Call for Papers: Panjab at the Limits of Indian History

April 24-25, 2020
Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life
Columbia University

Workshop Description:

We invite scholars from any discipline to submit paper proposals for a two-day workshop, “Panjab at the Limits of Indian History,” to be held at Columbia University in New York City on April 24-25, 2020. The workshop seeks to explore “Panjab” and “Panjabi” amid the assumptions, contradictions and elisions of the conventional study of South Asia. Our concern is not with producing a more robust historicization of a fixed region or focusing on recuperating lost worlds after catastrophic events such as the Partition of 1947. Instead, we are interested in papers that examine how various beliefs, practices and traditions emerging from Panjab call into question categories such as “nation,” “religion,” “language,” “capitalism,” “borders” and even “history,” and thereby offer potentially new ways to conceptualize the past and present.

By undoing the hardening of Panjab as a given object, participants are invited to consider broader ideological and material dynamics across the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial divides both within and beyond its imagined confines. In particular, we ask: What is the relationship between Panjab and India, or, to a different extent, Pakistan? How does a focus on Muslim-Hindu-Sikh syncretism contend with incommensurabilities among religious traditions? What happens to vernacular dialects, scripts and expressions in the process of foregrounding national languages(s)? How does the rule of capital and its manifold inequities operate in a celebrated and supposedly egalitarian agrarian economy? In what ways do migrant communities and diasporic organizations utilize aspects of Panjabiyat to make new claims and identities abroad? We are particularly interested in papers that focus on the unique trajectories of caste, gender, and sexuality across multiple convergences and divergences.

The workshop’s rubric and the questions posed above are neither static nor exhaustive; rather, they serve as a common orientation and point of departure. Through the workshop, we hope further configurations and collaborations will take shape, including the possibility that the papers may be published collectively.

Submission Guidelines:

Interested participants should submit a 300-word abstract and two-page Curriculum Vitae to Marianna Pecoraro at mp3699@columbia.edu by January 10, 2020. Please include your last name in all document titles. Participants will be notified of acceptance by February 1, 2020. Full papers are required by April 10, 2020 for pre-circulation among participants. We expect to be able to cover accommodation for all participants, and we have a limited amount for travel costs, especially for those without institutional support.

Please send your application materials to mp3699@columbia.edu by January 10, 2020.