

The PHI BETA KAPPA Society

VISITING



SCHOLAR

PROGRAM

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PUBLIC LECTURE
OFFERINGS

**THE ANTHROPOCENE AND OTHER STORIES: NARRATIVES OF
ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE**

We make sense of the world through narratives. History, science, and even climate models are built using narrative understandings of the world. In this talk I consider the power of some entrenched environmental narratives and outline efforts to evaluate them, first on a more local scale, using archaeological, historical, and paleoenvironmental data from India, with examples from environmental science, public education, and archaeology. At a larger scale, I consider the debate over the designation of the Anthropocene as a new geological era and the structure of global-scale narrative pathways in terms of the work they do shaping understandings and responses to the climate and biodiversity crises.

HOW ARCHAEOLOGY IS CONTRIBUTING TO CLIMATE MODELS

Archaeology and paleoecology are disciplines focused on reconstructing the past. In this lecture, I discuss the sometimes surprising ways in which these historical sciences are working to better understand the present and predict the future. I discuss the work of an international working group, LandCover6k, which is aggregating and analyzing land use and land cover data from history, archaeology, and paleoecology both to improve climate models and to better understand in what ways and for how long humans have had an impact on the earth.

KATHLEEN D. MORRISON

HAVE YOU HAD RICE TODAY? POWER, PRODUCTION, AND THE MAKING OF SOUTH INDIAN FOOD

While it is commonplace these days to consider the environmental and social impacts of consumption choices, including food choices, longer-term histories of food and food production have also had enduring impacts. These impacts are wide-ranging, including social, ritual, and cultural worlds, as well as the natural environment. In this talk, I discuss ongoing archaeological and historical research on South Indian food and farming. From early farming of millets and pulses to the development of elite, rice-based cuisines, differential food practices and their associated forms of land use significantly reshaped both local environments and livelihoods.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS



- 1. METHODS OF PALEOENVIRONMENTAL RECONSTRUCTION**
- 2. ANCIENT CITIES AND LANDSCAPES OF SOUTHERN INDIA**
- 3. TRADITIONAL IRRIGATION SYSTEMS IN SOUTH ASIA AND THEIR CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE**