



# South Asia Forum Lecture Series Fall 2018

**28. November**  
**13h30-15h**

**Rupa Viswanath** (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen)

*The Consolation of the People: Governing Caste Violence in Postcolonial South India, c. 1970s.*

Anti-Dalit violence is ubiquitous in post-colonial India, but though it is well-documented by human rights organizations, South Asianist academics have largely failed to recognize the phenomenon as a subject fit for research. This paper makes a preliminary foray into this underpopulated field, taking as its example one instance of violence that occurred in northern Tamil Nadu in 1978, and its afterlives. It breaks with the conventional wisdom on anti-Dalit violence, which conceptualizes it as the work of a retrograde “society” that the Indian state is unable fully to control. Instead, the paper analyzes the specific procedures used by government administrators to delimit the political consequences of such events, revealing their attempts to reconcile Dalit subordination with the conception of an undivided Tamil people that functions as an article of faith in postcolonial Tamil politics.

**15h30-18h**

**Nicolas Jaoul** (CNRS/ EHESS, Paris)

*Sangharsh. Strife.* Hindi documentary with English or french Subtitles, 2018, 105 minutes.

Shot in the late 1990s, Sangharsh takes us deep into the lifeworld of Dalit Panther activists in Uttar Pradesh. One is taken on a rough trip in the slums and villages where they are spreading the revolutionary anti-caste messages of Ambedkar, encouraging Dalits to assert one’s humanity, while caste humiliation, exploitation and violence remain always around the corner.



**29. November**  
**9h-10h30**

**David Picherit** (CNRS/ LESC, Paris)

*Connecting Migration Brokerage with Criminal Politics:  
A Dalit Fabric of Labour Circulation in South India*

Why and how do Dalit labour migrant brokers engage with Dalit henchmen of bosses, small-time criminals and violent politicians? This presentation argues for migration brokerage to be examined along a broad continuum of brokerage, notably politics, to explore the local fabric of labour circulation in the Indian construction sector, and the ways caste and class relations are mobilised and mediated in South India.

**11h-12h30**

**Supurna Banerjee** (Institute of Development Studies  
Kolkata)

*Nationalism of Exclusion: Gaumata and her unholy sons*

The right wing forces in India have relentlessly tried to push forward an agenda of religious fundamentalism in upholding a Brahminical patriarchal order. One of the important tools for this project is the cow or the gaumata (mother cow). This article explores the discourse around construction of cow as a symbol and how this has been used to propagate a particular type of legitimate nationalist symbol located at the intersection of caste, gender and religion.