

THE RENAISSANCE STUDIES PROGRAM PRESENTS
“RENAISSANCE DISCOVERIES AND RE-CREATIONS”



AYESHA RAMACHANDRAN

Making Universals: Maps, Histories, Renaissances

The terms “Renaissance” and “Global Renaissance” are traditionally invoked as historical period-markers, as guides to a distinct vision of temporality characterized by rupture and revolution. But how might the emergence of these categories at key moments in the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries shed light on the universal ambitions and distinct spatio-temporal imagination of sixteenth-century writers, thinkers and mapmakers? Conversely, what might the sixteenth-century struggle to think in terms of large-scale frameworks—such as empire, world, cosmos—tell us about our contemporary fascination with macrocosmic frameworks (big data, systems science, global theory)? This talk begins with two sixteenth-century objects: Diogo Homem’s manuscript *Atlas universal* (ca. 1565) and the anonymous “World Map in a Fool’s Cap” (ca. 1590) and unfolds a conceptual reflection on the making of renaissances and the desire for universal knowledge.

AYESHA RAMACHANDRAN (Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, Yale University) is a cultural and literary critic whose work engages European traditions from Neo-Latin poetry to early modern philosophy and literature as well as Eurasian connections. She is the author of *The Worldmakers* (Chicago University Press, 2015), and is currently at work on *Lyric Thinking: Humanism, Selfhood, Modernity*.

The lecture will be followed by a faculty roundtable on “The Global Renaissance” featuring PAUL LOSENSKY (Comparative Literature and Central Eurasian Studies), KAYA ŞAHİN (History) and SARAH VAN DER LAAN (Comparative Literature).

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WALNUT ROOM, INDIANA MEMORIAL UNION

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