

RETIKA ADHIKARI DESAI
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Department of Asian American Studies
1208 West Nevada Street, Urbana, IL 61801

EDUCATION

PhD, Cultural Anthropology, Syracuse University, 2018
MA, Social Sciences (Linguistic Anthropology), University of Chicago, 2011
MA, Gender and Peacebuilding, United Nations University for Peace, Costa Rica, 2004
BS, Biology and Environmental Policy & Behavior, University of Michigan, 2002

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IL

Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Asian American Studies, August 2019- present

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Theoretical: Critical Refugee Studies, Migration, Humanitarianism, Diaspora, Race and Ethnic Studies

Regional: Nepal-India-Bhutan Borderlands, Postindustrial United States, Transnational Asia

Methodological: Multi-sited and Transnational Ethnography

PUBLICATIONS

Book Manuscript

Refugee Crossings: Everyday Geographies of Nepali-Bhutanese Encampment and Resettlement (In Preparation)

Peer-Reviewed Works

2020. "Temporalities of Resettlement: 'Date-Waiting' for an American Future in a Bhutanese Refugee Camp." *American Anthropologist* (Forthcoming: September or December 2020)

2018. "Recalibrating Care: Newly Resettled Nepali-Bhutanese Refugees in Upstate New York." In *Care across Distance: Ethnographic Explorations of Aging and Migration*, edited by A. Hromadzic and M. Palmberger. Oxford: Berghahn Books

In Preparation

"Beyond the Spectacle of Saving: The Politics of Airports, Flights, and the Nepali-Bhutanese Passage to the United States." Target Journal: *Public Culture*. Target Submission Date: December 2019

Public Scholarship

Forthcoming. "Snapshot: Nepali-Bhutanese Refugees in the U.S." in *Our Stories: An Introduction to South Asian America*. South Asian American Digital Archive

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Post-Graduate Fellowships

University of Illinois Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2019-2020
University of California Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2019-2020 (Declined)

Syracuse University Research Awards

Dissertation Writing Grant, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University, 2015-2016
Claudia De Lys Dissertation Grant, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University, 2014-2015
Roscoe Martin Grant, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 2015, 2013
Moynihan Dissertation Challenge Grant, Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, Syracuse University, 2014
Bharati Memorial Grant, South Asia Center, Syracuse University, 2014, 2012
Summer Research Grant, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University, 2012-2013

Awards Granted Prior to Ph.D.

Merit Based Full Tuition Scholarship, University of Chicago, 2010-2011
Winner, Essay Competition, Emerging Scholar from the Economic South, Research Committee on Women in Society, *ISA World Congress of Sociology*, Gothenburg, Sweden, 2010

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Lectures:

"Date-waiting: Planning for an *Emrikan* Future in a Bhutanese Refugee Camp in Nepal," Social Sciences Seminar Series, Le Moyne College, March 20, 2018.

Conference Presentations:

- "Imperial Anxieties, Communist South Asia, and Nepali-Bhutanese Refugees' Arrival in the US," Panel: Unsettling Displacement: Critical Refugee Narratives Against State Violence, *American Studies Association Annual Meeting*, November 9, 2019 (Accepted; Unable to attend due to injury)
- "Behind the Visible Faces: Nepali-Bhutanese Backstory of Arrival and American Refuge," *Himalayan Studies Conference V* (University of Colorado), September 3, 2017.
- "Nepali-Bhutanese Refugees in Context," *Internationalization and Inclusion: Refugees in Community Colleges* (Onondaga Community College), November 5, 2016.
- "Recalibrating Care: A Story of Newly Resettled Nepali-Bhutanese Refugees in Upstate New York," *The Aging Studies Symposium* (Syracuse University), September 30, 2016.
- "The Politics of Distrust Among Nepali-Bhutanese Refugees Resettled in Upstate New York," *Society of Cultural Anthropology Biennial Meeting* (Cornell University), May 14, 2016.
- "Food, Senses, and Sociality: Nepali-Bhutanese Refugees and Vietnamese Grocery Stores in Upstate New York," *Association for Asian American Studies Annual Conference* (Miami, Florida), April 29, 2016.
- "Food, Senses, and Sociality: Nepali-Bhutanese Refugees and Their Vietnamese Grocery Stores in Syracuse New York," *American Anthropological Association Meeting* (Denver, Colorado), November 21, 2015.
- "Refugee Reciprocity, Indexicality, and the Nepali-Bhutanese Community in Syracuse," *3rd Himalayan Studies Conference* (Yale University), March 15, 2014.

- “The Abnormality of Home: Nepali-Bhutanese Refugee Women in Syracuse, New York,” *National Women’s Studies Association Annual Conference* (Cincinnati, Ohio), November 10, 2013.
- “The Making of the ‘Real’ Far Western Nepal: the Turning of the Far Western Wheel, the Fading Away of the ‘Far Westerners,’” *American Anthropological Association Meeting* (Montreal, Canada), November 19, 2011.
- “The Making of the ‘Real’ Far Western Nepal,” *South Asia Graduate Student Conference* (University of Chicago), March 3, 2011.
- “The Ambiguities of the Women’s Movement: Activism in Farwest Nepal as a Case Study,” *ISA World Congress of Sociology* (Gothenburg, Sweden), July 14, 2010.
- “Women and the Peace Process in Nepal,” *ISA World Congress of Sociology* (Gothenburg, Sweden), July 12, 2010.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Le Moyne College, Syracuse, NY

Department of Anthropology, Sociology, & Criminology
Instructor of Record, 2017-2018

ANT 304: “Anthropology of Refugees,” Winter 2018
PSC 344: “Immigration and the United States,” Fall 2017

Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

Department of Women’s and Gender Studies
Teaching Associate, 2017-2018

WGS 201: Introduction to Transnational Feminism, Spring 2018
WGS 101: Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies, Fall 2017

Department of Anthropology
Teaching Assistant, 2011-2014

ANT 121: People and Cultures of the World (Fall 2012/Spring 2012, 2013, 2014)
ANT 185: Global Encounters: Comparing Values and Worldviews Cross-Culturally (Fall 2011, 2013)

SERVICE & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Provide Expert Witness Affidavit supporting Nepali-Bhutanese Asylum Seekers, 2018- present
- Research Assistant, The Pluralism Project, Harvard University, Summer 2015
(Conducted and translated interviews with Nepali-Bhutanese religious leaders in Utica, NY)
- Created and administered Nepali Language Proficiency Test, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics, Syracuse University, 2013
- Speaker Series Co-Coordinator, Anthropology Graduate Student Organization, Syracuse University, 2012-13

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

“Modern Empires, Flows, Environments and Livelihoods,” March 2017

The India-China Corridor Spring School, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, Assam

“Migration, Globalization, Security, and Development” March 2009

A 10-day workshop organized by South Asian Migration Resource Network, a Dhaka and Sussex University collaboration

International Summer School in Forced Migration, July 2005

Refugee Studies Center, University of Oxford

TRANSLATION WORK

- Translated the City of Syracuse’s *Tenant’s Rights Handbook* from English to Nepali, Summer 2018
- Translated, edited, and proofread surveys from English to Nepali for a Graduate Research Project Robert H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland, Summer 2014
- Translated several issues of *Anbeshi* from Nepali to English, an annual report on the status of Violence Against Women in Nepal, Women’s Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC), Nepal, 2008-2011

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Asian American Studies

American Studies Association

American Anthropological Association

Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies

General Assembly member of Women’s Rehabilitation Center (WOREC) in Nepal

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

Research Fellow, Women’s Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC), Kathmandu, Nepal, 2009-2010

Designed and executed workshops on feminist approaches to development.

Team Leader, Peacebuilding Project, CARE International, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2008-2009

Designed monitoring and evaluation tools for peacebuilding projects.

Project officer for gender and peacebuilding project

Project Officer, SANGAT- A South Asian Feminist Network, New Delhi, India, 2006-2007

Managed SANGAT’s project of PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG).

Program Coordinator, Women’s Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC), Nepal, 2004-2006

Managed WOREC’s Advocacy Campaign on Violence Against Women (VAW) and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD).

LANGUAGES

Nepali (Fluent), Hindi (Fluent), Spoken Urdu (Fluent)

REFERENCES

Dr. Azra Hromadzic
Associate Professor, Anthropology
Syracuse University
(315) 443-5782
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