

SJ SINDU
(SINDUJA SATHIYASEELAN)

www.sjsindu.com

EDUCATION:

Doctor of Philosophy, English and Creative Writing, Florida State University, August 2017
Major: Fiction; Minor: Critical Theory; Major Professor: Mark Winegardner
Dissertation: *Blue-Skinned Gods* (novel)

Master of Arts, English and Creative Writing, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, May 2012
Major: Fiction; Minor: Women's and Gender Studies; Major Professor: Judith Slater
Thesis: *Not Quite Nirvana* (novel, later retitled *Marriage of a Thousand Lies*)

Graduate Certificate, Teaching of Writing, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, February 2012

Bachelor of Arts, English, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, May 2009, honors, high distinction
Concentration: Creative Writing; Minors: Business Administration, LGBTQ/Sexuality Studies

CURRENT ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT & AFFILIATIONS:

Assistant Professor of Creative Writing, Virginia Commonwealth University, Fall 2022 – present
Duties: designing and teaching courses in creative writing and literature, directing MFA theses, participating in committee service
Primary department: English; Affiliate department: Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

Visiting Faculty, Warren Wilson College, Spring 2025, Spring 2026
Duties: virtually supervising low-residency MFA students one-on-one, responding to student submissions, attending and teaching at residency

Affiliate Faculty, University of Pennsylvania South Asia Center, Fall 2025 – present

PAST ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT:

Faculty, Creative Writing, Vermont College of Fine Arts, December 2021 – December 2023
Duties: virtually supervising low-residency MFA students one-on-one, responding to student submissions, attending and running workshops during residencies twice a year.

Assistant Professor of Creative Writing (Teaching Stream), University of Toronto Scarborough, 2019 – 2022
Duties: designed and taught courses in creative writing and literature, directed independent studies with undergraduate students working on long-form prose, participated in committee service, developed a new queer studies curriculum and certificate.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Creative Writing, Ringling College of Art & Design, 2017 – 2019
Duties: designed and taught courses in creative writing, literature, and composition; development of creative writing curriculum; Managing Editor for literary journal *SHIFT*.

Graduate Teaching Assistant/Instructor, Florida State University, 2015 – 2017

Graduate Teaching Assistant/Instructor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2011 – 2012

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS: Creative writing (prose – fiction, nonfiction, hybrid, comics/graphic narratives); literature (South Asian diaspora, Tamil diaspora, queer, feminist); critical theory (queer, feminist, critical race); creative writing pedagogy.

PUBLICATION SUMMARY: 2 literary novels; 2 graphic novels; 1 short story collection; 2 hybrid chapbooks; numerous short fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry; 2 peer-reviewed critical articles.

HONORS, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS:

The Story Prize Spotlight Award for *The Goth House Experiment*. 2024.

American Library Association Stonewall Award Barbara Gittings Literature Award Honor Book for *Dominant Genes*. 2023.

Lambda Literary Award Finalist for *Blue-Skinned Gods*. 2022.

Indie Next Pick for *Blue-Skinned Gods*. November 2021.

Martha McCain Faculty Research Fellowship, University of Toronto, 2021.

Dean's Merit Award for Faculty, University of Toronto Scarborough, 2021.

Black River Chapbook Competition Winner for *Dominant Genes*, 2021.

DSC South Asian Literary Prize Longlist for *Marriage of a Thousand Lies*, 2018.

Selected for *Best American Experimental Writing* for "Test Group 4: Womanhood and Other Failures." 2018.

NBC Asian America A to Z influential Asian Americans pick, 2018.

The Publishing Triangle Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction for *Marriage of a Thousand Lies*, 2018.

Lambda Literary Award Finalist for *Marriage of a Thousand Lies*, 2018.

American Library Association Stonewall Honor Book for *Marriage of a Thousand Lies*, 2018.

Golden Crown Literary Society Award for Debut Fiction Finalist for *Marriage of a Thousand Lies*, 2018.

VCU First Novelist Award Finalist for *Marriage of a Thousand Lies*, 2018.

Top 50 Very Short Fictions of 2017 for "I Like to Imagine Daisy from Mrs. Dalloway as an Indian Woman." *Wig Leaf*. 2017.

Split Lip Turnbuckle Chapbook Contest Winner for *I Once Met You But You Were Dead*. 2016. Judged by Sara Lippmann.

Florida State University Spotlight Fiction Award for "Patriots' Day." 2016. Judged by Debra Monroe.

Glimmer Train's Top-25 List for New Writers for "Patriots' Day." Spring 2016

Winged City (Argus Press) Fiction Chapbook Contest, finalist for *I Once Met You But You Were Dead*. 2015

Fiction Vortex Reader's Choice Award for "Miracle Boy." April 2014

Florida State University Legacy Fellowship, 2014 – 2017

Lambda Literary Foundation LGBT Emerging Voices Writing Retreat Fellowship. 2013

New York State Summer Writers Institute Fellowship. 2012

The Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference/Jim Thompson Award. 2009

National Merit Scholarship. 2005 – 2009

PUBLICATIONS – LITERARY NOVELS & COLLECTIONS:

The Goth House Experiment. Soho Press. October 17, 2023. Short story collection.

Awards/honors/features:

- The Story Prize Spotlight Award
- Ms. Magazine's Best Books of 2023
- Amazon Editor's Pick

Description: A tragicomic collection of character-driven stories following an array of loners and artists—a boy with wings, a poet haunted by the ghost of Oscar Wilde, a queer beer brewer, a viral influencer—as they struggle to overcome grief in the wake of divorce, the pandemic, and other significant life changes.

SHELF AWARENESS PRO:

“Sindu invites readers to examine and ultimately accept these characters as they are: narcissistic, loving, unfaithful, righteous, greedy, kind, bigoted. There are no convenient endings here, but readers won't need them. Sindu's characters are terrible, wonderful, and, most of all, human. Will thrill fans of Carmen Maria Machado's *Her Body and Other Parties*.”

TOR.COM:

“Sindu's range as a writer is vast... and the styles and genres on display in this collection are further evidence of that.”

AKIL KUMARASAMY, AUTHOR OF *MEET US BY THE ROARING SEA*:

“A whirlwind of a collection. Bold, timely stories of what it means to live in this surreal world. Sindu's writing is electric.”

V.V. GANESHANANTHAN, AUTHOR OF *BROTHERLESS NIGHT*:

“What a fantastic, imaginative, subversive set of stories—probing the world and its people with questions and narratives that feel pulsingly alive and urgent, grounded in the world we know and also beautifully strange. In SJ Sindu's hands, you will not only upend your assumptions but also name ideas and feelings you didn't know you had. Read this and emerge changed and hungry.”

Blue-Skinned Gods. Soho Press (US & Canada), Legend Press (UK). November 2, 2021. Novel.

Awards/honors/features:

- Lambda Literary Award Finalist for Bisexual Fiction
- Indie Next Pick
- Publisher's Weekly Starred Review & Review of the Day
- The Million's Most Anticipated 2021
- Autostraddle's Best Books of 2021
- Women's National Book Association's Great Group Reads
- Loanstar Pick for November
- Literari First Editions Book Club
- Featured on NPR Weekend Edition & NPR Book of the Day

Description: A young boy grows up as the center of a Hindu cult, worshipped as Kalki, the next and last incarnation of the god Vishnu. His parents market him as a supernatural healer, and he is the focus of the ashram in which he lives. As he grows up, Kalki starts to doubt his abilities, and finally runs away at the age of twenty to discover who he is outside the lies he has always believed.

NEW YORK TIMES:

“It’s impossible not to be hypnotized.... Sindu masterfully renders how our environments bake into our skin.”

THE GUARDIAN:

“*Blue Skinned Gods* is a rich, beautifully told and moving examination of the allure of superstition and legend, the pains of growing up and the pitfalls of lying to others and lying to yourself.”

ROXANE GAY, *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *HUNGER*:

“SJ Sindu has written another brilliant novel in *Blue-Skinned Gods*...Here is a novel about the bonds between brothers, a deceptive tyrant and son, a mother who doesn’t know how to save herself or her child, a boy and how he yearns for his young loves, and so much more. The richness of this story will take hold of you and never let go.”

PUBLISHER’S WEEKLY (STARRED REVIEW):

“[T]he slow-burn narrative by the end becomes incandescent. Sindu’s stunning effort more than delivers on her initial promise.”

***Marriage of a Thousand Lies*.** Soho Press. June 13, 2017. Novel.

Awards/honors/features:

- Publishing Triangle Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction
- Golden Crown Literary Society Award for Debut Fiction
- DSC South Asian Literary Prize Longlist
- Independent Publisher Book Awards Silver Medal for LGBT+ Fiction
- Lambda Literary Award Finalist for Lesbian Fiction
- American Library Association Stonewall Honor Book
- VCU First Novelist Award Finalist
- *Poets & Writers* Notable Fiction Debut

Description: A Sri Lankan American lesbian named Lucky is in a marriage of convenience with a gay man. Together, the two of them present an illusion of heterosexual marital bliss to their conservative families while dating on the side. But when Lucky’s girlfriend gets an arranged marriage, Lucky’s life of lies starts to fall apart. This novel investigates the complex, at times painful intersection of queerness and South Asian American identity.

PUBLISHER’S WEEKLY:

“Perceptive, subtle, and provocative...Sindu’s characters, including Lucky’s divorced parents, are all believably complicated and compassionately observed...in a moving and memorable story.”

MS. MAGAZINE:

“A heart-wrenching debut novel...incorporates love, loss, family, rebirth and growth to tell a captivating story you won’t be able to put down.”

BOOK RIOT:

“So good...heartbreaking in the way it portrayed the characters torn between happiness and custom. SJ Sindu does a beautiful job describing how Lucky feels about living a secret life and her fear of disappointing her parents, and the language and imagery is gorgeous.”

GRAPHIC NOVELS:

Tall Water. Harper Collins. August 12, 2025. YA/Adult crossover.

Awards/honors:

- Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

Description: Nimmi dreams of the mother she’d never met. Though she has her overprotective father and a budding relationship with a boy at her school, she yearns of traveling to Sri Lanka to find and meet the mother who gave her up and refused to leave the island, not even in times of war. When Nimmi’s journalist father gets an assignment to cover Sri Lanka, Nimmi secretly follows him. Guided by a beautiful Red Cross volunteer named Sheila—on whom Nimmi quickly develops a crush—Nimmi and her father make their way to her mother’s hometown, only to get caught in the 2004 tsunami that devastates the island.

KIRKUS:

“This graphic novel’s most powerful pages are the wordless ones showing the tsunami and the wreckage and ruin it leaves behind. The characters’ human resilience and grit shine through beautifully in the straightforward text and fluid artwork executed in a muted palette. The book offers glimpses of the long-running conflict in Sri Lanka, its political and social history, the presence of international media, and the complexities of migration. Parenthood, found family, migration, and war are some of the themes that run through this poignant narrative. A strikingly illustrated story of love and war.”

SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL:

“A compelling, heartfelt story, and an excellent addition to most YA graphic novel collections.”

Shakti. Harper Collins. May 23, 2023. Middle-grade fantasy.

Awards/honors:

- School Library Journal’s Best Graphic Novels of 2023
- Virginia Library Association Youth Diversity Honor Book
- Two starred reviews

Description: Shakti, the twelve-year-old Indian-American daughter of a witch, is used to being the new girl in school. She and her two moms have moved just in time for Shakti to start seventh grade. But as Shakti quickly realizes, something isn't right in her new school. Three pretty, popular girls have all the teachers under a spell, and they're planning something even more diabolical—total domination over the town. Shakti must learn witchcraft from her mother in order to stop them, but when a spell goes wrong, she ends up unleashing a dangerous spirit that threatens the town and even the world.

BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS (STARRED REVIEW):

"This trim graphic novel offers all the right elements of magic, school struggles, and family negotiations to satisfy young readers."

PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY (STARRED REVIEW):

"Ali's richly colored art teems with cultural and naturalistic patterns and texture, and immersive interludes and brief asides provide expansive context into how Shakti's nature-based magic functions. Fiercely courageous characters and a gripping narrative further elevate this exhilarating fantastical adventure."

BOOKLIST:

"This feminist fantasy affirms that all emotions are valid—and valuable—in maintaining a life of balance."

SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL:

"Vibrantly illustrated by Ali, Sindu's debut graphic novel braids Hindu mythology with the importance of family and friendship, creating an accessible book that will be of interest to many readers."

CHAPBOOKS:

Dominant Genes. Black Lawrence Press. February 2022.

Awards/honors:

- Winner of 2020 Black River Chapbook Competition
- American Library Association Stonewall Award Barabara Gittings Literature Award Honor Book

Description: *Dominant Genes* is a hybrid chapbook of poetry and lyric essays exploring family, heritage, and the construction of in-between identities. Linked by content, the pieces vary in form, style, and structure, playing with the fragmentary nature of memory and identity.

I Once Met You But You Were Dead. Split Lip Press. December 2016.

Awards/honors:

- Winner of 2016 Split Lip Turnbuckle Chapbook Contest

Description: *I Once Met You But You Were Dead* is a hybrid chapbook of fiction and nonfiction that juxtaposes girlhood, womanhood, and cultural gender politics with war and violence. The

chapbook's short pieces play with the ways in which the feminine contends with, learns, confronts, negotiates, absorbs, and wields masculine power and violence—leading, ultimately, toward an inquiry into the gray space of identity.

SHORT FICTION:

“RVA 2075.” *Views*, commissioned by Virginia Humanities Institute. Spring 2025.

“Wild Ale.” *Electric Literature*, Recommended Reading. Winter 2020.

“Fundraising.” *War, Literature & the Arts*. Spring 2017.

“Patriots’ Day.” *Fifth Wednesday Journal*. Fall 2016.

Winner of Florida State University’s Spotlight Award for Fiction, March 2016.

Finalist in *Glimmer Train*’s Short Story Award for New Writers, November 2015.

“SpoDew.” *Queen Mob’s Teahouse*. Fall 2016.

“Tractor Town” and “Selenium Sulfide.” *The Normal School*. Fall 2016.

“Take the Boy.” *PRISM International*. Summer 2016.

“I Like to Imagine Daisy from Mrs. Dalloway as an Indian Woman.” *Apt.* June 2016.

Wig Leaf Top 50 Very Short Fictions 2017.

“Yellow School Buses.” *Vinyl Poetry and Prose*. March 2016.

“Miracle Boy.” *Fiction Vortex*. April 2014.

Winner of *Fiction Vortex* Readers’ Choice Award.

An excerpt from *Marriage of a Thousand Lies*. *The Aerogram*. Fall 2013.

“Husband Hunting: the survival of Indian arranged marriage in Worcester, MA.” *Rio Grande Review*. Spring 2011.

“Playing Princess.” *Harpur Palate*. Summer 2008.

CREATIVE NONFICTION:

“A Measure of Men.” *Hippocampus Magazine*. June 2021.

“Art in the Moment – Citizenship.” *Kenyon Review*. April 2021.

“Queer Enough.” *Split/Lip Magazine*. March 2021.

“Banana Tree Wedding.” *The Texas Review*. January 2021.

Honorable Mention in *Glimmer Train*’s Family Matters Contest, 2019.

- “Mother.” *The Cincinnati Review miCRo weekly feature*. December 2020.
- “Bombs Fall Like Pollen.” *Slice Magazine*. October 2020.
- “My Parents Crossed an Ocean and Lost Me.” *Mouths to Feed Zine*. October 2020.
- “Writers Recommend: Aquariums.” *Poets & Writers*. September 2017.
- “Imagine This: Revolutionary Queerness in *Born Confused*.” *Brown Girl Magazine*. September 2017.
- “Balancing Bollywood Inspirations with American Expectations.” *Literary Hub*. June 2017.
- “Think Music: Musical Inspirations for *Marriage of a Thousand Lies*.” *Memorious*. June 2017.
- “Draupadi Walks Alone at Night.” *Good Girls Marry Doctors: South Asian American Daughters on Obedience and Rebellion*. Ed. Piyali Bhattacharya. Aunt Lute Books. September 2016.
- “Sanctuary: Jeanette Winterson Saved My Life.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*. April 2016.
- “In Conversation: Writers SJ Sindu & Gabrielle Bellot on the Publishing Industry, Marginalized Identities, and Being Labeled a Queer Writer.” *Lambda Literary Review*. Co-authored with Gabrielle Bellot. March 2016.
- “Dangerous Art: Thoughts about Danticat’s Immigrant Artist and the Creation Myth.” *VIDA Exclusives*. February 2016.
- “You Can Keep Your Bold Riley: Thoughts on Cultural Appropriation.” *Black Girl Dangerous*. Fall 2014.
- “Mirrors Like Silence.” *Rkvy Quarterly*. Fall 2012.
- “SR-9.” *Brevity*. January 2012.
- “Test Group 4: Womanhood and Other Failures.” *Water~Stone Review*. Fall 2011.

POETRY:

- “I Don’t Know Sari Woman.” *Swamp pink*. 2024.
- “Pant Hoot,” “Girls from the Island,” and “Sun God.” *The Bombay Review*. 2023.
- “How to Survive a Pandemic.” *Prairie Schooner*. 2021.
- “To All My Suitors and the Aunties Who Send Them My Way.” *ARC Poetry*. Fall 2021.
- “Dominant Genes.” *Honey Literary*. Spring 2021.
- “Gods in the Surf.” *Burrow Press Review*. Fall 2020.
- “River Seeds.” *The Tipton Poetry Journal*. Summer 2013.

“The Edges of Her.” *The MacGuffin*. Winter 2012.

“Daughterson.” *JMWW*. Spring 2012.

“Cocoon.” *Sinister Wisdom*, Issue #81. Summer 2010.

ANTHOLOGIES / REPRINTS:

“Wild Ale.” *Be Gay, Do Crime Anthology*. Dzanc Books. 2024.

“Patriots’ Day.” *Electric Literature*. 2023.

“Mother.” *Nonwhite Woman and Nonbinary Anthology*. 2023.

“Dominant Genes,” “How to Survive a Pandemic,” and “Gods in the Surf.” *Out of Sri Lanka: An Anthology of Sri Lankan Poets*. 2023.

“Test Group 4: Womanhood and Other Failures.” *Best American Experimental Writing*. 2020.

“Yellow School Buses.” *Forward: 21st Century Flash Fiction*. 2019.

“Test Group 4.” *The Offing*. March 2017.

“SR-9” and “Test Group 4: Womanhood and Other Failures.” *Two Countries: U.S. Daughters and Sons of Immigrant Parents*. Red Hen Press. 2017.

“Husband Hunting” and “Test Group 4: Womanhood and Other Failures.” *The Female Complaint*. Shade Mountain Press. Fall 2015.

“SR-9.” *Being: What Makes a Man*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press. 2015.

“Cocoon.” *Love, Always: Partners of Trans People on Intimacy, Challenge, and Resilience*. Transgress Press. 2015.

“Test Group 4: Womanhood and Other Failures.” *Becoming: What Makes a Woman*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Gender Programs, 2012.

PEER-REVIEWED CRITICAL PUBLICATIONS:

“Women vs. modernity in Rajinikanth’s Tamil-language films: the mother, the good woman, the modern virgin, and the angry feminist.” *Studies in South Asian Film and Media*. 2020.

“Negotiating the Bi-nary: Strategic Ambiguity and the Non-Nameable Identity in the Classroom.” *Writing on the Edge*. Fall 2014.

BOOK REVIEWS:

Review of *Assembling Ethnicities in Neoliberal Times: Ethnographic Fictions and Sri Lanka's War* by Nimanthi Perera-Rajasingham. *ARIEL*. 2020.

Review of *Ruination* by Katie Jean Shinkle. *Lambda Literary Review*. 2018.

COMPLETED MANUSCRIPTS UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Marriage of a Thousand Lies (TV pilot for serial drama, based on debut novel) – Under consideration at CBC and Crave.

Hangman (Short story treatment for horror feature film, co-written with Geoff Bouvier, Alex Litvak, and Ryan Humphrey) – Under consideration at producer Scott Glassgold's 12:01 Films.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PROGRESS:

Samsaram (literary novel) – A polyphonic novel spanning five hundred years of Tamil rebellion, tracing the transmigration of a single soul across seven lifetimes.

CONFERENCE PAPERS, PANELS, and KEYNOTES:

"Don't Box Me In! Crossing Genres and Defying Categorization." Association of Writers and Writing Programs, Baltimore, March 2026.

"Setting as Character." James River Writers 2025 Writing Show, Richmond VA, November 2025.

"Illuminating the Unfamiliar: Show, Don't Tell in Science Fiction and Fantasy." James River Writers' Festival, Richmond VA, October 2024.

"Talking Pictures: Writing for Graphic Novels." James River Writers' Festival, Richmond VA, October 2024.

"The Laser Focus of the Short Story and Putting Together a Collection." Saints & Sinners Literary Festival, New Orleans, March 2024.

"The Role of the Publisher: Advocacy and Responsibility." Saints & Sinners Literary Festival, New Orleans, March 2024.

"Queer Reimaginings." Virginia Festival of the Book, Charlottesville VA, March 2024.

"Transcending Trauma: Avoiding the pitfalls of sentimentality and reductivism." Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, Kansas City, February 2024.

"Yes, And: A Bisexual Exploration of Genre." Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, Kansas City, February 2024.

Keynote: “Femme Fiction: Irreverence, Resistance, and Intersectionality.” Centre for Feminist Research’s Critical Femininities Conference, York University, August 2023.

“Writing Diversity.” HerStry Conference, virtual, April 2023.

“New Queer Weird.” Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, Seattle, March 2023.

“Time in the Narrative.” Muse and the Marketplace, virtual, April 2022.

“Writing the Disturbed Essay: Memory and Identity.” Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, Philadelphia, March 2022.

“Desi Mythpunk: Indian Mythologies in Futurist Writing by South Asian Authors.” Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, Philadelphia, March 2022.

Keynote: “Inheriting Resistance.” No Limits Women and Gender Studies Conference, University of Nebraska Lincoln, March 2022.

“Small Talks: Manipulating Time in Prose.” Saskatchewan Writers’ Guild Fall Conference. October 2021. Virtual.

“The Foreign Land We Call Canada: Immigrant Stories.” Victoria Festival of Authors. October 2021. Virtual.

“Reclaiming Narratives: Asian-Canadian Writers’ Roundtable.” Word on the Street Toronto. September 2021. Virtual.

“Beyond Print: Exploring Different Forms of Storytelling.” CanWrite! Festival. September 2021. Virtual.

“Publishing Your Debut Novel.” Washington DC South Asian Literary Festival. May 2021. Virtual.

“Who Tells Your Story: Analyzing Appropriation in Literature and Writing.” Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference. March 2021. Virtual.

“Transnational Currents in Canadian Literature.” Modern Language Association Conference. January 2020. Seattle, Washington.

“Sri Lankan American Women’s Writing—Contemporary Investments and Future Directions.” Modern Language Association Conference. January 2020. Seattle, Washington.

“The Diverse Desi: Readings by Three Creative Writer.” South Asian Literary Association Conference. January 2020. Seattle, Washington.

“Model Minority: Denial, Dissent, and Destruction.” Naked Heart Literary Festival. November 2019. Toronto, Ontario.

“LGBTQ+ Women Tell Their Stories.” Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference. March 2019. Portland, Oregon.

“Race and Gender in South Asian American Literature.” Tasveer South Asian Literary Festival. January 2019. Seattle, Washington.

“Writing South Asian LGBTQ Lives.” Tasveer South Asian Literary Festival. January 2019. Seattle, Washington.

“Youth in Revolt: Fiction That Refuses to Conform.” Virginia Festival of the Book. March 24, 2018. Charlottesville, Virginia.

“Marriage Beyond Borders: Fact & Fiction.” Virginia Festival of the Book. March 24, 2018. Charlottesville, Virginia.

“Beyond Genre: Writing, Editing, and Publishing Hybrid Forms in the Age of Fake News.” Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference. March 10, 2018. Tampa, Florida.

“Challenges and Triumphs: Underrepresented Voices in Publishing.” Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference. March 9, 2018. Tampa, Florida.

“Faithless Fiction: Writing About Religion from an Atheist Perspective.” Search for Meaning Festival. February 24, 2018. Seattle University. Seattle, Washington.

“Flash Fiction.” New Voices Conference. February 1, 2018. Georgia State University. Atlanta, Georgia.

“I’ve never heard of that country: Sri Lankan American writers on shaping an emerging literary identity.” Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference. February, 2017. Washington D.C.

“Gender and Genre: How do our prejudices affect our preferences?” Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference. February, 2017. Washington D.C.

“The Once and Future Love Story: Slash fiction addressing various closets in BBC’s *Merlin*.” Pop Culture Association / American Culture Association Conference. February, 2013. Washington D.C.

“Racial Performance and the Ethics of Memory: Coconuts in July.” Conference on College Composition and Communication. March 19, 2010. Louisville, Kentucky.

“From Women to Gender: An inclusive gender center proposal.” No Limits Women and Gender Studies Conference. March 6, 2010. University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

INVITED TALKS:

Invited talk, The Poe Museum, September 2025.

Invited talk and Q&A, Miami Book Fair’s Speak Up Creative Writing Summer Camp, August 2025.

Invited talk, Kilmarnock Comic Con, October 2023.

Invited reading and visit, University of Lynchburg, September 2023.

Invited “Meet the Author” talk, Virginia Commonwealth University, September 2023.

Panel, “Why Comics Matter,” Virginia Commonwealth University, September 2023.

Author panel with Likhawat, virtual, July 2023.

Panel with Books of Wonder on middle-grade graphic novels, virtual, June 2023.

Invited talk with Peterborough Library, Canada, March 2023.

Panel, James River Writers, Richmond VA, January 2023.

CLASS VISITS and WORKSHOPS:

Class visit with Victoria Munroe’s 7th grade class at Amherst Regional Middle School, virtual, May 2025.

“Comics Retreat Workshop.” 3-day comics workshop at Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar, Doha, December 2024.

Invited talk, Daniel Tysdal’s Introduction to Creative Writing class, University of Toronto Scarborough, virtual, November 2024.

LGBTQ+ Writers in Schools visit with NYC schools, virtual, April 2024.

Visit with Matteo Pangallo’s Topics in Book History class, Virginia Commonwealth University, October 2023.

Q&A with Pardesi Writer’s Workshop, virtual, June 2023.

Visit with Carita Gardiner’s senior seminar class, The Hotchkiss School, April 2023.

Visit with Diana Weis’s 5th grade class, Disney Elementary School, April 2023.

Visit with Alex Quinlan’s literature survey class, University of Tennessee Chattanooga, March 2022.

Visit with Ty Jaeger’s hybrid creative writing class, Hendrix University, March 2022.

Visit with Bhavani Raman’s Tamil worlds class, University of Toronto, February 2022.

Visit with Nick White’s fiction class, Ohio State University, October 2021.

Visit with Heather Bailey’s postcolonial literature class, Alcorn State University, September 2021.

Invited lecture, “Writing Young Adult Characters,” Nicholls University, April 2021.

Visit with Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm’s graphic novel class, University of Toronto Scarborough, April 2021.

Invited lecture, “Publishing Masterclass,” University of Saskatchewan, March 2021.

Visit with Karen Tucker's introduction to fiction class, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Fall 2020.

Visit with Megan Gannon's contemporary literature class, Ripon College, Spring 2020.

Visit with Cooper Lee Bombardier's developmental editing class, University of King's College, Spring 2020.

Visit with students in Asian American Lit class, Rice University, Fall 2019.

Meeting with editors of Caffeine and Careful Thought (student literary journal, University of Toronto Mississauga), Fall 2019

Writer's Panel hosted by UTM Scribes, University of Toronto Mississauga, Fall 2019.

Visit with Geoff Bouvier's class, University of Toronto Mississauga, Fall 2019.

"Writing Trauma." Rainbow Refugee writing workshop. August 2, 2018. Vancouver, British Columbia.

Visit with Sarah Gerard's class, New College of Florida, Fall 2018.

"Q&A with a writer," Dr. David Steiling's Literature and Media class, Ringling College of Art & Design, Spring 2018.

"Basics of Fiction and Publishing," Robert Przekwas's Literature and Media class, Ringling College of Art & Design, Fall 2017.

"Diversity in Worldbuilding," Dr. David Steiling's Worldbuilding class, Ringling College of Art & Design, Fall 2017.

"Time in Fiction and Constructing Scenes," Ringling College of Art & Design Pre-College Workshop, Summer 2017.

"Percival Everett's *Erasure*," Prof. Mark Winegardner's American Literature Survey class, Florida State University, June 2016.

"Work life balance," Florida State University's pedagogy class for incoming graduate students, Summer 2016.

"Q&A with SJ Sindu," Misha Rai's Fiction Technique class, Florida State University, Spring 2016.

"Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*," Prof. Mark Winegardner's American Literature Survey class, Florida State University, June 2015.

"Women writers and craft," Dr. Basuli Deb's Introduction to Women's Literature class, February 28, 2012, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"*Persepolis* and Iranian history," Dr. Basuli Deb's Introduction to Women's Studies class, November 10, 2011, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

“Introduction to queer theory,” Dr. Basuli Deb’s Introduction to Women’s Studies class, October 11, 2011, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS AWARDED:

Humanities Research Center Seed Grant for Graphic Narratives Lab (co-applicant), Virginia Commonwealth University, 2023

Martha McCain Research Fellowship for Queer and Trans Studies, University of Toronto, 2022-2023

Pedagogical and Professional Development Grant, University of Toronto Scarborough, 2019-2022

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Editing and publishing:

- Series Editor, University of Nebraska Press LGBTQ+ Fiction book series, 2021 – present
- Guest Editor, West Branch Wired, 2022
- Editor, The Glowup, *Just Femme and Dandy* Literary Magazine, 2021
- Guest Editor, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, January 2017

Judging and reviewing:

- Hindus for Human Rights Essay and Art Competition, 2025
- Old Dominion University Jerry Dickeski Prize in Fiction, 2024
- American Literary Review Fiction Awards, 2023
- Pinch Journal Literary Awards, 2022
- Prairie Schooner Mary Sandoz Awards, 2022
- Re:Locations Journal of the Asia and Pacific World contest, 2021
- Orison Anthology Award in Fiction, Orison Books, 2021
- Reviewer, Innovative Prose Series, The Texas Review Press, 2020
- Redivider Beacon Prize, 2019
- New South Prose Contest, 2019
- Tournament of Books, 2019
- Creative Pinellas Emerging Artist Grand Panel, 2018
- The Cupboard Contest, 2017
- Voices of the South Contest, March 2017
- Malone Writing Contest, March 2017
- Publishing Triangle Awards, 2017
- Lambda Literary Awards
 - Transgender Fiction, 2014
 - Transgender Nonfiction, 2013

Interviews:

- Skylight Books Podcast, April 2025
- The Book Maven (podcast), March 2025
- Tuckered Out (radio), August 2023
- Likhawat (YouTube), July 2023

- With Good Reason (radio), May 2023
- Style Weekly Richmond (magazine), May 2023
- Virginia Commonwealth University News (video), May 2023
- Diverse Book Finder (online), March 2023
- Vulgar Geniuses (podcast), December 2022
- Geeks Out (online), May 2022
- Tennessee Williams & New Orleans Literary Festival (YouTube), March 2022
- Write or Die Tribe (online), February 2022
- DesiBooks (podcast), February 2022
- Skylight Books Podcast, February 2022
- Beyond the Page (YouTube), January 2022
- KPL Podcast, December 2021
- Book Squad Goals (podcast), November 2021
- Your Favorite Book (podcast), November 2021
- NPR Weekend Edition (radio), November 2021
- LitHub's Fiction/Non/Fiction (podcast), November 2021
- Chills at Will (podcast), November 2021
- The Normal School (literary journal), November 2021
- Chatelaine (print magazine), November 2021
- Being LGBT (podcast), November 2021
- Your Favorite Book (podcast), November 2021
- Brown Girl Book Lovers (YouTube), November 2021
- Between Two Succulents (YouTube), November 2021
- 11 Questions (YouTube), April 2021
- Vulgar Geniuses (podcast), July 2020
- The Poetry Vlog (YouTube), November 2019
- Minorities in Publishing (podcast), December 2018
- Drunk on Ink (literary journal), June 2017
- The Unpublishables (online), June 2017
- NBC's A to Z (video), June 2017
- The Rumpus (online journal), June 2017
- Gaysi (podcast), June 2017
- Apogee (literary journal), June 2017
- Asian American Writers Workshop (podcast), June 2017
- Get Lit with Jamie Tenant (radio), June 2017
- Chuski Pop (podcast), June 2017
- The Offing (literary journal), June 2017
- Must Read Fiction (YouTube), June 2017

Book club visits:

- Fern Connection Book Club, November 2023
- Subtle Asian Book Club, June 2023

- The Chaptr Book Club, May 2022
- Radio Book Club, January 2019
- South Florida National Reading Group, September 2018
- St. Pete Book Club, July 2018
- Wordier Than Thou Book Club, June 2018
- Sarasota Fiction Writers Group, April 2018
- Fort Worth Book Club, March 2017
- Boston Women's Book Club, November 2017

Community events:

- In conversation with author Alice Winn and editor Diana Miller for the Cabell First Novelist Award to *In Memoriam*, Virginia Commonwealth University, November 2024
- In conversation with author Meg Medina, Virginia Commonwealth University, September 2024
- In conversation with author Geoff Bouvier for the launch of *Us From Nothing*, Shelf Life Books, Richmond VA, September 2024
- In conversation with author Josh Galarza for the launch of *The Great Cool Ranch Dorito in the Sky*, BBGB Books, Richmond VA, August 2024
- In conversation with author Karen Tucker for the launch of *Bewilderness*, Epilogue Books, virtual, June 2021

SELECTED READINGS:

First Mondays at Performance Space New York, April 2026.
Old Dominion University Literary Festival, October 2024.
Saints and Sinners: Writers Read, New Orleans, March 2024.
Split/Lip Press Reading, Kansas City, February 2024.
Racialized Is a Verb Reading, Naked Heart Literary Festival, Toronto, December 2023.
Jerome Stern Distinguished Writer's Reading Series, Florida State University, September 2023.
Appotomax Regional Governor's School for the Arts and Technology Writer's Fest, October 2022
Bridgewater State University, November 2021
A Celebration of Print: Slip Lip Press and Barrelhouse Reading, March 2021
Bandwidth Reading Series, Denton, Texas, December 2021
Balderdash Reading Series, Waterloo, Ontario, February 2020
East Loft Reading Series, Toronto, January 2020
Forward Anthology Launch, AWP Portland, March 2019
Powell's Bookstore Reading, Portland, Oregon, August 23, 2018
Dyke March featured speaker, Vancouver, British Columbia, August 4, 2018
A Night of Queer Storytelling at the Vancouver Public Library, August 3, 2018
Virginia Festival of the Book, Charlottesville, Virginia. March 23, 2018
Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, March 10, 2018
Elliot Bay Bookstore, Seattle, Washington. February 23, 2018
New Voices Conference, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia. February 2, 2018
Indigo Bridge Bookstore, Lincoln, Nebraska. October 13, 2017
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska. October 12, 2017

Functionally Literate Reading Series, Orlando, Florida. September 23, 2017
Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, Texas. September 14, 2017
Brookline Booksmith Bookstore, Boston, Massachusetts. June 26, 2017
South Asian Women's Creative Collective, Brooklyn, New York. June 25, 2017
Asian American Writers Workshop, New York, New York. June 24, 2017
Famous Last Words Reading Series, Toronto, Ontario. June 22, 2017
BookPeople Bookstore, Austin, Texas. June 17, 2017
Brazos Bookstore, Houston, Texas. June 14, 2017
Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference (two readings), February, 2017
Inkwell Reading Series at KGB Bar, New York, New York. December 10, 2014

UNIVERSITY COURSES TAUGHT:

Virginia Commonwealth University (Assistant Professor of Creative Writing):

- Graduate Novel Workshop (designed new syllabus for year-long MFA novel workshop), Fall 2024 – Spring 2025
- Form and Theory of Fiction (designed new syllabus for undergraduate level literature and workshop hybrid course), Spring 2024
- Advanced Fiction Writing (designed new syllabus for undergraduate level workshop course), Spring 2024, Fall 2025
- Writing for Comics (proposed and designed new syllabus for graduate and undergraduate split literature and workshop course), Fall 2023
- Reading New Literature (designed new syllabus for undergraduate literature course), Fall 2023
- Form and Theory of Fiction (designed new syllabus for graduate level literature and workshop hybrid course), Spring 2023
- Graduate Fiction Workshop (designed new syllabus for MFA short story workshop), Fall 2022, Fall 2025

University of Toronto (Assistant Professor of Creative Writing):

- Topics in Postcolonial Literature: Literature of the Tamil Diaspora (proposed and designed new syllabus, upper division literature course), Spring 2022
- Writing for Comics (designed new syllabus, upper division creative writing workshop), Fall 2021
- Queer Literature and Theory (proposed and designed new syllabus, upper division literature course), Winter 2021
- Creative Writing: The Art of the Personal Essay (designed new syllabus, upper division literature course), Winter 2021
- Introduction to Creative Writing (proposed and designed new syllabus, creative writing lecture with 175 students), Fall 2020, Fall 2021, Spring 2022
- Creative Writing as a Profession (designed new syllabus, upper division course), Winter 2020
- Creative Writing Special Topics: Writing Queer and Trans Voices (proposed and designed new syllabus, upper division creative writing workshop), Winter 2020
- Creative Writing Independent Study: Prose (upper division novel workshop), 2019-2021
- Fiction I Workshop (designed new syllabus, introductory fiction workshop), Fall 2019, Fall 2020
- Fiction II Workshop (designed new syllabus, intermediate fiction workshop), Fall 2019, Spring 2021, Fall 2021
- Canadian Writing in the 21st Century (designed new syllabus, literature class), Fall 2019

Ringling College of Art & Design (Visiting Assistant Professor of Creative Writing):

- Contemporary Writers of Color (proposed and designed new syllabus, upper division literature class), Spring 2019
- Story Fundamentals: Character (designed new syllabus, creative writing workshop), Spring 2019
- Literature Special Topics: Asian and Asian American Literature (proposed and designed new syllabus, upper division literature class), Fall 2018
- Topics in Editing and Publishing (designed new syllabus, creative writing class that puts together the SHIFT literature journal), Fall 2018
- How to Get Your Creative Writing Published (proposed and designed new syllabus, continuing education adult class), Spring 2018
- Creative Writing Special Topics: Writing LGBTQ Literature (proposed and designed new syllabus, creative writing workshop), Spring 2018
- Writing for Digital Media (creative writing workshop), Spring 2018, Spring 2019
- Literature Special Topics: Protest & Revolution (proposed and designed new syllabus, literature), Spring 2018
- Story Fundamentals: Scene (designed new syllabus, creative writing workshop), Fall 2017
- Literature and Media Studies (designed new syllabus, literature), Fall 2017
- Writing Studio (designed new syllabus, composition & rhetoric), Fall 2017, Fall 2018

Florida State University (Graduate Teaching Assistant, instructor of record):

- Women in Literature (designed new syllabus, literature), Summer 2017
- Fiction Technique (designed new syllabus, creative writing workshop), Fall 2015
- The Short Story (designed new syllabus, literature), Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016
- Queer Studies Reading Group (proposed, facilitated, organized, and led graduate student discussion group), Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017
- First Year College Composition (designed new syllabus, composition and rhetoric), Summer 2015, Spring 2017

University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Graduate Teaching Assistant, instructor of record):

- Writing: Rhetoric as Inquiry (designed new syllabus, Composition I), Spring 2012
 - Writing: Rhetoric as Argument (designed new syllabus, Composition II), Fall 2011
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SUPERVISIONS:

Graduate:

MFA thesis chair, Hana Rehman, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2025 – 2026
MFA thesis chair, Sarp Demiral, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2025 – 2026
Independent study (Queer YA), Josh Galarza, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2025
MFA thesis chair, Josh Galarza, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2024 – 2025
MFA thesis co-chair, Allison Weissman, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2024 – 2025
MFA thesis chair, Erin Bragg, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2024 – 2025
MFA thesis chair, James Fowler, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2023 – 2024
MFA thesis co-chair, Jamie Walters, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2023 – 2024
MFA thesis committee member, Celia Cumminsky, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2023 – 2024
Independent study (Queer fantasy), Dina Folgias, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2024

Independent study (Writing comics), Allison Weissman, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2024

Graduate thesis committee member, Anuja Varghese, University of Toronto, Fall 2023

Independent study (Graphic novel), Brenna Camping, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2023

MFA thesis chair, Christina McBride, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2022 – 2023

MFA thesis co-chair, Kayleigh Hughes, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2022

MFA thesis committee member, Majinder Sidhu, University of British Columbia Okanagan, 2022

Undergraduate:

Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship Summer Fellowship mentor, Martie Surasky, Summer 2025

Independent study (graphic novel), Aidan Doyle, Virginia Commonwealth University, Fall 2024

Honors thesis outside advisor, Andrea Ortega, Hendrix College, 2023 – 2024

Independent study (novel), Marquela Nunes, University of Toronto Scarborough, 2020 – 2021

Independent study (novel), Evan Thompson, University of Toronto Scarborough, 2019 – 2020

Independent study (novel), Justin Muir, University of Toronto Scarborough, 2019 – 2020

Independent study (novel), Jessica Burns, University of Toronto Scarborough, 2019 – 2020

Independent study (novel), Ryan Gillies, University of Toronto Scarborough, 2019 – 2020

PROFESSIONAL AND RELATED MEMBERSHIPS:

- Association of Writers and Writing Programs, 2012 – present
 - Modern Languages Association, 2012 – 2019
 - South Asian Literary Association, 2020 – 2021
 - Mensa International, 2012 – 2014
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SERVICE:

Virginia Commonwealth University (faculty)

- Graduate Studies Committee, 2025 – present
- Search Committee, 2024 – 2025
- Executive committee, 2023 – 2025
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, 2023 – 2025
- Graphic Narratives Lab founding co-director, 2023 – 2024
- MFA committee, 2022 – present
- VCU Cabell First Novelist Award faculty advisor, 2023 – present

University of Toronto (faculty)

- PTR (Progress Through the Ranks) committee, 2021 – 2022
- Chair, Queer and Trans Studies committee, 2020 – 2022
- Sexuality Diversity Studies and Bonham Centre steering committee, 2020 – 2022
- Tamil Studies Program committee, 2019 – 2022
- Digital Tamil Archives Advisory committee, 2019 – 2022
- Queer Research Lab committee, 2020 – 2021
- Creative Writing Portfolio committee, 2020 – 2021
- Writer-in-Residence committee, 2019 – 2021

- Leader, COW (creative writing student group), Fall 2019

Ringling College of Art and Design (faculty)

- Managing Editor, *Shift: A Journal of Literary Oddities*, 2018 – 2019
- Faculty Advisor, *Chomp: A Journal of Literature and Art*, 2018 – 2019
- Faculty Advisor, Spooky Queer Zine Club, 2018 – 2019
- Member, Library Advisory Committee, 2017 – 2019
- Member, Diversity Committee, 2017 – 2019
 - Member, Faculty Professional Development Subcommittee, 2018 – 2019
 - Member, Diversity Messaging Subcommittee, 2017 – 2018
 - Member, Diversity Student Outreach Subcommittee, 2017 – 2018
- Member, *SHIFT: A Journal of Literary Oddities* Faculty Editorial Board, 2017 – 2019
- Faculty Advisor, Ringling Writers (creative writing student group), 2017 – 2019
- Faculty Mentor, Students of Color Alliance, 2017 – 2019
- Faculty Advisor, Student Fashion Show, 2017 – 2018

Florida State University (graduate student)

- Secretary (elected position), FSU Graduate English Student Organization, 2015 – 2016
- Nonfiction Reader, *The Southeast Review*, 2014 – 2015

University of Nebraska-Lincoln (graduate student)

- Fiction and Nonfiction Reader, *Prairie Schooner*, 2006 – 2007, 2010 – 2012
 - Prairie Schooner Book Prize reader, Spring 2012
 - Second reader, 2011 – 2012
- No Name Reading Series committee member, 2011 – 2012
- MA Representative (elected position), UNL English Graduate Student Association, 2011 – 2012
- Advisor, Queer Ally Coalition, 2010 – 2012

Community

- Administrative Team, Subtle Tamil Social Traits (social justice-focused virtual Tamil group), 2020 – 2022
- Executive Team, Queer South Asian Wom/enby Network, 2020 – 2022
- Organizer, Lector Reading Series, 2018 – 2019
- Leader, Lector Book Club, 2018 – 2019