

Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto announces its  
3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Graduate Student Symposium

## **CRISIS AND CATASTROPHE: HOW DID WE GET HERE?**

April 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023

**Keynote Speaker: Professor Nayanika Mathur**

University of Oxford

Topic: Crooked Cats: Beastly Tales from the Anthropocene

Friday, April 21, 2023

The present historical moment finds us embroiled in various kinds of crises, with the ongoing pandemic, political polarization, international conflicts, economic precarity, and the climate emergency being some of the many that have recently taken center stage. There is a way, therefore, in which we might think of the contemporary as shaped by and preoccupied with a sense of such looming crisis; perhaps even to the point of no return and acute despair. Regardless of the specificity of the many forms and scales these crises can take, we are confronted with urgent calls for action. We want to recognize this moment as one of stock-taking. While realizing that there is an urgency to the framing of the present as one of “crisis and catastrophe,” we are aware of the dangers of viewing this as an originary moment, divorced from longer histories. Additionally, what we understand as ‘crisis’ also has to do with temporal and historical junctures. The idea of ‘crisis’ itself and what it encapsulates has changed over time.

We, therefore, ask: How do we understand questions around disaster, catastrophe, and crisis as being located as part of larger structural arrangements of gender, race, nation, caste and class? What is the specificity of this moment of “crisis”? How did we get here? Where do we go from here, and how? Further, who frames the conditions for what comes to be understood as “crisis” and how? How is it historically contingent and contextually specific? If, and how, did the conceptions about the “crisis” change over time? We want to invite graduate students, independent researchers, activists, and scholars to think in and with this moment as a way to recognize, understand and respond to various kinds of crisis: political, social, ecological, economic. We think here of “crisis” as a capacious political and affective category to think with questions of catastrophe, disaster, and rupture but also recuperation, hope, and possibility.

The organizing committee of the Centre for South Asian Studies’ third Graduate Student Symposium is pleased to invite submissions of papers for this year’s 2023 hybrid conference, framed broadly around the theme of “Crisis.” This conference will take place both in-person and online via Zoom on April 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. We encourage graduate

students from all disciplinary backgrounds and at any stage of their career to apply, along with interested independent researchers and activists.

Your abstracts may concern but not be limited to the following themes:

- Ecological Crisis/Climate Change
- The End of the World as We Know It
- Crisis in Space-Making: Contestations, Production of Space, Claims and Communities
- COVID-19, Pandemic, Isolation and Death
- Identity and Crisis: Contested Formulations of Identity and Making
- Movement and Crisis: Migrations, Displacements and Resettlements
- Disease and Disability: Changing Conceptions Over Time
- The Body in/ as a Site of Crisis
- Borders and Bureaucracy
- Nationalisms and Populisms
- Crisis of and Within Social and Political Movements
- Crisis in the Arts: The Crisis in/ of the Aesthetic
- War, Land and Conflict
- Philosophy of Crisis and Crisis as Philosophy
- Various Kinds of Institutional Crisis: Marriage, Family, Prisons
- Crisis in the University: Disciplinary Crisis and Academic Precarity
- Crisis through/ in Research and Source Materials
- Crisis in Arts and Questions of Representation

Please send a 250 – 300 word abstract as PDF by **January 16, 2023** to **southasiansymposium2023@gmail.com** to be considered for the symposium. **Include your name, email address, department, and year of study in your email.** Within your abstract, please identify 2 – 5 key words or themes your abstract speaks to.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the organizers (Ridhima, Jatin, and Maya) at [southasiansymposium2023@gmail.com](mailto:southasiansymposium2023@gmail.com) .