



WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

22.01.2025, 17:00 Uhr, Übungsraum (and online)

IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock

Nasima Selim (University of Bayreuth)

Conspiring Cities: How South Asian Cities Inspire and Suffocate (More Than) Human Life Worlds





Nasima Selim is an interdisciplinary scholar trained in medicine, public health and anthropology.

She is a breathworker, writer, researcher, and

educator currently working as a senior research associate of social and cultural anthropology at the University of Bayreuth. Her work intersects critical planetary health, environmental humanities, public anthropology, and the anthropology of Islam in and across Western Europe and South Asia.

How do atmospherically and socio-politically connected cities inspire and suffocate (more than) human life worlds? What does it mean to breathe well in Dhaka and Kolkata, two of the most “unbreathable” mega cities in South Asia? The air quality index (AQI) proves this point time and again, especially during the dry season of the year. Breathing well in these cities, however, requires more than the quantitative measuring of air quality and the execution of air pollution control regulations. Interpreting and improving urban breathing interpellate the respiratory tropes and biosocial practices of both “inspiration” and “suffocation” that I address in this talk with the framing of *conspiration* (breathing together). These inspirations and suffocations are respired by the (more than) human life worlds in a plethora of fractal crises: air pollution, respiratory disorders, distressed human-plant relations, un/learning indigenous breathwork traditions, and intersectional breathing troubles. *Conspiring Cities* offers a set of preliminary reflections from past and recent field visits in Dhaka and Kolkata (2023-2024; 2020; 2019). The talk also draws from the utopian aspirations and dystopic predictions about cities where the author spent more than three decades as an inhabitant (Dhaka), a frequent friendly visitor (Kolkata), and returned as a post-migrant ethnographer.

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Details:

<https://ksa.univie.ac.at/en/department/events/wednesday-seminar/>

