

Professor Vineeta Sinha

<https://discovery.nus.edu.sg/356-vineeta-sinha>

Short Biography

Vineeta Sinha is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Asia Research Institute (ARI) at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Her research focuses Hindu religiosity in the Diaspora, religion-state encounters, religion, commodification and consumption processes, Hinduism's entanglement with materiality and visuality, histories of Sociology and Anthropology, critical pedagogy, women's structural location and leadership in academia and decolonising knowledge production. As an ethnographer, her research has focused on how Hindu communities in Singapore and Malaysia negotiate inherited traditions even as they creatively produce novel religious imaginaries in urban, diasporic sites.

Education

- Ph.D (Anthropology), Johns Hopkins University, USA.
- M. A. (Anthropology), Johns Hopkins University, USA.
- M. Soc. Sci (Sociology) National University of Singapore
- B.A. Hons (Sociology) National University of Singapore.

Professional Experience

JANUARY 2026

Director, Asia Research Institute, NUS

2015-2021

Head, Department of Sociology, NUS

2012-2018

Head, South Asian Studies Programme, NUS

2014 - CURRENT

Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, NUS

2005 - 2014

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, NUS

1995-2005

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, NUS

Research Interests

- Critical Pedagogy
- Decolonizing Knowledge Production
- Hindu Religiosity in the Diaspora
- Hinduism's entanglement with Materiality and Visuality
- Histories of Anthropology and Sociology
- Religion and Infrastructures
- Religion, Commodification and Consumption Processes
- Secularism, Religion-State Encounters
- Women and Leadership in Academia

Publications

Books

2023 *Temple Tracks: Labour, Piety and Railway Construction in Asia*. London: Berghahn Books (<https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/SinhaTemple>).

2017 *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon* (Co-authored with Syed Farid Alatas), London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

2015 *Indians*, Singapore: Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore Press Holdings.

2011 *Religion-State Encounters In Hindu Domains: From The Straits Settlements To Singapore*, New York And London: Springer.

2010 *Religion And Commodification: Merchandising Diasporic Hinduism*, London: Routledge.

2005 *A New God In The Diaspora? Muneeswaran Worship In Contemporary Singapore*. Singapore: Singapore University Press and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.

Edited Books

2019 *Southeast Asian Anthropologies* (Co-edited with Eric Thompson). Singapore: NUS Press.

2015 *Food, Foodways and Foodscapes; Culture, Community and Consumption in Post-colonial Singapore* (Co-edited with Lily Kong). Singapore: World Scientific.

Refereed Articles (Selected)

2025 'Re-thinking decolonial concepts & practices: towards critical research and pedagogy.' *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 28(6), 725–743.

2021 'Annihilating the Savage Slot from Anthropology: Materialising Meaningful Practices.' *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 11:1: 264-272.

2017 (Co-authored with George Radics). ‘Regulating Religion and Granting Public Holidays in Singapore.’ *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 46:524-548.

2016 ‘Marking spaces as ‘sacred’: Infusing Singapore’s urban landscape with sacrality.’ Special Issue article, *International Sociology*, 31(4): 467-488.

2014 ‘Enacting a goddess festival in Urban Singapore: Bringing Back the Old Ways.’ *Material Religion*, 10(1): 76-103.

2010 ‘Unraveling ‘Singaporean Hinduism’ Seeing the Pluralism Within: A Look at Three ‘Home-grown’ Hindu Groups.’ *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, 14(2-3): 253-279.

2008 ‘‘Hinduism’ and ‘Taoism’ in Singapore: Seeing Points of Convergence.’ *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 39(1): 123-147.

2005 ‘Theorising ‘talk’ about religious harmony and religious pluralism in Singapore’ *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 20(1): 25-40.

2003 ‘‘Merging different sacred spaces: enabling religious encounters through pragmatic utilization of space?’’ *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 37, 3: 459-494.

2003 ‘‘De-centering social sciences in practice through individual acts and choices’’, *Current Sociology*, January Volume 51(1):7-26.

Book Chapters (Selected)

2024 ‘‘Urban Spaces’’ and ‘‘Infrastructures’’ as Sites for Theorizing ‘‘Diaspora Religion’’ in Lily Kong, Orlando Woods and Justin Tse (eds), *The Handbook of Geographies of Religion*, Springer, pp 1175-1189.

2024 ‘Visual Cultures in Hinduism, 1857-1947.’ In *Cultural History of Hinduism in Age of Modernism/Late Colonialism/Aspiration to Autonomy 1857-1947* edited by Gwilym Beckerlegge, New York: Bloomsbury.

2023 ‘Singapore: Families Living In/Through the COVID-19 Pandemic’ (with Pooja Nair, Ganapathy Narayanan and Daniel P S Goh). In *Family Life in the Time of COVID: International Perspectives* edited by Katherine Tawmley et al, London: University College London Press.

2023 ‘Disentangling’ as an Everyday Practice: Material, Visual Sacred and Commodity features of ‘Puja Things.’ In *Routledge Handbook of Material Religion*, edited by Brent Plate and Pooyan Tamimi Arab. London and New York: Routledge.

2021 ‘Interrogating a ‘Diasporic’ Lens: Narrating Singapore’s Indian Communities.’ In *New Perspectives on the Indian Diaspora* edited by Ruben Gowricharan, London and New York: Routledge, Chapter 6.

2019 ‘The Internet: A New Marketplace for Transacting ‘Puja Items’ *Digital Hinduism*, edited by Xenia Zeller, London and New York: Routledge, Chapter 9, 165-185.

2019 ‘The Modern Hindu Diaspora.’ In Torkel Brekke (ed), *Modern Hinduism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 179-202.

Research Grants

- **Principal Investigator**

Reimagine Research Fund, Type 1 Project

TPV: SGD 177,643.45.

2021, Singapore Families and Residents Living In/Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

- **Co-Principal Investigator**

Ministry of Education, Tier 1 Research Grant

TPV: SGD 60,000

2017, *Southeast Asian Anthropologies*

Publication of an edited volume, *Southeast Asian Anthropologies*, co-edited by Eric Thompson and Vineeta Sinha (NUS Press, 2019)

- **Collaborator**

Ministry of Education, Tier 2 Research Grant

SGD 635,000, Co-PIs: Tim Bunnell and Daniel P S Goh

2015, Urban Aspirations

Publication of an edited volume, *Urban Asias : essays on futurity past and present*, co-edited by Tim Bunnell and Daniel P.S. Goh, Berlin: Jovis, 2018. (Sinha, V. 'Methodological Musings: Trawling Singapore's Urban Religious Landscapes.' pp 263-277).

