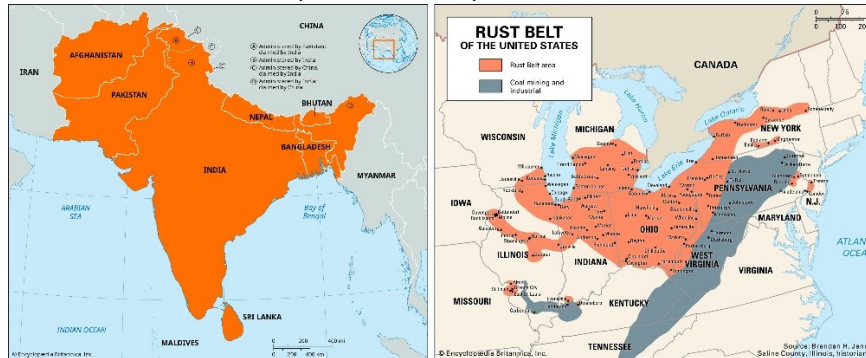


GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP FROM THE RUST BELT: EDUCATION, LABOR, & SOUTH ASIA



A symposium organized by the CNY Humanities Corridor working group Upstate South Asias: Citizenship, Comparison, & Equity generously co-sponsored by the Humanities Project, a program of the University of Rochester Humanities Center.

Humanities Center, University of Rochester
September 25-26, 2026

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

2:15 PM | Welcome and Opening Remarks

Matt Baxter (Syracuse University)

2:30-4:30 PM | Panel 1: Labor & Environment between the Rust Belt & South Asia

Chair/Discussant: Carmel Christy (Syracuse University)

Presentations

- “Finding the Rust Belt in Burma, and Vice Versa” – Chao Ren (Hamilton College)
- “Enrolling the Borderlands: Oil Palm and the Making of India’s National Economy” – Roderick Wijunamai (Cornell University)
- “From the Rust Belt to the Bay of Bengal: Connecting Struggles, Building Solidarities (Land, Labor, and Data Centers)” – Madhumita Dutta (The Ohio State University)
- “From India to the Rust Belt: Climate Goals and Local Injustices” – Heather Plumridge (Dickinson College)

4:45-6:45 PM | Keynote Address

Introduction: Llerena Searle (University of Rochester)

“Fighting Caste, Gender, & Sexuality: Engaging Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for Radical Humanist Global Futures”

Shailaja Paik

Charles Phelps Taft Distinguished Research Professor of History, University of Cincinnati

2024 MacArthur “Genius” Fellow

7:00 PM | Symposium Dinner

Humanities Center Lounge, University of Rochester

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

10:15 AM-12:15 PM | Panel 2: Democracy & Education

Chair/Discussant: Uzma Zafar (University of Rochester)

Presentations

- “Rust Belt Empire: Imagining Global Power Amid Decline” – Peter Simons (NY6 Liberal Arts Consortium)
- “The Race to Keep and Build Democracy: The Shared Challenge of Bridging Economic Divides and Reclaiming Democracy from South Asia to the U.S. Heartland” – John Austin (The Eisenhower Institute at Gettysburg College)
- “Institutions and Citizenship in Global Academia” – Emily Rook-Koepsel (American Institute of Indian Studies)
- “Education Quality and Support for Democracy in India-Administered Kashmir” – Yelena Biberman (Skidmore College)

12:30-1:30 PM | Lunch

Humanities Center Lounge, University of Rochester

1:45-3:45 PM | Panel 3: Citizenship & South Asia in Upstate New York

Chair/Discussant: Farha Ternikar (Le Moyne College)

Presentations

- “Tracing Patterns of South Asian Visibility in the Linguistic Landscape of Rochester, New York” – Suganya Schmura (University of Rochester)
- “Making Place, Making Livelihood in Buffalo, New York: Ethnic Enclaves as Resistance” – Zanya Hussain (Cornell University)
- “Immigration, Polarization, and Democracy” – Alexandra Oprea (University at Buffalo)
- “The Language of Food in the Diaspora: Madhur Jaffrey and Priya Krishna” – Maya Ravindranath Abtahian (University of Rochester)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Co-Organizers:

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Hotel:

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Front Desk: (585) 527-9110

Symposium Venue:

Humanities Center, Conference Room D
202 Rush Rhees Library
University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627