

Seth Ligo

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D.** Duke University (Durham, NC): Religious Studies, Asian Religions, Hinduism, 2020.
Dissertation: “Fear and Fruition: Bhairava in Text, Art, and Practice.”
- M.A.** Duke University (Durham, NC): Religious Studies, Asian Religions, 2016.
- M.Div.** Harvard University (Cambridge, MA): Hinduism and Christianity, 2012.
Thesis: “Reconsidering the Kāpālika: Multiple Interpretations and Diversity in Hinduism Made Accessible through the Intriguingly Grisly.”
- A.B.** Princeton University (Princeton, NJ): Religion, 2008.
Certificate in South Asian Studies

PUBLICATIONS

- “Troubling ‘Tantra’: Bhairava as Harbinger of Category Crisis in South Asian Socio-Religious Contexts” in Anya Golovkova and Hugh Urban (eds.) *The Tantric World*. Routledge Worlds Series, Forthcoming.
- “Your Friendly Neighborhood Bhairava: the Tantric and Transgressive Ties of a Temple Dedicated to Baṭuk (Little-Boy) Bhairava” in Amy Allocco and Xenia Zeiler (eds.) *Sweetening and Intensification in Hindu Traditions*. New York: Suny Press, Submitted.
- Review of *Guest is God* by Drew Thomases. readingreligion.org/9780190883553/guest-is-god/ 2023.
- “Bhairava, Hanumān, and the Deified Dead: A Material Study of Vernacular, Official, and Folk Hinduism” in Sravana Borkataky-Varma and Aaron Ullrey (eds.) *Living Folk Religions*. Routledge, 2023.
- Review of *Demons Are Forever* by David Gordon White. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Volume 89, Issue 4, (2021): 1485–1487. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfab090>
- “Kāśī Kṣetra Kāśī Maṇḍala: Mapping Evolving Interpretations of an Idealized Sacred City.” *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 26, 2022. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11407-022-09316-z>
- “Invisible Neighbors: Metaphysical Members of Society in Vārāṇasī, India.” *Science, Religion and Culture* 6, no. 1 (2019): 50-58. <https://dx.doi.org/10.17582/journal.src/2019.6.1.50.58>
- “Deities of Encounter and Theory of Experience: an Analysis of *The Great Darkness Text*” in Edward Simon (ed.) *The Anthology of Babel*. (Earth: punctum books, 2020), 49-72. [academic fiction]

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2023-2024 Instructor of Religious Studies, Duke University
Self, Society, and Art in Hinduism; Buddhism; Yoga and Tantra; Survey of Asian Religions; Indian Cinema and Social Change
- 2023 Adjunct Assistant Professor, Religious Studies, College of Charleston
Hinduism: A Survey; Premodern History of Religions
- 2020-2023 Adjunct Assistant Professor, Religious Studies, UNC Asheville
Buddhism; Yoga and Tantra: Asian Alchemical and Metaphysical Traditions; Introduction to the Study of Religion; Asian Religious Traditions; Humanities: The Ancient World
- 2021 Adjunct Assistant Professor, Religion and Philosophy, Western Carolina University
Hinduism; Eastern Religious Traditions
- 2018-2020 Graduate Instructor of Religious Studies, Duke University
Religions of Asia: Magic, Monsters, and Marginal Practices; Self, Society, and Art in Hinduism
Adjunct Assistant Professor, Elon University
Religion in a Global Context; Monsters and Wizards in Asian Religions (Winter Intensive)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2023 Panelist for Beyond Insider/Outsider: Theorizing Practitioners, Scholars, and Critical Methodologies. Roundtable discussion of Scholar-Practitioners at the American Academy of Religion (AAR).
- 2022 “Your Friendly, Neighborhood Bhairava: How Beneficence Enhances the Efficacy of a Supremely Transgressive Deity.” Lesser-Known Deities Panel, The Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI.
- 2020 Convener and Panelist for *The Implications of Being Earnest: Sincerity in South Asian Contexts*, AAR.
- 2019 “Mapping Maṇḍalas: Tantric Constructs in a Purāṇic City,” Digital Tantra Panel, AAR.
“Cries of Terror, Shrieks of Laughter: Marginal Yogīs and the Complementary Modalities of Humor and Fear,” Religion and Humor Panel, AAR.
- 2018 Convener and panelist for *A Convergence of Opposites: The Importance of Insight into Theoretical Misfits* at The Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI.
“Vārāṇasī, Bhairava, and Purity Amidst Pollution in the Age of Decay,” Flourish and Decay Graduate Conference, Syracuse University.
- 2017 “Acts that Liberate and Acting Liberated: Asceticism, Devotion, and the Worship of Bhairava,” at The Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- 2016 “Monster in the Middle: Terrific Deities in Orthoprax Hinduism,” at Magic, Miracles and the Paranormal in Religious Imaginaries, The University of Texas at Austin.
- 2015 “A Story, A Dream, A Stage: Sacred Space and Drama in the case of Hariścandra,” American Academy of Religion National Conference.
- 2014 “Reconsidering the Kāpālīka,” at Beasts, Monsters and the Fantastic Graduate Conference, Brown University (update and extension of master’s thesis).

LANGUAGES

English	Native.
Sanskrit	Advanced (Five years coursework at Harvard and Duke, three month summer intensive in Pune. Taught first-semester at Asheville.)
Hindi	Fluent (Six years at Princeton and Duke, two and a half years immersion. Dissertation fieldwork conducted in Hindi. Taught first year at Asheville.)
French	Fluent (Four years college-level coursework, five months immersion and language academy.)
Spanish	Fluent (Spoken daily with my Spanish wife and in-laws.)
Cherokee	Intermediate (Three years, co-taught first semester lessons upon instructor’s request.)
Catalan	Intermediate (Fluent comprehension, Beginner composition.)
Chinese	Beginner (One year, studied and audited at Duke.)

HONORS and AWARDS

- 2022 and 2023 Nominated twice for a UNC-Asheville Teaching Award.
- 2019 Bass Teaching Fellow: Original Course in Asian Religions.
- 2019-2020 John Hope Franklin Institute Digital Humanities Returning Fellow.
- 2018-2019 John Hope Franklin Institute Digital Humanities Fellow.
- 2017-2018 International Dissertation Research Travel Award (Duke).
- 2016-2017 Fulbright-Nehru Research Fellow.
- 2013-2019 Kiran Bedi Fellow: Minority Studies in South Asia.
- 2015-2017 Kenan Institute for Ethics Collaborative Scholarly Projects in Ethics Grant.
- 2010-2012 Lane Family Fund Fellow (Harvard).
- 2010 Stendahl Symposium Award: “Change and Continuity in Hinduism and Christianity.” (Harvard).

EXTRACURRICULARS and ADMINISTRATIVE/SERVICE WORK

- 2024 Master's Degree Committee Member for Shuvan Shrestha: "Mahākāla, Bhakti, and Tantra"
2023-2024 Primary Advisor for Undergraduate Honors Thesis: "Harmony Through Dharma: Hindu Resources for Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding" by Ruthie Kesri.
- 2023 Designed passport preparation workshop and secured funding from the Institute of International Education's Passport Project to facilitate and cover the cost of passports for low-income students from minority backgrounds (including race, gender/sexuality, and age)
- 2023 Founder and instructor for Sanskrit language and South Asian Religion and Aesthetics campus group — I teach introductory Sanskrit to four students, faculty, and staff, with discussion of Hindu and Buddhist representation in Sanskrit, and comparative linguistic analysis with the help of Dr. Mills, a participant and professor of Ancient Greek.
- 2023 Coordinator of the Community Outreach and Sustainability Taskforce — I guide members of faculty and staff through designing a research model, collecting information, and presenting recommendations as a part of the American Council on Education Lab.
- 2022-2023 Campus co-leader for the Academic Council on Education's Internationalization Lab, representing UNC-Asheville in Cohort 20 — this two-year process involves dozens of faculty and staff members, and coordinates with other institutions in the US and abroad to design and execute individualized programs for internationalization. I represented UNC-Asheville at national symposia in DC, and continue to guide the on-campus teams.
- 2022-2023 Coordinator of McClinton Scholars Program — I guided the search for McClinton Scholars supported by a \$1 million endowment, specifically students with financial need and scholastic merit pursuing semester-long study abroad. I continue to mentor and supervise returning scholars as they earn the final part of their individual \$5,500 awards as peer-mentors in the developing Global Studies Center.
- 2022-2023 Co-convenor and consultant for the design of a Global Studies Center, UNC Asheville. I worked directly with the Chancellor to begin a conversation, gather information, and run pilot programs for a Global Studies Center.
- 2021-2023 Founder and instructor for Hindi-Urdu language and South Asian Culture campus group — I taught Hindi-Urdu to seven heritage and non-heritage students, introduced and guided conversations regarding language, identity, culture, aesthetics, diaspora, and cultural-linguistic diversity.
- 2021- 2023 Volunteer TA and support faculty member for Cherokee Language Program — I work closely with Cherokee Speaker Gil Jackson, Cherokee tutors, and advanced students to support the program and promote Cherokee language preservation.

INVITED LECTURES

- 2023 "Yoga's 'Pizza Effect:' contemporary attitudes and historical shifts in the reception of yoga," Prof. Anna Sun's *Spiritual But Not Religious* course, Duke University.
"Sanskrit, Language, Religion, and the Gītā in the Mahābhārata," Lecturer John Falter's *Humanities in the Ancient World*, UNC Asheville.
- 2021 "Material Culture and Ethnography in the study of Bhairava," Dr. Aaron Ullrey's *Hindu Traditions*, Youngstown State University.
- 2019 "Introduction to 'Street Hindi,'" Prof. Kusum Knapczyk's introductory Hindi class, Duke University.
- 2018 Guest seminar (presentation and discussion in Hindi): "Politics, Identity, and Current Events in South Asia," Prof. Satendra Khanna's Advanced Hindi class, Duke University.
- 2017 Guest seminar (presentation and discussion in Hindi): "Ethnography and the Study of Hinduism," Prof. Satendra Khanna's Advanced Hindi class, Duke University.
- 2017 "Hinduism, Theism, and Atheism" for Prof. Hwansoo Kim's *Buddhism and Atheism*, Duke University
- 2017 "Identity, Otherness, and Representation: Ethics and Objectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork," University of Madison India Program, Vārāṇasī.
- 2016 "Qualitative Research and Writing," University of Madison India Program, Vārāṇasī.
- 2016 "History of Ethnography and Contemporary Ethnographic Practice," University of Madison India Program, Vārāṇasī, UP, India.
- 2015 "Hinduism, Gender, and Sexuality," for Prof. Hwansoo Kim's *Buddhism and Sexuality*, Duke University.