

# Wednesday Seminars

## LECTURE SERIES IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

27.05.2026 | 5 p.m. | @ Übungsraum IKSA | NIG, 4th floor

**Ammara Maqsood (University College London)**

***Momentary Ruptures and Traces:***

***Reflections on Hindu-Muslim Encounters in Karachi, Pakistan***



**Ammara Maqsood** is an Associate Professor in Social Anthropology at University College London.

Her current work focuses on questions of religious difference in non-secular contexts and is funded by the ERC grant 'Multi-Religious Encounters in Urban Settings'.

Ammara's work has appeared in various journals, such as *American Ethnologist*, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* and her book, *The New Pakistani Middle Class* (Harvard University Press), was awarded the 2019 AIPS Book Prize.

How do we capture, and what do we make of, momentary ruptures within dominant ways of relating with religious 'others'? Situated in the experiences of young Hindus in Karachi, my ethnography captures how relations between Hindus and Muslims remember, embody and enact the communal politics and violence of partition and, in many ways, are emblematic of the boundary-making (often around religion and ethnic difference) inherent in the formation of nation states in South Asia.

Yet, simultaneously, there are moments of rupture in these majoritarian-minoritarian modes of relating, and a brief appearance or a 'trace' (Napolitano 2015) of an alternative kind of relationship or recognition of the other. Through examples from different domains; fleeting friendships between Hindus and Muslims, the acceptance and acknowledgement of difference in failed (and successful) inter-religious romances, and the entanglement of Muslim saints in Hindu kinship and familial tensions and obligations; I offer glimpses into forms of relating that run counter to the dominant majoritarian impulse in Pakistan to engulf, or the minoritarian response to close boundaries. The sensibilities that these moments reveal also sit uneasily with liberal ideals of equality, as they often draw upon subjectivities outside the individual and on a non-sovereign self.



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