

Mitra Sharafi

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[faculty page](#) 🌐 [research website](#)

EMPLOYMENT

- 2014-present: **Associate Professor**, [University of Wisconsin Law School](#) and [Legal Studies Program](#), with affiliation appointment in [History](#), UW-Madison
- 2007-14: Assistant Professor, UW Law School and Legal Studies Program, with affiliation appointment in History, UW-Madison
- 2005-2007: Research Fellow, Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, UK

EDUCATION

- 2000-6: **PhD (History)**, **Princeton University**; Dissertation: “Bella’s Case: Parsi Identity and the Law in Colonial Rangoon, Bombay and London, 1887-1925,”
Advisors: Gyan Prakash & Hendrik Hartog
- 1998-9: **Bachelor of Civil Law** (LLM-equivalent), **Oxford University** (Magdalen College), Grade: I
- 1996-8: **Bachelor of Arts (Law)** (JD-equivalent), **Cambridge University** (Sidney Sussex College), Grade: I
- 1992-6: Bachelor of Arts (History), McGill University, Cum. GPA: 3.92

SELECTED AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

- [UW Institute for Research in the Humanities Resident Fellowship](#) for work on book project on the history of forensic science in colonial India (spring 2017)
- Law and Society Association’s [2015 J. Willard Hurst Award](#) for best book in socio-legal history published in 2014 (for [Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia: Parsi Legal Culture, 1772-1947](#))
- **Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) Mellon Fellowship for Assistant Professors:** recipient of one-year research fellowship (\$145,440) at the [School of Historical Studies, IAS](#) in Princeton, NJ (fall 2011, fall 2012)
- **National Science Foundation (NSF) “Law and Social Sciences” Research Grant:** Award no. SES-0850581; funding (\$87,212) for my first book project (1 June 2009-31 May 2011)
- **South Asia Council’s Dissertation Award Grand Prize** (Canada, 2007)
- **Social Science Research Council’s International Dissertation Research Fellowship** (2003-4)

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS (in reverse chronological order)

Electronic versions of most articles available [here](#).

Books

- Monograph: [Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia: Parsi Legal Culture, 1772-1947](#) (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), with [South Asian edition](#) (Ranikhet, India: Permanent Black, 2017)
- Lectures: [Colonial Parsis and Law: A Cultural History. Government Fellowship Lectures 2009-2010](#) (Mumbai: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 2010)

Articles

- ["South Asian Legal History,"](#) *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 11 (2015), 309-36
- ["Two Lives in Law: The Reminiscences of A. J. C. Mistry and Sir Norman Macleod, 1884-1926"](#) in D. Y. Chandrachud, Anoop V. Mohta and Roshan S. Dalvi, eds., *A Heritage of Judging: The Bombay High Court through 150 Years* (Mumbai: Maharashtra Judicial Academy, Indian Mediation Centre and Training Institute, 2012), 258-83.
- ["The Marital Patchwork of Colonial South Asia: Forum Shopping from Britain to Baroda,"](#) *Law and History Review* 28: 4 (2010), 979-1009
- ["The Slaves and Slavery of Marie Claire Chabert: Familial Black Slaveholding in Antebellum Louisiana,"](#) *Journal of Civil Law Studies* 4:1 (May 2010), 187-215
- ["The Semi-Autonomous Judge in Colonial India: Chivalric Imperialism meets Anglo-Islamic Dower and Divorce Law,"](#) *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 46:1 (2009): 57-81
- ["Justice in Many Rooms since Galanter: De-romanticizing Legal Pluralism through the Cultural Defense,"](#) *Law & Contemporary Problems* 71 (spring 2008), 139-46
- ["A New History of Colonial Lawyering: Likhovski and Legal Identities in the British Empire"](#) *Law & Social Inquiry* 32:4 (fall 2007), 1059-94
- ["The Slave Ship Manuscripts of Capt. Joseph B. Cook: A Narrative Reconstruction of the Brig Nancy's Voyage of 1793,"](#) *Slavery & Abolition* 24: 1 (April 2003), 71-100

Book chapters

- ["Parsi Life Writing: Memoirs and Family Histories of Modern Zoroastrians"](#) in Almut Hintze, ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 251-77
- "Law in Modern Zoroastrianism" in Michael Stausberg and Yuhan Vevaina, eds., [The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism](#) (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2015), 299-312
- ["Judging Conversion to Zoroastrianism: Behind the Scenes of the Parsi Panchayat Case \(1908\)"](#) In John R. Hinnells and Alan Williams, ed. *Parsis in India and the Diaspora* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2007), 159-80

Other publications

- Book review of [David Arnold, Toxic Histories: Poison and Pollution in Modern India \(Cambridge University Press, 2016\)](#), *Law and History Review* 34:4 (2016), 1071-3

- Encyclopedia articles: “Insurance” (750 words) and “The Nancy” (500 words), Toyin Falola and Amanda Warnock, eds., [Encyclopedia of the Middle Passage](#) (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 230-1, 286-7 (respectively)

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS & WORKS IN PROGRESS

- **Essay in review symposium on my 2014 book:** “Hijacking Law,” [Law & Social Inquiry](#) 42:4 (fall 2017), forthcoming; also featuring essays by Assaf Likhovski, Bhavani Raman, and Winnifred Sullivan
- **Book chapter:** “The Imperial Serologist and Punitive Self-Harm: Blood stains and Legal Pluralism in British India” in Ian Burney and Chris Hamlin, eds., *Locating Forensic Cultures* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), forthcoming
- **Book chapter:** “Parsi Legal Culture, Constitutionalism, and the Rule of Law” in Nawaz B. Mody, ed., volume in honor of the centennial anniversary of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute (Mumbai: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute), forthcoming
- **Book chapter:** “Indian Law” in Markus Dubber and Christopher Tomlins, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Historical Legal Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), forthcoming
- **Article:** “Abortion in India, 1860-1947: A Medico-Legal History” (in progress)
- **Book:** “Fear of the False: Forensic Science and Trickery in Colonial India” (in progress)

OTHER WRITING (INCLUDING WWW)

- **Op-eds:**
 - [“Why the US can’t claim to have been India’s colonial cousin in its struggle against the British,”](#) *Scroll.in* (4 July 2016)
 - [“Snoop Dogg feels the bite of Parsi legal culture,”](#) *Scroll.in* (3 July 2015)
 - [“The Changing Face of the Legal Profession,”](#) *Star Tribune* (16 Feb. 2015)
- **Blogposts:**
 - My [South Asian Legal History Resources](#) website, including monthly blogposts publicized on Twitter ([@mjsharafi](#)) such as:
 - [Bhopal Digital Archive](#)
 - [Experiments in \(not\) importing snakes](#)
 - [Medico-legal tales from the Raj](#)
 - [Legal Spankies in colonial India](#)
 - [Legal History Blog:](#)
 - as invited guest blogger (March 2015):
 - [In praise of small archives](#)
 - [In praise of private papers](#)
 - [In praise of memoirs](#)
 - [Eugenics in South Asian Legal History](#)

- [Digital Asian Legal History](#)
- as regular contributor (since May 2016), posting 2-3 times per week on new books, articles, events, and other topics relevant to the field of legal history, including:
 - [Legal history meets the History of Science+](#)
 - [Using film to teach US legal history](#)
 - [Using film to teach non-US & global legal history](#)
- Cambridge University Press's 1584 Blog: "[Death and Legal History on Sunday Afternoons](#)" and "[Parsi Legal Culture: A Slideshow](#)" (both 2014)

SELECTED INVITED PRESENTATIONS (in reverse chronological order)

- **Paper:** presentation of "Corruption and Forensic Experts in Colonial India" at SUNY-Buffalo Law School/Baldy Center Distinguished Speaker lecture series, Buffalo (3 March 2017); and at "Law in Global History: Beyond Imperial Frames" workshop, Dept. of History, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada (21 April 2017)
- **Lecture:** "Corruption and Forensic Experts in Colonial India" at Center for South Asian Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (17 Feb. 2017); Dept. of History and Sociology of Science, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (13 March 2017); Institute for Research on the Humanities, University of Wisconsin–Madison (10 April 2017); and Dept. of History, Washington University, St. Louis (12 April 2017)
- **Prison teaching lecture:** "India's histories: from empires to independence," Missouri Eastern Correctional Center (MECC), Pacific, Missouri (12 April 2017)
- **Workshop paper and lecture:** "The Imperial Serologist and Punitive Self-Harm: Bloodstains and Legal Pluralism in British India," *University of California Irvine Law Review* symposium on legal pluralism and UCI Socio-Legal Workshop, Irvine (26 August 2016)
- **Talk at mini-plenary session:** "Mixing Legal Systems in the British Empire" on Mini-Plenary, "Histories of Empire and Legal Pluralism—mixed legal systems around the globe"), Law and Society Association annual meeting, New Orleans (4 June 2016)
- **Lecture:** "Blood Testing and Fear of the False in Colonial India" at the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi (21 August 2015); and UW History of Science Brownbag lecture series (12 Feb. 2016)
- **Paper:** presentation of "Blood Testing and Fear of the False in Colonial India" (article draft) at the Legal History Workshop, University of Minnesota Law School, Minneapolis (1 Oct. 2015)
- **Workshop talk:** "Blood Testing and Fear of the False in Colonial India" at the "Locating Forensic Science and Medicine" conference, University of Notre Dame Global Gateway, London (24 July 2015)
- **Paper:** "Abortion in Colonial India: A Medico-Legal History" presented to the Hurst Summer Institute in Legal History (19 June 2015)

- **Live Law storytelling** (by [Life of the Law](#)): one of seven storytellers speaking on the theme of law and promises at the “Live Law 8” show, Law and Society Association meeting, Seattle (30 May 2015)
- **Book symposium:** Daniel Jacobson Jerusalem Legal History and Comparative Law Workshop on my 2014 book with commentators Assaf Likhovski and Binyamin Blum, and chaired by Adam Hofri-Winogradow, Jerusalem, Israel (18 June 2014)
- **Lecture:** “Law and Minority Identity in Colonial India,” Faculty of Law, McGill University, Montreal (11 April 2014)
- **Paper:** “Pure Parsi: Libel, Race, and Group membership” at the University of Virginia Legal History Workshop, Charlottesville (10 Feb. 2014)
- **Paper:** “Entrusting the Faith: Religious Trusts and the Parsi Legal Profession in British India,” Penn Law and History Consortium, University of Pennsylvania Law School (10 Oct. 2013)
- **Paper and public lecture:** “Parsi Legal Culture in British India,” Dept. of Religious Studies, Stanford University; and “The Parsi Chief Matrimonial Court in Colonial India,” Stanford Humanities Center (27 Sept. 2013)
- **Paper:** “Pure Parsi: Libel, Race and Group Membership in Colonial South Asia,” presented at Law and Public Affairs Program (LAPA), Princeton University (28 Nov. 2011)
- **Paper:** “Parsi Legal Culture in British India: Minority Strategies for Controlling Law,” presented at “Making an Ocean of Law: Licit and Illicit Activity in the Indian Ocean,” Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (24 April 2011)
- **Annual lecture:** “Legal Strategies of an Ethno-Religious Minority: The Parsis of British India,” Calvin and Helen Lang Asian Studies Annual Symposium lecture (one of three annual lectures on Asia), University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky (16 April 2011)
- **Annual lecture series:** 2009 Government Fellowship Lectures on Parsi legal history at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai, India (8-10 Oct. 2009)

RECENT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Corruption and Forensic Experts in late colonial India,” Law and Society Association, Mexico City (20 June 2017)
- “Detecting Dissimulation: Poisoning and the Chemical Examiners in Colonial India,” American Society for Legal History, Toronto (28 Oct. 2016); History of Science Society, Atlanta (3 Nov. 2016); and Law and Social Science Network (LASSnet), Delhi (10 Dec. 2016)
- “Blood Testing and Fear of the False in Colonial India,” American Association for the History of Medicine, Minneapolis (29 April 2016)

SELECTED COMMENTS AND ROUNDTABLES

- **Comment** on papers at “Entanglements of Law and Religion in South Asia” workshop, Yale University, New Haven (28-29 April 2017)
- **Reader’s comment** on Author-meets-Reader panel for Srimati Basu, *The Trouble with Marriage: Feminists Confront Law and Violence in India* (2015), Law and Society Association annual meeting, New Orleans (2 June 2016)
- **Comment** on papers for panel, “Circulation of Anglicization Practices in Imperial Regions” at Symposium on Comparative Early Modern Legal History, “Anglicization of Law and through Law: Early Modern British North America, India, and Ireland Compared,” Newberry Library, Chicago (8 April 2016)
- **Author’s comment** at Law and Society Association Author-meets-Reader panel on my 2014 book with readers Robert Gordon, Julia Stephens, Sylvia Vatuk, Benjamin Hett, Walter Walsh and Winnifred Sullivan, chaired by Bryant Garth at the LSA annual meeting, Seattle (24 May 2015); and panel on my book with Rohit De, Bhavani Raman, and Binyamin Blum, chaired by Thomas Green at the ASLH annual meeting, Washington, DC (31 Oct. 2015)
- **Roundtable panelist** at “Tracing the past into the present: How living descendants affect the substance, methods, and ethical stakes of legal history” with Daniel Sharfstein and Sam Erman, and chaired by Barbara Welke at the ASLH annual meeting, Washington, DC (30 Oct. 2015)
- **First Book Workshop reader** on book manuscript of Stephanie Elsky, “Time out of mind: The Poetic Custom and Common Law in Renaissance Literature,” University of Wisconsin Center for the Humanities, Madison (5 May 2015)
- **Workshop comment** for 2015 Race, Law & History Pro-Seminar at the University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor (20 April 2015)

SELECTED INTERVIEWS AND ARTICLES ABOUT MY RESEARCH

- [Podcast interview](#) on my book with Ian Cook of New Books in South Asian Studies (2 March 2016)
- **article** on *BBC News* online: Soutik Biswas, [“Parsi matrimonial courts: India’s only surviving jury trials”](#) (24 Sept. 2015)
- **articles** on UW Law School website (2014-15):
 - [“Professor Mitra Sharafi’s new book examines one minority’s turn to law”](#)
 - [“Professors Sharafi and Leachman win Law and Society Association awards”](#)
- interviews and articles on my research on Parsi legal history in Parsi community magazines [Parsiana](#) and [Hamazor](#) (2005-present)

TEACHING

Electronic versions of my most recent Legal Studies syllabi available [here](#).

- **UW Law School:** Contracts I (2007-8, 2010, 2013-present)
- **UW Legal Studies Program, cross-listed with History** (undergraduate):
 - [Legal Pluralism](#) (2008-9, 2011, 2013-present)
 - [Lawyers & Judges in the British Empire](#) (2008)

- [Law & Colonialism](#) (2009, 2011, 2013)
- History of Forensic Science (formerly [Medico-Legal History](#)) (2014-present)

SELECTED SERVICE AT UW-MADISON

- **Law School:** Appointments (2010-11, 2013-14, 2017-18) • Admissions (2008-9) • Global Legal Studies (2013-14) • Institute for Legal Studies (2013-fall 2016), including faculty co-convenor of ILS Law & Society Graduate Fellows Program (monthly workshop sessions, 2016-present) • LEO Diversity Program (2008-9) • Library Committee (2008-9, 2010-11) • Student Retentions (2010-11, 2013-14) • Summer Research Funding (2010-11) • Tenure (2014-16, including as chair in 2015-16) • UW South Asia Legal Studies Working Group organizer (monthly workshop sessions, 2014-present) • Writing group member (monthly 4-person workshop sessions, 2015-present)
- **Legal Studies program:** Core Faculty Steering Committee (2007-present) • Awards Committee (chair, 2015-16)
- **Center for South Asia:** Center for South Asia Advisory Board (2013-fall 2016), including Annual Conference on South Asia Program Committee (2007-8, 2013-15) and Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Award Committee (2007-8, 2010-11, 2013-16) • Conference Chair for 44th & 45th Annual Conferences on South Asia (2014-16)
- **University level:** Faculty Senate (2007-8) • Future of Asian Studies Committee (2014) • India Initiative Steering Committee (2008-11)

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

- *American Journal of Legal History* Editorial Advisory Board member (2016-19)
- **American Society for Legal History (ASLH)** Board of Governors (2012-15) and Program Committee Co-Chair (2013-14)
- **ASLH J. Willard Hurst Summer Institute in Legal History** faculty director (2017), selection committee member and Wisconsin representative (2009-present)
- **ASLH Peter Gonville Stein Book Award** committee chair, new prize for best book on non-US legal history (2016-19)
- **H-Law:** Advisory Board member (2014-present)
- *Law and Social Inquiry* Editorial Board member (2016-18)
- **LSA's South Asia Collaborative Research Network ([CRN 22](#)):** organizer (2005-present)
- **LSA J. Willard Hurst Book Prize** committee member in 2015-16 for best book on socio-legal history published in 2015
- **Oxford Legal History book series** Editorial Board member, 2016-19

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

- [Annual South Asia Legal Studies Workshop](#): co-organizer, UW Law School, Madison (2007-present)

- [Comparative Legal Histories Workshop: Colonial/Postcolonial India and Mandatory Palestine/Israel](#): co-organizer (with Assaf Likhovski and Renisa Mawani), Stanford Law School (6 June 2011)
- [Legal History and Religion Workshop](#), UW Law School (24 Sept 2010)

PEER REVIEWER

Articles reviewed for: *Am. Hist. Rev.*; *Austr. Feminist LJ*; *Itinerario*; *J. of Colonialism and Colonial History*; *J. of Legal History*; *Law, Culture and the Humanities*; *Law & Social Inquiry*, *Modern Asian Studies*, *ShariaSOURCE*, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* • **Book manuscripts** reviewed for Ashgate, Cambridge University Press, Manchester UP, Oxford UP, Princeton UP • **Grant, workshop & fellowship applications** reviewed for School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Law & Humanities Junior Scholars Workshop, National Science Foundation, Soc. Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada

ARCHIVAL & RARE BOOK RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- **India:** Bombay High Court (Mumbai) • First Dastoor Meherjirana Library (Navsari) • Godrej Archives (Mumbai) • K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Library (Mumbai) • National Archives of India (Delhi) • Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (Delhi) • Parsi Panchayat Archives (Mumbai) • Tata Central Archives (Mumbai) • University of Bombay Archives (Mumbai) • Bhikaji Unwalla Zoroastrian Library (Udwada) • N. M. Wadia Trust (Mumbai) • Wadia Ghandy and Co. (Mumbai)
- **UK:** Ancient Iran and India Trust (Cambridge) • British Library (London) • Highland Council Archives (Inverness) • Honourable Society of the Inner Temple (London) • Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn (London) • Honourable Society of the Middle Temple (London) • National Archives (London) • National Library of Wales (Aberystwyth) • Privy Council Office (London) • Royal Society of Medicine (London) • University of Cambridge Archives (Cambridge) • University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections (Glasgow) • Wellcome Library Archives and Manuscripts (London) • World Zoroastrian Organization Archives (London)
- **Other:** Kings College Dublin Archives (Dublin) • Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.) • Musée Guimet (Paris) • Public Records Office Victoria (Melbourne) • Riesenfeld Rare Books Research Center, University of Minnesota Law Library (Minneapolis)

LANGUAGES

English (native speaker), **French** (advanced), **Gujarati** and **German** (intermediate reading knowledge), **Persian**, **Hindi** and **Latin** (basic knowledge)