

SAMADRITA KUITI

PhD Candidate

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EDUCATION

PhD, English, University of Connecticut, expected July 2023 | Dissertation title - “Spacetimes of Hope: Feminist & Queer Utopias in Postcolonial Literatures (1905 - present)” | Committee: Eleni Coundouriotis (chair), Bhakti Shringarpure, Pamela Bedore | Feminist Studies Graduate Certificate

M.A., First-Class Honors, English (with a specialization in 20th century American Literatures), Indira Gandhi National Open University (India), 2016

B.Tech, Computer Science & Engineering, West Bengal University of Technology (India), 2011

Dissertation Abstract: My dissertation entitled “SpaceTimes of Hope: Feminist and Queer Utopias in Anglophone Postcolonial Literatures (1905-Present)” theorizes a politics of the future for gendered and queered subjects within postcolonial societies in Africa & South Asia. I use the frameworks of “utopia” and “utopianism” to unpack feminist and queer re-articulations of the idea of nation. The dissertation adds to the ongoing conversation on decolonizing the Anglo-American framework of utopian studies and uses utopianism as a paradigm to locate (both in space and time) postcolonial “others”. By postcolonial “others”, I specifically refer to the victims of gender, religion, caste, sexuality-based oppressions, neo-colonial capitalist exploitation and their diverse intersections both during the time of and beyond the colonial period in the nations of South Africa, Nigeria, Namibia, & India. De-centering the focus on male-centric postcolonial narratives that foreground the experiences of archetypal son-of-the-soil figures, this study analyzes an archive of fiction by women writers such as Buchi Emecheta, Nadine Gordimer, Nnedi Okorafor, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, Manjula Padmanabhan, & Arundhati Roy aside from secondary texts such as photojournalistic work, video commercials, and full-length feature films (such as *Matrubhoomi*) among others. I organize my project around select historical events in colonial India such as the Indigo Rebellion (1859), the rise of aggressive Hindu nationalism in *fin-de-siècle* British India and its consequences, as well as chart the landscapes on contemporary trans and queer rights activisms in India and Nigeria.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles

- “Decolonizing the Feminist Utopia: Interfaith Sisterhood and Anticolonial Feminist Resistance in Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain’s *Sultana’s Dream* and *Padmarag*.” *Utopian Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2022, pp. 240–56, <https://doi.org/10.5325/utopianstudies.33.2.0240>.
- ““Mother-Warriors”: Queer Motherhood as Resistance in Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*.” *South Asian Review*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2021, pp. 250-264, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02759527.2020.1863737>
- “Anticipating the Afrotopia: Queer Monsters & Utopian Futurities in Nnedi Okorafor’s *Lagoon*” - **Conditional Acceptance** (*Modern Language Studies*)

Reviews, Creative Writing, & Other Public-Facing Work

- “Flowers”. *Flash Fiction Magazine*, 31 July 2021. <https://flashfictionmagazine.com/blog/2021/07/31/flowers-2/>
- “Assessing Learner Needs, Maintaining Instructor Presence, & Building Community in Asynchronous Courses.” Edited by Kristi Kaepfel. *Graduate Certificate in College Instruction*, 28 December 2020. <https://gccu.uconn.edu/2020/12/28/assessing-learner-needs-maintaining-instructor-presence-building-community-in-asynchronous-courses/>
- “Caught between closing borders: International Graduate Students in a Global Pandemic”. Edited by Didem Uca. *MLA Grads Blog*, 13 May 2020. <https://mlagrads.mla.hcommons.org/2020/05/13/grad-studies-in-coronavirus-post-4/>.
- “Queer, Digital, Indian, Neoliberal?” Review of *Queering Digital India: Activisms, Identities, Subjectivities* edited by Rohit K. Dasgupta & Debanuj DasGupta. *Warscapes*, 9 September 2019. <http://www.warscapes.com/reviews/queer-digital-indian-neoliberal>.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT - Instructor of Record (2016-present)

I was the sole instructor for the following courses and was responsible for syllabus design, course materials, and assignment architecture at the University of Connecticut.

- ENGL 1010: Seminar in Academic Writing (Fall 2016 & Spring 2017) - General Education Course | 48 students
- ENGL 1011: Seminar in Writing Through Literatures (Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2019 & Fall 2019) - General Education Course | 120 students
- ENGL 2301W (4 sections): Anglophone Literatures (Spring 2020 & Fall 2021) | 76 students
- ENGL 1007 (7 sections): Seminar in Writing & Multimodal Composition (Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Spring 2022, Summer 2022) - General Education Course | 128 students
- WGSS 3253 (2 sections): Gender Representations in US Popular Culture (Spring 2023) - WGSS elective | 38 students

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT - GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (Fall 2022)

I served as a teaching assistant for the following courses with a different primary instructor who was in charge of syllabus design, course materials, & assignment architecture.

- WGSS 1104: Feminisms & the Arts (4 discussion sections with 25 students each - sec 001D, 002D, 009D, 010D) - General Education Course/WGSS Elective

PEDAGOGICAL TRAININGS AND DEVELOPMENT

Participant, English Upper-Division Teaching Workshop. 2020.

Participant, First Year Writing Winter Workshop. January 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022.

Participant, First Year Writing Orientation for Returning Instructors. 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021.

GRANTS, AWARDS, & HONORS

- 2022 NeMLA Graduate Communications Fellowship; \$2000
- 2022 Wood/Raith Summer Graduate Fellowship (awarded by the Wood-Raith Living Trust competitively across departments at UConn for research on gender & sexuality studies); \$4000
- 2022 UConn WGSS Susan Porter Benson Graduate Research Paper Award; \$250

- 2022 NeMLA Women's & Gender Studies Caucus Essay Award; \$100
- 2021 Conference Participation Award (\$1000). The Graduate School, University of Connecticut.
- 2021 Dr. Radenka Maric Graduate Fellowship Runner-Up (Awarded by the Graduate School at UConn competitively); \$1000
- 2021 Aetna Chair Graduate Critical Writing Award (awarded by the Aetna Life and Casualty Foundation's Aetna Endowment & UConn Writing Programs); \$500
- Fall 2020 Provost's Commendation for Excellence in Teaching
- Spring 2020 Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (awarded by the Graduate School at UConn); \$2000
- 2019 Wood/Raith Summer Graduate Fellowship (awarded by the Wood-Raith Living Trust competitively across departments at UConn for research on gender & sexuality studies); \$4000
- 2019 Nicole LaRose Graduate Student Conference Travel Grant (awarded by the Society for Utopian Studies on a competitive basis); \$500
- 2019 Predoctoral Dissertation Fellowship (awarded by the Graduate School & the English Department); \$2450
- 2019 NeMLA Graduate Student Caucus Conference Travel Award (awarded by the Northeast Modern Language Association's Graduate Student Caucus on a competitive basis); \$250

ACADEMIC SERVICE & OTHER APPOINTMENTS

NORTHEAST MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION (NeMLA) - Graduate Communications Fellow (June 2022- Present)

- Maintained official NeMLA social media handles on Twitter, Facebook, & Instagram
- Created interactive digital content like posters, infographics with information on upcoming NeMLA events as well as posting CFAs and CFPs for the upcoming annual NeMLA convention in March, 2023
- Coordinated with the NeMLA Executive Director, board members, and other graduate fellows to create and circulate social media updates about upcoming events geared toward NeMLA 2023

First Year Writing Summer Workshop Planning Committee - *University of Connecticut-Storrs* (Spring - Summer 2022)

- Served on the core planning committee for incoming Graduate Assistants and new instructors in First Year Writing
- Revised baseline syllabi & curriculum for new instructors' use, edited an already existing multimodal assignment with principles of accessibility in mind
- Added revisions to course schedule and assignment architecture taking into account time-related constraints of summer courses

First Year Writing Conference on the Teaching of Writing Planning Committee - *University of Connecticut-Storrs* (Spring 2021)

- Monitored an email account dedicated to receiving abstract/proposal submissions
- Drafted email responses to abstract submissions, other conference related queries, & acceptance/rejection emails
- Organized scheduling issues along with other planning committee members

NORTHEAST MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION (NeMLA) - Graduate Student Caucus (GSC) Communications Director (April 2020 - Present)

- Collaborated with the NeMLA WGSC (Women's & Gender Studies Caucus) officers to propose a panel on women graduate students' trajectories within the neoliberal university for the NeMLA annual convention in 2023
- Proposed, planned, coordinated GSC-sponsored panels at the annual NeMLA convention in 2021
- Organized & led informal networking events for graduate students at the annual NeMLA convention in 2021
- Amplified news about academic job postings, graduate student concerns across GSC social media channels
- Created interactive digital content like posters, infographics with information on upcoming GSC application deadlines & other opportunities
- Enhanced user accessibility by redesigning pages of the GSC Wordpress website
- Evaluated annual GSC essay & travel award applications in a timely & streamlined manner

MENTEE Global (NGO) - Global Mentor (April 2021 - Present)

- Helped vulnerable female students from various underrepresented backgrounds in countries from South Asia & Africa take charge of their professional trajectories

- Advised women second-language learners on best practices to improve their English proficiency through video conferencing & emails
- Advised a female community organizer in Tanzania conducting research involving human subjects on best practices through video conferencing & emails

UCONN CENTER FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT - Member of the Graduate Student Career Council (GSCC) (August 2019-May 2021)

- Proposed, planned, co-hosted panels & discussions on grad student professionalization directed at the university's graduate student body at large
- Served as liaison between the UConn EGSA & the GSCC
- Revamped the GSCC's "Graduate Student Intern of the Year Award" format & eligibility criteria along with other GSCC stakeholders to make it more equitable

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE of the UCONN ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (EGSA) - Chair (August 2020-May 2021)

- Created & moderated a UConn EGSA Discord server for English graduate students to use as an informal networking tool during the height of the pandemic
- Organized & hosted virtual roundtables, workshops on alternative career trajectories outside of academia especially for humanities graduate students

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT - UConn Human Rights Institute Summer Intern (May 2018-August 2018)

- Copy-edited 3 academic articles at the intersection of divinity studies & Kurdish gender studies (consisting of 60 pages) for visiting scholar Dr. Dilsa Deniz
- Edited a proposal for Dr. Deniz's forthcoming book that was accepted by the academic publisher Lexington Books in 2018.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- "Afrofutures of the Past: Women's Utopian Dreams in Buchi Emecheta's *The Rape of Shavi* and Nadine Gordimer's *A Sport of Nature*." American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) Annual Convention. Online, 16 June 2022.

- “Afrofuturist Dystopias: Anticipating the Postcolonial Queer Utopia in Nnedi Okorafor’s *Lagoon*.” Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA). Online, 11 Mar. 2021.
- “Queer Space as Utopia: Queer kinship and Community in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*”. Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA). Boston, Massachusetts, 5 Mar. 2020.
- “Feminist Utopian Longing: Interfaith Sisterhood and Anticolonial Resistance in Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain’s *Sultana’s Dream & Padmarag*”. The Society for Utopian Studies Annual Conference (SUS). East Lansing, Michigan, 19 October 2019.
- “Confessions of an Unlikely Murderess: Flawed Motherhood in Nayomi Munaweera’s *What Lies Between Us*.” Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA), Washington D.C., 24 March 2019.
- “The Queering of Indian Motherhood as a Strategy of Resistance in Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*.” Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA), Pittsburgh, 12 April 2018.
- “The Graveyard of Utmost Happiness: Resistance, Resilience, and a Requiem for the ‘Disappeared’ in Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*.” South Asian Literary Association’s Annual Conference (SALA), New York, 8 Jan. 2018.

OTHER CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

- “Queer Utopias: Decolonizing Utopianism in Contemporary Literary Studies Part I & Part II.” Chair & Panel Organizer. Co-chair with Julia Brush. Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA), Online, 11 March 2021.
- “Reimagining Transferable Skills: Professional Development in a Post-Covid World.” Chair & Roundtable Organizer. Co-chair with Saronik Bosu. Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA), Online, 11 March 2021.
- “Publishing Mentorship.” Chair & Roundtable Organizer. Co-chair with Elizabeth Laughlin. Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA), Niagara Falls, NY, 25 Mar. 2023.

INVITED TALK

- “Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain as Feminist Activist, Educator, & Writer”. Panelist on Baithak UK Arts’ “Utopia Across Cultures: South Asia, Britain, & Beyond” Event, Online (Facebook Live), 25 September 2022. <https://fb.watch/fQe9ppNDWT/>

LANGUAGES

Bengali (reading & writing fluency)
Hindi (reading & writing proficiency)

MEMBERSHIPS

Modern Language Association
Northeast Modern Language Association
Society for Utopian Studies
National Women's Studies Association
American Comparative Literature Association

REFERENCES

Dr. Eleni Coundouriotis, Professor of English, University of Connecticut.
eleni.coundouriotis@uconn.edu

Dr. Pamela Bedore, Associate Professor of English, University of Connecticut.
pamela.bedore@uconn.edu

Dr. Bhakti Shringarpure, Associate Professor of English & Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, University of Connecticut. bhakti.shringarpure@uconn.edu

Dr. Ariana Reilly Codr, Associate Director of Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program & Assistant Professor in Residence, University of Connecticut. ariana.codr@uconn.edu

Dr. Carine M. Mardorossian, Executive Director, Northeast Modern Language Association & Professor of English & Global Gender & Sexuality Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo.
cmardoro@buffalo.edu