

Benjamin Robert Siegel

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Education

Ph.D. Department of History, Harvard University	2014
A.M., Department of History, Harvard University	2010
B.A. with honors, Department of History, Yale University	2007

Professional Appointments

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

Publications

Books

Markets of Pain: American Bodies and Indian Drugs in an Age of Distress, manuscript in progress

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

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

“‘The Claims of Asia and the Far East’: India and the FAO in the Age of Ambivalent Internationalism,” *International History Review*, volume 41, issue 2 (Spring 2019), pp. 427–450

“Asian Drama Revisited,” *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

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

“The President’s Messenger: American Visions, Indian Citizens, and National Development in the Kennedy Years,” in *Globalizing the U.S. Presidency: Postcolonial Views of John F. Kennedy*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh (forthcoming, Bloomsbury)

“‘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, 2018)

“‘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

Journalistic Articles and Occasional Pieces

“Shree Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau, Madhya Pradesh,” *Archives of Economic Life in South Asia*, Centre for History and Economics, Cambridge University, April 16, 2019

“Wither Agriculture?: The Green Revolution at 50,” *Public Books*, January 14, 2019

“The US Opioid Crisis Started in India” [US title] / “Indian Drugs, American Addiction” [international title], *Vice*, April 27, 2018

“World Food Day: 35 Years On, India Still Struggles Against Hunger,” *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

“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)

“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

“Empire and Ecology in the Bengal Delta: The Making of Calcutta (Debjani Bhattacharya),” *Environmental History*, forthcoming

“Opium’s Long Shadow: From Asian Revolt to Global Drug Control (Steffen Rimmer),” *The New Rambler*, forthcoming

“From Farm to Finders (ed. Kiranmayi Bhushi),” *Asian Ethnology*, forthcoming

“Governing Islam: Law, Empire, and Secularism in Modern South Asia (Julia Stephens),” *Religion, Politics, and Ideology*, forthcoming

“Rethinking Revolutions: Soyabean, Choupals, and the Changing Countryside in Central India (Richa Kumar),” *Economic and Political Weekly*, volume LII, issue 36 (September 9, 2017), pp. 36-38

“India At War: The Subcontinent and the Second World War (Yasmin Khan),” *The Historian*, volume 80, issue 1 (Spring 2018), pp. 136-138b

“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

Speaking

Invited Talks and Lectures

Talk title TBA, Center for South Asia Fall Lecture Series, University of Wisconsin-Madison, October 3, 2019

“Markets of Pain: A Transitional History of the United States Opioid Crisis,” Latin America in a Globalizing World Seminar, Johns Hopkins University, April 25, 2019

"Democracy and Development in Contemporary Bangladesh," Wellesley Association for South Asian Cultures Spring Series, Wellesley College, April 10, 2019

"The Bank and the Weed: Indian Agriculture and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development," 1818 Society World Bank History Thematic Group, World Bank, Washington DC, April 23, 2019

Hungry Nation: Food, Famine, and the Making of Modern India book talk, South Asian Studies Council, Yale University, February 7, 2019

"Markets of Pain: Opioids, Agriculture, and Power in Modern Indian History," Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, January 29, 2019

"Poppy Politics: Science, Trade, and Medicine in Indian and American History," Maharaja Ranijt Singh College, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India, January 10, 2019

"Markets of Pain: A Transnational History of the United States Opioid Crisis," Colloquium on Global History, Freie Universität, Berlin, December 17, 2018

"Markets of Pain: Poppy Politics and the Global Origins of the American Opioid Crisis," Seminar in Environmental and Agricultural History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, December 7, 2018

"The Fall, Rise, and Fall of the Indian Opium Regime," Harvard University South Asia Workshop, November 28, 2018

"Markets of Pain: Poppy Politics and the Global Origins of the American Opioid Crisis," Agrarian Studies Colloquium, Yale University, October 26, 2018

"The International Origins of the United States Opioid Crisis," at *Humanities Approaches to the Opioid Crisis*, Boston University Center for the Humanities, October 13, 2018

Hungry Nation: Food, Famine, and the Making of Modern India book panel (chair, Sunil Amrith, Harvard University; discussants: Rachel Berger, Concordia University, and Prakash Kumar, Penn State University), Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, September 24, 2018

"1971: East Pakistan and the Birth of Bangladesh," Wellesley Association for South Asian Cultures Spring Series, Wellesley College, April 19, 2018

"Hungry Nation: Food, Famine, and the Making of Modern India," at India Political Economy Seminar, University of California, Berkeley, November 16, 2017

Keynote Address, "Hunger, Food, and Development in Modern India," Educators for Teaching South Asia Annual Conference, Cambridge MA, May 13, 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

“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

“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

Invited Small Workshop Presentations

Talk title TBA, at University College London, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, and Boston University workshop on U.S. Global Connections, London, May 23, 2019

Discussant, Energy Humanities Workshop, Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University, March 30, 2019

“‘Except as Found Necessary for Medicine and Science’: The Fall and Rise of the Indian Opium Regime, 1935–1969,” at *Sovereignty, Economy and the Global Histories of Natural Resources*, Cambridge University, December 19, 2017

“Remaking Rationing in Independent India,” at *Midnight’s Institutions: Rethinking Political Imaginations and Institutional Change after India’s Independence*, Yale University, April 23, 2016

“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, April 1, 2017

“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,” 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

“‘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

Annual Conference Presentations

Chair and discussant, “Eating in and out of South Asia: dynamic histories of food in modernity” panel, Madison South Asia Conference, October 17–20, 2019

“Rethinking Welfare,” in the “Rethinking the Roots of Democracy, Secularism, and Welfare” panel, Madison South Asia Conference, October 12, 2018

Narcotic Pasts and Futures in South Asia panel (co-organizer with Mauricio Najarro), Madison South Asia Conference, October 12, 2018

“Race, Drugs, and Spies in the China Burma India Theater: World War II and the Rebirth of the Indian Opium Trade, in the “South Asia and the Second World War” symposium / pre-conference, Madison South Asia Conference, October 11, 2018

“Tiller, Owner, Soil: Land and the Indian Postcolonial Ethic,” in the The “Postcolonial Moment: Political Economy and the Projects of Indian Nationhood” panel, Madison South Asia Conference, October 24, 2015

“Stakhanovites on the Ganges: Krishi Pandits and the Politics of Labor in Nehruvian India,” in the “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 the “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,” in “The Problems and Possibilities of Want: Scarcity and the State in China, India, and Japan,” panel American Society for Environmental History Conference, San Francisco, March 15, 2014

Campus and Departmental Talks

“Internationalizing the United States Opioid Crisis,” Annual Gerald and Deanne Gitner Family College of Arts Sciences Lecture, Boston University,” September 20, 2018

“Markets of Pain: American Bodies and Indian Pharmaceuticals in an Age of Distress,” Boston University CAS Dean’s Advisory Board Dinner, April 27, 2017

Discussant, “Researching the Real World: Practical Strategies for Field Work and 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

Guest Lectures at Boston University

“Food Histories,” MET ML589: Nature’s Past: Histories of Environment, Society (James McCann), April 20, 2016

“Introduction to South Asia,” IR230: Fundamentals of International Politics (Houchang Chehabi), November 17, 2016

“New Delhi: Edwin Lutyens and the Making of a ‘Modern’ Capital,” HI226: Cities and Cultures (Diana Wylie), October 19, 2015

“The Mughals,” Muslim Societies proseminar (Betty Anderson), October 9, 2015

Media Appearances

Interview on *Hungry Nation: Food, Famine, and the Making of Modern India* on *New Books Network South Asian Studies Channel*, October 5, 2018

Panelist, “#TKOP (The Kinds Of Pain),” *Syntalk* (Mumbai), September 16, 2017

Prizes, Grants, and Awards

Junior Fellowship, Boston University Center for the Humanities	Spring 2018
American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship	Fall 2017
Sardar Patel Prize, Center for India and South Asia, UCLA	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, Yale University / Jawaharlal Nehru University	2007–2008

Departmental and University Service

Faculty Affiliate, Boston University Global Development Policy Center	2019–present
Faculty Mentor, Environmental History Graduate Student Working Group, Boston University Department of History	2019–present
Member, steering committee, Boston University Forum on the Opioid Crisis	2017–2018
Member, planning committee, Boston University Study Abroad in India	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
Program development lead, Asian Studies Minor proposal	2016–2017
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

Professional Service

Book manuscript reviewer, University of Chicago Press, the New Press, Routledge, Springer Publishing	Ongoing
Article manuscript reviewer, <i>Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East</i> , <i>Humanity</i> , <i>History Compass</i> , <i>Itinerario</i> , <i>Journal of War and Culture Studies</i> , <i>South Asia</i>	Ongoing
External reviewer, Wellcome Trust, Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship	2016–present
External reviewer, manuscripts, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla	2018
Country expert witness (India) for United States Executive Office for Immigration Review, Boston College Law School Immigration Clinic	Fall 2017
Contributing editor, <i>Marginalia Review of Books</i>	2014–2016
Coordinator, United Nations Foundation Digital History Project	2009–2010
Alumni admissions interviewer, Yale University	2008–present

Professional Experience

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

Professional Memberships and Affiliations

Member, American Historical Association	2012–present
Member, Association for Asian Studies	2014–present

Student Supervision

Doctoral Committee Member

Iris Yellum, South Asian Studies, Harvard University

General Examinations for Doctoral Students

Thomas John Sojka (British Empire)	Spring 2019
Jeanna Kinnebrew (Gender and Reproduction in South Asia)	Spring 2018
Cari Babitzke (Law, Violence, and the Colonial State)	Fall 2017
Agnes Burt (British Empire and South Asia)	Spring 2016

Master Theses Supervision

Giselle Kennedy Lord, “Kibbi and Kinship: Lebanese Home Cooking in Latin America as a Medium for Memory, Kinship, and the Preservation of Culture,” Master of Liberal Arts in Gastronomy (Second Reader)	Fall 2018
Lucy Valena, “From Fruitcake to Foam: Commodity Fetishism, ‘Tradition,’ and the Evolution of the Wedding Cake,” Master of Liberal Arts in Gastronomy	Fall 2015

Undergraduate Supervision and Examination

Isha Pawar, “What Was ‘The Future?’: Economics, Environment, and Resource Use in Modern Indian History,” UROP Humanities Scholars Program Project	Summer 2019
Tenaya N. Goldsen, “Al-Huda: A Study of Revivalist Movements and a Window into the Al-Huda Institute,” (Boston University Department of Religion, external examiner)	Spring 2017
Aisha Chandraker, “Casting Light on Society: Cire-Perdue Bronzes of the Chola Period” (Boston University Academy)	Spring 2017
Fred Schmidt, “Oranges, Caracul Sheep Porcelain Teeth: Capital, Capacity and Economic Development during the Formative Interwar Yishuv of 1920 – 1939”	Spring 2016
Sydney Hou, “A New Lens: Understanding Taiwanese Identity Through Food”	Spring 2016
Aabir Pablo Das, “India’s Look East Policy: The Opportunities of a Democratic Myanmar” (Boston University Department of International Relations, external examiner)	Spring 2016
Marlene Stoute, “Development through FTAs: Comparing Panama’s Promise with Chile’s Experience,” (Boston University Department of International Relations, external examiner)	Spring 2015

Courses Taught

Boston University

HI200: The Historian’s Craft

HI234: Introduction to India and South Asia (BU Hub)

HI343: Culture, Taste, Power: A Global History of Food (BU Hub)

HI344: Bodies, Drugs, and Healing: A Global History of Medicine (BU Hub)

HI401: Senior Honors Thesis Supervision

HI525: Development in Historical Perspective

HI526: Poverty and Democracy

HI908: Directed Readings in English History

HI987: Directed Readings in South Asian History

Harvard University (as Teaching Fellow)

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 (Amartya Sen and Sugata Bose)

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 medicine, drugs, and the body; history of South Asia, 1500 – present; food politics, famine, and hunger; modern South Asian politics, economy, and culture; poverty and inequality in comparative perspective

Continuing Professional Training

Participant, Adobe Catalyst Program, BU Center for Teaching and Learning Winter 2018–2019

Languages

Hindi and Urdu (High proficiency)

French (High proficiency)

Hebrew (High proficiency)

Italian (Intermediate proficiency)

Spanish (Reading)

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