

Mitra Sharafi

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

Professional status

Evjue-Bascom Professor of Law, [University of Wisconsin Law School](#) and [Legal Studies](#) program,
with [History](#) and [Center for South Asia](#) affiliation, 2022+

Research interests: South Asian legal history & socio-legal studies • legal history of empire & colonialism • history of forensic science • history of the legal profession & legal education • history of law books & publishing • legal pluralism • law & religion • law & minorities

Previous academic appointments

2018-22 **Professor**, UW Law School and Legal Studies program
2014-18 **Associate Professor**, UW Law School and Legal Studies program
2007-14 **Assistant Professor**, UW Law School and Legal Studies program
2005-7 **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, 1887-1927”
1998-9 **Bachelor of Civil Law** (LLM equivalent), Oxford University
(Magdalen College)
1996-8 **Bachelor of Arts (Law)** (JD equivalent), Cambridge University
(Sidney Sussex College)
1992-6 **Bachelor of Arts (History)**, McGill University

Selected research grants & fellowships

2020-21 Frederick Burkhardt Fellowship for Recently Tenured Scholars, American Council of Learned Societies: residential fellowship linked to the [National Center for the Humanities](#), NC ([class of 2018](#))
fall 2018 [Shelby Cullom Davis Center Fellowship](#), History Dept., Princeton University: residential fellowship
2018-24 [H. I. Romnes Faculty Fellowship](#): research funds (\$60,000) provided by the UW–Madison Office for the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education with funding from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation

summer 2018	National Endowment for the Humanities summer stipend award: no. FT-259722 (\$6,000)
spring 2017	UW Institute for Research in the Humanities Resident Fellowship
fall 2011 & fall 2012	Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) Mellon Fellowship for Assistant Professors , School of Historical Studies, IAS, Princeton, NJ (\$145,440)
2009-11	National Science Foundation "Law & Social Sciences" research grant: Award no.SES-0850581 (\$87,212)
2007	South Asia Council's Dissertation Award Grand Prize (Canada)
2003-4	Social Science Research Council's International Dissertation Research Fellowship

Scholarly publications

(most available electronically [here](#))

Books

in progress	Monograph, Fear of the False: Forensic Science and the Law of Crime in Colonial South Asia
in progress	Monograph (or multi-article project) on non-European students (including South Asians) who studied law at the Inns of Court in London, c. 1860s-1960s
2014	Monograph, Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia: Parsi Legal Culture, 1772-1947 (New York: Cambridge University Press), with South Asian edition (Ranikhet, India: Permanent Black, 2017); winner of the 2015 J. Willard Hurst Award for best book in socio-legal history, Law and Society Association (LSA)
2010	Lectures, <i>Colonial Parsis and Law: A Cultural History: Government Fellowship Lectures 2009-2010</i> (Mumbai: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute)

Articles (* indicates peer-reviewed)

in progress	Article projects on (1) death investigation (coroners), (2) suicide, and (3) the history of law books and publishing in the Anglosphere
2023	* "Indian Constitutionalism, the Rule of Law, and Parsi Legal Culture," <i>Indian Law Review</i> 7:3, 259-80 (Open Access)
2021	* "Abortion in South Asia, 1860-1947: A medico-legal history," <i>Modern Asian Studies</i> 55:2 (2021), 371-428 (Open Access)
2015	"South Asian Legal History," <i>Annual Review of Law and Social Science</i> 11, 309-36
2010	* "The Marital Patchwork of Colonial South Asia: Forum Shopping from Britain to Baroda," <i>Law and History Review</i> 28:4, 979-1009
2010	* "The Slaves and Slavery of Marie Claire Chabert: Familial Black Slaveholding in Antebellum Louisiana," <i>J. of Civil Law Studies</i> 4:1, 187-215

- 2009 *[“The Semi-Autonomous Judge in Colonial India: Chivalric Imperialism meets Anglo-Islamic Dower and Divorce Law,”](#) *Ind. Econ. and Social Hist. Rev.* 46:1, 57-81
- 2008 [“Justice in Many Rooms since Galanter: De-romanticizing Legal Pluralism through the Cultural Defense,”](#) *Law & Contemp. Problems* 71, 139-46
- 2007 [“A New History of Colonial Lawyering: Likhovski and Legal Identities in the British Empire,”](#) *Law & Social Inquiry* 32:4, 1059-94
- 2003 *[“The Slave Ship Manuscripts of Capt. Joseph B. Cook: A Narrative Reconstruction of the Brig Nancy’s Voyage of 1793,”](#) *Slavery & Abolition* 24:1, 71-100

Book chapters

- forthcoming* “South Asians at the Inns of Court: Empire, Expulsion, and Redemption circa 1900” in Jacob Cogan and Kenneth Mack, eds., *In Between and Across: Legal History without Boundaries* (Oxford University Press), Festschrift in honor of Hendrik Hartog
- 2019 “The Imperial Serologist and Punitive Self-Harm: Bloodstains and Legal Pluralism in British India” in Ian Burney and Christopher Hamlin, eds., [Global Forensic Cultures: Making Fact and Justice in the Modern Era](#) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 60-85; winner of the [2020 LSA Article Prize](#)
- 2018 “Indian Law” in Markus Dubber and Christopher Tomlins, eds., [Oxford Handbook of Legal History](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 839-57
- 2017 [“Parsi Life Writing: Memoirs and Family Histories of Modern Zoroastrians”](#) in A. Hintze and A. Williams, eds., *Holy Wealth: Accounting for This World and the Next in Religious Belief and Practice. Festschrift for John R. Hinnells* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz), 251-77
- 2015 [“Law and Modern Zoroastrians”](#) in M. Stausberg and Y. Vevaina, eds., *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell), 299-312
- 2012 [“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), 258-83
- 2007 [“Judging Conversion to Zoroastrianism: Behind the Scenes of the Parsi Panchayat Case \(1908\)”](#) in J. R. Hinnells and A. Williams, eds., *Parsis in India and the Diaspora* (London: Routledge Curzon), 159-80

Other scholarly work

- 2023 [Book review](#) of E. Claire Cage, *The Science of Proof: Forensic Medicine in Modern France* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), *Isis* 114:3, 666-7
- 2020 [“Mixing Legal Systems in the British Empire,”](#) University of Wisconsin Legal Studies Research Paper No.1591, 1-10 (unpublished)

- fall 2017 [“Hijacking Law,”](#) *Law & Social Inquiry* 42:4, 1240-7, essay responding to symposium review essays on my 2014 book by Assaf Likhovski, Bhavani Raman, Winnifred Sullivan, and Sylvia Vatuk
- 2016 [Book review](#) of David Arnold, *Toxic Histories: Poison and Pollution in Modern India* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), *Law and History Rev.* 34:4, 1071-3
- 2007 Encyclopedia articles: “Insurance” and “The Nancy” in Toyin Falola and Amanda Warnock, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Middle Passage* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press), 230-1, 286-7

Teaching & Mentoring

Courses taught

- 2007+ UW Law School: Contracts I
- 2008+ UW Legal Studies/History (undergraduate; syllabi available [here](#)): History of Forensic Science, Legal Pluralism, Law & Colonialism, Lawyers & Judges in the British Empire

Campus awards

- 2022 Slesinger Award for Excellence in Mentoring; Women, Trans, & Non-Binary Faculty Mentoring Program
- 2021 Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award
- 2019 Postdoc Mentoring Award, UW–Madison Postdoctoral Association

Other

- Keynote/plenary addresses: “Falsity and Forensic Science in South Asian Legal History,” 3rd Asian Legal History Conference (Hong Kong, 20 June 2023); “Interdisciplinary Studies and Forensics: Why history matters” (available [here](#) at 1:11:05+), 1st International Symposium on Crime Studies, O. P. Jindal Global University (Delhi/virtual, 28 Oct.2020)
- Selected invited papers or presentations on “Fear of the False” project (2017-23): Boston College Legal History roundtable, Georgetown Legal History Colloquium, Indiana U. Bloomington Arts and Humanities Festival: India Remixed, Max Planck Institute for Legal History-Tel Aviv U. Law’s Transnational Legal History Workshop, NYU S. Asia lecture series, Davis Center for Historical Studies (Princeton), Stanford Center for Law and History, SUNY-Buffalo Law School’s Baldy Center, U. of Michigan’s Center for S. Asian Studies, U. of Pennsylvania’s Dept. of History & Sociology of Science, Yale Law School Legal History Forum
- Selected conference talks on “Fear of the False” project (2014-22): Am. Assoc. for the History of Medicine, ASLH, History of Science Society, LSA
- Service on campus: UW Law School (including Tenure & Promotions committee chair, 2015-16 & 2021-22), Legal Studies program, Center for South Asia (including conference chair of Annual Conference on S. Asia 2015 & 2016), History (including hiring committees: South Asia, History of Life Sciences); campus-level: Named Awards, UK/Ireland Scholarships

- Am. Society for Legal History (ASLH): President-elect (2023-25); faculty host of [J. Willard Hurst Summer Institute in Legal History](#) (2017, 2019), Stein Book Award committee chair (2017, 2018), Nominating committee (2012-15), Program committee co-chair (2013-14)
- Law and Society Association (LSA): trustee, Class of 2021; Hurst Prize committee member (2016); South Asia Collaborative Research Network 22 (organizer, 2005-22)
- Op-ed and magazine articles: [Himal Southasian](#), [Times of India](#), [Scroll.in](#), [Madras Courier](#), [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#)
- Interviews with: [Am. Historical Association](#), [New Books Network](#), [The Swaddle](#), [Borderlines \(Comp. Studies of S. Asia, Africa and the Middle East\)](#), [Chapati Mystery](#), [Chronos](#) (McGill U.)
- Short videos (*The Swaddle*): [Why did widow remarriage change abortion laws in India?](#) • [How did epidemics create an opportunity for murder by poison?](#) • [Why was poison stereotyped as the 'woman's weapon'?](#)
- Podcast: [CRIME: CSI++](#), Flash Forward with Rose Eveleth
- Host of [South Asian Legal History Resources](#) (2010+) and a [Legal History Blogger](#) (2016-21)
- Workshops co-organized: Global Forensic Histories workshop (virtual, 2021); 1st-15th Annual South Asia Legal Studies Workshop (UW Law School/virtual, 2007-21); Comparative Legal Histories workshop: Colonial/Postcolonial India and Mandatory Palestine/Israel (Stanford Law School, 2011)
- Article submissions peer reviewed for: *Am. Hist. Rev.* • *Austr. Feminist LJ* • *Am. J. of Comparative Law* • *Eng. Historical Rev.* • *History Compass* • *Indian Econ. and Social History Rev.* • *Itinerario* • *J. of Colonialism and Colonial History* • *J. of Law, Culture and the Humanities* • *J. of Legal History* • *Law and History Rev.* • *Law & Social Inquiry* • *Modern Asian Studies* • *ShariaSOURCE* • *South Asia: J. of South Asian Studies*
- Book proposals and manuscripts reviewed for: Ashgate • Cambridge University Press • Cornell UP • Manchester UP • Oxford UP (India) • Princeton UP
- Grant, workshop & fellowship applications reviewed for: School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study • Law & Humanities Junior Scholars Workshop • National Humanities Center • National Science Foundation • Soc. Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada • Canada Research Chair Program
- Archival & Special Collections research experience (selection): Bombay High Court (Mumbai) • British Library (London) • Honourable Society of the Inner Temple (London) • Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn (London) • Honourable Society of the Middle Temple (London) • Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.) • Musée Guimet (Paris) • National Archives (London) • National Archives of India (Delhi) • National Library of Wales (Aberystwyth) • Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (Delhi) • Privy Council Office (London) • Riesenfeld Rare Books Research Center, University of Minnesota Law Library (Minneapolis) • University of Cambridge Archives (Cambridge) • University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections (Glasgow) • Rare Book School (Rare Law Books course, 2018)
- Languages: English (native), French (excellent); Gujarati, German (intermediate reading knowledge); Hindi, Persian, Latin (basic knowledge)

(5-page version of CV; updated on 12 Aug. 2024)