HASSAN ASIF

PhD Candidate – Faculty of Information (iSchool), University of Toronto
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EDUCATION

- **PhD, Information,** University of Toronto, Canada, 2019 – present (expected Winter 2026).
  Dissertation "Remixing Devotion: Digital Media Practices in Pakistan."
  Collaborative Specialization in South-Asian Studies.
  Supervisor: Prof. Seamus Ross; Committee: Prof. Mark Campbell, Prof. Farzaneh Hemmasi

- **MA, Museums & Gallery Practice,** University College London, UK, 2015. (Grade: Distinction).
  Dissertation: "The Muslim Buddha: Sculpture and Heritage Values in Taxila, Pakistan"
  Supervisor: Prof. Trinidad Rico

- **BS, Communication Studies,** Northwestern University, USA, 2014. GPA 3.75 (cum laude).
  Minor: Cultural Anthropology.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- **Asif, H. (2025).** Discostan and Hamnawa: Between erasure and preservation in South Asian digital diasporic archives. *Media, Culture & Society*, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437251353093
- **Asif, H. (2024).** "Blur the preacher": Media remix and digital technocultural practice in Pakistan. *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture, 13*(3), 363–386. https://doi.org/10.1163/21659214-bja10110
- **Asif, H. (in press).** Obfuscation as revelation: Knowledge sharing, piracy, and Islamic devotional remixing in Pakistan. *Digital Humanities Quarterly* (special issue edited by S. T. Shanmugapriya & P. Murrieta-Flores).
- **Asif, H. (under review).** IslaMixing: Hauntology as an experimental framework for exploring online #Islamogram memes. *Journal of Media and Religion.*

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

- **Asif, H. (forthcoming).** Translating truth: AI in digital Islamic sermons and the case of Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza. In D. Sundaram & C. Tekobbe (Eds.), *Social Media, Religion, and Culture.* Routledge.
- **Asif, H. (forthcoming).** Technical imagination against deepfakes: Reading, bending, and exposing the image game. In J. Tulasiewicz & S. Jovicic (Eds.), *Anthropology of Digital Harms, Addiction and Disconnection* (manuscript under review at Berghahn Press/Cornell University Press).
- **Asif, H., & Rico, T. (2017).** The Buddha Remains: Heritage transactions in Taxila, Pakistan. In T. Rico (Ed.), *The Making of Islamic Heritage.* Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4071-9_7

Non-Peer-Reviewed Contributions

- **Asif, H. (2019).** Really risky "interpretation". *Association for Heritage Interpretation, 24*(1), 36–37.
- **Rico, T., & Asif, H.** (2015). Reports. *Anthropology of the Middle East, 10*(1), 61–88.
- **Asif, H. (2013).** Rolling out a new broadband era in Qatar. *The Edge, 43*, 40.

Works in Progress

- **Asif, H., & Bashir, H. (Eds.). (in preparation).** *Digital Religion* [edited-volume proposal; submission planned for Fall 2025].

SELECTED GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 2025   Margaret Higgins Memorial Fellowship (university-wide) – CA $10 000
- 2025   Professor Amilcare Iannucci Graduate Fellowship in the Humanities (university-wide) – CA $6 500
- 2024–25   Chancellor Jackman Graduate Fellowship (university-wide) – CA $40 000
- 2023–24   SSHRC Doctoral Scholarship (national competition) – CA $20 000
- 2021–23   Ontario Graduate Scholarship (provincial competition) – CA $30 000
- 2021–22   iSchools Inc. Research Award (international competition) – CA $5 000
- 2022   School of Graduate Studies Research Travel Grant (university-wide) – CA $3 000

o   2022   Ethel W. Auster Scholarship for Doctoral Research (university-wide) – CA $2 000

Full list of grants and awards available on request.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE
o   #Blacktronica Electronic Music in Detroit and Berlin, Research Assistant, Prof. Beth Coleman, University of Toronto Mississauga, Sep '21 – Jan '22
o   DigiLabs Workshops, Participant and Research Assistant, University of Toronto and University of Manchester, Feb '20 – Jan '21
o   Richard Charles Lee Insights Through Asia Challenge, Student Research Trainee, Asian Institute, University of Toronto, Apr '21 – Sep '21
o   McLuhan Centre for Culture and Technology, Member Reading Group, "Sub-Altern-ative Media Technologies," University of Toronto, Sep '20 – May '21
o   Toronto Data Workshop, Member, University of Toronto, Sep '20 – Sep '21
o   Centre for South Asian Civilizations, Member Reading Group, "Pakistan Reading Group," University of Toronto, Jan '20 – Sep '21
o   Lahore College of Arts and Sciences, Social Studies Curriculum Developer, May '18 – Aug '19
o   Barker Langham, Research Consultant, Aug '17 – Mar '18
o   Lahore University of Management Sciences, Research Associate, Nov '15 – Mar '16
o   TBWA\Worldwide, Account Manager & Concept Researcher, Jun '15 – Nov '15
o   Media Gallery for Journalism and Communication, Research Assistant, Northwestern University, Jan '15 – Jun '15
o   Northwestern University, Research Assistant, Sociology, Jan '13 – May '13

FIELD RESEARCH
o   Devotional Media and Remix Culture, Karachi, Lahore and adjacent cities, Pakistan, Jul '22 – Dec '22
o   Buddhist Sculpture and Heritage Values, Taxila & Islamabad, Pakistan, Apr '15 – Jul '15
o   Cityscapes on Experimental Film, Paris, France, Dec '13 – Jan '14
o   Understanding Female Sports Participation, Doha, Qatar, Sep '13 – Dec '13
o   Media Entrepreneurship in East Asia, Seoul, South Korea, Jun '13 – Aug '13
o   Future of Broadband in MENA, Broadband MEA Conference, Dubai, UAE, Jan '13 – May '13
o   Heavy Metal Music and Subculture, Lahore & Islamabad, Pakistan, May '12 – Jul '14

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Muslims in Canada Archive (MiCA), Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Toronto
Senior Digital Fellow | Sep 2021 – Jun 2023
o   Initiated a nationwide digitization programme: ran workshops or archival workflows, and standardized metadata across partner institutions using Access-to-Memory (AtoM) servers.
o   Helped secure CA $4 million in Budget 2022 federal funding, doubling the archive's contributor network within one year.
o   Wrote preservation policy drafts and data-sharing agreements that govern 250 GB of born-digital and legacy material.

Muslims in Canada Data Initiative (MiCDI), Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Toronto
Senior Digital Fellow | Dec 2021 – Jun 2023
o   Prototyped a SQL database housing survey, interview, and social-media datasets on Muslim life in Canada.
o   Produced draft policy briefs for Canadian Heritage on data ethics and community consent in minority research.
o   Coordinated with an interdisciplinary team of scholars; worked on monthly progress dashboards.

Amal Academy (supported by Stanford University & Acumen)
Program Manager | Sep 2017 – Feb 2018
o   Managed Career Prep Fellowships across Punjab University, UET Lahore, and GCU Lahore.
o   Trained 500+ low-income students; 70 % secured employment within three months of graduation.

- o Raised local sponsorships and expanded alumni engagement by 60 %.
- o Rebuilt milestone tracking in Looker Studio, boosting student-engagement metrics by 25 %.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Pakistan
Project Assistant, Culture | Jan 2017 – Jul 2017
- o Built a network of 40 museums, universities, and NGOs for joint heritage projects.
- o Ran digitization workshops at Taxila, Lahore, and Peshawar Museums, preserving 2 000+ artefacts.
- o Procured and installed IT and lab equipment, establishing Taxila Museum's first digital archive lab.

Consultant, Culture | Mar 2016 – Jan 2017
- o Managed three preservation projects (World Bank, Swiss Embassy, UNESCO) with a combined budget > US$150 000.
- o Led policy dialogue that supported Pakistan's ratification of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity.
- o Wrote successful grant proposals for site restoration and intangible-heritage programmes.
- o Conducted needs assessments in Taxila to guide long-term conservation and community outreach plans.

Additional curatorial projects available on request.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
Courses taught
- o Reimagining Global Copyright (graduate, U of T, 2024 & 2025, 25 students, offered four times)
- o Religion, Media & Popular Culture (undergraduate, UTM, 2023, 40 students, offered twice)
- o Engaging with Texts (Lahore University of Management Sciences, 2019, 45 students, offered once)
- o History & Sociology (Lahore College of Arts and Sciences A-level, 2018-19, 25 students each)

Courses assisted (Teaching Assistant, 2019-Present) – Visual Communication and Digital Environments; Interpersonal Communication; Communicating in and between Organizations; Project Management; Communication & Advertising; Contemporary Communication Technologies; Remix Culture; Rhetoric and Media; Mind, Media, and Representation; Media Audiences, Introduction to Visual Culture; Signs, Referents, and Meaning and 10 others.

CONFERENCES (SELECTED)
- o **Asif, H. (2025, June).** *Obfuscation as revelation: Knowledge sharing, piracy, and Islamic devotional remixing in Pakistan* [Conference presentation]. International Communication Association 2025 Pre-Conference "Debating Creator Culture," Boulder, Colorado, United States.
- o **Asif, H. (2025, June).** *Between confusion and deception: Ethical dilemmas in AI-enabled audiovisual remixing of Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza's sermons* [Conference presentation]. Canadian Communication Association Annual Conference, George Brown College, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2025, April).** *Cracked devotion: Piracy, pedagogy, and Islamic media remixing in Pakistan* [Conference presentation]. South Asia Graduate Student Workshop, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2025, February).** *Mediating truth: Tensions in AI-driven remixing of Engineer Muhammad Ali Mirza's sermons* [Conference presentation]. 20th Annual Communication Graduate Caucus Conference, "(In)Tensions—Navigating the In-Between," Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2024, June).** *Digital desires and distortions: The impact of deepfake pornography in Pakistani cyberspace* [Conference presentation]. Global Digital Intimacies Conference, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- o **Asif, H. (2024, May).** *Technological transcendence: The transformation of Naʿat in Pakistan's digital Islamic landscape* [Conference presentation]. Canadian Association for the Study of Islam and Muslims Second Biennial Conference, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (Chair). (2024, April 27)**. *Performance, sound, music, media, and materiality* [Conference panel]. Arts of the Indian Ocean Conference, University of Toronto Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2023, October).** *Bytes of blessings: Examining digital technology's influence on Pakistan's Naʿat culture* [Conference presentation]. 51st Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, United States.

- o **Asif, H. (2023, May).** *Prayers, pixels, and piracy: Online presentation of religious self in Pakistan's Naʿat community* [Conference presentation]. Graduate Student Conference, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2021, September).** *Rogue representations: Diasporic digital archives of South Asian musical media.* Paper presented at the Richard Charles Lee Insights Through Asia Challenge, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2021, April).** *Discursive identities: Media remix in Pakistan.* Paper presented at the South Asian Studies Graduate Symposium, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2021, April).** *Critical technocultural discourse analysis of sampling in Pakistani media remixes.* Paper presented at iSchool PhD Research Days, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2016, February).** *Stillborn Siddhārthas: Reassessing Gandharan art in Pakistan.* Paper presented at the Liberal Arts International Conference, Texas A&M University, Doha, Qatar.
- o **Asif, H. (2013, September).** *Broadband development in MENA: Current trends and future directions.* Paper presented at the 6th Annual Meeting of ASMEA, Washington, DC, USA.
- o **Asif, H. (2013, March).** *Wherever I may roam: Heavy metal in Pakistan.* Paper presented at the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, Austin, TX, USA.

INVITED TALKS (SELECTED)
- o **Asif, H. (2025, March).** *Politics, pop, and the pulpit: Where does the sacred end and the meme begin?* [Guest lecture]. Remix Culture course, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2025, January).** *Remixing devotion: An exploration of digital media practices in Pakistan* [Invited talk]. Jackman Humanities Institute, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2023, October).** *Islamixing: Digital audio workstations and contemporary devotion* [Guest lecture]. Masters of Information seminar "Remix Culture," University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2023, May).** *Branding beliefs: Exploring self-presentation in the Pakistani Naʿat community* [Invited talk]. ICCIT seminar, University of Toronto Mississauga, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.
- o **Asif, H. (2020, November).** *Remixing resistance through sonic heritage: A Tribe Called Red (ATCR)* [Workshop presentation]. DigiLabs Workshop, University of Toronto and University of Manchester (online).
- o **Asif, H. (2020, February).** *Cross-cultural project management* [Invited talk]. Masters of Information seminar, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

INTRAMURAL AND EXTRAMURAL SERVICE
- o Volunteer Mentor, Palestinian Students & Scholars at Risk (PSSAR): Guide prospective and newly admitted Palestinian graduate students on application strategy, supervisor matching, funding searches, and cultural adjustment in North America, July 2025–present
- o Graduate Student Mentor: Continuous mentoring of new graduate students, especially from South Asia and the Middle East. Provide guidance on navigating funding opportunities, research grants, academic integration, and actively participate in South Asian and Middle East-focused student groups, Ongoing
- o Manuscript Reviewer: *Journal of Religion, Media, and Digital Culture*, Oct–Dec 2022
- o Manuscript Reviewer: *Stream: Culture/Politics/Technology*, Simon Fraser University, Sep–Nov 2021
- o Mental Health Committee Member, Doctoral Students Association, University of Toronto, Sep 2020–Jan 2021
- o Volunteer, *Our Networks* Conference, Sep 2020
- o Contributor, Museum Professionals of Color (MPOC), iSchool, University of Toronto, Jul 2020

OTHER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
- o Participant, "Computer Class," Centre for Culture and Technology Summer Institute, University of Toronto, Summer 2024

    Took part in an intensive three-week studio that paired daily code labs with critical seminars. Experimented with the Ludus programming language—modifying its turtle-graphics engine to create generative shapes—while studying classic texts by Seymour Papert (*Mindstorms*) and Joseph Weizenbaum (*Computer Power and Human Reason*). The course linked hands-on coding to media-philosophy debates about learning, agency, and the social limits of AI.

- o Participant, "Global Southing: Internet and Data Studies Workshop," Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford (Online-Hybrid), March 2025.
    - Learned about critical approaches to AI governance, digital sovereignty, and platform politics from Global South perspectives.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Canadian Communication Association (CCA); Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA); Museums Association of Pakistan (MAP); International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM).

LANGUAGES

English (Native fluency: reading, writing, speaking); Urdu (Native fluency: reading, writing, speaking); Punjabi (Native fluency: reading, writing, speaking; proficient in Shahmukhi script); Arabic (Reading proficiency)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- o Audio and Media Production: Cubase, FL Studio, Sonic Pi, Adobe Creative Suite, FFmpeg
- o Programming and Data Analysis: Python, SQL, Matlab, Praat Signal Processing, OpenCV