming, and to conduct interviews and other research in hopes of building a platform for a systematic examination of the history of race at Davis, in its many facets.

### VENUES FOR THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS IN AESTHETICS AND MEDIA

Co-directed by Professor Tarek Elhaik of Anthropology and Dr. Katharine Wallerstein of the DHI, this research cluster takes as its subject matter intersecting concepts of “venue,” “aesthetics,” and “media.” Experiencing, interrogating, and conceptualizing the material, virtual, and philosophical spaces in which scholars, artists, and others come together for shared creative and critical thought, along with the aesthetic, affective, and political tasks venues assume and perform, is at the heart of our project. The cluster seeks to locate what is called “venue work” within a larger media ecology - an ecology of organisms, environments, ideas, concepts, and images.

The group's work is inspired and animated by a search for an oikos where “cogitative souls” (Elhaik, 2021) can carry out their image and concept work, and where they can encounter and study, without mastering them, the “reveries” (Bachelard, 1960) that traverse and animate them. This oikos, one venue and many, is a time-space of immanence, of inquiry and experimentation, and, not least, of imaginative forms of conviviality.



# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## 2023 MARXIST INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH



The Marxist Institute for Research (MIR) is a new initiative connecting faculty and graduate students across the UC system engaged in historical materialist-related research and pedagogy. It is designed as a lasting network to better serve researchers, especially graduate and early-career faculty, across the system by coordinating and making available scholarly and practical resources beyond the limits of any single campus or discipline. To learn more about the MIR, visit their website [here](#).



This year's inaugural MIR summer seminar offers two daily courses: one sharing pedagogical techniques and the other relating orthodox economics to Marxist critiques of political economy. These course frameworks serve as scaffolding to enable most learning to happen in informal conversations, debates, and chats. The program's goal is to support UC graduate students using materialist methods to develop their capacities as teachers and researchers.

Planned for August 9-13, 2023 at Sagehen Creek Field Station near Truckee, CA, this pilot summer school will pursue the theme of "Marxism in Transition" — addressing the present's desperate volatility as object of study and context for rising global interest in adequate approaches to capitalism and its crisis character, while registering the scholarly and pedagogical need for Marxist thought to engage anticolonial thought, Black studies, gender studies, and other vital currents of contemporary theory. Through its transdisciplinary methodologies, theoretical breadth, and the gathered force of thinkers from across the system and beyond, MIR hopes to address this interest and support the kinds of research that can develop our understandings of the present in an era of extraordinary need.

The faculty seminar in Marxist pedagogy will be oriented by "Capital Concerns" — challenges in teaching Marx's central work in the present — and led by Drs. Chris Chen, Charmaine Chua, Joshua Clover, Colleen Lye, and Annie McClanahan.

According to Dr. Joshua Clover, The student who received the award, who wishes to remain anonymous, demonstrated work that stood out for its direct engagement with Marxist value theory as a corpus and its application of abstract concepts to concrete histories of social struggle, passing through the great and ambiguous question of how "the human" itself has been constructed. Their ambitious and serious work would enter into compelling conversation with that of other students moving in corresponding but distinct directions. Ultimately, their underlying question itself seemed emblematic of "the humanities," so they were the ideal choice to receive support from the DHI, to whom the MIR remains immensely grateful.

# RESEARCH & AWARDS

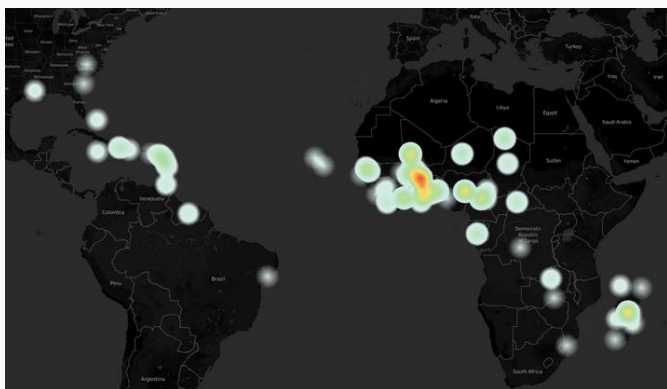
## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: TOBIAS WARNER

NEH Summer Fellowships are competitive awards granted to individual scholars pursuing projects that embody exceptional research, rigorous analysis, and clear writing. Applications must clearly articulate a project's value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both.

### THE DEFIANT GIRL AND THE INCOMPLETE GENTLEMAN: A GLOBAL NARRATIVE HISTORY

Dr. Warner is Associate Professor of French and affiliated faculty in the Departments of African American and African Studies, Comparative Literature, and Critical Theory at UC Davis. His research explores points of friction in the globalization of literary cultures. Trained as a comparatist, his work is grounded in the study of modern African literatures with a particular focus on Senegal. Dr. Warner also teaches courses on literature and film from West and North Africa, the Caribbean, Western Europe, and the Indian Ocean.

His project explores the forms of aesthetic and political imagination that emerged around one of the most widespread yet understudied narratives in the world known as "the defiant girl" - a tale of desire, deception and escape told all over pre-colonial Africa then spread across the globe by slavery and imperialism. The story tells of a defiant young woman who falls in love with a handsome stranger who turns out to be a malevolent creature in disguise who has assembled a human body for himself out of rented parts. Over the 19th and 20th centuries, this tale was transcribed hundreds of times in dozens of languages across Africa and its Atlantic and Indian Ocean diasporas, with anthropologists having searched for it and dozens of creative writers having adapted the narrative.



Heatmap of 300+ versions of the defiant girl story, collected 1885-2000 (courtesy of Tobias Warner)

Working across a timeframe that stretches from the first 19th-century transcriptions of the tale all the way to its adaptation into the 2021 Man-Booker Prize-winning novel *At Night All Blood is Black*, Dr. Warner's project explores connections between seemingly far-flung contexts to reveal the kinds of work that the story has done and continues to do. By linking the individuals who collected, adapted, or responded to this story over the last two centuries - including some of the most influential creative writers, philosophers, editors, and anthropologists of their day - his work brings into view a narrative constellation that stretches across Africa and its diasporas. Ultimately, Dr. Warner's project draws insightful connections and thoughtfully illuminates a narrative constellation, asking how we might broaden humanistic inquiries into the globalization of narrative.



*Written by Stacey Anh Baran*

# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## GUGGENHEIM FELLOWSHIP: LUCY CORIN

In April 2023, Professor of English Lucy Corin was awarded a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship in Fiction to pursue her next creative writing work, *Les and Rae*. “It’s about a couple who respond to current cultural pressures differently – one joins an underground gun group and one sneaks away into the woods at the edge of their neighborhood,” she says. *Les and Rae* will narratively explore the effects of contemporary divisive projects, the indirect representation of animals, and technologically-mediated relationships.

Professor Corin has been conceptualizing the project since the publication of her most recent novel, *The Swank Hotel* (Graywolf, 2021), which explores madness and the complex pursuit of stability in early twentieth-century America, and was longlisted for the New Literary Project’s 2022 Joyce Carol Oates Prize. Professor Corin’s other awards include the 2012 American Academy of Arts and Letters John Guare Writer’s Fund Rome Prize and a 2016 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) creative writing fellowship.

Writing at the intersections of mainstream, experimental, and occasionally speculative contemporary fiction, Professor Corin has been recognized as a 2023 Guggenheim Fellow “on the basis of prior achievement and exceptional promise,” according to the [John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Press Release](#). For Professor Corin, this achievement extends beyond the title of Guggenheim Fellow. She acknowledges the lesser-seen benefits which come with recognition from fellowships like the Guggenheim, such as the inherent “creative endowment” granted by the award itself, and the community-building and support fostered during the proposal-writing process. She has also been recognized as a [DHI Faculty Research Fellow](#) for 2022-2023.



*Written by Stacey Anh Baran*



# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## MELLON NEW DIRECTIONS FELLOW: COLIN WEBSTER

Colin Webster is Assistant Professor in the Classics program at UC Davis, whose research focuses on ancient science, medicine, and technology. His first book, *Tools and the Organism*, tracks when Greek medical theories first started to conceptualize the body as composed of tool-like parts and what this idea had to do with the actual technologies of the ancient world. He is currently the president of the Society for Ancient Medicine and editor of its blog, *The Rootcutter*.

For the New Directions Fellowship, Dr. Webster has proposed a project called *Empire and Intercultural Medicine: A Paleobotanical Approach to Ancient Healing*, through which will examine medicinal plants to determine which moved around the ancient world, whom they moved with, and how they made these treks. There are many intimations that ancient medical practices were a cross-cultural affair. For example, Alexander III of Macedon reportedly retained Indian doctors during his military campaigns, while in the century that followed, Indian emperor Ashoka (r. 268–232 BCE) reportedly cultivated medicinal plants across both his empire and neighboring territories.

Yet doctrinal influences from Egyptian, Assyro-Babylonian, Greek, and Indian medical texts are hard to determine and track. To understand these complex interactions, Dr. Webster is endeavoring to investigate archaeobotanical samples, whether in the form of the plant residues left inside pots or dietary traces left in dental calculus. To do so requires retraining in multiple areas, so he will take classes in plant sciences, plant genetics, and herbology to learn how to extract lipid and DNA samples, perform chemical and genetic analyses, and identify the plant substances leftover from the ancient world.

Working with archeologists, chemists, historians of medicine, and herbal practitioners from various traditions, Dr. Webster hopes to interpret the physical evidence with ethnobotanical and comparative approaches to understand how plant residues might capture the traces of empire, as well as non-elite aspects of healthcare, including the knowledge networks of women and enslaved people.

In conducting his research, Dr. Webster has found that interdisciplinarity in the humanities can often take the form of a single scholar learning a new methodology and then retiring to their office alone. Yet he emphasizes that most big research questions require expertise and skill sets that extend beyond the reasonable capacity of a single person to acquire and maintain. There can be, he admits, some embarrassment in asking for cooperation on cross-disciplinary projects, especially since proposing these new types of ventures involves the discomfort of not knowing whether one's ideas are obvious, patently false, or outright silly. Still, sometimes becoming a naïve beginner again provides its own joy.

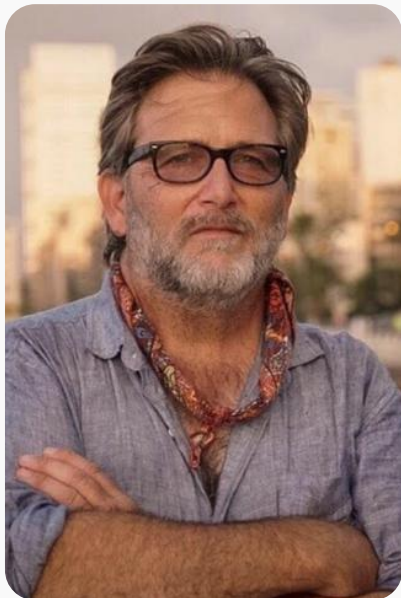


*Written by Rosette Simityan*

# RESEARCH & AWARDS

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## PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARD: KEITH DAVID WATENPAUGH



Dr. Watenpaugh is Professor of Human Rights and the Founding Director of Human Rights Studies at UC Davis. In 2022, he received the Public Scholarship Award from the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE). For Dr. Watenpaugh, the concept of public scholarship is in fact a rediscovery of the power and responsibility of the American research university to engage with the communities and people they serve across the world. To achieve that end, his scholarly practice builds connections and partnerships with diverse communities to foster the protection and promotion of human rights.

Similar ideas sit at the center of his previous and ongoing projects, such as his award-winning book, *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (2015) and the DHI-sponsored "Human Rights Studies for 21st-Century Californians," which partners with high school teachers statewide to translate cutting-edge human rights research into curriculum.

Dr. Watenpaugh is best known as the director of the UC Davis Article 26 Backpack, a human-digital ecosystem that empowers young people affected by war or conflict to reconnect with higher education. First launched in 2017, his work has been recognized with the Institute of International Education's 2019 Centennial Medal and in 2021 with Human Rights Educators USA's Edward O'Brien Award for outstanding contribution to human rights education. It assists nearly 4,000 students and professionals globally and is collectively administered by students and university-age refugees.

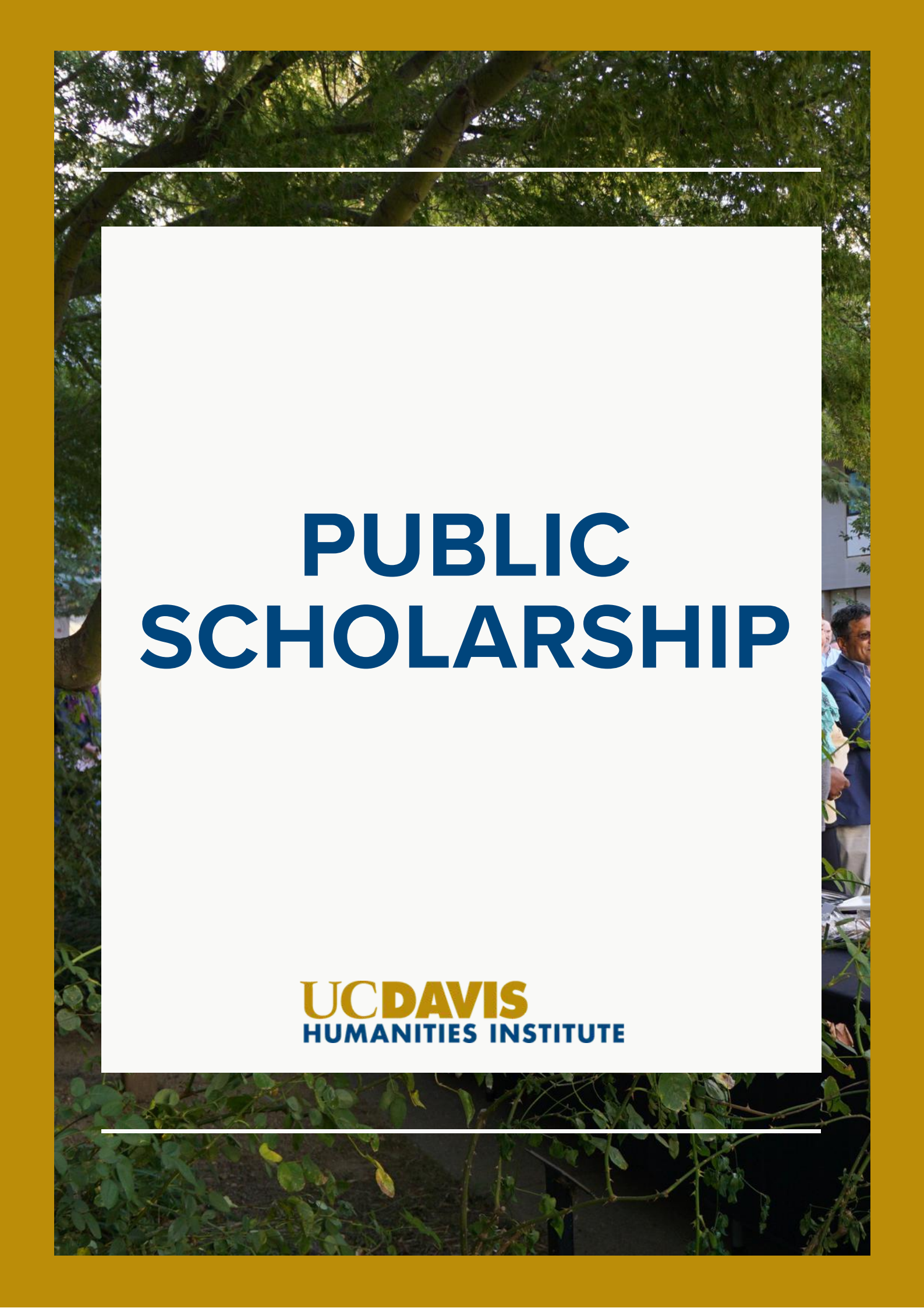
As a former UC Davis Office of Public Scholarship and Engagement Fellow (2020-2021), Dr. Watenpaugh encourages faculty and students to make these kinds of professional initiatives a university priority, and to support colleagues, graduate students, and others in exploring the multiple forms of engagement. Driven by memories of violence and need witnessed in wartime Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East, he emphasizes the role of the humanities in engaging the collective empathetic imagination in an effort to build a culture of human rights for all. Likewise, the COVID pandemic demands that we rethink what it means to be responsible for, and with, one another. Humanities scholars, he concludes, should ask themselves: what is our role in addressing the human rights challenges of our time?

Dr. Watenpaugh is currently writing *The White Savior, the Waif, and the Ends of Humanitarianism*, which is a wide-ranging critique of the practice of modern humanitarianism, which he sees as too beholden to a colonial past and forms of racism to be effective, and calls for reimagining ways to address human suffering based on human social, cultural and economic rights.



Watenpaugh demonstrating the Arabic-language version of Backpack with the American University of Beirut students, April 2018

*Written by Stacey Anh Baran*

The background of the slide is a photograph of a large, leafy tree with green foliage. In the lower right corner, a portion of a group of people is visible, including a man in a blue jacket and glasses. The entire image is framed by a thick gold border.

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# **PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP**

**UCDAVIS**  
HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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# CULTIVATION

## FOOD, FARMING, AND HERITAGE IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY AND BEYOND

A 2022-2023 DHI Public Humanities Initiative



Inspired by UC Davis' "[Sustainable Food Systems](#)" [Grand Challenge](#), and the university's recognized research strengths in agriculture and food studies, the DHI is pleased to announce a year-long public humanities initiative exploring the themes of farmers, farming, race, and ethnic heritage in the Sacramento Valley and beyond.

The Cultivation series will feature conversations on and off campus on a wide-range of topics such as food labor; food science; the racial roots of farming; community formation around food; sustainability and sustainable traditions; and water rights and agriculture in a range of engaging formats, including book chats, art events, conversations, library book displays, film screenings, podcasts, field trips, and workshops. Organized in collaboration with academic and community partners, our programming will aim to bring the campus to the public, and the public to our campus, while fostering dialogue between the humanities and the sciences, the arts and agriculture, the university and its larger communities.

### EVENTS

#### **"Digging the Past"**

Book Chat with Dr. Fran Dolan  
November 9, 2022

#### **"Recipes to Remember: Expanding the Chinese Cookbook Collection"**

Webinar with Ben Fong & Tianyun Hua  
March 2, 2023

#### **"Enriching Our Roots: Asian American Farmers' Heritage"**

Panel at the California Museum  
April 22, 2023

#### **Punjabi Week**

Week-long Punjabi event program  
May 15-19, 2023

#### **"The Story of Iran"**

Podcast Series

#### **"Food for Thought"**

Event series with Amanda Trager  
June 23-25, 2023

# ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

## SIKKIL C. GURUCHARAN: CULTIVATING NEW TRADITIONS IN MUSIC



Photo by Archana Venkatesan

Sikkil C. Gurucharan is a leading musician and a youth ambassador for Carnatic music. A primetime artist during the Chennai music season, Charan is the recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar Award in 2007 and the Tchaikovsky Award for the best musician of the year in 2006. Making his mark in the traditional concert-paddhati style, Charan broadens audience appeal through collaborative projects with world-renowned musicians while retaining the spirit of the art form.

His collaborative album, *Miles from India*, was also nominated for the Best Contemporary

Jazz Album at the 51st Grammy Awards, and *India Today* magazine featured Charan on their 2010 list of “35 Game Changers Under the Age of 35” in India. In 2020, the Tamil Nadu Government conferred upon Charan its highest honor of Kalaimamani.

Gurucharan’s DHI residency this year marks one of many returns that he has made to the Sacramento area: he previously performed for Sacramento Aradhana, a local non-profit Indian arts organization, in September 2011; he was a 2015 Fulbright visiting scholar co-teaching a course on religion and the Indian performing arts with Dr. Archana Venkatesan; and he performed in a collaborative concert at the Mondavi Center in 2017. His first time as an Artist in Residence in 2023 features a host of new events and collaborations, including a Pandya Nadu concert at Harvard University in April, guest lectures in multiple art and music courses at UC Davis, and a Carnatic music concert at the Ann E. Pitzer Center in May.

In Charan’s words, Carnatic music is an ancient form which began with the music of South India in the Tamil language. This style eventually gave way to the Carnatic music that is sung today, whose evolution dates back to the 14th century. Many other Indian languages, like Sanskrit, are now sung through this musical form, and despite its niche status, artists like Charan are using the style to reach out to wider audiences today.

Charan’s longstanding and prolific work as a performer and artist has taken him to various national and international venues, and has granted him the opportunity to foster invaluable connections in the classroom - all of which give him confidence that every musical style and genre is interrelated. He believes that concerts in particular are excellent platforms for introducing people to classical Indian music for the first time, commenting that “it’s an opportunity to find out how similar Indian music is with any other melodic music form in the world.”

Contrary to what people might assume, Charan stresses that Carnatic music does not

*Continued on page 28*

necessitate prior knowledge or understanding in order to appreciate it. “It has roots in ancient centuries,” he says, “but it can speak a language that communicates as a modern art form, and it can speak what the artist desires when he performs it.” Likewise, rather than being confined to specific languages or diasporas, Carnatic music opens itself up to countless avenues of collaboration. He also sees this evolution as imperative to the music and comments on the importance of experimenting with tradition, which doesn’t fundamentally chain the artist to a particular form but instead provides the structure needed to explore and expand beyond. “Artists can never stay content,” he says. “I love to be restless in that regard.”

***It takes time for a song to percolate within yourself. Internalize the process subconsciously - the idea has to grow in your mind - and then it will fruit. ”***

performance unique. He calls it “similar to magic,” and remarks that this was “one of the most exciting concerts [he’s] done in the US in a long time.”

The title of Charan’s concert, *Bijam* (meaning “seed” or “grain” in Sanskrit), is a reference to the main forms of sustenance in South India. He likens the performance of the concert to the literal sprouting of a seed and watching it grow, just as an idea is metaphorically planted in someone’s mind and evolves to inspire others. Aligning with the theme of cultivation, his songs stress the importance of agriculture and farm work in South Indian culture. The thematic framing of the concert, and of his work more broadly, recognizes that everything moves at its own pace: one song, for instance, speaks of a gardener, explaining the lesson that you can water a thousand times a day, but if the season isn’t right, the plant will not bear fruit.

Dedicated to the pursuit of spreading Carnatic music to reach new people every day, Charan’s inspiring work as a musician, composer, and artist demonstrates his ability to make waves not only in the Indian community, but cross-culturally and all around the world. “I wouldn’t have dreamed of accomplishing something like this, say, ten years back,” he admits. And yet Charan’s nurtured commitment to the gradual proliferation of Carnatic music within global audiences is a testament to his attitude regarding the powers of patience and persistence. He reflects upon the satisfaction of sitting back, watching things as they evolve, and being content with the process. “Patience,” Charan says, “and letting things happen: that is the vision of cultivation.”

The program of songs performed at Charan’s concert at the Pitzer Center in May were composed from literatures as old as the 3rd century and as recent as the 1700s, spanning more than fifteen centuries total. The concert was further characterized by the traditional Carnatic musical performance structure in which one part is planned and predetermined, while the other is improvised on-stage. The Pitzer concert was 70% improvised, Charan explains, allowing the artists to add their own spontaneous flourishes and making every

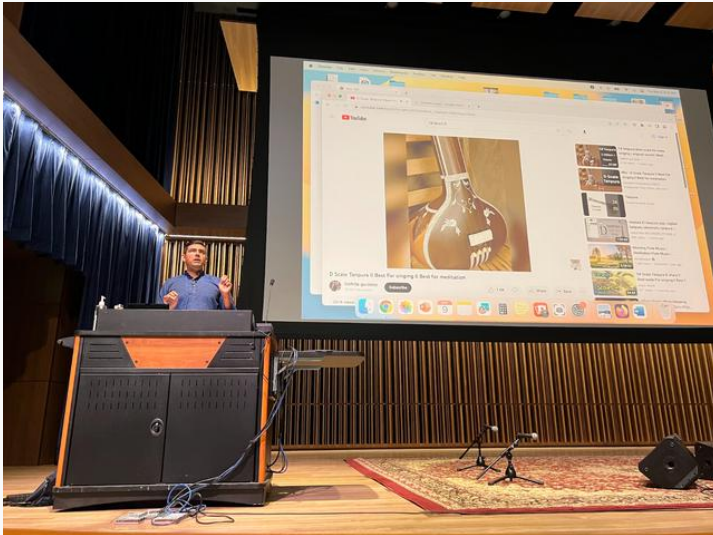


Charan lecturing in one of the UC Davis lecture halls

*Written by Stacey Anh Baran*

# ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

## SIKKIL C. GURUCHARAN 2022-2023 RESIDENCY



All photos courtesy of DHI staff and academic assistants.

# ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

## SIKKIL C. GURUCHARAN BĪJAM: MUSIC SEEDS



Also a part of the UC Davis Shinkoskey Noon concert series, this performance features acclaimed Carnatic vocalist and DHI Artist in Residence Vidwan Sikkil C. Gurucharan, exploring the theme of Cultivation through over 1,200 years of South Indian classical music. The internationally award-winning vocalist was accompanied by Vidushi Sruti Sarathy on a virtuosic violin, Vidwan Ajay Gopi on a stirring mridangam (percussion), and UC Davis alumna Vardhinee Prakash on the dulcet tanpura (backing drone). Gurucharan's evocative and dextrous performance ranged from a Sanskrit blessing set to a contemporary Ravi Shankar composition, "Mangalam," to Tamil texts using agricultural language to speak of mystical experiences.

One attendee, Tim Kahl, remarked on the experience of the concert: "My favorite moment was during one of his improvisations during Tirukkural when after a sequence of frenzied runs he landed on a single note and steadily held it there. I think all of us in the first three rows let out an audible gasp. Truly magnificent. The movement of the tonic note in each of the four raga sections was a technical tour de force. I'm not sure I fully realized a path to Shiva, but I was close."

The majority of the translations for the pieces performed were made by Dr. Archana Venkatesan, who co-curated the concert's program with Gurucharan to nurture connections between and sow inquiry about the various senses agricultural language can take on in poetry and music, with breathtaking results.

*Written by Natalie Robertson*



Left to right: Ajay Gopi, Sikkil Gurucharan, Vardhinee Prakash, Shruti Sarathy

# PUNJABI WEEK

## FOOD, FARMING, AND HERITAGE IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY AND BEYOND A 2022-2023 DHI Public Humanities Initiative

In the early twentieth century, farmers from the northwest of India settled in California's Sacramento Valley – a landscape reminiscent of the rich soil of Punjab, the land of five rivers. Over the last 130 years, Punjabi immigrants have contributed to the transformation of agriculture in California, and today, our region is home to the oldest and one of the largest South Asian American communities. This week-long program, curated by Dr. Nicole Ranganath, features this recovered history of Punjabi farmers in California, and their contemporary farming and foodways in the Sacramento Valley.

MAY 15 - MAY 19, 2023

May 15

[Opening Celebration](#)

May 16

[Gurbani Sangit Concert](#)

May 17

[Punjabi Foodways Webinar](#)

May 18

[Unpacking Immigration Film Screening](#)

May 19

[Dr. Gurdev S. Khush Papers Ceremony](#)

## ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Podcast with Professor Emeritus Dr. Gurdev S. Khush  
Podcast with Dr. Nicole Ranganath: "The Other Land of Five Rivers"  
Both podcasts are available [here](#)

# PUNJABI WEEK

## OPENING CELEBRATION

Whetting appetites for Wednesday's more savory webinar, the DHI began Punjabi Week "desserts first" at the opening celebration. Amandeep Kaur Dhaliwal and Jasjot Kaur Sandhu, the DHI's Punjabi Week interns, handed out pinni, jalebi, and cha in the UC Davis Quad while sharing information about exciting local events and opportunities during and beyond Punjabi Week, featuring Punjabi culture, music, and language, as well as information about the community's historic and current contributions to California.

## GURBANI CONCERT

UC Davis faculty, students, and community gathered to immerse in the serenity of Gurbani Sangit on the second day of Punjabi Week. Gurbani Sangit is the classical music style practiced in Sikhism. Bibi Rasleen Kaur, Bhai Siripal Singh Ji, and his students showcased the special instruments of Rabaab, Taus, Tabla, Swarmandal, and Tanpura to create the blissful musical atmosphere enjoyed by all the attendees. Accompanying the musical stylings of the instruments, the audience engaged in singing universal Sikh prayers on the theme of abundance that nurtures the physical and spiritual needs of humanity. The night closed with everyone sharing the communal meal of langar.



## PUNJABI FOODWAYS WEBINAR

Hosted by Dr. Nicole Ranganath, this webinar shared conversations surrounding Punjabi inter-generational recipes and food heritage. Speakers Pushpinder Kaur, Raj K. Sodhi-Layne, and Harleen Kaur Bal shared rich reflections of their memories associated with cooking and eating traditional Punjabi food like roti, saag, and chai as children. They also discussed the importance of commensality in Punjabi culture, which emphasizes generosity and hospitality within their community. The webinar's speakers generously shared some family recipes and cooking practices for various Punjabi dishes, such as chai, kitchari, and samosas, and finally reflected on Punjabi tradition, discussing how conventional Punjabi foodway practices are both maintained and adapted over time for Indian communities in the United States.

## UNPACKING IMMIGRATION FILM SCREENING

From migration to the physical toll of meatpacking labor and fraught notions of home and belonging for working-class immigrants in the "land of opportunity," *Unpacking Immigration*, a short film written and directed by Harleen Kaur Bal, illuminated the stories of Punjabi Sikh meatpackers in California's Central Valley. Beginning with introductions of the project, film, and the filmmaker and ending with a Q&A as well as a brief talk on the importance of the Jakara movement by Mandeep Singh, the evening was packed and the film was nestled in the middle of it all.

# PUNJABI WEEK

## DR. GURDEV S. KHUSH PAPERS CEREMONY



Photo by Captivating Photos

As a conclusion to both the Cultivation and Punjabi Week series by the DHI, a ceremony was held in honor of Dr. Gurdev S. Khush at the Shields Library courtyard on May 19, 2023. In addition to being a world-renowned plant geneticist during the Green Revolution, Dr. Khush is a UC Davis alumnus and faculty emeritus whose decorated career serves as an example of the contributions of Punjabi immigrants to California and global history.

With 80 people gathered in attendance, the ceremony marked the generous gift of the Gurdev S. Khush papers to the Library's Archives and Special Collections, which will be made available at a future date. Dr. Khush and Harwant Khush's donation includes conscientiously-organized supplementary documents such as correspondences, field notes, speeches, photographs, news clippings, and gray literature recording Dr. Khush's enormous achievements in plant sciences, especially rice cultivation, which helped provide global food security and justice.

After heartfelt introductions from Dr. Archana Venkatasen, Dean Estella Atekwana, Chancellor Gary S. May, Dr. Pam Ronald, and Dr. Kevin Miller, Dr. Nicole Ranganath engaged Dr. Khush in a rich conversation tracing his life and career. Dr. Khush reflected on immigrating from his village in Jalandhar to pursue graduate studies at UC Davis in 1957, when the campus was a small community of just 2,000 students. He went on to detail his groundbreaking work that addressed global food insecurity with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines, where his 35-year career saw him studying high-yield, disease-resistant varieties of rice and traveling to over 50 countries to participate in training programs for rice cultivation and food justice.

As a parting note, when asked what lessons from the Green Revolution apply to today's climate crises, Dr. Khush stressed the importance of international cooperation irrespective of ideological differences between nations. His extensive research, relationships with colleagues, and responsible mentorship stand as a testament not only to Dr. Khush's scientific excellence but also to his achievements in scientific collaboration on a global scale.

This event was supported by the UC Davis Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, the Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Global Affairs, and Berryessa Gap Vineyards. To watch a recording of this event, click [here](#). To read more about the Gurdev S. Khush Papers on the UC Davis Library website, click [here](#).



Photo by Captivating Photos

*Written by Rosette Simityan*

# CULTIVATION EVENTS

## ENRICHING OUR ROOTS: ASIAN AMERICAN FARMERS' HERITAGE



The California Museum, the Locke Foundation, and the DHI presented this special Earth Day forum with several speakers who shared their stories about farming and food heritage in California. The event was moderated by Lonnie Wong with speakers Dan Kubo of Cortez Farm; Christopher "Topher" Chan, a fourth generation Delta farmer; Dr. Nicole Ranganath; and chef David Soohoo. Dan discussed the history of his family's farming roots and the impact on the Japanese farming community after the Pearl Harbor bombings and internment. Topher described how his great-grandfather arrived in the late 1800s as a merchant and began farming with other Chinese farmers in 1910. Dr. Nicole Ranganath continued the thread of immigrant farmers' expertise by sharing the stories of Punjabi migrants from northwest India who settled in California in the 1890s and developed the apricot industry in Yuba County. Lastly, David described his involvement in shaping Sacramento's electric building ordinance as a restaurant industry representative and the effectiveness of fuel efficiency with ethnic cooking. The event was followed by free exhibit tours featuring Chinese American, Japanese American, and Filipinx history, all of which demonstrated how Asian heritage is deeply embedded in the history of Californian land.

## THE STORY OF IRAN

Supported in part by the Bita Daryabari Endowment in Persian Language and Literature, this podcast responds to enduring questions about the place and idea of place known as Iran. Connecting to Iran's rich and diverse history through unconventional objects of association, or through conventional objects viewed in a different light, episodes of *The Story of Iran* include discussions with Dr. Persis Karim of San Francisco State University, Dr. Talinn Grigor of UC Davis, and Dr. Beeta Baghoolizadeh of Bucknell University. Episodes 1 and 4 in particular are featured as part of Punjabi Week for their connections to cultivation.

Episode 1: "Consider the Pomegranate" explores the various connotations of the fruit as a symbol fertility and beauty, with a long and distinguished history in Persianate art, literature, and architecture. Episode 4: "For Bread Alone," guest-hosted by Elmira Louie, discusses the importance of bread for Iranians and Iranian-Americans. The episode features a local Davis Iranian-American and owner of the Village Bakery, Aziz Fattahi, and his experience baking barbari, a traditional Iranian bread, in his bakery for over 25 years. More episodes and information on *The Story of Iran* podcast can be found [here](#).

# CULTIVATION EVENTS

## RECIPES TO REMEMBER PODCAST "EXPANDING ARCHIVES: ORAL HISTORIES IN SAN FRANCISCO CHINATOWN"



The UC Davis Library holds the second largest collection of English-language Chinese cookbooks in the United States. This podcast highlights this unique collection and its connection with San Francisco Chinatown. "Recipes to Remember" is an ongoing project led by the UC Davis Library and the DHI that explores the connections between contemporary San Francisco Chinatown and people featured in the historical cookbooks' texts and images.

How can cookbooks be used to discover unwritten stories and memories across generations and communities? This podcast provides a snapshot into various parts of the project and its relation to the Collection and Chinatown. It highlights efforts to renew the Chinese Cookbook Collection through an interview with Ben Fong (Comparative Literature, UC Davis), Tianyun Hua (Comparative Literature, UC Davis), and San Francisco Chinatown Chef Martin Yan. This podcast series also illustrates the present-day value of libraries' special collections and archival materials and their contribution to public scholarship. Information about the related webinar can be found [here](#).

### EPISODE ONE

In the first episode of their two-part series "Recipes to Remember," Ben Ruilin Fong (UC Davis, Comparative Literature) and Tianyun Hua (UC Davis, Comparative Literature) explore the relationship between food and community through archives and oral histories. They discuss their work with the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA) and their oral histories with residents of San Francisco Chinatown.

### EPISODE TWO

In the second episode of the series, Ben Fong and Tianyun Hua converse with Martin Yan about his life, career, and relationship with food and community. Martin Yan discusses cooking from an early age in China, his immigration to the United States, his connections to San Francisco Chinatown, and how food builds community.

Both podcast episodes can be found [here](#).

# CULTIVATION EVENTS

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT: FACTS & (SCIENCE) FICTIONS

The culminating event of the DHI's year-long public humanities initiative on the theme of Cultivation, "Food for Thought" was a series of events spanning one weekend, June 23-25, 2023, in Esther's Park, situated in Sacramento's historic Oak Park neighborhood. It is part of the Passing Through Projects directed by Amanda Trager, which partners with local institutions to create public platforms for critical community engagement around various topics. The three-day program served as a platform for discussion around two films, *Souder* (1972) and *The Martian* (2015).

Friday's events consisted of opening remarks by Amanda Trager, followed by a presentation by Genesis Lara and Wilson Sefo Michel discussing the intermingled legacies of Black family life and the role of sugar and slavery explored through a transatlantic focus on sugar, family, and labor in the Dominican Republic.

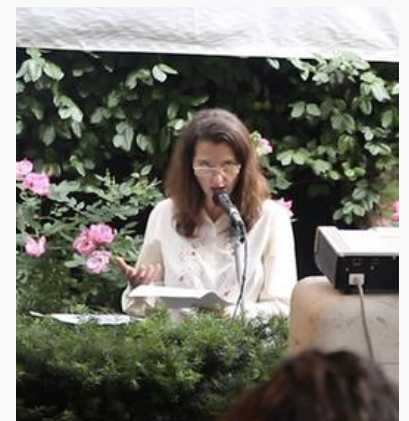
Saturday's program began with an engaging, thoughtful talk from Dr. Ashanté Reese (University of Texas at Austin), who shared her current research on the cultural history of sugar in relation to the "sometimes contradictory and deadly sweetness that marks Black life." This was followed by an intimate discussion moderated by UC Davis Professor, Dr. Kimberly Nettles-Barcelón (African American and African Studies). Later, Judith and Chanowk Yisrael of the Sacramento-based Yisrael Family Urban Farm discussed the history of sugarcane in the US South through the discourse around urban farming, the history of the Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement and farm boxes, and how Black farmers introduced solutions to the problem of soil depletion. Finally, Amie Breeze Harper and Carlos Monleon Gendall engaged in conversation on Sunday regarding science fiction and agriculture, focusing on the work of Octavia Butler, and Harper read excerpts from her forthcoming book, *Seeds of Sankofa*. To read more about Passing Through Projects, please click [here](#).



Amanda Trager (left) with Ashanté Reese (right)

Written by Stacey Anh Baran

Amanda Trager is a visual artist. Her work as a cultural producer exists alongside her 15-year artistic practice with Erik Moskowitz, beginning with the "Nassau Street Show," an art exhibition organized with Jean-Michel Basquiat that occupied fugitive space in a 19th-century Lower Manhattan office building. Other venues have included The Vera List Center for Art and Politics, The New School for Social Research (NYC), and Los Angeles Contemporary Archive. Trager's grants and awards include the Artist Community Engagement Grant from the Rema Hort Mann Foundation (2017); the Scotia Scholars Award from Research Nova Scotia; and a Fellowship with the Institute for the Study of Canadian Slavery (2021-22).



# PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

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## 2023 GRADUATE PUBLIC SCHOLARS

Graduate Public Scholars (GPS) is a fellowship program that guides graduate students in developing and carrying out collaborative projects with community partners for public impact and social benefit. Combining professional development, mentorship, interdisciplinary learning, and practical training, this program offers a uniquely transformative educational experience in the university and beyond.

### ROSE BERN (PSYCHOLOGY)

Rose Bern is a second-year social psychology PhD student in the Eastwick Attraction and Relationships Lab. Her work lies at the intersection of community psychology, queer theory, and relationship science. She aims to interrogate hegemonic, heteronormative (the belief that heterosexuality is the only natural sexual orientation), and mononormative (the belief that romance and sex should only exist within a monogamous partnership) frameworks by working with LGBTQ+ and consensually non-monogamous communities. Ultimately, she strives to do community-based work that promotes the well-being of marginalized groups within STEM.



### CRISTAVEL CAMACHO-GUTIERREZ (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT)

Cristavel Camacho-Gutierrez is a proud immigrant daughter of working-class Mexican immigrant parents and a first-opportunity graduate student-parent in the Community Development program. She earned her BA in American Studies with minors in Anthropology, Chicanx Studies, and Education from UC Davis. She is a McNair Fellow and an executive board member in the Sacramento Poderosas Mural Project. This project uses art as activism to honor the lives and work of nine Latinx/Chicanx women trailblazers, using the mural to tell their stories.



### TREY MAKLER (MUSIC COMPOSITION)

Trey is a PhD candidate in Music Composition and Theory at UC Davis. His dissertation research on the aesthetics of AIDS and the lived experience of musical form has been generously supported by a Bilinski Educational Foundation Dissertation Writing Fellowship. He holds degrees from The Juilliard School and the University of Missouri. His music explores the human situation of musicking while imagining alternative worlds and bonds. Melodies and other musical objects are conceived as people, with their own socio-musical interactions and identities shaped by circumstance and environmental influence. These objects are woven together playfully and often rest within hyperactive mechanisms that are built from dense counterpoint, rhythmic vitality, and long, expressive lines. The resulting music is hard-edged and forward-driven, with ruptures leaving behind bifurcated states of before and after that are filtered through daydreams of hope, failure, and triumph.



# PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

## MELLON PUBLIC SCHOLARS SHOWCASE

The DHI was pleased to host our last Mellon Public Scholars Reception for the 2022 graduate student cohort on February 22, 2023. Audience members included graduate students, faculty mentors, community partners, guests from the Dean's Office, and colleagues from UC Davis-affiliated programs. The graduate public scholars presented findings from their impactful community-engaged projects and projected promising visions for future public scholarship work. There is no greater joy than witnessing what began as summer projects for a small group of graduate students transform into long-term, meaningful commitments to public-facing work. The Mellon Public Scholars program has served as a model for the future of scholar-practitioners at UC Davis and beyond. We wish all of our scholars the best of luck with their academic journeys and thank them for exemplifying how the humanities can impact the larger world around us.



### **HARLEEN BAL (ANTHROPOLOGY)**

Dharti Ma, "Earth Mother": Digital Narratives of Punjabi  
Diaspora Farmers' Relations to Land, Food, and Wellbeing

### **AARON BENEDETTI (CULTURAL STUDIES)**

The LLACE Oral History Project



### **BEN RUILIN FONG (COMPARATIVE LITERATURE)**

"Home Style Cooking": A San Francisco Chinatown Cookbook

### **ROSEMARY HANNON (PERFORMANCE STUDIES)**

International House Davis: Artist Liaison for 2022  
International Festival



### **TORY JOHNSTON (NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES)**

Putting a Song on taptaanə: Quinault Musicking for  
Sound Protocols

### **BESHARA KEHD (CULTURAL STUDIES)**

Arab American Studies K-12 Curriculum



### **COLE MANLEY (HISTORY)**

City of Davis Arts & Cultural Affairs: Community Engagement  
with the Davis Centennial Seal

### **KIMBERLY JOHNSON (NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES)**

Developing a Tongva-led Archive for the Kuruvungna  
Springs Collection



### **INGRID SUB CUC (NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES)**

Ruk'ux Ri Qawinaq: Indigenous-led Language  
Revitalization in Kaqchikel Communities

### **SUNY NY VANG (MUSIC)**

Seev Suab [Sing Out]!: Learning and Performing Kwv Txhij and  
Lug Txaj [Chant Stories] as Hmong Placemaking in Diaspora



# PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

## NATIONAL HUMANITIES CENTER FELLOWS

The NHC Public Humanities Podcasting Institute was a five-day virtual workshop in January 2022 which trained graduate students to develop collaborative, public-facing humanities research in a full podcast format. Participants learned how to storyboard their ideas, create and capture audio content, and edit their narratives into powerful and insightful podcasts. The DHI reserved eight spots for this competitive award.

**ALEJANDRO  
PONCE DE LEON**  
Cultural Studies  
PhD candidate



**REBECCA "BEX"  
JONES**  
Anthropology  
PhD candidate



**BRIAN AITKEN**  
Communication  
PhD student



**FAITH BENNETT**  
History  
PhD student



**MARIANNA  
"NANA"  
MORAES**  
Anthropology  
PhD student



**JOYAN TAN**  
Religious Studies  
PhD student



**SANTIAGO  
BEJARANOS**  
Spanish/Portuguese  
PhD student



**MELINDA MARKS**  
Performance Studies  
PhD student



**LAURA CATTERSON**  
Comparative Literature  
PhD student

# PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

## DIALOGIC PODCAST



*Dialogic* is a DHI podcast that features guests from across the arts, humanities, social sciences, and beyond. Through interviews, conversations, and creative storytelling, *Dialogic* bridges disciplines to bring listeners the latest in humanities research and public scholarship at UC Davis and the surrounding community.

### EPISODE 1: Día de los Muertos

*recorded and produced by Emily Rich*

In the first episode of *Dialogic*, Dr. Daniela Gutiérrez Flores, Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, discusses Día de los Muertos. Also known as Day of the Dead, this Mexican holiday celebrates and honors those who have passed away. Dr. Gutierrez Flores explains the history of the holiday, some of the traditional foods associated with it, and invites listeners to participate in the festivities at UC Davis.

### EPISODE 3: Ramadan

*recorded and produced by Elmira Louie*

In this episode, Dr. Mairaj Syed, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, discusses Ramadan, a holy month for practicing Muslims around the world that includes festivities, rituals, and fasting. Dr. Syed offers resources for Muslim students and faculty at UC Davis, as well as ways that others can support their colleagues and students during Ramadan. He also shares some personal stories anecdotes about celebrating the holiday and talks about the foods that are traditionally eaten to break the fast.

### EPISODE 2: Pirandello in Translation

*recorded and produced by Elmira Louie*

This episode dives into digital humanities and public-facing research through a conversation with Dr. Michael Subialka, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Italian, about his collaborative digital publication project, *Pirandello in Translation*. The project aims to bring the entirety of Luigi Pirandello's short stories into English for the very first time. More information about this digital publication can be found [here](#).

### EPISODE 4: The Supreme Court

*recorded and produced by Elmira Louie*

This episode features Dr. Aaron Tang, Professor of Law, to discuss his new book, *Supreme Hubris: How Overconfidence is Destroying the Court—and How We Can Fix It* (forthcoming August 2023). Dr. Tang shares insight into the reasoning behind several court cases, addresses some of the major issues with the Supreme Court today, and offers ways in which voters can unite to create a more balanced system.

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# PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

## DIALOGIC PODCAST



### EPISODE 5: Rice Cultivation

*recorded and produced by Elmira Louie*

As a part of Punjabi Week, related to cultivation, farming, this episode features Dr. Gurdev Khush, world-renowned and award-winning agronomist and geneticist, to discuss rice production and genetics, farming, and cultivation. His research focuses on increasing the global supply of rice during a time of exponential population growth, and he created the Khush Foundation to provide scholarships to future Punjabi scholars.

### EPISODE 7: Censorship and Research in the Humanities

*recorded and produced by  
Natalie Robertson*

This podcast interviews UC Davis English PhD student Yasmin Mendoza, a 2023 GradSlam finalist. GradSlam is “an annual competition where master’s and doctoral students are invited to share their research in a compelling presentation that is three minutes or less.” Yasmin shares with us her award-winning pitch, “Don’t Say --- : An Exploration of the Censorship of Literature in the United States,” and discusses the importance of humanistic research methods to censorship research and where her work is headed next.

### EPISODE 6: Punjabi Communities in the Central Valley

*recorded and produced by  
Elmira Louie and Natalie Robertson*

Also one of the podcasts presented with Punjabi Week, this episode features Dr. Nicole Ranganath and PhD student Harleen Bal. Hosted by Elmira Louie, the three speakers discuss the dynamic and influential histories of Punjabi communities in the Central Valley of California.

### EPISODE 8: Beekeeping in Shangri-La

*recorded and produced by  
Natalie Robertson*

In this episode, Natalie Robertson interviews Samtso, a dedicated leader and beekeeper from Shangri-La, Tibet, and a Fulbright-Humphrey Scholar here at UC Davis for the 2022-23 academic year. Samtso speaks about the traditional beekeeping methods her community uses and the future of her grassroots non-profit’s work, and shares her story of empowering women through education.

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# PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

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## DIALOGIC PODCAST



### EPISODE 9: Cultivating Musical Innovations in South Indian Classical Music

*recorded and produced by  
Natalie Robertson*

In this episode, Natalie Robertson interviews Sikkil Gurucharan, the [Spring 2023 Artist-in-Residence](#) at the DHI and a leading musician and youth ambassador for South Indian classical Carnatic music. They speak about Charan's love for and the history of Carnatic music, the innovations and collaborations inherent to the art form, and the many senses of "cultivation" that Charan discovered during his recent concert at Davis, "[Bījam: Musical Seeds](#)."

### EPISODE 10: Encountering US Central American Murals in San Francisco

*recorded and produced by  
Natalie Robertson*

In this episode of *Dialogic*, Natalie Robertson interviews Dr. Mauricio E. Ramirez, who is currently a UC President's and Andrew Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in the Chicana/o Studies Department at UC Davis. Together, they discuss the history of politically-engaged murals, mural preservation, and Mauricio's extensive and exciting work on the origins and significance of Central American solidarity murals that emerged within San Francisco's Mission District in 1984.

### EPISODE 11: The Power of the Humanities

*recorded and produced by  
Natalie Robertson*

In the last episode of *Dialogic's* first season, Natalie Robertson speaks with outgoing Interim Director of the DHI, Dr. Archana Venkatesan, about the role of the humanities in her life, in contemporary society, and whether or not the humanities are in "crisis."

This final episode can be found [here](#).

To learn more and listen to all episodes from the *Dialogic* podcast, see [here](#).

# FEATURE: NICOLE RANGANATH

Dr. Nicole Ranganath is an Assistant Professor of the South Asian Diaspora in the Middle East/South Asian Studies. Her research and teaching focuses on the South Asian diaspora, South Asian cinema, and Social Justice in the Middle East and South Asia. She has worked closely with the local Punjabi community on several research and educational projects, including the Pioneering Punjabis Digital Archive, a documentary film, and the launch of Punjabi language and culture classes. She has published articles on the history of Sikhs in California and Fiji. Her forthcoming book, *Women and the Sikh Diaspora: Music and Mobility Across the Seven Seas*, will map a history of Sikh women's music in the United States.



Dr. Nicole Ranganath's work significantly focuses on the history of the diaspora from Punjab, a region in northwest India and present-day Pakistan. She has completed fieldwork in California, Fiji, and Punjab, focusing in particular on Punjabi immigrants engaged in farming in California. Dr. Ranganath has worked closely with the local Punjabi community in the Sacramento Valley in her research and educational endeavors over the past eight years.

The DHI launched a week of programs in May ([Punjabi Week](#)) featuring the recovered history of Punjabi farmers in California, as well as their contemporary farming and foodways. The programming draws from Dr. Ranganath's community-engaged scholarship. The signature event was a dedication ceremony of Professor Emeritus Gurdev S. Khush's papers to the UC Davis library. Dr. Khush is an agronomist and geneticist who won the 1996 World Food Prize for increasing and improving the global supply of rice during a time of enormous population growth. There will also be a screening of a short documentary by graduate student Harleen Kaur Bal about Punjabi immigrants in the meatpacking industry in the Central Valley, as well as a classical Sikh Gurbani music concert focusing on the themes of cultivation and abundance.

"I first became aware of California's Punjabi-American community in farming by chance about fifteen years ago when I attended Yuba City's Sikh parade," Dr. Ranganath shared. Each year on the first Sunday in November, about 100,000 people gather in the small rural community of Yuba City about 40 miles north of Sacramento from as far away as Canada, England, and India. Sharing one's wealth and performing selfless volunteer service are cornerstones of Sikhi, the fifth largest world faith that emerged in Punjab in the fifteenth century. "I was so overwhelmed by the community's generosity and vitality in the midst of this small town off the beaten track but not far from Davis' backyard," Dr. Ranganath recalls.

Our university is located in the heart of the Punjabi community, whose roots date back to the beginning of the late nineteenth century. Today, our region is home to one of the oldest and

*Continued on page 43*

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Continued from page 42

largest South Asian American communities due to this rich agricultural history. In 2015, she partnered with Yuba City's Punjabi American Heritage Society to create the first digital archive with over 700 interviews, photographs, archival films, and other materials documenting the [history of Punjabis in California](#) for over 130 years. "South Asians have played a critical role in California's history, particularly the Punjabis who came as early as the late nineteenth century, yet their history is virtually unknown outside of the South Asian American community." The library incorporated the archive into its digital collections, which was fitting given the work of the late UC Davis librarian Ted Sibia who pioneered the digitizing of South Asian American history.



Tea party, Yuba City, CA, 1967 (Left to right) Front row: Sant Kaur Grewal and Gita Kaur Grewal. Back row: Bakhso Kaur Takhar, Swarn Kaur Johl, Harbhajan Takher, Gurmit Kaur Takhar, and Swarn Kaur. Photo by Dr Manohar Singh Grewal

Generous support from the California Humanities allowed her to conduct oral histories with the surviving women who formed the first generation of South Asian American women. "It was very gratifying to document the lives of over 40 elderly women in the local Punjabi community while they were still with us," Dr. Ranganath added. This feat would not have been possible without the support of the daughters of the first generation of women in the community, especially Rajinder K Tumber, Sharon Singh and Davinder Deol. The project developed into a documentary that aired on PBS called "[Jutti Kasoori: Walking into the Unknown](#)" (2018) and a [women's gallery](#) narrating each woman's life.

Dr. Ranganath's forthcoming book, *Women and the Sikh Diaspora: Music and Mobility Across the Seven Seas*, is the first to chart a gendered history of Sikhs and their music in the United States. Her book explores the vitality and transformation of the musical expressions of women in the Sikh faith in California. The diasporic framework is critical to understanding women's motivations to compose songs, as well as the ruptures in geographical and emotional connectivity that altered the performance and reception of women's music. This history is told through an analysis of three genres of music performed and created by South Asian diasporic women: devotional hymns (*shabad kirtans*), folk songs, and rare autobiographical songs.

Dr. Ranganath was also part of a multi-campus initiative funded by the Office of the President to launch Punjabi language courses in a fully online format. Currently, Dr. Kuldeep Singh teaches Punjabi language classes as part of the UC Davis Middle East/South Asia Studies Program for students throughout the UC system. Punjabi is one of the ten most spoken languages in the world, and the third most common in California's Central Valley. Beginning this fall, Davis students will be able to learn Intermediate Punjabi in-person and on campus through the ME/SA Program.

Written by Kaceylee Klein

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a large, leafy tree with green foliage. In the lower right corner, a portion of a group of people is visible, including a man in a blue jacket and glasses. The image is framed by a solid gold border.

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# SPOTLIGHTS

**UCDAVIS**  
HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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# SPOTLIGHTS

## LECTURER SPOTLIGHT: CHRISTOPHER FROH



Photo by Archana Venkatesan

Percussionist Christopher Froh specializes in promoting and influencing the creation of new music through critically-acclaimed performances and dynamic lectures. To date, he has premiered over 150 solo and chamber works by composers from 17 countries. His collaborations include some of the most significant composers of the 20th and 21st centuries including Chaya Czernowin, David Lang, Steve Mackey, John Adams, George Crumb, Liza Lim, Matthias Pintscher, and Keiko Abe. Froh has also worked extensively realizing percussion scores of player piano and fixed-media pieces by Conlon Nancarrow, a project that culminated in a solo recital at the Whitney Museum in New York City and featured solo performances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has performed with leading voices in chamber music including Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Music at Menlo, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

A lecturer at UC Davis since 2004, Froh works with a broad array of students, from those with no musical training to doctoral students in music composition. His courses and lectures seek to convey the immediacy and relevance of musical practice as a critical component of the pluralistic promise of higher education.

According to Froh, his foundational experience as a musician has been in performing chamber music and then bringing those experiences as a performer into the classroom. However, as he approaches 20 years of teaching, he is more aware of how his experiences as a teacher have influenced him as a performer. Seeing just how impactful exposure to even the most challenging, abstract music can be for any student, regardless of discipline or musical experience, has shaped his approach toward audience engagement. Rather than programming music that is easier for audiences to understand, he frames compositions before and after performances with the goal of helping new listeners feel valued as stakeholders in the concert experience.

Ultimately, he considers himself to be a teacher first, sharing music that he believes has transformative potential for anyone who is willing to stop and listen.

*Written by Rosette Simityan*

# SPOTLIGHTS

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## GRADUATE & UNDERGRADUATE SPOTLIGHTS



### GABI KIRK

Gabi Kirk is a PhD Candidate in Geography with a Designated Emphasis in Feminist Theory and Research at UC Davis. Working between political ecology, feminist geography, and geographies of colonialism, her dissertation project examines how Palestinian farmers and sustainable development organizations in the northern West Bank use agro-ecology in projects of identity formation and struggles for sovereignty. She uses feminist archival methods to study the settler-colonial history of agricultural science, examining the transnational circuits of agricultural and infrastructural expertise between California and Palestine from the nineteenth century onward.

She has published, solo and collaboratively, in *Jewish Currents*, *Historical Geography*, *Journal of Political Ecology*, *Society and Space*, and *PROTOCOLS*.

### EMMANUEL CAMACHO LARIOS

Emmanuel Camacho Larios is a fifth-year undergraduate Art Studio and Chicano/Chicana Studies double major at UC Davis. His work bridges the intersections of both majors and aims to foster connections and ask questions surrounding labor, immigration, and marginalized communities and POC. Emmanuel has taken on various leadership roles at the university, such as running the student-organized Basement Gallery which showcases student work in a curated gallery space. In late March 2023, he was also accepted to the Summer Sculpture Marathon at the New York School of Painting, Drawing and Sculpture.

Emmanuel is expected to graduate in winter of 2023, after which he intends to continue his art practice by engaging with more artists in the LA area and give voice to its marginalized communities.



# SPOTLIGHTS

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## LIBRARIANS



### DAVID MICHALSKI

David Michalski is the Social and Cultural Studies Librarian in the Researchers Services Department at the UC Davis Library, where he provides research assistance to those working in the humanities, social sciences, cultural studies, and the arts, including holding consultations, teaching workshops on library research, and organizing resources in support these fields of study. He works with a team of librarians in the UC Davis Library's Research Services department that specializes in graduate student and faculty support across the University. David's work with humanities, social sciences, cultural studies scholars includes orientations to library resources, assistance with research strategies and methods, developing literature reviews, data and primary source discovery, evaluation, and management, and developing scholarly connections at UC Davis and beyond.

David came to UC Davis as a Librarian in 2002 from the School of Visual Arts in NYC. He has a Master of Library and Information Studies from Queens College (CUNY), a MA in American Studies and Information Studies from Queens College (CUNY), and a MA in American Studies from SUNY at Buffalo. While at UC Davis, he earned his PhD in Cultural Studies, with a Designated Emphasis in Critical Theory in 2010. His dissertation, *Taste After Taste: On the Aesthetic invitation of Wine*, explores the sociology of wine culture and the role of the aesthetics in contemporary society, an inquiry he continued in his book, *The Dialectic of Taste* (Palgrave, 2015).

As a graduate student in Cultural Studies, David was active in the DHI Research Clusters and benefited from the opportunity to learn from faculty and graduate students across the humanities and social sciences, as well as the space DHI offered to air new ideas and present innovative research. He sees the UC Davis Library as coextensive with the mission of the DHI in their mutual support for interdisciplinary collaboration, and as spaces to explore and contemplate new approaches to scholarship.

To learn more about David Michalski or to get in touch, click [here](#).



*Written by KaceyLee Klein*

# SPOTLIGHTS

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## LIBRARIANS



### ADAM SIEGEL

Adam Siegel is bibliographer for languages, literatures, and performing arts at UC Davis. Adam has been a humanities and social sciences librarian at the university since 2004, and over time has served as a liaison and subject specialist (reference, instruction, collection development, outreach) for many DHI-affiliated departments and programs: Classics, Comparative Literature, French & Italian, German & Russian, Theatre & Dance, Performance Studies, and Middle Eastern/South Asian Studies. He holds degrees from the Defense Language Institute, the University of Minnesota (BA), the University of California (MA), and San Jose State University (MLIS).

His research interests focus on cultural contact and the transmission of plant knowledge in Central and Eastern Europe. As a literary translator, he has translated non-fiction, fiction, theater, and poetry from Russian, Czech, German, Croatian, Serbian, French, Italian, Swedish, and Norwegian. He was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Literary Translation Fellowship in 2014 to translate the work of the late Russian author Vasili Golovanov. His translations from various European authors

(Hans Henny Jahnn, Georg Saiko, Jovan Nikolic, etc.) have been published widely, and include Wolfgang Ernst's *Stirrings in the Archive* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015) and Hubert Fichte's *Black City* (Sternberg, 2019). Between 2013 and 2018, he translated plays by Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Pirandello, Goethe, and Schiller for the Art Theatre of Davis.

His more recent pursuits have combined his background in Eastern European studies and plants. With his spouse, Deatra Cohen, he is co-author of *Ashkenazi Herbalism: Rediscovering the Herbal Traditions of Eastern European Jews* (North Atlantic, 2021). They are currently writing a follow-up (working title *Woven Roots*), which will look more broadly at shared cultures of plant-medicinal healing in Central and Eastern Europe, scheduled for publication in 2025.

*Written by Rosette Simityan*





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# EVENTS

**UC DAVIS**  
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# EVENTS

## BOOK CHATS

Hosted at the International House Davis, the DHI Book Chat series celebrates the artistic and intellectual ventures of our faculty and allows them to share their new and recent projects with the Davis community.



### **TALINN GRIGOR, *THE PERSIAN REVIVAL: THE IMPERIALISM OF THE COPY IN IRANIAN AND PARSİ ARCHITECTURE***

Dr. Talinn Grigor's chat on October 12, 2022 discussed her new book, followed by conversation with Dr. Wendy DeSouza. Together they worked through the book's examination of Europe's discovery of ancient Iran, first in literature, and then in art history. The event concluded with a lively Q&A portion and closing remarks from Dr. Archana Venkatesan. Special thanks to Dr. Grigor for giving the very first book chat of the year, to International House Davis for hosting, and all the organizers and participants for their contribution to this event.

### **FRAN DOLAN, *DIGGING THE PAST: HOW AND WHY TO IMAGINE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY AGRICULTURE***

On November 11, 2022, Dr. Fran Dolan and the community discussed her latest work after a brief reading from the book. With local farmer and author, Dr. Mike Madison, they discussed the history of many foods, including mulled wine, as well modern idioms that originated from seventeenth-century agricultural terms. The book chat then entered the Q&A portion with insightful questions about the origins of modern recipes and what we can apply to modern agricultural methods.



# EVENTS

## BOOK CHATS



### **NAOMI JANOWITZ, *ACTS OF INTER- PRETATION: ANCIENT RELIGIOUS SEMIOTIC IDEOLOGIES AND THEIR MODERN ECHOES***

On January 11, 2023, Dr. Naomi Janowitz gave a talk on her new book and read an excerpt from the work. The following discussion with Dr. Flagg Miller elaborated on the book's arguments regarding language, models, signs, and the way modern scholarship studies religion and culture. The Q&A portion of the chat introduced questions surrounding the way in which things gain and redefine their meaning, as well as the power of rituals. Conversations on translation and ChatGPT ended the event, with the discussion leading those present to think about the effects of the interplay between technology and language have on our present and future.



### **ALYSSA NEY, *THE WORLD IN THE WAVE FUNCTION: A METAPHYSICS FOR QUANTUM PHYSICS***

An enthusiastic crowd gathered on February 8, 2023 to hear Dr. Alyssa Ney speak about her newest book. Dr. Ney read sections from the introduction and conclusion, after which she and Dr. David Glick conversed in depth about what it means to be wave function realists. During Q&A, attendees asked about practical implications, the place of philosophers in physics, and the reality of our perception of a 3D world. Dr. Venkatesan closed out the conversation with thanks to International House, executive director Shelly Gilbride, event assistant Jacqueline Iniguez, and the book chat speakers.



# EVENTS

## BOOK CHATS



Gina Aparicio (left) with Susy Zepeda (right)

### SUSY ZEPEDA, *QUEERING MESOAMERICAN DIASPORAS*

On April 12, 2023, Dr. Susy Zepeda gave a talk on her new book, *Queering Mesoamerican Diasporas*. After introductions, Dr. Zepeda and artist Gina Aparicio performed a short ritual in the four directions to invite ancestors into the dialogue. Their presentation space featured an altar to highlight how art-making enacts remembrance and healing for individuals and communities. Dr. Zepeda gave a brief reading, followed by her approach to spirit research which uncovers how genderqueer, Chicanx, Latinx, and Indigenous ways of knowing and art-making can break colonial narratives and build community.

### DAVID OSLEGER, *GEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPES OF AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS*

An multidisciplinary audience met on May 10, 2023 to hear Dr. David Osleger present his new textbook, *Geology and Landscapes of America's National Parks*. After introductions, Dr. Osleger read a brief excerpt from the preface to help the audience understand geologic time. Then Dr. Julianne Ballou engaged Dr. Osleger in conversation about how the geology of our national parks reveals a vital narrative about the shaping of the North American continent and how it relates to the humanities. Dr. Osleger also discussed the pedagogical organization of his textbook from least to most complex park geologies and underscored the importance of improving accessibility and finding sustainable solutions in the face of threats to our national parks.



# EVENTS

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## WEBINARS

The DHI-hosted webinars give a platform to various speakers and scholars, coming together to discuss a diverse range of topics, such as current events and other historical, cultural, or social engagements.



### UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT UPRISING IN IRAN October 27, 2022

This Zoom webinar on October 27, 2022 placed UC Davis professors and graduate students in conversation on a panel to discuss current events in light of Iran's recent history and politics, Islamic Law and hijab, and the experience of being a student abroad while one's home country is in turmoil.

Dr. Mairaj Syed, Dr. Amy Motlagh, and Mahya Saffarpour gave a series of talks explaining and discussing the Mahsa Jina Amini protests in Iran. Dr. Syed gave context to the broader religious history of Islam. He detailed the relevant Qu'ran verses and

interpretations of them as well as the different types of head coverings in current-day Iran. Focusing more on the political context of the protests, Dr. Motlagh explained how the revolution that marked the transition of power from the Pahlavi era to the current regime defines and elucidates the current governments religious ties and its relationship with its citizens. Lastly, Mahya focused on the protests and their effects on the Iranian people. She shared anecdotes from current UC Davis students who have been affected by the protests.

After the event, Drs. Mairaj Syed and Amy Motlagh created a resource page with relevant courses, books, and news sources available on the DHI website [here](#).

### RECIPES TO REMEMBER: EXPANDING THE CHINESE COOKBOOK COLLECTION THROUGH ORAL HISTORIES IN SAN FRANCISCO CHINATOWN March 2, 2023

This webinar is the first event in the three-part series of "Recipes to Remember," also part of the DHI's [Cultivation series](#). UC Davis PhD candidates [Ben Ruilin Fong](#) and [Tianyun Hua](#) shared their knowledge of this unique collection and how it forms the foundation of their community-based research project exploring connections between contemporary San Francisco Chinatown and people featured in the historical cookbook collection's texts and images. How can cookbooks be used to discover unwritten stories and memories across generations and communities?

In conversation with UC Davis Food and Wine Archivist, [Dr. Audrey Russek](#), Fong and Hua shared the origins of the Chinese Cookbook Collection and discussed ways that scholars can build meaningful connections between archives and the communities from which they originate. Using examples from unique books, letters, and visual artifacts, Fong and Hua describe how their project unfolded based on the cookbook collection, their efforts to renew the archive with newly-acquired oral histories from Chinatown residents, and how their discoveries speak to the relationship between food culture and identity. This project also illustrates the present-day value of archival materials and their contribution to public scholarship.



# EVENTS

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## CONVERSATION SERIES: REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Conversation Series is a public event program that puts UC scholars in dialogue with students, the community, and each other. The 2022-2023 Conversation Series, "Abortion and the States of America," focuses on reproductive rights across different spheres of influence.

### ABORTION & RELIGION NOVEMBER 2, 2022

**Dr. Lynna Dhanani**  
**Dr. Liza Grandia**  
**Dr. Naomi Janowitz**  
**Dr. Meaghan O'Keefe**  
**Dr. Mairai Syed**

The first panel discussion in the Reproductive Rights Conversation Series began with Dr. O'Keefe's introduction to the history of Christian evangelicalism which supported abortion through the late 1970s in the US. Dr. Janowitz further explained the focus that Jewish law places on both the male and female roles in conception. Drs. Syed and Dhanani deconstructed the concept of ensoulment as well as early treatises on conception and gestation. Dr. Grandia joined the panel virtually to discuss her public outreach work with the APROFAM project and its holistic reproductive health education in Guatemala. The panel concluded with questions from students, postdocs, and professors in the audience.

### ABORTION & LAW JANUARY 23, 2023

**Dr. Katherine Florey**  
**Dr. Lisa Ikemoto**  
**Dr. Rana Jaleel**  
**Dr. Rebecca Kluchin**  
**Dr. Aaron Tang**

The second panel in the Reproductive Rights Series began with a legal history of Roe and Casey by Dr. Ikemoto, followed by Dr. Kluchin's US history of abortion and public attitudes. Drs. Tang and Florey also discussed cross-state legislation on abortion and access. The Q&A portion was moderated by Drs. Mairaj Syed and Meaghan O'Keefe, during which the audience asked questions both about the progression of history thus far as well as into the future. Many thanks to the UC Davis Alumni Center, the panel spakers, and the series' co-sponsors for making this event possible.

### ABORTION & MEDICINE APRIL 17, 2023

**Dr. Jocelyn Glassberg**  
**Dr. Catherine Cansino**  
**Dr. Steven McElroy**

The final panel discussion in this series focused on the varying considerations and facts surrounding the concepts of 'life' and 'choice.' Dr. Jocelyn Glassberg explained the most common reasons women may choose to have a medically induced abortion and questioned the idea of limited ranges of acceptability for them. Dr. Catherine Cansino also detailed the dangers of withholding medical attention from women who sought medically induced abortions and explained the ill-effects both on the mother and child. Lastly, Dr. Steven McElroy, Chief of Neonatology, discussed the history of medical and parental interest in infants beyond their potential use as future-adults—from the mass deaths at foundling homes to the surprising survival rates in the emerging field of Neonatology—Dr. McElroy shifted the discussion of viability from its current political and theoretical place within the womb to one outside of it, within his ward. The Q&A portion of the event continued in the hall after the event formally concluded, closing out the night with lively conversation.

# EVENTS

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## JUNIOR FACULTY EXCHANGE: NATASHA MCPHERSON

The Junior Faculty Exchange program is UC-wide initiative in which junior faculty members visit other campuses and deliver lectures based on their work. The series aims to connect junior faculty across campuses to encourage professional connections and further research.



### “‘SHE WAS HIS CONCUBINE’: THE ARCHIVE AND THE LIVES OF BLACK CONCUBINES AFTER RECONSTRUCTION”

Natasha McPherson is Assistant Professor of African American History at UC Riverside. Dr. McPherson received her Ph.D. in History from Emory University. Her research examines the lives of southern black women living in the wake of slavery and Reconstruction. She is currently completing her book manuscript, *Women and the Making of Creole New Orleans*. Dr. McPherson's book examines Afro-Creole women's efforts in their households and neighborhoods to delay their own subjection as part of a collective, socio-political struggle in early Jim Crow New Orleans.

On February 1, 2023, Dr. McPherson delivered her talk, beginning with the historical backgrounding of single black women who cohabitated with white men through the vignette of Sylvanie LeBlanc, a Black woman assaulted by a white mob because she cohabitated with a white man. Through similar vignettes, Dr. McPherson told the story of continued control of the sexual labor of Black women by both individual whites and the state. In the wake of slavery, Black women living in concubinage became particularly elusive in the archival records. The growing surveillance of Black sexual morality and increasing restrictions on interracial sex thus prompted cohabiting Black women to keep their intimate relationships out of the public record whenever possible. Dr. McPherson's critical read of the archive demonstrates how post-emancipation concubinage functioned as an extension of slavery's sexual economy and considers the lives of Black women who forged opportunities for themselves through their intimate labor.

A Q&A session followed Dr. McPherson's talk, where undergraduates, graduates, and professors asked insightful questions about the nature of archive research. Many thanks to Dr. McPherson and the UC Riverside Center for Ideas and Society for making this event possible.

*Written by Kacey Lee Klein & Stacey Anh Baran*



# EVENTS

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## FALL 2022 DHI RECEPTION

The DHI's 2022 Fall reception, held in the Voorhies Courtyard, was at once a commencement for the 2022-23 academic year and a celebration of the past 20 years of the Institute's tenure on the Davis campus. Interim director Archana Venkatesan welcomed attendees, described the enduring mission of the DHI, and introduced the evening's speakers and musical entertainment by a percussion ensemble of UC Davis music undergraduates led by Professor Chris Froh.

Following opening remarks, Dean Atekwana extolled the importance of the DHI to the university, detailing the grants and fellowships that the Institute offers; Prashant Mahopatra, Vice Chancellor of Research, lauded the interdisciplinary nature of the Institute while emphasizing the value of the Humanities on a STEM-focused campus; and Julia Lupton, the UCHRI Interim Director, spoke about the DHI in the network of all the UC Humanities Centers. After live musical performances by the Student Jazz Ensemble, the event concluded with remarks by Associate Director Katherine Wallerstein.



All photos courtesy of Dr. Archana Venkatesan.

# EVENTS

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## CONSORTIUM OF HUMANITIES CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

Since 2021, DHI Associate Director Katharine Wallerstein has led an international network within the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI), within which the DHI is a member organization. The Critical Humanities Spaces Network provides a platform for critical reflection on the work of institutes, centers, and other venues for humanities and cross-disciplinary work, interrogating the material, virtual, and philosophical spaces of the center, along with the aesthetic, affective, social, and political tasks they assume and perform. It has been important to Katharine that this group's steering committee and reach be international, and that it be open to anyone in any way engaged with the work of directing, administering, and curating humanities spaces, broadly construed. Their activities are open to anyone interested in participating.

In 2022, the group organized two conversations: "Forming the Humanities: On Care" and "Traversing the Humanities: On Space." The first looked at the concept of administration, asking: "If the concept of 'administration' refers genealogically to forms of 'care' (stewardship, accompaniment, taking care), thus largely exceeding the programming of measurable high research outputs demanded by the current system (a teleological function towards productivity, growth, efficiency, applications), what does 'care' mean in and for the formation of the humanities?" The second asked "If the task of the humanities center involves traversing and articulating several topologies, amid which the material space of its actual work, its symbolic space as an institution, and the interdisciplinary and intercultural space created by integrating and translating from heterogeneous discourses, times, and cultures, how do centers clear such spaces for the arrival of the new, make room for the unexpected?"

This year, the network has organized a series on "Repair." A first conversation was held in April in Cape Town, and asked: "What does it mean to abide by a concept like 'repair,' especially when this comes to function as a term that allows a different intervention in our time?" A second event will be held in Santiago, Chile in June, focusing on the work of repair in our humanities spaces, and a third on pedagogies of repair will be held at Oxford in July.

Please visit [here](#) to read more and find event recordings, and to get on the mailing list. Katharine welcomes your questions via [email](#).



The background of the slide is a photograph of a large, leafy tree with green foliage. In the lower right corner, a portion of a group of people is visible, including a man in a blue jacket and glasses. The entire image is framed by a thick gold border.

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# **CLOSING MESSAGES**

**UCDAVIS**  
HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Announcement

**UC DAVIS**  
HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

The Davis Humanities Institute (DHI) will transition to the Dean's Office on July 1, 2023, for a two-year visioning process. During this time, the DHI will continue to maintain its web presence ([dhi.ucdavis.edu](http://dhi.ucdavis.edu)), the DHI Digest will be published regularly, and faculty research funding programs and select graduate funding will remain available. While the DHI's spaces (Quiet Rooms, Conference Room, and Podcasting Lab) will be closed for the summer after July 1, they will be open to use at the start of Fall 2023.

Please write to [dhi@ucdavis.edu](mailto:dhi@ucdavis.edu) with any questions. The FAQ page on the DHI's website can answer your questions regarding the DHI's transition and the visioning process.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Stacey, Kaceylee, and Rosette for their exceptional contributions to the 2022-2023 DHI Newsletter, and to Morgen for facilitating and coordinating our operations. Their dedication, expertise, and passion have greatly enriched our publication, ensuring its continued success and impact within our academic community. Together, this hard work and dedication have helped create a vibrant platform for the exchange of ideas, fostering a deeper appreciation for the humanities and recognition of interdisciplinary research.

Thank you once again for your exceptional contributions!

