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Benjamin B. Cohen

Department of History

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EDUCATION:

- 2002 **Ph.D.** University of Wisconsin – Madison, WI – History (Modern South Asia)
Dissertation: “Hindu Rulers in a Muslim State: Hyderabad, 1850-1949”
- 1997 **M.A.** University of Wisconsin – Madison, WI– South Asian Studies.
Thesis: “Procession, Politics, and Religion: The *Rath Yatra* and its Formations in Modern India”
- 1992 **B.A.** Earlham College – Richmond, IN– English, Music

EMPLOYMENT AND EXPERIENCE:

- 2026 – Present. **Professor** Department of History, University of Pittsburgh.
- 2016 – 2026 **Professor** Department of History, University of Utah
- 2018 – 2022 **Department Chair** Department of History, University of Utah
- 2008 – 2016 **Associate Professor** Department of History, University of Utah
- 2008 – 2011 **Director of Graduate Studies** Department of History, University of Utah
- 2003 – 2008 **Assistant Professor** Department of History, University of Utah
- 2002 – 2003 **Visiting Assistant Professor** Department of History, University of Utah
- 2002 (Spring) **Reader** “Medieval Indian History” University of Wisconsin - Madison, Lecturer-Prof André Wink
- 2001 (Fall) **Teaching Assistant** “Empires of Central Asia from Ghengis Khan to Stalin” University of Wisconsin, Madison, Lecturer-Prof David Morgan
- 1999 (Fall) **Reader** “Civilizations of India: The Modern Period,” University of Wisconsin - Madison Lecturer, Prof Joe Elder
- 1997 (Fall) **Lecturer** “Research Methodology” College Year in India Program, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Hyderabad, India
- 1996 (Fall) **Reader** “The Age of Gandhi: Modern South Asian History” University of Wisconsin – Madison, Lecturer-Prof Robert Frykenberg

PUBLICATIONS:

Books:

In Production:

2026 *Water in Hyderabad and the Deccan: A History of Power and Elites from the 11th to 20th Centuries*. Oxford University Press.

Published:

2019 *An Appeal to the Ladies of Hyderabad: Scandal in the Raj*. Harvard University Press. Indian edition (2020).

2019 *The Pleasures at your side: Papers from the Wanaparthi Samasthan, 1832-1911*. Edited by Benjamin B. Cohen. Orient BlackSwan Press, Hyderabad, India.

2015 *In The Club: Associational Life in Colonial India*. Manchester University Press, UK. (Studies in Imperialism Series). Indian edition: Orient BlackSwan Press (2015).

2007 *Kingship and Colonialism in India's Deccan: 1850-1948*. Palgrave Macmillan. Indian edition, Manohar Books, New Delhi (2023)

Articles and Book Chapters:

2022 "The water flows under the bridge and we pass above it." Infrastructure, Transport and State Power: The Bridges of Hyderabad City, India c. 16th to 20th centuries. *Journal of Transportation History*. Vol. 44, No. 1. pp. 1-23.

2022 "'This Has Not Been Done Because It Was Not Made Any One's Business to Do It.' Conserving Hyderabad City's Hussain Sagar Tank in the Late Nineteenth Century". Vol. 51, No. 1. pp. 1-16. *Urban History*.

2021 "Social Clubs in a Princely State. The Case from Hyderabad, Deccan". Vol. 48, No. 2. pp. 1-15. *Indian Historical Review*.

2021 "Modern India: The Historical Context". *Understanding Contemporary India*. Third Edition. (ed. DeVotta and Ganguly) Lynn Rienner.

2020 "From Soldier to Spectacle: Africans and the langar procession in Hyderabad". *South Asian History and Culture*. Vol. 11, No. 4. pp. 374-389.

2020 "The African Guard of Wanaparthi and Hyderabad". *African Rulers and Generals in India (Afro-South Asia in the Global African Diaspora)* Vol. I., edited by Omar H. Ali, Kenneth Robbins, Beheroze Shroff and Jazmin Graves. University of North Carolina at Greensboro Ethiopian and East African Studies Project and Ahmedabad Sidi Heritage and Educational Center. pp. 101-113.

2019 "Water in Medieval Telangana: Repair, Restore and Beyond" pp. 171-176 in *Second International Seminar on Telangana Through the Ages: Perspectives from Early and Medieval Periods*. Hyderabad.

2017 "Transfers of Power: A Hydrosocial View of Hyderabad". pp. 76-86. In *The Princely States and the Making of Modern India*. (eds: D.A. Prasanna, K. Sadashiva). Manipal University Press, India.

2016 (Co-edited with Stephen Goldsmith) *Practical Research in Support of Sustainable Urbanization*, Hyderabad 2016.

2016 "The utility of scandal: examples across disciplines from Europe and India". *History*

- Compass*. Vol. 14, No. 7. pp. 304-313.
- 2016 “Visiting Hyderabad: Real “face time” in a Princely State, 1915-1938”. *Weber - The Contemporary West*. Spring, 2016.
- 2014 “Introducing Colonial Regionalism: The Case of India’s Presidencies, the View From Madras”. Vol. 13, No. 4. pp. 321-336. *India Review*
- 2014 “Introduction: Regions and Regionalism in India” co-authored with Sumit Ganguly. Vol. 13, No. 4. pp. 313-320. *India Review*.
- 2014 “Negotiating Differences: India’s Language Policy” pp. 27-52. *Difference and Constitutionalism*. (ed. Susan H. Williams) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- 2012 “The Delhi Durbar: The View from Hyderabad”. pp. 94-109. *Power and Dominion: Photography and the Imperial Durbars of British India*. (ed. Julie Codell) Mapin, New Delhi.
- 2011 “Modernizing the Urban Environment: The Musi River Flood of 1908 in Hyderabad, India”. Vol. 17, No. 3 pp. 409-432. *Environment and History*.
- 2010 “Modern India: The Historical Context”. *Understanding Contemporary India*. Second Edition. (ed. DeVotta) Lynn Rienner.
- 2009 “Networks of Sociability: Women’s Club in Colonial and Postcolonial India”. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies*. Special Issue: Women’s Clubs at Home and in the World. Vol. 30, No. 3. pp. 169-195.
- 2007 “The Court of Wards in a Princely State: Bank Robber or Babysitter?”, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 395-420. *Modern Asian Studies*.
- 2006 “The Study of Indian History in the US Academy”. Vol. 5, No. 1. pp. 144-172. *India Review*.
- 2004 “Gifts or Greed? Nazr in the reign of Hyderabad’s Osman Ali Khan”. *Paradigms in Indian History*. (ed.) Itihasa Prabhasa Publishers, Hyderabad, 2004.

Other Publications:

- 2021 “How the Idea of ‘India’ Came About”. *Newslines*. Online. 10 May 2021.
- 2015 “Water and Cities: A Case from India”. *The Kingfisher*. College of Humanities, University of Utah, 2015.
- 2006 “Civil Society and a World of Clubs”. *The Kingfisher*. College of Humanities, University of Utah, 2006.
- 2004 *Encyclopedia of Everyday Life*. Entries on modern South Asia. Greenwood, 2004.
- 2002 H-Albion. Book review, “Days in the Life of a Noble,” of *Reversing the Gaze*.

LANGUAGES:

Telugu. Reading, writing and spoken language; two years of formal training and two years of private study in Hyderabad, India.

Hindi and Urdu. Reading, writing, and spoken language; three years of formal training and two years of private study in Hyderabad, India.

Persian. One semester.

TEACHING:

Regular courses:

Modern India
Medieval India
Ancient India

The Mughal Empire
Environmental History of India
The Global Indian Ocean
Asian History to 1500
Asian History 1500 to the present
Senior Seminar (“Events in History”)

Occasional courses:

South Asia: Conflict in Historical Perspective
The Indian Diaspora
Mughals to Modernity: A Learning Abroad Course

CONFERENCES, INVITED LECTURES, AND OTHER PRESENTATIONS:

2024 October. “Situating Hyderabad.” Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI.
2024 March. Invited guest speaker in “First Year Learning Community”, Honors College, University of Utah. Host: Dr. Karleton Munn.
2023 October. Chair. “Understanding Built Environment: Space Making, Urbanity and Heritage in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century South Asia.” Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI.
2021 August. Invited. Chair for the British Library’s program on South Asia. Online.
2021 March. Invited. “Water, People, Power: Long-term Tales from the Deccan”. The University of Pennsylvania, Department of South Asian Studies.
2021 February. Invited. Guest lecture, Westmont College, CA.
2020 November. Invited. Keynote address. Dr. Omar Khalidi memorial webinar event.
2019 November. “Colonial Clubbing in a Princely State: The Nizam Club of Hyderabad, India”. North American Conference on British Studies, Vancouver, Canada.
2019 November. Chair. “Indirect Rule Across the British Empire”. North American Conference on British Studies, Vancouver, Canada.
2019 October. “The Hydrosocial World of Hyderabad City: Water, Recreation, Leisure and Beyond c. 1880-1908”. Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI.
2019 July. Invited. “A Hydrosocial History of Water in the Deccan”. University of Hyderabad, Department of History. Hyderabad, India.
2019 April. Invited. “Urban Aquatic Conservation Efforts in Princely India: The Case of Hussain Sagar in Hyderabad city”. Presented at the Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester conference on “Princely Cities: Towards a New Urban History of South Asia”.
2018 March. “Swimming Against the Stream: Water and Recreation in India”. University of Utah Department of History Practicing History Conference.

2018 January. Invited. "Water in Medieval Telangana: Repair, Restore, and Beyond". International Seminar: Telangana Through the Ages, Government of Telangana, India.

2017 December. Invited Lecture. "The Hydrosocial and the Long-term: A Case for India's Deccan". Vanderbilt History Seminar, Vanderbilt University.

2017 February. Invited Lecture. "Transfers of Power: A Hydrosocial View of Hyderabad". Department of History, University of Mysore, India.

2017 January. "Water in India's Deccan: A Hydrosocial Perspective". Tanner Humanities Center presentation, University of Utah.

2016 October. Invited lecture. "The Shape of Water in India's Deccan". Emory University, Atlanta.

2016 April. "Scandal and Law in Nineteenth Century Hyderabad". Association of Asian Studies Annual Conference, Seattle, WA.

2015 October. "From the Kakatiyas to "Mission Kakatiya"." Western Conference branch of the Association of Asian Studies, Salt Lake City.

2015 March. Invited lecture. *The Home and the World*. University of Utah's Intellectual Traditions program.

2015 March. "Five minutes on an object". "The Fountain at the Char Minar". University of Utah, Department of History Annual Conference.

2015 March. Invited paper. "Of Clubs and Scandals". Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA.

2014 October. Invited conference paper. "Introducing Colonial Regionalism: The Case of the Madras Presidency" at the Ohio State University Mellon-Sawyer conference on "Imagining Alternative Modernities: Interventions from the Balkans and South Asia". Columbus, Ohio 9-11 October.

2014 Invited lecture. The *Bhagavad-Gita*. University of Utah's Intellectual Traditions program.

2013 Invited lecture, the Waterford School, Utah, "Making the most of college".

2013 August. Conference Paper, "Colonial Regionalism and the Presidencies: A View from Madras". American Institute of Indian Studies Conference on Regions and Regionalism in India, Gurgaon, India.

2013 August. Invited Lecture. "Reflections on Hyderabad and Telangana". Co-Sponsored by the Osmania University Center for International Programs and the Department of Political Science, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

2013 August. Invited Lecture. "Clubs and Civil Society". Kothi Women's College, Hyderabad.

2013. August. Invited Lecture. "Colonial Madras and Hyderabad – The Makings of Regional Identities". Co-Sponsored by the Center for Human Security Studies and EFL University, Hyderabad.

2013 April. Panel Chair, Department of History Conference. University of Utah.

2013 April. "The Utility of Scandal: A Case from India". Tanner Humanities Center presentation, the University of Utah.

2012 April. "The Case for Scandal: An Example from Colonial India". Department of History Conference, University of Utah.

2009 Keynote. Utah State University. International Week. Lecture, "Pakistan: Divided Pasts,

Uncertain Futures”.

2009 October. Conference Paper, “A Scandalous Life? Nawab Mehdi Hasan and late nineteenth century Hyderabad, Deccan” Annual South Asian Studies Conference, Madison, WI.

2007 September. Chair: ““New”? Frontiers in 19th and early 20th Century Indian History”, and paper: “Scandal in Fin de Siècle Hyderabad: Adding the Event Back Into History” Western Conference branch of the Association of Asian Studies.

2007 February. Conference Paper, “Scandal in Nineteenth Century India”. Annual Conference on South Asia, University of California at Berkeley.

2006 Guest lecture. Secunderabad Club, Secunderabad, India.

2006 Guest lecture. Indian Center for Historical Research, New Delhi.

2006 Panel Organizer, Participant. European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Leiden, the Netherlands. Panel: “Overturning North Indian Hegemonies Then and Now: the View from the Deccan”. Conference Paper: “The Little Kings of Hyderabad State”.

2006 January. Chair, “Comparative Studies in Cultural History: New Research into the Everyday Life and Legacy of the Mughal Emperor Babur, 1483–1530”. American Historical Association Annual Conference, Philadelphia.

2005 October. Roundtable Chair, “The World of Hyderabad”. Annual South Asian Studies Conference, Madison, WI.

2005 October. Conference Paper, “Rituals in Clubs in India”. Victorian Interdisciplinary Studies Association, Western United States, Albuquerque, NM.

2005 July. Panel Chair, “The Traumas of Transition”. The Indian Princely State International Research Symposium, Southampton, UK.

2004 May-July. Guest Lecturer, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.

2003 May. Invited guest at The Saban Center for Middle East Studies at the Brookings Institution conference on, “U.S. Policy Towards Muslim Minorities Living within Democracies”.

2003 February. Conference Paper, “The ‘Great Generation’ in South India: Velama Nobility in Hyderabad State and the Madras Presidency, 1830-1930”. Annual Conference on South Asia, University of California at Berkeley.

2002 October. Conference Paper, “Peripheral Participants: Little Kings in Hyderabad, Deccan”. Annual South Asian Studies Conference, Madison, WI.

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND AWARDS:

2024-2025 University Research Incentive Seed Grant.

2022-2023 American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Short-term Fellowship.

2022-2023 University Faculty Fellow, University of Utah.

2016-2017 Tanner Humanities Center Fellow.

2016-2017 Environmental Humanities Professorship, University of Utah.

2016 (Fall Semester) Sabbatical leave.

2016 College of Humanities Kickstart Grant.

2015-2016 US Government, "Practical Research in Support of Sustainable Urbanization", Hyderabad, India. \$30,000.

2015-2016 Environmental Humanities Professorship, University of Utah.
 2015 Asia Center Travel Grant, University of Utah.
 2015 College of Humanities International Travel Grant recipient.
 2013 American Institute of Indian Studies Conference Award (co-PI), New Delhi. \$9000.
 2012-2013 Tanner Humanities Center Fellow.
 2012 Dee Grant recipient (co-PI), University of Utah.
 2011 Great Ideas in the Humanities Award.
 2009 (Fall Semester) ½ Sabbatical leave.
 2006 University Faculty Fellow, University of Utah.
 2006 University Research Committee grant recipient, University of Utah.
 2004 University Research Committee grant recipient, University of Utah.
 2003 University of Utah International Faculty Professional Development Grant recipient.
 2000 Department of History, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Dissertation research travel award.
 1996-1999 United States Government, Title VI, Foreign Language Area Studies Scholarship: Hindi, Urdu and Telugu.
 1999-2000 American Institute of Indian Studies. Finalist for dissertation research scholarship.
 1999-2000 United States Institute of Peace. Finalist for dissertation research scholarship.

TEACHING AWARDS AND HONORS:

2013-2014 Ramona Cannon Teaching Award nominee.
 2011-2012 Phi Alpha Theta Instructor of Distinction award.
 2011-2012 Ramona Cannon Teaching Award finalist.
 2010-2011 Virgil Award for Graduate Student Teaching and Service.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SERVICE:

2026 External Reviewer. Article submission. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*.
 2023 – present. Member, Acquisition Board, Primus Press (New Delhi), series on “Nature, Culture, and Colonialism in South Asia.”
 2021 External Reviewer. Manuscript submission. Cambridge University Press, UK.
 2017 – present. *Journal of Deccan Studies*. Board Member, Hyderabad, India.
 2016 – present. Member, Advisory Board, Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi.
 2010 – present. American Institute of Indian Studies representative for University of Utah.
 2009 – 2026. Associate Editor, *India Review*.
 2014 External Reviewer, Oxford University Press, New York. 2012 External Reviewer, *Environment and History*.
 2012 External Reviewer, Oxford University Press, Karachi.
 2009 External Reviewer, Oxford University Press, New York.
 2007 WCAAS Conference organizing committee member.
 2006 US Department of Education Title VI South Asia National Resource Center reviewer.
 2001-2007. *Journal of Deccan Studies*. Board Member, Hyderabad, India.
 2002 April. Volunteer, Judge, University of Wisconsin History Day.

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH SERVICE:

2025-2026 Chair, Tenured Faculty Review Committee.

2024-2025 Chair, Department of History faculty search in modern France and Francophone Africa.

2024 Secretary RPT Advisory Committee (formal reviews), Department of History.

2024-2025 Senator. University of Utah Senate, College of Humanities elected member.

2024 Organizer. Professor Malvika Maheshwari visit and lecture to the University of Utah with co-sponsors: the Department of History, the Asia Center, the Tanner Humanities Center, the Division of Gender Studies, the College of Humanities, the department of Art History, the department of Political Science, and the Center for Latin American Studies.

2024-2025 Chair, RPT Ad-hoc Committee for formal fourth year review, Department of History.

2024-2025 Member, RPT Ad-hoc Committee for formal fourth year review, Department of History.

2024-2025 Member, RPT Ad-hoc Committee for promotion to tenure, Department of History.

2023-2024 Chair, Department of History faculty search in the Middle East.

2023-2024 Member, Undergraduate Committee, Department of History.

2023-2024 Member, Executive Committee, Department of History.

2023-2024 Member, RPT Committee for promotion to Professor, Department of History.

2018-2022 Chair, Department of History.

2017-2018 Retention, Promotion, Tenure (RPT) Chair, Department of History.

2017-2018 Research Member, RPT Committee, Department of World Languages.

2017-2018 Member, Graduate Committee, Department of History.

2017-2018 Member, Ad-hoc committee on byelaws, Department of History.

2017-2018 Member, Ad-hoc committee on diversity, Department of History.

2015-2016 Member, Graduate Committee, Department of History.

2015-2016 Member, Ad-hoc Committee for third-year review, Department of History.

2015-2016 Member, College Executive Committee, College of Humanities.

2015 March. Guest speaker, Kearns High School UT., Latinos in Action class.

2014-2015 Member, Graduate Committee, Department of History.

2014-2015 Chair, Department of History Wilson Lecture Committee

2013-2014 Member, Asian Studies Graduate and FLAS Committee.

2013-2014 Member, Southeast Asia search committee, Department of History.

2013-2014 Chair, Ad-hoc Committee for third-year review.

2013-2014 Member, Department of History Wilson Lecture Committee

2012-2013 Chair, Teaching Committee, Department of History.

2012-2013 Member, Days of Remembrance Committee.

2012-2013 Member, College Executive Committee, College of Humanities.

2011-2012 Member, Ad-hoc Committee for third-year review, Department of History.

2011-2012 Member, Teaching Committee, Department of History.

2011-2012 Member, Graduate Committee, Asian Studies Program.

2011-2012 Member, Graduate Committee, Department of History.

2011-2012 Chair, Wilson Lecture Committee, Department of History.

2010-2011 Member, Department of Language and Literature job search in South Asia.

2010-2011 Member, Colonialism search committee, Department of History.

2009-2011 Director of Graduate Studies, Department of History.

2008-2009 Honors Thesis Advisor, Department of History.

2008 Program Director University of Utah Study Abroad: Program in India, “Mughals to Modernity”.

2007-08 UROP Research Paper Advisor.

2007-08 Graduate Committee, Department of History.

2007-08 Undergraduate Committee, Department of History.

2006-08 International Studies Board, University of Utah.

2006-08 International Exchange Committee, University of Utah.

2006-2007 Wilson Lecture Committee, Department of History.

2007 University of Utah Tanner Humanities Center teachers’ training speaker on South Asia

2007 University of Utah, College of Humanities Happy Hour speaker, “How to be Scandalous in the British Raj”.

2005-2006 University of Utah, Presidential Task Force on Internationalization.

2005-08 University Undergraduate Studies Intellection Exploration Humanities Area Committee.

2005-2006 Executive Committee, Department of History.

2005, 2006, 2007 Graduate Committee, Department of History.

2005 June. Guest speaker, Park City Library, Park City Utah, “One Book” Program.

2005 April. Volunteer, Judge, University of Utah History Day.

2005 March. Volunteer, Judge, University of Utah Humanities Essay contest.

2004-2005 University of Utah Title VI International Studies Seminar participant.

2004-2005 Wilson Lecture Committee, Department of History.

2003-2004. *Asian Studies Update*. Writer and Editor newsletter, University of Utah.

2003-2004 Undergraduate Committee, Department of History.

2004-present. International Studies Major faculty member.

2002-present. University of Utah Asian Studies Program member.

RESEARCH AND LIVED EXPERIENCE RELATED TRAVEL:

2025 December, Hyderabad.

2024 July, Hyderabad.

2023 February, New Delhi.

2022 September, Hyderabad.

2018 January, Hyderabad.

2017 July, Hyderabad.

2017 February, Hyderabad, Mysore.

2016 January, July, November, Hyderabad. 2015 (Summer) Hyderabad.

2013 (Summer) Hyderabad, New Delhi. 2009 (Summer, Fall) Hyderabad.

2008 (Spring) New Delhi, Agra, Lucknow.

2006 (Fall) New Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Lucknow. 2006 (Summer) Leiden, The Netherlands.

2005 (Summer) Southampton, UK.

2004 (Summer, Fall) London, New Delhi, Hyderabad. 2004 (Summer) Penang, Malaysia.

2003 (Summer) Hyderabad, Delhi, Lucknow, Kotwara (UP). 2000-2001, 1997-1998: Hyderabad.

1992 (Winter) New Delhi.

1977-1978: Visakhapatnam, New Delhi, Mussoorie. Travel also in Italy, France, Spain, and Germany.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT:

Project Assistant:

2002 January – May. University of Wisconsin – Madison, Department of Political Science. Project Assistant to Prof. Aseema Sinha. Conducted research on the dominant caste groups in the modern Indian business community. This included: comparative analysis of predominant caste groups in pre and post-liberalization period. Analysis of India's annual budget from 1985 to 2001, and prepared summary reports on major budget initiatives. Analysis of relevant media coverage from a wide variety of printed and electronic sources. Reviewed current theories on liberalization in India (April-May). Conducted both independent and collaborative work with monthly meetings to assess progress, share materials and evaluate future direction of research.

Monitor:

1997 – 1998. University of Wisconsin – Madison, College Year in India Program, Hyderabad, India. Responsible for the program in Hyderabad. This included: assisting students on the program with all aspects of living overseas including orientation, cultural awareness, academic supervising and personal support. Responsible for program staff (eight people) including salary, schedule, job responsibilities and program house operation. Created monthly budget to be sent to Madison for the administration. Responsible for program budget of over 1 million rupees. Served as liaison between program and members of the academic, government and business community in Hyderabad.