



**Pashaura Singh**  
Distinguished Professor and Saini Chair in Sikh Studies  
**Department of Religious Studies**  
2026 CHASS INTN Building  
900 University Avenue  
Riverside, CA 92521

June 24, 2022

### **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

#### **8th Dr. Jasbir Singh Saini Endowed Chair in Sikh and Punjabi Studies Conference** **(May 5-6, 2023)**

#### **Theme of the Conference**

*Sikhs in North America: Remembering Key Historical Events, Challenges and Responses*

#### **Description and Rationale**

Sikhs have been a part of the social fabric of North America for more than 150 years. When discussing the history of Sikhs in North America, there are a series of key events which drastically impacted the Sikh narrative in North America. These events include, but are not limited to, the Anti-Asian riots across the Pacific Northwest Coast, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* of 1923, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the Oak Creek Gurdwara massacre in August of 2012. Major anniversaries for some of these catalyst moments occur between 2021 and 2023. These include the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *U.S. v. Thind* (2023), the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Balbir Singh Sodhi's murder following the 9/11 attacks (2021), and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Oak Creek Gurdwara massacre (2022). In addition, 2023 will also be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the registration of Sikh Dharma International as a recognized non-profit 501c (3) religious organization in the United States. And with all the fallout from the recent expose of Yogi Bhaajan's misconduct during his reign, it might be an appropriate time for updated reflections on Punjabi Sikh and Gora Sikh relations in North America. Scholarship and community activism surrounding Anti-Sikh hate incidents and the archiving of Sikh history on the continent within the past twenty years were developed because of the rise of antagonism, abuse, and discrimination following the two latter incidents. Together, these anniversaries offer us an opportunity to reflect upon the scholarship of Sikhs in North America, and the interconnectedness of many historical threads across boundaries and borders from numerous

perspectives and approaches to touch on intersectional issues such as: racialization, ethnicity, class, gender, criminalization, anti-Sikh hate, Sikh activism (past and present), assimilation, inclusivity, inter-generational trauma, education, and other relevant topics.

For the upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> Sikh Studies Conference at UC Riverside, this call for proposals invites original research papers, activist reflections, and creative engagements (visual art, poetry, etc.) that considers any of these major anniversaries and historical antecedents in Sikh North American history or touches upon the themes listed above. We invite scholars, educators, artists, activists, and others working in Sikh Studies, Asian American Studies, North American Studies, Social Work, Public Health, Education, Ethnic Studies, Women and Gender Studies and other fields to reflect on these pivotal moments.

We invite graduate students to present their current research in this conference.

We also invite community representatives to participate in this conference and provide the community perspective.

### **Timelines / Participation**

This in-person conference will be mainly a two-day event of panel discussions, and will be held on Friday through Saturday, **May 5-6, 2023**, at the newly built Interdisciplinary Building (**Symposium INTS 1113**) of the Riverside Campus of the University of California. The abstracts of the papers are due by **November 30, 2022**, and complete papers by **April 15, 2023**. Attendance at the seminar will be open to graduate students, faculty, and the public.

### **Budget**

The details of the budget will be worked out once we have a clear idea of who will be coming to participate in the conference. The Saini Chair of Sikh Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) will provide funding to cover local expenses, board and lodging, and travel funding to those participants whose proposals have been accepted. Graduate students are encouraged to make their travel arrangements through the Graduate Student Association (GSA) of their institutions.

### **Outcomes**

There are two main outcomes of this project, one immediate and quantitative, and the other long term and qualitative.

The immediate outcome of this conference will be the publication of selected papers emerging from the conference on a coherent theme. The task of soliciting contributions from among the participants and organizing and editing the volume will fall to the chair of the organizing committee of this

conference. It is anticipated that an academic publishing house will be receptive to publish such a volume.

In the long term, this conference will contribute to the on-going process of community building between individual scholars as well as across institutions. This conference provides an opportunity for scholars with otherwise disparate fields of inquiry in Sikh Studies / South Asian Studies to enter conversation with one another. This conference represents a first step in developing further collaborative projects among scholars of UCR and other universities around the world.

## **Organizers**

Chair of the Organizing Committee: Professor Pashaura Singh  
E-mail: [psingh@ucr.edu](mailto:psingh@ucr.edu)

Members: Tejpal Singh Bainiwal  
E-mail: [tbain001@ucr.edu](mailto:tbain001@ucr.edu)

Adam Tyson  
E-mail: [atyso001@ucr.edu](mailto:atyso001@ucr.edu)

Event Coordinator: Irene T. Dotson  
E-mail: [irene.dotson@ucr.edu](mailto:irene.dotson@ucr.edu)