

GIL BEN-HERUT

Curriculum Vitae

University of South Florida
Department of Religious Studies
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Tampa, FL 33620

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[Faculty Webpage](#)



[Detailed Webpage](#)

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2024–Present Professor

South Asian Religions, Department of Religious Studies,
University of South Florida

2019–2024 Associate Professor

South Asian Religions, Department of Religious Studies,
University of South Florida

2013–2019 Assistant Professor

South Asian Religions, Department of Religious Studies,
University of South Florida

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

South Asian devotional (*bhakti*) traditions, premodern religious literature in the Kannada language, Hindu narrative traditions, sainthood and hagiography, technology development in Digital Humanities

EDUCATION

2013

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion, Emory University

Dissertation: “Narrating Devotion: Representation and Prescriptions of the Early Kannada Śivabhakti Tradition according to Harihara’s *Śivaśaraṇara Ragalegalu*.”

Chair: Laurie Patton. Readers: Velcheru Narayana Rao, Sara L. McClintock, R. V. S. Sundaram.

2007

Master of Arts (*summa cum laude*)

Religious Studies Program of the School of Philosophy, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel

Thesis: “The Descent of Goddess Gaṅgā: A Translation of a *Mahākāvya* Poem from Sanskrit into Hebrew and Research on the Political, Historical, and Religious Background of This Work.” Advisor: Yohanan Grinshpon.

2004 **Bachelor of Arts (*summa cum laude*)**
East and South Asian Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel

PUBLICATIONS

Books

In progress *A History of Speaking: Artifact and Authority in Kannada Devotional Songs.* Supported by the Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Award and the Senior Short Term Research Grant, funded by the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), for undertaking research between 2023 and 2025.

Forthcoming *Stories of Shiva's Saints: Selections from Harihara's Ragales.* Co-translated with R. V. S. Sundaram. Supported by the Collaborative International Research Grant, American Academy of Religion (AAR). The AAR Religion in Translation Book Series. New York: Oxford University Press.

2018 *Śiva's Saints: The Origins of Devotion in Kannada according to Harihara's Ragaleḡaḡu.* New York: Oxford University Press. [☞](#)

Awards: 2020 Best Book Award, Southeastern Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS); 2019 Best First Book, Southeastern Medieval Association (SEMA).

Podcast interview in *New Books Network (NBN)*. Interviewer: Dean Accardi. February 19, 2019 [☞](#).

Reviews: (1) *Book Reviews, History of Religions* vol. 60: 2, by Sarah Pierce Taylor, November 2020 [☞](#); (2) *Book Reviews, Religion*, by Caleb Simmons, October 12, 2020 [☞](#); (3) *Religious Studies Review* vol. 46: 1, by John Cort, March 2020 [☞](#); (4) *Book Reviews, The Hindu*, by H. S. Shivaprakash, December 5, 2019 [☞](#); (5) *Reading Religion: A Publication of the American Academy of Religion*, by Elaine Fisher, February 6, 2019 [☞](#).

2015 Anonymous. *Udayādityālaṅkāraṃ: A Compendium on Poetry Dedicated to King Udayāditya. Transliteration, English Translation and Notes.* Co-translated with R. V. S. Sundaram. Mysuru: Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada, Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL).

Edited Volumes

2020 *Regional Communities of Devotion in South Asia: Insiders, Outsiders, and Interlopers*, co-edited with Jon Keune and Anne Monius. London, New York: Routledge.

Podcast interview in *New Books Network (NBN)* with Jon Keune. Interviewer: Raj Balkaran. April 28, 2021 [↗](#).

Review: *Religious Studies Review* vol. 46: 1, by John Cort, March 2020 [↗](#).

Refereed Journal Articles

- Forthcoming* “Early Traces of *Vacanas* in Kannada Literature.” *NESAR: New Explorations in South Asia Research*, issue 1. The University of Chicago Library.
- Under Review* “‘Rav Yehuda Hindua’: Indian Myth and the Babylonian Talmud.” Co-authored with Joshua Kullock.
- 2022 “Brahmin or Vīraśaiva? The Kannada Poet Rāghavāṅka between Śaiva Idioms of Power and Devotion.” *Journal of Hindu Studies* 15: 1–25. [↗](#)
- 2021 “From Marginal to Canonical: The Afterlife of a Late Medieval Telugu Hagiography in a Kannada Translation.” *Translation Studies* 14 (2): 133–49. *Special Issue on Translation in South Asia: A Cultural History of Texts and Multilingual Practices*, edited by Hephzibah Israel. [↗](#)
- 2016 “Things Standing Shall Move: Temple Worship in Early Kannada Śivabhakti Hagiographies.” *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 20 (2): 129–58.
- 2015 “Figuring the South-Indian Śivabhakti Movement: The Broad Narrative Gaze of Early Kannada Hagiographic Literature.” *Journal of Hindu Studies* 8 (3): 274–95.
- 2012 “Literary Genres and Textual Representations of Early Vīraśaiva History: Revisiting Ekānta Rāmayya’s Self-Beheading.” *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 16 (2): 129–87.
- 2009 “Sharing Language: On the Problem of Meaning in Classic Buddhist and Brahmanical Traditions.” *Religions of South Asia* 3 (1): 125–46.

Book Chapters

- Forthcoming* “Making Less-common Dictionaries Searchable Online: A Case History of a ‘Bottom-up’ Digital Humanities Project”
- Forthcoming* “Debating the Written Word: Modern Vacana Anthologies in Colonial Karnataka,” in *Rethinking Hinduism in Colonial India*, eds. Arun Brahmbhatt, Avni Chag, and Lucian Wang. Co-authored with Vijaykumar Boratti.
- 2023 “‘A Mirror and a Handlamp’: The *Way of the Poet-King* and the Aferlife of the *Mirror* in the World of Kannada Literature Kannada,” in *A Lasting Vision*:

Dandin's Mirror in the World of Asian Letters, ed. Yigal Bronner. Co-authored with Andrew Ollett and Sarah Pierce-Taylor. New York: Oxford University Press, 92–140.

- 2022 “What is the Creation Story in Hinduism?” “Where Did the Different Deities Come From?” “Where Did the Concept of Caste Begin?” “Was Reincarnation Included in the Texts that Hindus Follow?” in *Hinduism in Five Minutes*, ed. Steven W. Ramey. Bristol: Equinox Publishing.
- 2020 “Introduction,” in *Regional Communities of Devotion in South Asia: Insiders, Outsiders, and Interlopers*, eds. Gil Ben-Herut, Jon Keune, and Anne Monius. Co-authored with Jon Keune and Anne Monius. London, New York: Routledge, 1–11.
- 2020 “Arguing with Vaiṣṇavas, Annihilating Jains: Two Religious Others in Early Kannada Śivabhakti Hagiographies,” in *Regional Communities of Devotion in South Asia: Insiders, Outsiders, and Interlopers*, eds. Gil Ben-Herut, Jon Keune, and Anne Monius. London, New York: Routledge, 54–72.
- 2019 “Religious Equality, Social Conservatism: The Shiva-bhakti Community as Imagined in Early Kannada Hagiographies,” in *Bhakti and Power: Debating India's Religion of the Heart*, eds. John Stratton Hawley, Christian Lee Novetzke, and Swapna Sharma. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 38–48.
- 2011 “Nāyaka Elaborations of Personhood: A Reading of *The Descent of Gaṅgā* by Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita,” in *World without Borders: Being Tamil, Being Human (3rd Tamil Studies Conference, University of Toronto)*, ed. R. Cheran. Toronto: TSAR Publications, 72–85.

Encyclopedia Entries

- 2020 “‘I Sing as Love Commands the Tune!’: The Devotional Poetry of Basavanna.” An encyclopedia entry. *A Companion to World Literature*, eds. Ken Seignourie, Susan Andrade, Chris Lupke, B. Venkat Mani, Wen-chin Ouyang, and Dan Selden. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Book and Dissertation Reviews

- 2021 *Dharma and Halacha: Comparative Studies in Hindu-Jewish Philosophy and Religion*, eds. Ithamar Theodor and Yudit Kornberg Greenberg. 2018. Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books. Published in *Reading Religion: A Publication of the American Academy of Religion*. [↗](#)
- 2013 Online Dissertation Review: “Eknāth Remembered and Reformed: Bhakti, Brahmins, and Untouchables in Marathi Historiography,” by Jon Milton Keune. February 20. [↗](#)

Other Publications

- 2018 Online Journal Article: “Exploring the Ethnographic and Ethical Dimensions of Contemporary Bhakti Movements,” *The Wire*. Co-authored with Richard Davis, Jon Keune, and Hanna Kim. October 29. [↗](#)

DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Professional experience as a programmer; member of the Digital India Learning (DIL) Committee, American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS); active collaborator in digital projects about South Asian texts and languages involving open-source and open-access environments, Macintosh and Windows applications development, the Linux ecosystem, Vim/NeoVim and Vim-motions, and related architectures.

Projects in Digital Humanities:

- 2018-Present <https://digitalRoses.net>: *Digital Rapid Online Search Engine for Scanned Materials* (PI and coding). Funded by the Jim Strange Foundation. Searchable online deployment of Kittel’s Kannada-English dictionary (1894). [↗](#)
Review: *Read, Hot and Digitized: More is less? Less is more? Minimal computing in South Asian Lexicography* by Mary Rader, posted on: *TEXLibris The Magazine of the University of Texas Libraries*, May 23, 2022 [↗](#)
- 2016–Present <https://www.regionalbhakti.org/home/>: *Bhakti Virtual Archive (BHAVA)* (co-PI with Jon Keune). Funded by: the Jim Strange Foundation, January 2021 to present; Digital Scholarship Grant of the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), November 2020; Carnegie-Whitney Grant, the American Library Association (ALA), February 2019. [↗](#)

Related Publications:

- 2022 <https://tinyurl.com/zen-of-vim>. An article in Medium.com: “The Zen of Vim.” July 9 [↗](#)

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2023 Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Award for 2023-2024. April. [↗](#)
- 2023 Senior Short Term Research Grant funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS). March.

- 2023 Humanities Institute Summer Grant, University of South Florida. March.
- 2022 Faculty International Travel Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. December.
- 2020 Digital Scholarship Grant, the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS). November.
- 2019 Faculty International Travel Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. December.
- 2019 Carnegie-Whitney Grant, the American Library Association (ALA). February.
- 2018 Collaborative International Research Grant, American Academy of Religion (AAR). December.
- 2018 Office for Research and Scholarship Travel Awards, College of the Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida. November.
- 2018 Faculty International Travel Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. March.
- 2018 Global Citizenship Project's Global Faculty Fellowship, University of South Florida. January.
- 2016 Creative Scholarship Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. April.
- 2016 Faculty International Travel Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. March.
- 2016 College of the Arts and Sciences Internal Awards, University of South Florida. February.
- 2014 College of the Arts and Sciences Internal Awards, University of South Florida. April.
- 2014 Faculty International Travel Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. March.
- 2014 Humanities Institute Summer Grant, University of South Florida. March.
- 2014 New Researcher Grant, Research and Innovation, University of South Florida. February.

- 2013 Humanities Institute International Research Grant, University of South Florida, December.
- 2012 The Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry (FCHI) Graduate Dissertation Completion Fellowship 2012–13, Emory University. April.
- 2010 American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) One-year Tuition Fellowship. April.
- 2007 The Arts and Sciences Fellowship, Emory University. March.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2020 Faculty Outstanding Research Achievement Award, University of South Florida.
- 2020 The 2020 Best Book Award, Southeastern Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS).
- 2019 The 2019 Award for Best First Book, the Southeastern Medieval Association (SEMA).
- 2013 The John Fenton Prize in the Comparative Study of Religion, Emory University. April.
- 2012 Honorary Mention in the Robert Detweiler Essay Prize Competition in Literature and Religion, Emory University. May.
- 2004 South Asian Studies Award to Outstanding Graduate Assistants, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel. December.
- 2003 The Kruvi Foundation Award to Outstanding Students. March.

INVITED LECTURES AND KEYNOTE SPEECHES

- 2024 “קולוניאליזם, קסטות, ושירת דבקות: תנועת הוירה-שאיוה בדרום הודו” [Colonialism, Castes, and Devotional Poetry: The Vīraśaiva movement in South India].” The South and East Asian Departmental Colloquium, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel. June 18.
- 2024 “שירת דבקות בשפת הקנדה בתחילת עידן הדפוס” [Devotional Poetry in the Kannada Language during the Early Print Era].” The Department of Asian Studies, Haifa University, Haifa, Israel. June 17.
- 2024 “Harihara’s Ragale Stories and the Vacanas.” The Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada, Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL). Mysuru, India.

January 18.

- 2023 “Vacanas in Early Śivaśaraṇas’ Stories.” Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in English, Kuvempu University. Shivamogga, India. October 9.
- 2023 “A History of Speaking: Scripture, Authority, and Artifact in Kannada Devotional Poems.” The Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra) and the Department of Religion, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. February 10.
- 2022 “Translations of Harihara’s Śivaśaraṇara Ragaḷegaḷu,” with R. V. S. Sundaram. “Sārāsa Translation Workshop.” Dhvanyaloka Centre for Indian Studies. Mysuru, India. August 8.
- 2022 Keynote Speaker. “The (Im)perfection of Translation: Technology, Positionality, and Readership in a Working Translation from South Asia.” Conference Title: “Transitions and Transformations.” Department of Asian Studies, University of Texas at Austin. February 26.
- 2021 “Translating the Regional, Negotiating Bhakti.” Webinar title: “Current Trends in the Study of Bhakti.” The Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra), University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. May 7. ☑
- 2020 “Early Testimonies for Vacanas in Kannada Literature.” ಅರಿವಿನ ನಿರೀಗಿ Online Lecture Series, lecture #22. Bengaluru Historians’ Society, Itihasa Darpana, and Rhutumana.com. Bengaluru, India (online). December 12. ☑
- 2020 “Contributions of American Scholarship to the Study of Kannada Literature.” Conference title: “ಸಮಕಾಲೀನ ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಸಂದರ್ಭ: ಕನ್ನಡ ಪ್ರಜ್ಞೆ ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರತಿಕ್ರಿಯೆ [Contemporary Cultural Matters: Breakthroughs and Reactions in Kannada]”. Department of Kannada, Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu. Kuvempu University Sahyadri Commerce and Management College. Shimoga, India (online). September 20.
- 2020 “My Guru: A Decade Long of Collaboration.” Webinar title: “Life and Works of Prof. R. V. S. Sundaram.” Department of Kannada, University of Madras, Chennai, India (online). August 29.
- 2019 “האם 'העשירים בונים מקדשים לשיוה' חפוש אחר עדויות כתובות לשירת דבקות של המאה השנים עשרה. [Is It True that ‘The Rich Will Make Temples for Śiva?’ In Search of Written Testimonies for ‘Spontaneous’ Devotional Poetry]” The South and East Asian Departmental Colloquium, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel. December 31.
- 2019 “Written Traces of ‘Spontaneous’ ‘Songs’ of Devotion in Kannada.” South Asian Religions Colloquium, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University. November

7.

- 2019 “From Old Kannada to Modern English: Current Challenges in Ongoing Translations,” with R.V. S. Sundaram. Bangalore International Centre (BIC), Bengaluru, India. August 10. [↗](#)
- 2019 Keynote Speaker. “Epic Churnings: Moral, Ethical, and Philosophical Dimensions of a Classical Indian Myth.” Conference title: “Transcontinental Migrations: Selfhood, Community, and Nature in World Philosophies.” Philosophy Graduate Student Organization, University of South Florida. April 5.
- 2018 “Two Critical Interventions in the History of Kannada Devotional Literature.” The Center for the Study of Social Exclusion & Inclusive Policy, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, India. July 2.
- 2017 “Saints as Arguments: Society and Religion in Early Hagiographies from the Kannada-Speaking Region.” Department of Religious Studies, Yale University. February 16.
- 2017 “Religiously Egalitarian, Socially Conservative: Rethinking the Social Ideals of Early Kannada Śivabhakti.” Department of Religious Studies, University of Virginia. February 2.
- 2016 “History and Remembered History in Medieval South India: Reconsidering the Past of the Heroic Saints of the God Śiva.” The Medieval/Renaissance Colloquium, University of South Florida. March 23.
- 2014 “A Literary Revolution: Kannada Literary History and Harihara’s *Ragaḷeḷaḷu*.” The American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), Mysore, Karnataka, India. July 14.
- 2014 “Things Standing Shall Move: A Look at the Vīraśaiva Tradition of South India.” The Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra), University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. April 3.
- 2014 “Attaining the Void and Winning over Tāntrikas: Vīraśaiva Hagiographies and Mystical Experience.” The Religious Studies Department, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida. March 20.
- 2013 “Imagined Courtly Interactions, Historical Political Negotiations.” The South and East Asian Departmental Colloquium, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel. June 4.
- 2013 “Speaking of Śiva’s Saints: Reconstructing Early Vīraśaivism in the Kannada-Speaking Regions.” West and South Asian Religions Colloquium, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. March 28.

- 2012 “Serving the King, Devoted to the God: Prescribing Political Resistance in Thirteenth-Century South-Indian Hagiographies.” Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. November 7.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Workshops and Panels Organized

- 2024 Co-organizer of “The Bhakti Virtual Archive (BHAVA): Present and Future.” A round table at the 52th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. November 2.
- 2024 Co-organizer of “*Śāstrīya Kannaḍa Adhyayanada Aṃtārāṣṭrīya Śībira* (An International Camp of Learning Classical Kannada).” A three-day camp with 30 participants with the collaboration of the Kannada Development Authority and the Karṇāta Centre for Classical Kannada. Karnataka State Open University, Mysuru, India. September 27 to 29.
- 2024 “Exploring BHAVA: a New Digital Tool for Bhakti Studies.” A two-day workshop with fourteen participants and three invited lectures, funded by the James Strange Foundation, University of South Florida, Sarasota campus. March 7 to 9.
- 2022 Planning member of “Sensing Bhakti.” A preconference symposium at the 50th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 19.
- 2022 Co-organizer of “Scripture and the Aesthetics of Violence: Comparative Perspectives on World Religions and the Social Reception of Their Narratives about Violence.” A workshop hosted by the Department of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida, Diversity Studies Centre Oslo (DISCO) at Oslo Metropolitan University, and the Centre for Research on Extremism (C-REX) at the University of Oslo. Location: University of South Florida, St. Petersburg campus. January 15 and 16.
- 2021 Co-organizer of “Print, Representation, and Formation of Bhakti in the Long Nineteenth Century.” A symposium at the 49th Annual Conference on South Asia (online), University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 21.
- 2020 Organizer of “Contexts and Practices of Translating Premodern South Asia.” The 2020 Southeastern Conference of the Association of Asian Studies (SEC/AAS). Sarasota, Florida. January 18.
- 2019 Planning member of “Bhakti Visualities: Imaging Devotion in the Visual Arts.” A

preconference symposium at the 48th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 17.

- 2018 Planning member of “Contemporary Bhakti Encounters: Devotionalism in Ethnographic and Ethical Perspective.” A preconference symposium at the 47th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 11.
- 2017 Planning member of “Modes of Bhakti: Approaching Bhakti through Cross-disciplinary Conversation.” A preconference workshop at the 46th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 26.
- 2016 Co-organizer of “Beyond Familiar Boundaries: Collaborative Studies of Bhakti across Limits of Language and Region.” A preconference workshop at the 45th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 20.
- 2015 Co-organizer of “Regional Bhakti Traditions: Who’s In, Who’s Out?” A preconference workshop at the 44th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 22.
- 2014 Co-organizer of “On the Idea of the Bhakti Movement: Responding to Jack Hawley's *A Storm of Songs*.” A preconference workshop at the 43rd Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 16.
- 2014 Co-organizer of “Bhakti between the Elite and the Popular: Religion, Poetics, and Audience in the South-Asian Vernaculars.” A two-day workshop at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 19-20.

Presentations

- 2024 Participant in a review panel of *Mirabai: The Making of a Saint* by Nancy M. Martin, Oxford University Press, 2023. DANAM Annual Book Review. Held in conjunction with the 2024 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Diego, California. November 23.
- 2024 “Attitudes toward the Subaltern in the Early Kannada Śiva Bhakti Tradition,” in “Bhakti Practices from the Subaltern Margins.” The 2024 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Diego, California. November 23.
- 2024 “BHAVA: Technical Details,” in “The Bhakti Virtual Archive (BHAVA): Present and Future.” The 52th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of

- Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. November 2.
- 2024 “The Textualization of Vacanas in the Fifteenth Century and the Problem of Textual Authority,” in the symposium “Textual Authority in Hindu Traditions.” The 52th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 30.
- 2024 “Digital Tools for Classical Kannada,” in the “*Śāstrīya Kannaḍa Adhyayanada Aṃtārāṣṭrīya Śibira* (An International Camp of Learning Classical Kannada).” The Kannada Development Authority and the Karnāta Centre for Classical Kannada. Karnataka State Open University, Mysuru, India. September 28.
- 2024 “Technology, Infrastructure, and UI Practices,” in “Exploring BHAVA: a New Digital Tool for Bhakti Studies.” University of South Florida, Sarasota campus. March 7 to 9.
- 2024 “On Translating from Premodern Kannada: Ragale Stories of Shiva’s Saints by Harihara,” in “Ancient Kannada Literature: Ways of Reading,” an international conference of the Department of Kannada, Central University of Kerala, in association with Central Institute of Indian Languages and Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada (hybrid, delivered online). Kasargod (Kerala), India. February 21.
- 2023 “A Public Launch of the Bhakti Virtual Archive (BHAVA) Project.” The 2023 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas. November 21.
- 2023 Panel Discussion: “The Sanskrit Dilemma Workshop.” The 2023 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas. November 20.
- 2023 “Beyond Good and Evil: Ethics and Aesthetics of Transgression in Early Kannada *Śivabhakti* Narratives” in the 9th Regional Bhakti Scholars Network (RBSN) symposium on “Transgression.” The 51th Annual Conference on South Asia (hybrid, delivered online), University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 18.
- 2023 “Introducing BHAVA: the Bhakti Virtual Archive.” Conference title: “CHiTra Mela V: Research and Pedagogy on South Asia and Global Hindu Traditions.” Hosted by the Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra) and the Department of Religion, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. February 15.
- 2022 Panel Discussion: “Even Less Commonly Taught: Developing and Sustaining Language Education for Under-Resourced South Asian Languages.” The 50th Annual Conference on South Asia (online), University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 21.

- 2022 “Debating the Printed Word: Vacanas and the Modern Turn in Vīraśaivism during the Late Colonial Period.” Rethinking Hinduism in Colonial India: An Online Conference, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies. February 6.
- 2022 “Narrative Extremism and Its Aftermath in a South-Indian Devotional Tradition.” Workshop: “Scripture and the Aesthetics of Violence: Comparative Perspectives on World Religions and the Social Reception of Their Narratives about Violence.” University of South Florida, St. Petersburg. January 15.
- 2021 “Vacanas: From Where? Since When?” The 2021 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas (online). November 23.
- 2021 Roundtable: “Digital Humanities, Digital Communities” in “Identity & Ways of Knowing,” Flagship Program of the School of Culture, History and Language (online), the Australian National University. November 4.
- 2021 “The ‘Modern’ Reconfiguration of the Vachanas and Subsequent Public Debates” in the symposium “Print, Representation, and Formation of Bhakti in the Long Nineteenth Century.” The 49th Annual Conference on South Asia (online), University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 21.
- 2020 “Vacanas: From Where? Since When?” The Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference 2020, Denver, Colorado. March 11. [Postponed due to the pandemic, TBA].
- 2020 “Three Moments in the History of Vacanas.” Conference title: “CHiTra Mela IV: A Symposium for Faculty and Graduate Students in Florida.” Hosted by the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. February 15.
- 2020 “Translating Meter: Comments from an Ongoing Translation of Thirteenth-Century Kannada Hagiographies.” The 2020 Southeastern Conference of the Association of Asian Studies (SEC/AAS). Sarasota, Florida. January 18.
- 2019 “Collaboration in the Regional Bhakti Scholars Network.” The 2019 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Diego, California. November 25.
- 2019 “The Bhakti Turn: Devotional Meters and Translations from Telugu to Kannada in the Thirteenth Century Deccan.” The 48th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 18.
- 2019 “Introducing digitalRoses: Rapid Online Search Engine for Scanned Materials.” The Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference 2019, Denver, Colorado. March 23.
- 2018 “Beyond Lexical Meticulousness: What Can We Learn from ‘Vīraśaiva,’

- ‘*Liṅgāyat,*’ and ‘*Vacana*’ as *Hapax Legomena* in Early Kannada Śivabhakti Literature?” The 2018 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado. November 18.
- 2018 “Writing Saints’ Lives as an Act of Political Dissent in Premodern South India.” The 2018 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado. November 17.
- 2018 “Male Voice, Female Roles: Multiple Readings of a Devotional Story about a Female Saint’s Sexual Labor.” The 47th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 12.
- 2018 “Caught in Triśaṅku’s *Svarga*: The Kannada Poet Rāghavāṅka between Śaiva Idioms of Power and Devotion” for the symposium “After the Śaiva Age: Transformation and Continuity in the Regional Śaivisms of South India.” The 47th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 11.
- 2018 “Ancient Texts, Modern Contexts: Ethnographical Cues for Reading Premodern Bhakti Literature in Kannada” for the symposium “Contemporary Bhakti Encounters: Devotionalism in Ethnographic and Ethical Perspective.” The 47th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 11.
- 2018 “Competing Anthologies of a Pliable Tradition: Form, Structure, and Multiple Visions in Kannada Saints’ Stories.” The 25th European Conference on South Asian Studies, the European Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS), Paris, France. July 24.
- 2018 “Cataloged Bibliographic References for Digital Research on South Asian Devotional (*bhakti*) Traditions.” Conference title: “DHAsia 2018.” With the support of Stanford University, Stanford, California. April 27.
- 2018 “Connected Bhakti Bibliographies Database (CBBB): Challenges and Prospects.” Conference title: “Emory Digital Humanities Symposium: DH for the Study and Teaching of South Asia.” Hosted by Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. April 6.
- 2018 “Digital Asia: Developing the Connected Bhakti Bibliographies Database (CBBB).” Conference title: “CHiTra Mela II, Research and Pedagogy in South Asia and Global Hindu Traditions: A Symposium for Faculty and Graduate Students in Florida.” Hosted by the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. February 10.
- 2017 “Religious Egalitarianism, Social Conservatism: Rethinking Early Kannada Śivabhakti with Harihara’s *Śivaśaraṅara Ragaḷegaḷu*.” Conference title: “CHiTra Mela, Research and Pedagogy in South Asia and Global Hindu Traditions: A

- Symposium for Faculty and Graduate Students in Florida.” Hosted by the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. January 21.
- 2016 “‘Don’t Marry a Jain, Convert Him’: Complicating the Śaiva Vilification of Jains in the Kannada-Speaking Regions.” The 2016 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas. November 20.
- 2016 “South to Mt. Meru: A Comparative View of the Early Tamil and Kannada Śaiva Literatures.” Co-presented with Anne Monius (Harvard University). The 45th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 20.
- 2016 “Implicit Borrowings: Buddhists and Brahminical Cross-Fertilizations in the Classical Philosophical Discourse about Language and Meaning.” Conference title: “Truth and Meaning in Buddhism.” The Center for Advanced Studies, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich. September 12.
- 2016 “From Marginal to Canonical: A Premodern Translation of Saints’ Lives from Telugu to Kannada in the Śivabhakti Tradition.” The 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies, the European Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS), Warsaw, Poland. July 29.
- 2016 “Śiva Assemblies as Sites of Worship in Early Kannada Śivabhakti.” 13th Biennial Conference of Asian Studies in Israel, Tel-Hai College, Israel. May 19.
- 2016 “After the Vacanas, Before the Siddhānta: The Open and Inclusive Vision of Early Kannada Śivabhakti Hagiographies.” Conference title: “Exploring Bhakti: Is Bhakti a Language of Power or of Protest?” Hosted by the South Asian Studies Council, Yale University. May 15.
- 2015 “The King’s Embellishments and the Embellishment of the King: Patronage and Poetics in the Kannada Udayādityālaṅkāraṃ.” Conference title: “A Lasting Vision: Daṇḍin’s Mirror in the World of Asian Letters.” The Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. December 15. ☑
- 2015 “Arguing with Vaiṣṇavas, Annihilating Jains: Two Religious Others in Early Kannada Śivabhakti Hagiographies.” The 44th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 22.
- 2015 “‘Siva, You Are the Ruler of Hampi’: Patronage and Early Kannada Śivabhakti Literature.” The 2015 Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois. March 28.
- 2014 “Translating a Metaphor: Vernacularization at the Verse Level in the Kannada Poetic Treatise the *Kavirājamārgam*.” The 2014 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, San Diego, California. November 24.

- 2014 “The Genealogy of Terminology and its Implication on the Early Kannada Śivabhakti Tradition.” The 43rd Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 16.
- 2014 “Sacred Spaces in Early Vīraśaiva Literature.” International Conference on Sacred Geographies, Religious Cultures, and Popular Practices in History and Imagination, Government Arts College, Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, India. June 28.
- 2014 “Complicating Equality: Resistance to Brahminical Ideology of Exclusion and Negotiation of Social Difference in Early Vīraśaiva Literature.” The 12th Biennial Conference of Asian Studies, Haifa University, Haifa, Israel. May 26.
- 2014 “Poetics, Audience, and Developments in the History of Early Kannada Śivabhakti Literature.” Conference title: “Bhakti between the Elite and the Popular: Religion, Poetics, and Audience in the South-Asian Vernaculars.” Hosted by the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. May 20.
- 2013 “Remembering the Ancient Ones and the Recent Ones: Situating Early Vīraśaivism in Its Broader South Indian Context.” The 2013 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland. November 26.
- 2012 “Royal Patronage and Book Accounting: Kannada Hagiographies about Vīraśaivas at the King's Court.” The 41st Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 14.
- 2012 “Sectarianism in the Domestic Sphere: Thirteenth-Century Kannada Stories about Marriages between Śaivas and Jains.” Conference title: “Monastery Mosque & Temple: Jains, Muslims, and Hindus in the Medieval Deccan (c. 700–1700).” Hosted by the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. April 28.
- 2012 “Pottery as Devotion: A Kannada Tale about a Bhakta who Made Śiva Burst into Dance.” The 2012 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Southeastern (SECSOR) Regional Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia. March 3.
- 2011 “*Rūpaka* Superimposed: A Comparative Look at *Rūpakāṅkāra* in the *Kāvyaśarṣa* and the *Kavirājamārgam*.” Conference title: “Manuscripts on Poetics in Southern Peninsula.” Andhra Pradesh Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Institute, Hyderabad, India. March 19.
- 2009 “Textual Genres and Historical Representations in the Early Vīraśaiva Materials” in the panel “New Directions in the Study of Religion in South Asia.” The 2009 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, Montréal, Canada. November 8.

- 2009 “Reconstructions of Religious Identities in the Vīraśaiva Movement.” The 2009 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Southeastern (SECSOR) Regional Meeting, Greensboro, North Carolina. March 14.
- 2008 “Divine and Human: Nāyaka Elaborations of Personhood.” The 2008 Tamil Studies Conference, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada. May 17.
- 2007 “Man, God, and Goddess in Late Sanskrit Literature.” The Annual Conference for Asian Studies in Israel, Haifa University, Haifa, Israel. May 10.
- 2005 “The Descent of Goddess Gaṅgā: A *Mahākāvya* Poem from Seventeenth-Century Madurai.” Conference title: “Regional Sanskrit Literatures Summer Academy.” Hosted by the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. July 16.

SELECTED COURSES TAUGHT

“Fundamentals of Applied Digital Research in South Asian Languages”
Graduate Seminar

“Classical Epic and Politics in India: The *Mahābhārata* in Context”
Graduate Seminar

“Epic Literature in History: The Many Voices of the Rāmāyaṇa”
Graduate Seminar

“Communities of Devotion in India: Poetry, Saints, Society”
Graduate Seminar

“Major Texts: Reading Religious Literature in Context”
Advanced Undergraduate Course

“Religious Quest in Contemporary Film”
Writing-Intensive, Advanced Undergraduate Course

“Gods and Goddesses of India”
Advanced Undergraduate Course

Directed Reading: The Mahabharata, Literary Readings of Religious Epics,
Environmentalism in South Asia, Sanskrit Texts

SERVICE TO PROFESSION

- 2024-Present Editorial Board Member for *Āray: Kannada Immukhi Kuruḍōdu mattu Daṭṭōdu Mūrutimḡala Anlayin Saṃśōdhanā Patrike* (Kannada Double Peer Review Quaterly Online Research Journal). Chief Editor: Basavaraja Kodagunti, Central University of Karnataka, Gulbarga, India. Since July 2024.
- 2024-Present Co-founder of *karṇāṭa*: Centre for Classical Kannada. Since January 2024.
- 2022–Present Member of the Digital India Learning (DIL) Committee, American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS). Since March 2022.
- 2020–Present Member of the Annual Meeting Travel Grants Jury, American Academy of Religion (AAR). Since January 2020.
- 2014–Present Co-founder and co-chair of the Regional Bhakti Scholars Network (RBSN). Since September 2014. 
- 2020–2021 Member of the Annual Book Award Committee, Southeastern Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS). December 2020 to October 2021.
- 2018–2019 Member of the Planning Committee for Digital Technologies Expo, Association for Asian Studies (AAS). July 2018 to March 2019.
- 2015–2018 Member of Religion in South Asia (RISA) Section Steering Committee, American Academy of Religion (AAR). November 2015 to December 2018.

DEPARTMENTAL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- 2023–Present Committee Member, Technology Committee, College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida. Since May 2018.
- 2019-Present Tenure and Promotion Committee, School of Humanities, University of South Florida. Since August 2019.
- 2017–Present Committee Member, School of Humanities Graduate Committee, University of South Florida. Since August 2017.
- 2017–Present Departmental Liaison, Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE), University of South Florida. Since August 2017.
- 2016–2023 Director of the MA Graduate Program, Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida. Since August 2016.
- 2018–2020 Committee Member, Technology Committee, College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida. Since May 2018.

- 2017 Committee Member, Assistant Professor Search Committee, Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida. September to November.
- 2015 Committee Member, Instructor Search Committee, Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida. April to June.
- 2014–2016 Committee Member, MA Graduate Committee, Department of Religious Studies, University of South Florida. August 2014 to May 2016.
- 2014–2015 Committee Member, Institute for Research in Art (IRA) Advisory Committee, University of South Florida. September 2014 to April 2015.

PUBLIC SERVICE

- 2020–present Member in the Academic Advisory Council of the Kannada Academy, a non-profit organization registered in the United States. Since October 2020. ☑

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION AND WORKSHOPS

- 2022 “Kannada as a Classical Language: Vacanas.” Institute of Cultural Studies of East and South Asia, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg. May 9 to 13.
- 2017 “Comparative Hagiology Workshop: Cross-cultural Approaches to Religious Life Writings.” The 2017 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts. November 17.
- 2017 “Teaching Hinduism Workshop: Teaching Tales: Narrative and Pedagogy in the Hindu Studies Classroom.” The 2017 American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts. November 17.
- 2014 Active Learning vs. Guided Learning, Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE), University of South Florida. March 19.
- 2014 Teaching as a Non-Native Speaker Workshop, Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE), University of South Florida. January 23.
- 2013 “Dissertation into Book Preconference Workshop.” Hosted by the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS). The 42nd Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. October 13–14.
- 2013 Visual Thinking Strategies Workshop, the Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE), University of South Florida, August 9.
- 2010-2011 American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), Advanced Kannada Academic Year program, Mysore, India. September 2010 to April 2011.

2008 Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Kannada Basic Language Structure summer course, Mysore, India. July to August.

GUEST CLASS INSTRUCTION

- 2022 Class topic: “Bhakti Traditions and Scholarship,” in “Religions of India,” an advanced undergraduate course taught by Jonathan Edelmann, University of Florida, April 19.
- 2022 Class topic: “Two Saints in Translations of Poems and Stories,” in “Bhakti Poets,” a graduate seminar taught by John S. Hawley, Columbia University, February 10.
- 2021 Class topic: “Kannada Shiva Bhakti,” in “Bhakti,” a graduate seminar taught by Harshita Mruthinti Kamath, Emory University, March 3.
- 2021 Class topic: “The Vacanas in History and Translation,” in “Love, Translated: Hindu Bhakti,” a graduate seminar taught by John S. Hawley, Columbia University, February 4. [↗](#)
- 2020 Class topic: “Religious Othering and the Problem of History in Premodern India,” in “Global Political Sociology,” a graduate seminar taught by David Jacobson, University of South Florida. November 2.
- 2019 Class topic: “סוגדי צלמים ומנתצם בשירת דבקות מדרום הודו [Icons and Iconoclasts in South Indian Devotional Literature],” in “Space and Place in Hinduism: A Place for the Gods,” an advanced undergraduate course taught by Ehud Halperin, Tel Aviv University, Israel, December 24.
- 2019 Class topic (via video conferencing): “Devotional Literature in Kannada,” in “Poetry of Gods and Kings: A Thousand Years of South Indian Literature,” an advanced undergraduate course taught by Harshita Mruthinti Kamath, Emory University. February 14.

PUBLIC TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2024 Classroom teaching: “American Jewish Humor” with Jerry Cohen. Camp Ramah Darom, Clayton, Georgia. July 16.
- 2024 “Social Aspects in the Ragale Stories.” An open discussion with the Mysore Book Club about *stories of Shiva’s Saints*. February 14.
- 2024 “Akka in Songs and Stories.” A public reading of excerpts from *Stories of Shiva’s*

- Saints*. Heritage House, Mysore, India. February 3.
- 2023 Public Talk: “An Open Conversation about Classical Hindu Texts.” Anokhi Café, Mysore, India. November 7.
- 2022 Classroom teaching: “Rav Yehuda the Hindu.” Camp Ramah Darom, Clayton, Georgia. July 22.
- 2021 Classroom teaching: “A Jewish Reading of Sacred Hindu Texts.” Camp Ramah Darom, Clayton, Georgia. July 9.
- 2021 Podcast interview in New Books Network (NBN): *Regional Communities of Devotion in South Asia: Insiders, Outsiders, and Interlopers*, with Jon Keune. Interviewer: Raj Balkaran. April 28. [☞](#)
- 2019 Podcast interview in New Books Network (NBN): *Śiva’s Saints: The Origins of Devotion in Kannada according to Harihara’s Ragaleḡaḡu*. Interviewer: Dean Accardi. February 19. [☞](#)
- 2014 Radio interview: “The Study of Hinduism as a Field in Religious Studies.” Interviewer: Michael Fenton. Hawk Radio, Hillsborough Community College – Ybor City Campus, Tampa. December 1.
- 2011 Radio interview: “Studying Kannada in Mysore,” Akashvani Radio, Mysore, India. August 5.

LANGUAGES

Research: Sanskrit, Kannada
Others: Hebrew, French

Programming Languages:
C/C++, Java, Python, SQL, XML/HTML/CSS/JavaScript, PHP