

# Benjamin Robert Siegel

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## Education

- Ph.D. Department of History, Harvard University 2014  
Dissertation: “Independent India of Plenty: Food, Hunger, and Nation-Building in Modern India” (Winner, Sardar Patel Prize for best dissertation on modern India)
- A.M., Department of History, Harvard University 2010
- B.A. with honors, Department of History, Yale University

## Professional Appointments

- Assistant Professor, Department of History, Boston University (*On leave 2017-18, spring 2019*)  
2014–present
- Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of History, Boston University 2015–2017
- Board Member, Boston University Center for the Study of Asia 2015–2017
- Graduate Fellow, Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies 2013–2014
- Visiting Researcher, Indian Agricultural Research Institute 2011–2012
- Researcher, Hong Kong University Centre for the Humanities and Medicine Spring 2011

## Publications

### Book

- Hungry Nation: Food, Famine, and the Making of Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)

### Academic Articles

- “The Claims of Asia and the Far East’: India and the FAO in the Age of Ambivalent Internationalism” *International History Review* (under review)
- “On Asian Drama,” *Humanity*, volume 8, number 1 (Spring 2017), pp. 195–205
- “Modernizing Peasants and ‘Master Farmers’: Progressive Agriculture in Early Independent India,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* volume 37, issue 1 (May 2017), pp. 64–85

“‘Self-Help Which Ennobles a Nation’: Development, Citizenship, and the Obligations of Eating in India’s Austerity Years,” *Modern Asian Studies* volume 50, issue 3 (2016), pp. 975–1018

“Learning to Eat in a Capital City: Constructing Public Eating Culture in Delhi,” *Food, Culture, & Society* volume 13, issue 1 (March 2010), pp. 71–91

### Book Chapters and Reference Entries

“‘The World Has Changed’: Development, Land Reform, and the Ethical Work of India’s Independence” in *The Postcolonial Moment in South and Southeast Asia*, eds. Gyan Prakash, Michael Laffan, and Nikhil Menon (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming)

“‘Fantastic Quantities of Food Grains’: Cold War Visions and Agrarian Fantasies in Independent India,” in *Negotiating Independence: New Directions in the History of Decolonization and the Cold War*, eds. Leslie James and Elisabeth Leake (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 21–42.

“Raagtime,” *Civil Lines 6: New Writing from India*, eds. Achal Prabhala, Kai Friese and Mukul Kesavan (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2012)

“Food,” “Green Revolution,” *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa: An Encyclopedia*, eds. Andrea L. Stanton et al. (London: Sage, 2012)

### Journalistic Articles and Occasional Pieces

“World Food Day: Seven Decades of Hunger and the Solutions Hiding in Plain Sight,” *WION News / Zee TV*, October 16, 2016

“Before Malala,” *Marginalia Review of Books*, September 15, 2014

“The Multiple Ideas of India: Narendra Modi and the Meaning of Indian Secularism,” *Marginalia Review of Books*, May 27, 2014

“Reluctantly Lahore,” *The Caravan* volume 4, issue 1 (January 2012)

“Playing Host is Hard to Do,” *World Policy Journal* volume 27, issue 4 (Winter 2010/2011), pp. 59–66

“India’s Feel-Good Fast,” *World Policy Journal* blog, April 18, 2011

“Fighting Harassment on India’s Streets,” *Christian Science Monitor*, August 23, 2007

“Stressful Times for Chinese Students,” *Time.com*, June 12, 2007

“How to Kill the Tiger,” *Time Magazine*, July 30, 2006

“Sweet Nothing: the Triumph of Diet Soda,” *American Heritage* volume 57, issue 3 (June/July 2006), pp. 42–49.

## Book Reviews

- “Rethinking Revolutions: Soyabean, Choupals, and the Changing Countryside in Central India” (Richa Kumar),” *Economic and Political Weekly*, forthcoming.
- “India At War: The Subcontinent and the Second World War” (Yasmin Khan),” *The Historian*, forthcoming.
- “Democracy Against Development: Lower-Caste Politics and Political Modernity in Postcolonial India (Jeffrey Witsoe),” *Contemporary South Asia*, volume 22, issue 3 (Summer 2014), pp. 326–327
- “Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India (Akhil Gupta),” *Contemporary South Asia* volume 21, issue 4 (Winter 2013), pp. 104–105
- “Poverty Amid Plenty in the New India (Atul Kohli),” *Contemporary South Asia* volume 20, issue 4 (Winter 2012), pp. 545–546

## Prizes, Grants, and Awards

American Council of Learned Societies Fellow	Fall 2017
Junior Fellowship, Boston University Center for the Humanities	Spring 2018
Sardar Patel Prize, Center for India and South Asia, University of California Los Angeles	2014
Graduate Fellow, Harvard Academy for International Affairs	2013–2014
Graduate Student Associate, Harvard University South Asia Initiative	2012–2013
American Institute of Indian Studies Junior Fellowship	2011–2012
Clive Fellowship, Harvard University	2011–2012
Teaching Fellow, Department of History, Harvard University	2010, 2012–2013
Harvard University South Asia Initiative Research Grant	2009, 2010, 2012
Harvard University Asia Center Research Grant	2009
Homer J. Hagedorn Graduate Fellowship Fund, Harvard University	2009–10, 2010–11
Graduate Student Fellowship, Harvard University	2008–2013
Fox International Fellowship, Jawaharlal Nehru University	2007–2008

## Invited Lectures and Presentations

- “Culinary Nationalism in Times of Scarcity: Visions of Plenty and Want in Independent India,” at *Culinary Nationalism in Asia*, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, March 2017
- Keynote Address, “Hunger, Food, and Development in Modern India,” Educators for Teaching South Asia Annual Conference, Cambridge MA, May 13, 2016
- “Remaking Rationing in Independent India,” at *Midnight’s Institutions: Rethinking Political Imaginations and Institutional Change after India’s Independence*, Yale University, April 23, 2016
- “Rights, Rationing, and the Envisioning of the Postcolonial City,” at *Decolonizing India and Pakistan, at Urbanism, Exclusion and Change in South Asia*, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan, March 5, 2016
- “On *Asian Drama*,” at Revisiting Gunnar Myrdal, *Humanity* / Harvard Law School Seminar, January 22, 2016
- “Land, Labor, and Postcolonial Ethics,” *The Postcolonial Moment*, Princeton University, November 14, 2015
- “The Indian Merchants’ Chamber and the Idioms of National Development,” at *The Business History of India and South Asia: Recent Trends in Research*, Harvard Business School, October 30, 2015.
- “Swadeshi Spaces / Sovereign Spaces: Scale and Time in the Indian Economic Imaginary” at *Spaces, Scales, and Routes: Region Formation in History and Anthropology*, Harvard University, April 30, 2015
- “Jayaprakash Narayan and the Ethics of Counter-Development, at Jayaprakash Narayan Reconsidered, Harvard University, April 9, 2015
- “Agriculture and the Politics of Labor in Nehruvian India,” at Global Midwest Workshop, Penn State University, April 12, 2015
- Discussant, “Economies & the Reinvention of Space” panel, Yale South Asia Workshop, April 11, 2015
- “Indian Independence and the Future of Food,” at Lost Futures in the History of European Empires (Part II), University of North Carolina Chapel Hill / King’s College London, September 14, 2014
- “Internationalism and the Indian Food Problem,” at *FAO in a Global Context*, Institute for Global Studies, Basel, Switzerland, August 2014
- “The Fat of the Land: Vegetable Ghee and the Ends of Indian Industry, 1925–1950,” *Fasting to Feasting: The Politics of Provisioning and Consumption*, at NYU Global South Asia Workshop, New York University, February 14, 2014

- “‘The Dictator Officials are Losing the Business’: Indian Merchants and National Needs, 1955–65,” *Defining the Economy in Political Crisis: Revolution, Rupture and the Law*, Center for History and Economics, Harvard University, October 4, 2013
- “‘Grains and Geopolitics’: American Grain, Soviet Expertise, and Cold War Agricultural Contestations in Nehruvian India,” at *Negotiating Independence*, Cambridge University, May 3, 2013
- “Food, Rights, and Hunger and the Making of Modern India,” Department of History, University of California, Berkeley, March 5, 2013
- “How to Feed the Hungry State,” Department of History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, January 31, 2013
- “The Hungry State: Food and Nation in Twentieth-Century India,” *Feast and Famine* speaker series, Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health, New York University, November 30, 2012
- “‘Self-Help Which Ennobles a Nation’: Rights, Citizenship, and the Obligations of Eating in India’s Austerity Years,” Center for History and Economics, Harvard University, October 12, 2012
- “Meals for Millions: Food and Citizenship in India’s Scarcity Era,” Technologies of Bureaucracy and State-Making, Yale University South Asia Workshop, April 6, 2012
- “Food, Agriculture, and the State in Modern Indian History,” American Institute of Indian Studies, Gurgaon, Haryana, India, January 1, 2012
- “More Grass than Corn: Indian Agricultural Development in Historical Context,” Department of History and Centre for the Humanities and Medicine, Hong Kong University, April 7, 2011

## Conference Presentations

- “Tiller, Owner, Soil: Land and the Indian Postcolonial Ethic,” Madison South Asia Conference, October 2015
- “Stakhanovites on the Ganges: Krishi Pandits and the Politics of Labor in Nehruvian India,” in “Revisiting Development in Modern India: Science, Ethics and the Agricultural Landscape” panel, Association for Asian Studies Conference, March 29, 2015
- “Political Imaginaries of Food in a Hungry Decade,” in “From Colonial to Postcolonial Imaginaries,” panel (co-organizer with Rohit De and Julia Stephens), Madison South Asia Conference, October 2014
- “Cloth and the Calorie: Scarcity Regimes and Political Power in Independent India, 1947–1967,” *The Problems and Possibilities of Want: Scarcity and the State in China, India, and Japan*, American Society for Environmental History Conference, San Francisco, March 15, 2014

## Campus and Departmental Talks

- Discussant, “Researching the Real World: Practical Strategies for Field Work Career Building,” Boston University Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies, November 1, 2016
- Discussant, “Changing Food Systems in the United States and China,” Boston University Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies and Center for the Study of Asia, March 19, 2015
- “Food and the Indian Political Imagination,” Boston University Center for the Study of Asia, November 7, 2014
- Chair, *Economic Growth and its Discontents in Post-Independence India*, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Undergraduate Associates’ Thesis Conference, Harvard University February 8, 2014
- “Why Food?” *Big Ideas*, Harvard University South Asia Institute, April 4, 2013
- “Two Blades of Grass: Building Indian Agriculture, 1905–2010,” Center for History and Economics, Harvard University, November 30, 2010
- “Food and Urban India,” Harvard South Asia Workshop, October 8, 2008

## Student Supervision

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|---|--------------|
| Ph.D. reading supervision (Cari Babitzke, Agnes Burt, Calynn Dowler [Anthropology], Jeanna Kinnebrew) | 2014–present |
| Master’s thesis supervision, Boston University Gastronomy program                                     | 2015–2016    |
| Honors thesis supervision, History (2 students)   | 2015–2016    |
| Honors thesis committee member, International Relations (2 students)                                  | 2016–2017    |
| Honors thesis supervision, International Relations (1 student)  | 2015–16      |
| Undergraduate history major advising (9 B.A. students)  | 2014–present |
| Honors thesis supervision, Boston University Academy (1 student)                                      | 2016–2017    |
| B.A. thesis supervisor, Dept. of South Asian Studies, Harvard University                              | 2013–2014    |

## Departmental and University Service

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|---|--------------|
| Member, Steering Committee, Boston University Forum on the Opioid Crisis    | 2017–2018    |
| Co-planner, History Department Internship Program                           | 2016–2017    |
| Campus co-coordinator, BU Global Programs (London, Lancaster)               | 2016–present |
| Faculty author, South Asia Library Collection Grant, Mugar Memorial Library | 2017–present |

Member, Academic Conduct Committee, BU College of Arts and Sciences	2016–present
Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of History, Boston University	2015–2017
Member, Boston University Department of History Curriculum Committee	2015–2017
Co-Convener, Boston University Tertulia Junior Faculty Symposium	2015–2016
History Department Representative, CAS Academic Credit Committee	2014–2015

## External Service

Proposal reviewer, Wellcome Trust	2017
Manuscript reviewer, Routledge	2017–present
Reviewer, Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship	2016–present
Manuscript reviewer, Springer Publishing	2016–present
Peer reviewer, <i>South Asia, Itinerario</i>	2014–present
Contributing editor, <i>Marginalia Review of Books</i>	2014–present
External reviewer, The New Press	2011
Coordinator, United Nations Foundation Digital History Project	2009–2010
Alumni admissions interviewer, Yale University	2008–present

## Non-Academic Professional Experience

Reporter-Researcher, <i>Time Magazine</i> , Hong Kong	2007
Intern, <i>Time Magazine</i> , South Asia Bureau, New Delhi	2006

## Teaching Areas

Citizenship, governance, and statehood; comparative colonial and global history (Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia); development, technology, and the politics of expertise; history of economic thought; history of South Asia, 1500 – present; food politics, famine, and hunger; modern South Asian politics, economy, and culture

## Languages

Hindi and Urdu (High proficiency)

French (High proficiency)

Hebrew (High proficiency)

Spanish (Reading)

Russian (Elementary)

## Professional Memberships and Affiliations

Member, Association for Asian Studies 2014–present

Member, American Historical Association 2012–present

## Courses Taught

### Boston University

HI200: The Historian's Craft

HI234: Introduction to India and South Asia

HI343: Culture, Taste, Power: A Global History of Food

HI401: Senior Honors Thesis Supervision

HI525: Development in Historical Perspective

HI987: Directed Readings in South Asian History

### Harvard University

CB20: Reason and Faith in the West (Ann Blair)

HI84U: Gender, Migration, and Globalization in 20th-Century U.S. History (Lili M. Kim)

HI86H: Asia After Europe (Sugata Bose)

SW36: Modern India & South Asia (Sugata Bose and Amartya Sen)