Jake Cohen ’15 Receives Brandeis-India Fellowship for Bangalore Science Program

By Jake Cohen

Thanks to the Brandeis-India Fellowship program, I was able to fly to India to be a part of the pilot semester for the new Brandeis exchange program with the Indian Institute of Science. The purpose of the program is to offer science majors an opportunity to study abroad, an experience that is often not available because of the difficulty that comes with transferring major requirements. So far, I have spent most of my time living on the IISc campus in Bangalore and attending classes. On top of this coursework, I am also doing astrophysics research at the nearby Raman Research Institute. So I am having an incredible academic experience thanks to the availability of these major Indian institutions.

However, despite the heavy workload, I am still managing to have new experiences outside the classroom every day. One day I found myself exploring Indian ruins on the East coast, the next I was woken up by the sounds of a huge bonfire celebration for Pongal that I was more than happy to join, and on another day I was even blessed by an elephant. The food is unlike what I have ever eaten back in the States and I can hardly believe sometimes that I get to eat it every day. Even the scenery that I pass by everyday walking to class or out to a restaurant, from the lush tree-filled campus to cows wandering the streets and even monkeys taking my juice box when I’m not looking, reminds me that I am in a place so very different from my home. And I can’t help but be affected by all of it and feel myself growing from each new experience. I can say with absolute certainty that the person who left Brandeis on this grand adventure is not the same person who is going to return. And I am excited to become that person over the next few months.

For more information about the Brandeis-India Science Scholars program, see page 6.
Introducing Our New Program Coordinators!

**Holly Walters** is a PhD student in the Department of Anthropology specializing in religion, language, and identity in northern India and Nepal. She has conducted fieldwork in Belize, Germany, northern Italy, and India. Her most recent fieldwork involved the study of personhood, gender, ritual practice, and the use of sacred stones in rural West Bengal. Her upcoming project will focus on religious syncretism, gender, the economics of pilgrimage, and the production of sacred stones in the Himalayas of Nepal.

Holly is the current Program Coordinator for the Brandeis-India Initiative and the Brandeis-India Fellowship program. You can contact her at holly@brandeis.edu

**Jessica Bray** is a current MA student in the joint Anthropology and Women's and Gender studies program. Her research focus is on post-colonialism, religion, queer theory, gender and queer-based activism, South Asia, sexuality, everyday resistances and transnational social change. During her undergraduate education, she worked for the Middle East/South Asia Studies program at the University of California, Davis. Jessica will be continuing her fieldwork this summer in Mumbai, India and hopes to join a doctoral program in the near future.

Jessica is the current Program Coordinator for the South Asian Studies Department, including the Soli Sorabjee lecture series. You can contact her at jlbray22@brandeis.edu.

---

**Dr. Ali Ahmad – Madeleine Haas Russell Visiting Professor in South Asian Studies**

Dr. Ali Nobil Ahmad is the 2014 Madeleine Haas Russell Visiting Professor in South Asian Studies. The Madeline Haas Russell program for visiting scholars supports temporary appointments in non-Western and Comparative studies. Dr. Ahmad has been based at the Lahore University for Management Sciences (LUMS) in Pakistan since 2009 where he primarily teaches history and cinema. Many of his previous classes have focused on themes of revolution, warfare, modern political history, and ecology. Dr. Ahmad is originally from both the UK and Pakistan and holds a PhD in History and Civilization from the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, Italy. He has also studied at UCL - University College London and continues to write and publish on topics of human smuggling, migration, cinema and media, gender, and journalism.

Dr. Ahmad will be giving a talk titled "Tamasha Politics: Journalism, Democracy, and Illusory Dissent in Pakistani Media" on Monday, April 7, 2014 at 3:30pm in the Hassenfeld Conference Center, Levine Ross Room.

This talk considers the dynamics of media infrastructure, ownership, and corruption within the production process and offers useful explanations as to why and how the media of Pakistan has a tendency to distract audiences from issues that are integral to the establishment of substantive democracy in Pakistan. We hope to see you there!
Over the course of the past year a number of Brandeis faculty have had the opportunity to strengthen our connections with India through conferences, papers, and program visits:

**Professor Yu Feng** recently attended the Second International Conference on Dharma-Dhamma organized by the Centre for Study of Religion and Society (CSRS) at Bhopal, India. The central theme of the Conference was “Nature, Source and Relevance of Dharma-Dhamma Traditions” and the aim of the Conference was to undertake intra- and inter-cultural study of varied Buddhist traditions and their textual sources in relation to the Vedic traditions of South Asia.

**Professor Ulka Anjaria** was a January 2014 Visiting Fellow at the Department of English at Delhi University. Besides meeting other faculty and scholars, Professor Anjaria also had the opportunity to give a talk on her current work, titled "Ambivalent Utopias: Realism in the Contemporary Indian Novel," which focuses on the writings of Aravind Adiga. In addition, during that time she led a graduate class on Premchand’s Hindi novel *Godaan*. Her experiences at Delhi University included a vibrant, intellectually stimulating, campus where, unlike many other campuses worldwide, the humanities are thriving. She remarks that "the fellowship was a wonderful opportunity to connect with academics who share my scholarly interests while also exploring one of the world's great cities."

**Professor Jytte Klausen** recently spoke on issues of freedom of speech and ideas of respect at the second meeting of a dialogue project titled the Venice-Delhi Seminars organized by ResetDOC (Rest Dialogues of Civilizations), an Italian NGO. While the previous meeting took place in Venice, the most recent meeting met October 10-12, 2013, in New Delhi.

The conference was jointly sponsored by three Indian organizations: the Indian National Islamic University, Jamia Millia Islamia; Seminar, an intellectual magazine edited by Malvika and Tejbir Singh (Wien Scholar, Brandeis BA ’76); and the India Habitat Centre. The National Islamic University and the India Habitat Centre shared hosting the conference.

**Professor Harleen Singh** recently accompanied President Fred Lawrence on his December 2013 trip to India. In addition to working with President Lawrence, Professor Singh also visited the Jindal...
School of International Affairs at O.P. Jindal Global University and hosted three Brandeis alumni and student receptions in Bangalore, Mumbai, and New Delhi.

Rachel Fish, Associate Director for the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies recently spoke at the Brandeis-Jindal Workshop on Israel Studies at the Jindal School of International Affairs at O.P. Jindal Global University in Delhi along with Professor Ilan Troen, Director of the Schusterman Center, and Professors Gannit Ankori and Yehudah Misky. Dr. Fish’s talk was entitled "Visions for the State of Israel: From Zionist to post-Zionist."

**Soli Sorabjee Lecture in Spring '14**


Presented by the South Asian Studies Program and the Department of Fine Arts - Faculty Coordinator: Prof. Talinn Grigor, Department of Fine Arts, Brandeis University

Friday, April 4, 2014
4:00-8:00pm

**ARCHITECTURAL EXCHANGES IN SOUTH ASIA
Medieval to Contemporary Periods**

**PROF. TALINN GRIGOR, Chair**
Department of Fine Arts, Brandeis University

**PROF. TAMARA L. SEARS**
The Jeffrey Loria Center for the History of Art, Yale University
Wandering the Wilderness Between Temple and Town: Architecture and Landscape in Medieval Madhya Pradesh

**PROF. ALKA PATEL**
Department of Art History, University of California, Irvine
An Empire between India and Iran: the Glords of Afghanistan, 1150-1215

**PROF. SUSSAN BABAIE**
The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London
Architecture and the Mobility of Taste: Nadir Shah’s Spills from Delhi

**PROF. ELIZABETH DEAN HERMANN**
Division of Architecture and Design, Rhode Island School of Design
Constructing Identity in the Post-Colonial Era: The South Asian Dimension in 20th-Century Sri Lankan Architecture

The Soli Sorabjee Lectures in South Asian Studies & The Richard Saivetz ’69 Annual Memorial Architectural Symposium
Presented by the South Asian Studies Program and the Department of Fine Arts

---

**Brandeis-India Fellows Presentations Last Fall**

**Reflections from the Brandeis-India Fellows**

In October and November of last year, the latest round of Brandeis-India Fellows presented their projects to the South Asian Studies faculty and students in two events.

**October 11th: Reflections on Study Abroad in India and Nepal:**


Presentations included detailed information on sustainable farming and tradition, rural socioeconomic development, epidemic relief and urban development work projects, and early childhood education.

**November 7th: Reflections from the Brandeis-India Fellows:**


Presentations included detailed information on communications and education, urban fashion and marketing, donor work and charity management, education for abandoned or disadvantaged children, support programs for families living in urban slums, and the social and cultural empowerment of women.
**SAS 164b: Pakistan: History, State, and Society - special one-time course offering!**

T, F 12:30 PM–1:50 PM

Instructor: Dr. Ali Ahmad.

An introduction to the unsettled history and contemporary predicament of modern day Pakistan. Themes examined include Muslim nationalism, contending perspectives of national origin, the complex relationship between US imperialism and the post-colonial state, public discourse and activism, and the so-called War on Terror.

Full course listing:
http://www.brandeis.edu/registrar/schedule/classes/2014/Spring/6550/all

---

**SAS 155b: Cinema and Society: History, Film, and Visual Culture in Pakistan - special one-time course offering!**

T, F 11:00AM–12:20PM

Instructor: Dr. Ali Ahmad.

Explores the rise, fall, and reprise of the Pakistani film industry against a backdrop of the country’s tumultuous past and present. Films, throughout, will be studied alongside history as complex works of art and as mirrors and construction-sites of national identity. This course is designed to enhance students’ knowledge of Pakistan and it’s cinematic history.

---

**Soli Sorabjee Fall ‘13**

"Ingesting Culture: Cooking, Colonialism, and the Construction of Indian-ness"
Dr. Aruna D'Souza

Our Fall 2013 lecture was held in the Shapiro Admissions Center and widely attended by undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and South Asian scholars, Women's and Gender studies scholars, and Art Historians from the Boston area. Professor Aruna D’Souza gave the tenth lecture in the Soli Sorabjee lecture series in South Asian Studies. Professor Aruna D’Souza is a writer, critic, and historian of modern and contemporary art with a particular interest in issues of feminism, post colonialism, and globalization, and a cultural critic who writes on food’s relation to memory and trauma. She is currently finishing two projects: a book titled *Open Secrets: Intimacy Between Street and Home*, and a memoir-slash-cookbook, *Kitchen Stories: Essays on Food, Love, and Loss*. She is the author of *Cézanne’s Bathers: Biography and the Erotics of Paint*, and co-editor of the 2013 volume *Art History in the Wake of the Global Turn*. Her criticism has been published in *Art in America, Bookforum, Time Out New York*, and *Art Margins*.

Professor D’Souza gave an inspiring lecture on food as a cultural production in South Asia and the Canadian diaspora. She spoke of her own experiences as a South Asian woman living in the diaspora and visiting India. Through a visual culture presentation, Professor Aruna D’Souza showed how food is a crucial component of cultural production.

**South Asian Studies Conference at Brandeis!**

**March 7-8, 2014: Futures Imperfect: Utopias and Dystopias in South Asia**

Profs. Ulka Anjaria (English) and Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria (Anthropology) are organizing an interdisciplinary conference titled "Futures Imperfect: Utopias and Dystopias in South Asia." The purpose of the conference is to bring together scholars from a range of disciplinary backgrounds to explore how utopic and dystopic visions shape subjectivities, geographies, and texts in South Asia today. Inspired by contemporary processes in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, the conference conceives of utopias and dystopias not as alternative worlds but as, in the words of Gordin, Tilley, and Prakash; "conditions of historical possibility" which allow for the articulation of a diversity of experiences in the present. The conference seeks to shift attention from celebratory narratives such as "shining India" and the transnational novel, as well as from dystopic visions such as the "planet of slums" or Pakistan as a "failed state," to look at how futurity animates the contemporary - in life and in text.
South Asian Studies Conference at Brandeis (Con't)

Participants include Ali Nobil Ahmad (LUMS, Lahore), Mrinalini Chakravorty (UVA), Sangita Gopal (Oregon), Priya Joshi (Temple), Naveeda Khan (Johns Hopkins), Sarah Lamb (Brandeis), William Mazzarella (Chicago), Sarah Pinto (Tufts), Smitha Radhakrishnan (Wellesley), Lucinda Ramberg (Cornell), Harris Solomon (Duke) and Tulasi Srinivas (Emerson).

See: http://www.brandeis.edu/programs/southasianstudies/futuresimperfect/about.html for more details.

This conference is co-sponsored by the Program in South Asian Studies, the Brandeis India Initiative, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Department of English, the History of Ideas Program and the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for the Humanities.

Study Abroad for Science Majors: Bangalore, India

In collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore, India, the Brandeis Office of Study Abroad, with the Division of Science has developed an exchange program for students interested in studying biology, chemistry, physics, math, and computer science. Along with classes taught in English by Indian faculty, students will have the opportunity to collaborate in research projects in one of the many labs on campus.

Following the semester program, select students from the IISc will come to Brandeis to participate in summer research projects with Brandeis faculty.

For more information, visit http://www.brandeis.edu/abroad/brandeisprograms/india/index.html.

Alumni & Friends Networks in India

Brandeis alumni are working to organize a stronger Brandeis Alumni & Friends networks in India. If you are an alum, parent, or current student interested in participating in a group, please contact the following individuals:

**Delhi Contact:**
Nikhil Bapna (MA ’07)
nikhil.bapna@gmail.com / +91 99102 77891

**Mumbai Contacts:**
Vikas Gupta (MBA ’11)
vikas@brandeis.edu / +91 98208 757 30

Chiara Bercu ’11
chiarabercu@gmail.com / +91 9833431299

**Not in one of these cities? Still want to connect?**
Contact Karen Rogol ’98 (Director, Alumni and University Relations) at krogol@brandeis.edu

Facebook Page:
https://www.facebook.com/BrandeisIndiaInitiative

---

Stay Connected!

**Brandeis-India Initiative** / South Asian Studies Department

MS 092
415 South Street
Waltham, MA 02453 [USA]

Phone: +1 (781) 736-5240
Email: southasianstudies@brandeis.edu

Brandeis-India Fellows Blog:
http://blogs.brandeis.edu/indiainitiative/

Giving: If you’d like to make a contribution to support the Brandeis-India Initiative, please contact Gayle Gordon ’08 at 781-736-4060 or visit our secure giving website.