

ISAS Public Lecture Series



Unwanted Neighbors: The Mughals, the Portuguese, and Their Frontier Zones

a talk by

Jorge Flores

Professor of Early Modern Global History, Department of History
and Civilization, European University Institute, Florence

Talk Abstract: In December 1572 the Mughal emperor Akbar arrived in the port city of Khambayat. Having been raised in distant Kabul, Akbar had never in his thirty years been to the Ocean. Presumably anxious with the news about the Mughal military campaign in Gujarat, several Portuguese merchants in Khambayat rushed to Akbar's presence. This encounter marked the beginning of a long, complex, and unequal relationship between a continental Muslim empire that was expanding into South India while often looking back to Central Asia, and a European Christian maritime empire whose rulers considered themselves "Kings of the sea."

By the middle of the seventeenth century, these two empires faced each other across thousands of kilometers from Sind to Bijapur to Bengal. The arduous management of diverse frontier environments of Mughal India by a European power based in Goa — the capital of the Portuguese Estado da Índia — lies at the heart of this talk. "Unwanted Neighbors" (based on the book with the same title, OUP, 2018) addresses the relationship between the Portuguese and the undesirably close Mughals by placing frontier zones and borderlands front and center.

Speaker Bio

Jorge Flores is Professor of Early Modern Global History, Department of History and Civilization, European University Institute, Florence. His current book project is tentatively titled *The Accidental Persianate State: Political Communication Between the Estado da Índia and the Mughal Empire*.

Tuesday, April 02, 2019

5-7 pm

10 Stephens Hall, (For directions look up "Institute for South Asia Studies" on Google Maps)

Cosponsors: Sarah Kailath Chair of India Studies.

Event is free & open to public. 510-642-3608 or southasia.berkeley.edu