

Simranjit Steel, formerly Khalsa

Department of Sociology · The University of Memphis · 231 Clement Hall
Memphis, TN 38152-3530 · Email: s.steel@memphis.edu

Education

Ph.D. Sociology, Rice University, 2020

Dissertation Title: “Practicing Minority Religion: Interrogating the Role of Race, National Belonging, and Gender Among Sikhs in the US and England”

Committee: Elaine Howard Ecklund (chair), Sergio Chavez, Jenifer Bratter, Elias Bongmba

Comprehensive Exam Areas: Race and immigration, Religion and culture

M.A. Sociology, Rice University, 2015

“Defining Sikhism: Boundaries of Religion and Ethnicity among Sikhs in the United States.” (Committee: Elaine Howard Ecklund, (chair); Erin Cech, Sergio Chavez)

B.S. Sociology and Planning Public Policy and Management, University of Oregon, 2013
Conferred *Summa Cum Laude*

A.A. Oregon Transfer Degree, Lane Community College, 2010

Areas of Interest

Sociology of Religion, Race and Ethnicity, Sociology of Immigration, Sociology of Culture, Cross-national comparison

Peer Reviewed Articles¹

Steel, Simranjit. 2024. “Legitimacy in 3HO/Sikh Dharma” *Sikh Formations* 20(1-2): 75-83. Published online <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448727.2024.2318897>

Khalsa, Simranjit, Brenton Kalinowski, Brandon Vaidyanathan, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2022. “Science-Religion Boundaries in Indian Scientific Workplaces” *Zygon* 57(2): 322-343 <https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12760>

Khalsa, Simranjit, Brenton Kalinowski, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2020. “Understanding Religion: Indian Scientists Definitions of Religion and Spirituality,” *Religions* 11(7): 355 <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11070355>

Di, Di, **Simranjit Khalsa,** Robert A. Thomson Jr., and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2020. “Spirituality among Global Scientists,” *The Sociological Quarterly*. 62(1):187-208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00380253.2020.1724057>

¹ Last name changed from Khalsa to Steel in 2023.

Sorrell, Katherine R., **Simranjit Khalsa**, Elaine Howard Ecklund, and Michael O. Emerson. 2019. "Immigrant Identities and the Shaping of a Racialized American Self," *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023119852788>

Vaidyanathan, Brandon, **Simranjit Khalsa**, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2018. "Naturally Ambivalent: Religion's Role in Shaping Environmental Action" *Sociology of Religion* 79(4): 472-494.

Khalsa, Simranjit. 2017. "A Faith for All: Boundaries of Religion and Ethnicity among Sikhs in the US" *Sociology of Religion* 78(3): 340-362.

Peifer, Jared, **Simranjit Khalsa**, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2016. "Political Conservatism, Religion, and Environmental Consumption in the United States" *Environmental Politics* 25(4): 661-689.

Vaidyanathan, Brandon, **Simranjit Khalsa**, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2016. "Gossip as Social Control: Policing Informal Ethical Violations in Scientific Workplaces of India, the US, and the UK" *Social Problems* 63(4): 554-572.

Other Publications

Steel, Simranjit. 2023. "Why this Year's Summer Solstice Matters so Much for a New Religious Movement Mired in Controversy" *The Conversation* (June 14th)
<https://theconversation.com/why-this-years-summer-solstice-matters-so-much-for-a-new-religious-movement-mired-in-controversy-197869>

Steel, Simranjit. 2022. "What is the Sikh Festival of Baisakhi and Why is it So Sacred" *The Conversation* (April 13th) <https://theconversation.com/what-is-the-sikh-festival-of-baisakhi-and-why-is-it-so-sacred-180095>

Khalsa, Simranjit. 2021. Review of *Violent Ignorance: Confronting Racism and Migration Control* by Hannah Jones in *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*

Khalsa, Simranjit. 2020. "They Were Studying Urban Inequalities When a Pandemic That Worsens Disparities Hit" *Urban Edge Blog*. Kinder Institute for Urban Research. Access at: <https://kinder.rice.edu/urbanedge/2020/06/01/they-were-studying-urban-inequalities-when-pandemic-worsens-disparities-hit>

Scholarly Manuscripts in Progress (*full manuscripts available upon request*)

Steel, Simranjit. "Burden or Boon? Experiences of Minority Religious Symbols in Two Sikh Communities."

Steel, Simranjit. "Change and Organizational Constraints: Religion and Same Sex Marriage in Sikh Dharma"

Conference Presentations

2023. **Steel, Simranjit**. “Looking Glass Sikh: Minoritized Identity Construction” *American Academy of Religion* Annual conference, San Antonio, TX

2023. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Legitimacy in 3HO/Sikh Dharma” *Sikh Studies Conference*, UC Riverside, Department of Religious Studies, Riverside, CA.

2022. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Controversy and Image Management in 3HO/Sikh Dharma” *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* Annual Conference, Baltimore, MD.

2022. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Change and Organization Constraints: Religion and Same Sex Marriage in Sikh Dharma” *American Sociological Association* Annual conference, Los Angeles, CA.

2021. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Gendered Boundaries Among Sikhs in the US and England” *American Academy of Religion* Annual Conference, virtual and in San Antonio, TX (attended virtually).

2021. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Beyond Discomfort: Strategies to Engage Students about Race” *American Sociological Association*, Teaching and Learning Symposium, Annual Conference, virtual.

2021. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Contesting and Claiming National Belonging: Sikhs in the US and England” *Southern Sociological Society* Annual Conference, virtual.

2020. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Sikhs Claims to National Belonging in the US and England” *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* Annual Conference, Cancelled due to COVID-19 outbreak.

2020. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Finding Hope in Practice: Community Engaged Learning” *Society for the Study of Social Problems* Annual Conference, Cancelled due to COVID-19 outbreak.

2019. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Becoming American: Narratives of Marginalization and National Identity Among Sikhs in the US” *American Academy of Religion* Annual Conference, San Diego, CA.

2019. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Teaching Race as a Social Construction” *UHD: Teaching and Learning Symposium*, HTXedu: A HigherEd Teaching eXcellence Conference, University of Houston, Downtown.

2019. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Experiencing Sikhism: The Intersection of Religion and Race in the US and UK” *American Sociological Association* Annual Conference, New York City, NY.

2019. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Progressive Sexual Ideals vs Religious Authenticity: Warring Identities among White Sikh Converts” *Society for the Study of Social Problems* Annual Conference, New York City, NY.
2018. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Being an ‘Other’: Experiences of Marginalization Among Sikhs in the US and England.” *American Academy of Religion* Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado.
2018. **Khalsa, Simranjit** and Elaine Howard Ecklund. “Indian Scientists’ Understanding of Religion and Spirituality” *American Academy of Religion* Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado.
2018. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Burden or Boon? Experiences of Minority Religious Symbols in Two Sikh Communities.” *Association for the Sociology of Religion* Annual Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
2016. Ecklund, Elaine Howard, Bob Thomson, **Simranjit Khalsa**, Di Di. “Scientists’ Spirituality Across the Globe” *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* Annual Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.
2016. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. Author Meets Critic Session: *Perfect Children: Growing Up on the Religious Fringe*. *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* Annual Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.
2015. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Sikhism in the US: Religion and Ethnicity” *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* Annual Conference, Newport Beach, California.
2015. Vaidyanathan, Brandon, **Simranjit Khalsa**, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. “Gossip as Social Control: Policing Informal Ethical Violations in Scientific Workplaces in India, the US, and the UK” *American Sociological Association* Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois.
2015. Peifer, Jared, **Simranjit Khalsa**, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. “Political Conservatism, Religion, and Environmental Consumption in the United States” *American Sociological Association* Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois.
2014. Vaidyanathan, Brandon, **Simranjit Khalsa**, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. “Naturally Ambivalent: Religion’s Role in Shaping Environmental Action” *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* Annual Conference, Indianapolis, Indiana.
2013. **Khalsa, Simranjit**. “Resolving Religious Difference: Christians and Non-Christians in Intimate Relationships” *Pacific Sociological Association* Annual Conference, Reno, Nevada.

Invited Events

2023. **Panelist.** “Navigating the Academic Job Market” *Center for Teaching Excellence*, Rice University.

2020. **Khalsa, Simranjit.** “Teaching 101: How to Get Started” Science Education Center, University of Texas MD Anderson. Cancelled due to COVID-19 outbreak.

2019. **Co-presented** “Engaged and Engaging Pedagogy” at the Pedagogy Institute for Graduate Students and Postdocs, *Center for Teaching Excellence*, Rice University

2018. **Co-presented** “The Learner-Centered Classroom” at the Pedagogy Institute for Graduate Students and Postdocs, *Center for Teaching Excellence*, Rice University.

2018. **Khalsa, Simranjit.** “The Legacy of Guru Gobind Singh in the West” *Consulate General of India*, Houston, Texas.

2017. **Khalsa, Simranjit**, Brandon Vaidyanathan, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. “Beyond Gould: The Tenuous Separation of Science and Religion in India.” *Faraday Institute*, Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK.

Grants and Fellowships

2023 Khalsa, Simranjit. “Practicing Minority Religion: Sikhs in the West” MOCH Catherine and Charles *Freeburg Fellowship*, The University of Memphis

2021 Khalsa, Simranjit, PI (Rosie Phillips Davis, Hsiang-Te Kung, Dianna Ruggerio, and Chrisann Schiro-Geist, Co-PIs). “Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion” *Community of Research Scholars*, University of Memphis. (\$2,500)

2019 “Becoming American: Narratives of Marginalization and National Identity Among Sikhs in the US” Graduate Student Conference Travel Grant, *Social Sciences Research Institute*, Rice University (\$600)

2019-2020 Dissertation Writing Fellowship, Department of Sociology, Rice University (\$28,500)

2019 “Experiencing Sikhism: The Intersection of Religion and Race in the US and UK” Graduate Travel Grant, *American Sociological Association, Section on Religion* (\$250)

2019 “Progressive Sexual Ideals vs Religious Authenticity: Warring Identities among White Sikh Converts” Lee Student Support Fund, *Society of the Study of Social Problems* (\$150).

2018 “Understanding Religion: Indian Scientists Definitions of Religion and Spirituality.” and “Being an ‘Other’: Experiences of Marginalization among Sikhs in the US and England.” Annual Meeting Travel Grant, *American Academy of Religion* (\$500)

2017 “Practicing a Minority Faith: Constructing Religion, Race, and Ethnicity Among Sikhs in the US, UK, and India” *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* (\$3,000)

2015 “Constructing a Sikh Identity: On the Boundaries of Religious Tolerance” *Bonuik Institute for the Study and Advancement of Religious Tolerance*, Rice University (\$2,500)

2015 “Sikhism in the US: Religion and Ethnicity.” Graduate Student Association Travel Grant, *Rice University* (\$500)

2014 “Naturally Ambivalent: Religion’s Role in Shaping Environmental Action.” Student Travel Grant, *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion* (\$300)

Teaching

Instructor of Record Courses

Introduction to Religion, Honors Section (RLGN 1100), The University of Memphis

Introduction to Sociology, Honors Section (SOC1 1010), The University of Memphis

Sociology of Religion, Graduate Level (SOC1 7860), The University of Memphis

Introduction to Religion (RLGN 1100), The University of Memphis

Race and Religion in the US (RLGN 3105), The University of Memphis

Sociology of Religion, Undergraduate Level (SOC1 3860), The University of Memphis

Inequality and Urban Life (SOC1 470), Rice University

Community Bridges Training (SOC1 469), Rice University

Science at Risk (SOC1 314), Rice University

Teaching Assistantships

Spring 2015 “Introduction to Sociology” (SOC1 101), Rice University

Winter 2011 “Introduction to Sociology” (SOC 204), Lane Community College

Guest Instructor

Fall 2019 “Practicum in College Teaching” (UNIV 502), Rice University

Guest Lectures

Spring 2015 “Religions of India” (RELI 232), Rice University

Spring 2015 “Introduction to Sociology” (SOC1 101), Rice University

Spring 2014 “Religions of India” (RELI 232), Rice University

Honors and Awards

2017. Walter and Helen Hall Prize, Rice University, for “Defining Sikhism: Boundaries of Religion and Ethnicity among Sikhs in the United States.”

2016. Seth Balkishan Das Singhal Award, Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Rice University, for “Defining Sikhism: Boundaries of Religion and Ethnicity among Sikhs in the United States.”

2013. Sociology Department, University of Oregon:
High honors for “Resolving Religious Difference: Christians and Non-Christians in Intimate Relationships”

Advisors: Jiannbin Shiao, Marion Goldman

Professional Development

2013-2020. Senior Graduate Student Research Fellow, Religion and Public Life Program, Rice University

2018-2020. Graduate Fellow, Center for Teaching Excellence, Rice University (applied and was accepted after completing the graduate certification)

2018. Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning, Center for Teaching Excellence, Rice University, 2018

2016. International Migration, Integration, and Social Cohesion PhD Summer School, Princeton University

Service

External Service

Ad Hoc reviewer for *Sociological Focus*, *Social Problems*, *Contexts*, *Sociology of Religion*, *Religions*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*

2022 Chair, Student Paper Award. Sociology of Religion Section, *American Sociological Association*.

2018 Session convener. “White Identities and Symbolism: Intersecting Religion and Race” *Association for the Sociology of Religion*

- 2015 Session convener. “Islam and Sikhism in the U.S.” *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion*
- Internal Service*
- 2023 Group member, CAS Strategic Planning for Goal 1, College of Arts and Sciences, The University of Memphis
- 2023 Committee member, Search Committee, Department of Sociology, the University of Memphis
- Present-2020 Committee member, Undergraduate Committee, Department of Sociology, The University of Memphis
- Present-2020 Committee member, Colloquium Committee, Department of Sociology, The University of Memphis
- 2022 Committee member, Search Committee, Department of Sociology, The University of Memphis
- 2020 Committee member. Graduate Student Teaching Award Committee, Center for Teaching Excellence, Rice University
- 2019-2020 Committee member. Graduate Student Association Grants Committee, Rice University
- 2019 Committee member. Graduate Student Teaching Award Committee, Center for Teaching Excellence, Rice University
- 2018-2019 Committee member. Graduate Student Association Grants Committee, Rice University
- 2016 Graduate mentor. Undergraduate Mentorship Program, Rice University
- 2015 Graduate mentor. Undergraduate Mentorship Program, Rice University
- 2012 Sociology Peer Advisor. Department of Sociology, University of Oregon

Professional Affiliations

Southern Sociological Society
 American Sociological Association
 Society of the Study of Social Problems
 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion
 Association for the Sociology of Religion
 American Academy of Religion