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# Manan Ahmed

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Associate Professor  
Department of History  
Columbia University

## Education

- 2008 PH.D., South Asian Languages & Civilizations, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL.  
1997 B.A. WITH HONORS in History, Miami University, Oxford, OH.  
1991 B.Sc. in Physics, University of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

## Employment Record

- 2020- Associate Professor (with Tenure), Department of History, Columbia University, New York, NY.  
2018-20 Associate Professor, Department of History, Columbia University, New York, NY.  
2018-19 Visiting Scholar, Department of South Asian Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.  
2012-2018 Assistant Professor, Department of History, Columbia University, New York, NY.  
2009-2012 Junior Professor, Institut für Islamwissenschaft, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

## Selected Publications

### Books

- 2020 *The Loss of Hindustan: The Invention of India*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).  
2016 *A Book of Conquest: The Chachnama and Muslim Origins in South Asia*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).  
2011 *Where the Wild Frontiers Are: Pakistan and the American Imagination*. (Just World Books, 2011).

### Journal Special Issues

- 2022 Editor *Circuits of Culture in Early Modern South Asia* of *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*. 42.2 (2022). Author of Introduction  
2022 Editor *Rethinking Sindh* of *Philological Encounters*. Author of Introduction.  
2015 Co-Editor with Anand Vivek Taneja. *Enchanted Politics: Humans and other Animals across South Asia and the Middle East* of *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle*

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- 2012 *East*, 35: 2 (2015). Co-author of Introduction: 200-203 (equal authorship).  
Co-Editor with Anand Vivek Taneja. *Fractured Genres: The After-Lives of Medieval Indo-Persian Histories*, special issue of *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 49:4 (December 2012). Co-author of Introduction: 455-457 (equal authorship).

#### Peer Reviewed Articles

- 2021 "Reading Across Firishta and Chimalpahin" in *History & Theory*, 16, 3 (September 2021): 441-447.  
2019 "Technologies of Power: From Philology to Big Data," in *Spheres: Journal for Digital Culture* (December 2019)  
2017 "Quarantined Histories: Sindh and the question of historiography in Colonial India– Part I," *History Compass*, 15, no. 8 (August 2017) doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12403>  
2017 "Quarantined Histories: Sindh and the question of historiography in Colonial India– Part II," *History Compass*, 15, issue 8 (August 2017) doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12398>  
2014 "Idols in the Archive," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 73, no. 1 (February, 2014): 1-8.  
2013 "A Demon with Ruby Eyes," *The Medieval History Journal*, 16, no. 2 (October 2013): 335-369.  
2012 "The Long Thirteenth Century of the *Chachnama*," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 49, no. 4 (December 2012): 459-491.  
2011 "Adam's Mirror: The Frontier in the Imperial Imagination," *Economic & Political Weekly*, 46, no. 13 (March-April 2011): 60-65. Republished Ахмед, Манан (2019), "Зеркало Адама: фронтир в имперском воображении," in *Журнал Фронтирных Исследований*, (1), 83-101.

#### Chapters in Peer Reviewed Volumes

- 2020 "The Virulence of Hindutva," in *The Pandemic: Perspectives on Asia*, edited by Vinayak Chaturvedi (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 2020), 153-167.  
2020 "Narratives of Earliest Hindu-Muslim Encounters," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Mughal World*, edited by Richard M. Eaton and Ramya Sreenivasan  
2015 "The Advent and Spread of Muslim Rule in South Asia," in *History of Pakistan*, edited by Roger D. Long (Lahore: Oxford University Press, 2015), 135-167.  
2013 "Future's Past" in *South Asia 2060: Envisioning Regional Futures*, edited by Adil Najam and Moeed Yusuf (London: Anthem Press, 2013), 46-52.

#### Book Reviews

- 2020 Richard M. Eaton *India in the Persianate Age 1000-1765* in *The American Historical Review*, 126, no. 1 (March 2021): 294–295  
2018 Christian Lee Novetzke, *The Quotidian Revolution: Vernacularization, Religion, and the*

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- Premodern Public Sphere in India* in *The American Historical Review*, 123, no. 1 (February 2018): 201–202.
- 2017 Shahid Amin, *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan* in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 54, no. 2 (2017): 267–295.
- 2017 Michael Fisher, *A Short History of the Mughal Empire* in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 76, no. 2 (May 2017): 553–555.
- 2015 Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 52, no. 1 (2015): 109–119.
- 2010 Finbarr Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval “Hindu-Muslim” Encounter* in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 48, no. 2 (April 2011): 301–305.
- 2009 Review of Huttenback, Robert A., *British Relations with Sind, 1799–1843: An Anatomy of Imperialism* in H-Asia, H-Net Reviews. December, 2009.
- 2004 - Author, *Chapati Mystery* - a South Asia history and culture publication. <http://goo.gl/1JKtd>

## Selected Grants & Contracts

- 2021 *Revealing the Archives of the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center* with Susan McGregor.  
\$1500 from Data Science Institute.
- 2021–2024 *Muslims in India* with Christophe Jaffrelot (Science Po), Bernard Haykel (Princeton)  
\$300,000 from Henry Luce Foundation.
- 2020 *Worlds at Waste: Air, Water, Land, and the Public in Asia and Africa*, with Kavita Sivaramakrishnan (History and Public Health).  
\$20,000 from Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy.
- 2019–2024 *Decolonization, the Disciplines, and the University* with Mahmood Mamdani (Columbia), Rosinka Chaudhuri (Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Kolkata), Dzodzi Tsikata (University of Ghana), Samer Frangie (CAMES, American University of Beirut).  
\$1,500,000 from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
- 2019–2020 *The Humanities in the Wake of War? Technologies of Power, Displaced Histories and Reconstruction* with Hiba Bou Akar (Architecture), Zainab Bahrani (Art History), Kaoukab Chebaro (Columbia Libraries), Marwa Elshakry (History), Hanaa Mallalah (Iraq), Brinkley Messick (Anthropology & MESAAS), Madiha Tahir (Journalism), Adrien Zakar (Stanford Humanities Center)  
\$60,000 from Columbia University Humanities War and Peace Initiative.
- 2019 *CSMS Lecture Series* with Brinkley Messick (Anthropology) and Marwa Elshakry (History).  
\$10,000 from the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy.
- 2018 *Orientalism and Its Others* with Marwa Elshakry for a class to be taught in Tunis in Spring 2019.  
\$80,000 from the President’s Global Fund Grant.
- 2018 *Muslim Worlds Manuscript Project* with RBML Columbia, Free Museum Philadelphia and

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- University of Pennsylvania Libraries.  
\$500,000 from CLIR Mellon Hidden Collections Grant.
- 2017 *Data Ethics* with Bruce Kogut (Business) and Josh Whitford (Sociology).  
\$40,000 from Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy.
- 2017 *Connected Core: Pilot for Cross-Section Online Collaboration in Core Classes* with Dennis Tenen (English).  
\$30,500 from Columbia College
- 2017 *Indo-Ghuria: Workshop* for international workshop on 12th and 13th c. South and Central Asia.  
\$9,000 from Columbia Faculty of Arts & Sciences.
- 2016 *A History of Difference* with Katharina Ivanyi (Religion).  
\$20,000 from Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life.
- 2015-17 *Colonization and De-Colonization* with Mae Ngai (History) and Claudio Lomnitz (Anthropology) for a class taught in Mexico City in Summer 2017.  
\$50,000 from President's Global Fund Grant.
- 2015 *Digital Justice* with Dennis Tenen (English) to organize a workshop in Mumbai in Summer 2016.  
\$20,000 from President's Global Fund Grant.
- 2015 *Borderlands: GIS Lab* for a hybrid learning platform for graduate level seminar on G.I.S.  
\$10,000 from Provost's Hybrid Learning Technology Grant
- 2010-15 *Zukunftsphilologie* with Islam Dayeh and Georges Khalil for an international research project.  
€1,300,000 from City of Berlin.
- 2011-12 *e-basis Islamwissenschaft* for a platform for shared data for teaching Islamic history.  
€50,000 from CeDiS, FU-Berlin.
- 2010 *Delhi Historical Map Project* for a workshop on mapping and digitization.  
€10,000 from Dahlem Research Forum, FU-Berlin.

## Fellowships

- 2018-19 *Visiting Scholar*, Department of South Asian Studies, Harvard University.
- 2016-17 *Heyman Center Fellow*. Faculty Fellowship at the Heyman Center, Columbia University.
- 2014 *Op-Ed Project*. Public Voices Fellow, Columbia University.
- 2006 *Dissertation Write-up*. Norman Wait Harris Fund for International Studies, University of Chicago.

## Presentations & Lectures

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## Invited Lectures & Keynotes

|      |                                                                                                                                                            |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2022 | "Firishta's Hindustan" Ahmadabad University                                                                                                                |
| 2022 | "Loss of Hindustan" SRM University, Andhra Pradesh                                                                                                         |
| 2022 | "Loss of Hindustan" Ashoka University                                                                                                                      |
| 2022 | "Where was Hindustan?" American University, Cairo                                                                                                          |
| 2021 | "Decolonization and History: A Look back at Hindustan" Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan in Kazan               |
| 2021 | "The Loss of Hindustan" Presidency College Kolkata                                                                                                         |
| 2021 | "The Loss of Hindustan" University of Toronto                                                                                                              |
| 2021 | "The Loss of Hindustan" University of Chicago                                                                                                              |
| 2021 | "Intellectual Geography of Hindustan" Yale Macmillan Center, Yale University                                                                               |
| 2021 | "Decolonizing Storytelling" Lucas Films, Ltd.                                                                                                              |
| 2021 | "A Book of Conquest" Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad                                                                                                |
| 2021 | "History After Destruction" Keynote to "Inqilab: Revolution, Rebellion, and Realignment in Eighteenth Century South Asia," Princeton University.           |
| 2021 | "A Contrapuntal History of Hindustan" Seminar on Modern South Asia, University of Oxford.                                                                  |
| 2021 | "The Loss of Hindustan" King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, Riyadh.                                                                       |
| 2020 | "The Loss of Hindustan" UC Santa Cruz.                                                                                                                     |
| 2020 | "The Loss of Hindustan" St. Stephens College, Delhi                                                                                                        |
| 2020 | "The Loss of Hindustan" Jamia Milli University, Delhi                                                                                                      |
| 2019 | "A Book of Conquest." University of Chicago.                                                                                                               |
| 2019 | "Firishta and the History of Hindustan." Harvard University.                                                                                               |
| 2018 | "What, where and when was Hindustan?" Stanford University.                                                                                                 |
| 2018 | "From Philology to Algorithm and the Study of Asia." Dartmouth College.                                                                                    |
| 2018 | "A Book of Conquest." University of Pennsylvania.                                                                                                          |
| 2017 | "Did Firishta have a Philosophy of History?" Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Yale.                                                                      |
| 2017 | "A Book of Conquest." South Asia Institute, UT-Austin.                                                                                                     |
| 2017 | "A Book of Conquest." Contemporary South Asia Seminar, Brown University.                                                                                   |
| 2016 | "Quarantined Histories." Boston College.                                                                                                                   |
| 2016 | "A Long History for a Prophetic Pakistan." South Asia Program, Cornell University.                                                                         |
| 2016 | "On the Last Hindu Emperor." South Asia Institute, University of Texas at Austin.                                                                          |
| 2016 | "Technologies of Power: The History and Future of Area Studies in United States", University of Chicago.                                                   |
| 2015 | "Prophetic Pakistan." PIIRS, Princeton University.                                                                                                         |
| 2015 | "Local, Regional and Universal History, Now or Then." Center for South Asian Studies, University of Michigan.                                              |
| 2014 | "Dialectical Images in <i>Chachnama</i> : Trees, Walls and Ruby Eyes in Medieval Sind." Center for South Asian and Indian Ocean Studies, Tufts University. |
| 2014 | "Entombed Voices: Female Authority and Immurement in the <i>Chachnama</i> ." Brown Bag Lunch Series, Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University.           |

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- 2014 "Against DroneSpace: Reading Testimony from Waziristan." Sarah Lawrence College.
- 2014 "Empire and Media Workshop," New York University.
- 2014 "Prophetic Pakistan." Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations, Amherst College.
- 2013 "Considered Difference in Medieval Sind," Department of History, Penn State University.
- 2013 "Self-Publishing Prophecies: Apocalypse and Media from Shah Waliullah to Zaid Hamid," Center for South Asian Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- 2012 "Shah Waliullah to Zaid Hamid: A Longer View on Prophecy and Dreams in South Asia," Lahore University of Management & Sciences, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Pakistan.
- 2011 "Prophecy, Apocalypse, and the Selling of the Pakistani Dream, 1947-2009," Department of History, Rice University.
- 2011 "Zehn Jahre 9/11," Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.
- 2010 "Rethinking the History of Pakistan," Wellesley College, Department of History.
- 2010 "False Prophets: Spend an Evening with Zahid Hamid," *Nationhood and Nation-building in South Asia*, Stanford University.
- 2010 "Reading Tea Leaves in Pakistan," HIMUN, Universität Hildesheim.
- 2008 "Database Design for Non-Profits". Lecture and demonstration at South Side Arts & Humanities Network.
- 2007 *Hacking Historical Maps: Towards a Digital South Asia*. Planned and organized a workshop to assess and gather means of combining web technologies (GIS, geo-tagging) to build a data-bank for South Asian historians working with historical maps.
- 2005 "History and Historians on the Web". *If:book - A Project of the Institute for the Future of the Book*. Los Angeles, CA.

### Panel Presentations

- 2020 "Decolonizing Indian History." Jaipur Literary Festival.
- 2020 "South Asia from Afar." Oxford School of Global and Area Studies, Oxford University.
- 2020 *The Postcolonized Historian and the Global South: Reflections on South Asia and Latin America*, chaired by Camilla D. Townsend. The AHA 134th Annual Meeting, New York.
- 2019 *A Roundtable Discussion of Cynthia Talbot's The Last Hindu Emperor: Prithviraj Chauhan and the Indian Past, 1200-2000*, chaired by Purnima Dhavan. The AAS Annual Meeting, Denver, CO.
- 2018 *Identity and Belonging in Premodern Imperial Discourses: A Roundtable*, chaired by David A. M. Spafford. The AHA 132nd Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.
- 2016 "'Qabacha's Legacy," *From Medieval to Longue Durée: Continuities and Ruptures in 12th-13th Century South and Central Asia*, chaired by Alka Patel. 50th Annual Meeting, Middle East Studies Association, Boston, MA.
- 2015 "Not Being Governed: Surveillance, Policing and Resistance in Mughal Sind," *Regimes of Making in the Borderlands of South Asia*, chaired by Cynthia Talbot. 44th Annual South Asia Conference, Madison, WI.

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- 2014 “Digital History for Medieval South Asia,” *Textual Corpora and the Digital Islamic Humanities*. Brown University.
- 2013 “Stones fed with Blood: Female Immurement and Kingly Authority in Late Medieval India,” *The Spaces of Violence: Gender and the City in South Asia*, chaired by Manan Ahmed. 42nd Annual South Asia Conference, Madison, WI.
- 2012 “A Death Foretold: Dreams and Romance in the *Chachnama*,” *On Dreams and Other Truths in Medieval Central and South Asia*, chaired by Manan Ahmed. 41st Annual South Asia Conference, Madison, WI.
- 2011 “A Note on Some Medieval Representations of Muslim Capital in South Asia,” *Urban Spaces and Emotions*, chaired by Margrit Pernau. 40th Annual South Asia Conference.
- 2010 “The Political Languages in the Frontier of Sindh, 1220 CE,” *Textual Practices Beyond Europe 1500-1900*, Cairo.
- 2010 “The Long Thirteenth Century of the Chachnama,” *Fractured Genres: The Afterlives of Medieval Indo-Persian Histories*, chaired by A. Sean Pue. 39th Annual South Asia Conference, Madison, WI.
- 2010 “Navigating Self and State in Communal Histories in Pakistan.” On panel, *National Culture and Belonging in Pakistan*, chaired by Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar. Annual Association of Asian Studies Meeting 2010. Philadelphia, PA.
- 2008 “Encounters between Early Modern Sanskrit and Persian Cultures: Ethical and Political Text.” Workshop chaired by Manan Ahmed. Seventh Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies. Toronto, ON.
- 2008 “The End of Muhammad bin Qasim: Memory, History and the Postcolonial Urge to Forget.” On panel, *Contested Pasts and Presents: History and Memory in the Local*, chaired by Manan Ahmed. 122nd Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association. Washington, D.C.
- 2006 “From Diwan to Database: Digital Archives of South Asia.” On panel, *Digital Humanities for South Asia*, chaired by A. Sean Pue. 35th Annual South Asia Conference, Madison, WI.
- 2006 “Knowledge Brokers of the Empire in Sindh.” Workshop, *Beyond Deconstruction - Engaging Colonial Knowledge* at King’s College, Cambridge, UK.
- 2006 “An Imperial Moment: Seth Noamul Hotchand and the Annexation of Sindh.” On panel, *Fissures in the Imperial Narrative: Production and Consumption of Historical Memory in Colonial India*, chaired by Prachi Deshpande. 21st Annual South Asia Conference at University of California, Berkeley, CA.
- 2005 “Interplay of History and Literature in Indo-Persian Texts.” On panel, *Interplay of History and Literature in Indo-Persian Texts*, chaired by Sunil Sharma. 215th Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Philadelphia, PA.
- 2005 “Imagined Sindh: Orientalist, Nationalist and Post-Nationalist Constructions of Sindhi Nation.” On panel, *Writing History, Creating Pasts*, chaired by Ronald B. Inden. 20th Annual South Asia Conference at UCLA, Berkeley, CA.
- 2004 “Law and Order in Mughal Sindh.” On panel, *South Asia from the Margins*, chaired by Munis Faruqui. 33rd Annual South Asia Conference at University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

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- 2004 “Death of Muhammad b. Qasim in History and Memory.” On panel, *Sites of Memory: Practices and Representations of the Muslim Past*, chaired by Muzaffar Alam. 19th Annual South Asia Conference at University of California, Berkeley, CA.

## Teaching Experience

### 1. Classes Taught

- 2020 “Islam and the Modern World: Critical Texts and Practices in the Study of Muslim Societies.” Undergraduate Seminar
- 2012-20 “Introduction to Contemporary Western Civilization.” Undergraduate seminar for the Columbia College Core.
- 2012-19 “History of South Asia I: From al-Hind to Hindustan.” Undergraduate lecture survey.
- 2014-19 “The Worlds of Mughal India.” Undergraduate seminar course.
- 2018 “Early Modern South Asia: Agent, Subject, Object.” Graduate Seminar
- 2017 “Colonization and Decolonization.” Undergraduate seminar co-taught with Claudio Lomnitz (Anthropology) in Mexico City.
- 2015-19 “Borderlands.” Graduate Seminar with a Historical G.I.S. Lab component. Co-taught Fall 2017 with Karl Jacoby (History).
- 2015 “History in Action.” Graduate seminar co-taught with Pamela Smith (History).
- 2012-14 “Walking & Colonialism: 17th to the 19th century.” Undergraduate seminar.
- 2013-14 “Masterpieces of European Literature & Philosophy.” Undergraduate seminar for the Columbia College Core.

### 2. Thesis Supervision

#### Ph.D. Sponsor

Tania Bhattacharyya, PhD received 2019 (Harvard Society of Fellows, 2019-2022)  
Rahul Sarwate, PhD received 2020 (Assistant Professor, Ahmedabad University)  
Sayantani Mukherjee, PhD received 2021 (Assistant Professor, Ashoka University)  
Laura Yan, G07  
Joslyn DeVinney, G07

#### Ph.D. Committee Member, Columbia or at other Institutions

Samyak Ghosh (MESAAS, Columbia), “Formations of the King: Politics, Pleasure, and Law in Contact Zones of Early Eighteenth-Century Brahmaputra Valley, 1700-1750” (2022)  
Aaron Mandon-Plasek (History, Columbia), “Genealogies of Machine Learning, 1950-1995”



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(2022)

Angela Giordani (History, Columbia), "Making Falsafa in Modern Egypt: Towards a History of Islamic Philosophy in the Twentieth Century" (2020)

Esmat Elhalaby (History, Rice University), "The Arab Rediscovery of India." (2019, current Assistant Professor at University of Toronto)

Fatima Quraishi (Art History, New York University), "Necropolis as Palimpsest: the Cemetery of Makli in Sindh, Pakistan." (2019, current Assistant Professor at UC Riverside)

Shayan Rajani (History, Tufts University), "Reimagining the World, Remaking the Region: Distinction and Difference in Early Modern and Modern Sindh." (2018, current Assistant Professor at LUMS Lahore)

Sonia Ahsan (Anthropology), "States of Honor: Sexual Ethics and the Politics of Promiscuity in Afghanistan." (2015)

Anand V. Taneja (Anthropology), "The Sacred as History: Presenting the Past in the Medieval Ruins of Delhi." (2013, current Assistant Professor at Vanderbilt)

#### M.A. M.Phil Supervision

Mahum Qazi (2022)

Safia Mahmood (2022)

Sayeed Chowdhury (2022)

Mahum Qazi (2022)

Xintong Chen (2022)

Sofia Shehana Basheer (2021)

Anna Misra (2021)

Wanjiku Elizabeth Karanja (2019)

Tobias Pešter (2017)

Anisha Padma (2017)

Heba Islam (Anthropology) (2016)

Nadia Misir (American Studies) (2016)

Selim Karlitekin (MESAAS) (2014)

#### B.A. Senior Thesis First/Second Reader

Liza Chowdhury, '19 (Thesis won the Taraknath Das Prize for Undergraduate Excellence in South Asian Studies)

Tara Chand Lal, '17

Jingwei Xu, '16 (Thesis won the Taraknath Das Prize for Undergraduate Excellence in South Asian Studies)

Sundas Amer '15

David Abud '14

Priom Ahmed '14 (Thesis won the Taraknath Das Prize for Undergraduate Excellence in

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South Asian Studies)

Lewis West '13 (Thesis won the Taraknath Das Prize for Undergraduate Excellence in South Asian Studies)

Sameaa Butt '13