“Imagining India in Ghana and Nigeria, 1940s-Present Times

At least since the eighteenth-century, India has been an object of cultural fascination, serving as a canvas for various peoples to project popular imaginings. Whether engendered by physical familiarity (Rudyard Kipling) or simply by texts (Henry David Thoreau), India, and its peoples, have served as a foil, a mirror people have used to reflect upon and to define their own identities. In this lecture, I interrogate how following contact with Indian peoples and their religious ideas and symbols in the early twentieth-century, Ghanaians and Nigerians understood, (re)constructed, and employed "India" in their everyday lives.