



Colloquium: Shrink Wrapped Souls: Managing the Self in India's New Economy

Speaker:
Carol Upadhyia

Date / Time:
February 28, 2013 - 3:45pm - 5:30pm

Venue:
10th Floor, Auditorium, Pixel A, APU

Abstract:

The expansion of the private corporate sector in India has required the production of new kinds of worker subjects, and an array of management and training practices have been brought into play to accomplish this goal. In this paper I describe the 'soft skills' training techniques that are used by software companies to mould software engineers into 'entrepreneurial' workers, and explore the convergence of these practices with new forms of spirituality that circulate more widely within the urban middle classes. While these practices are creating an Indian version of 'enterprise culture', I suggest that they do not simply 'produce' new economic subjects but are creatively appropriated by software engineers in their own projects of self-fashioning.

A Note on the Speaker:

Carol Upadhyia, a social anthropologist, is Professor in the School of Social Sciences at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) in Bangalore. Her research interests focus on globalization, transnationalism, and capitalism, class formation, and social transformations in post-liberalisation India. In addition to a number of published papers on the Indian middle class, work, and social identity in relation to the Indian IT industry, she co-edited (with A.R. Vasavi) the volume *In an Outpost of the Global Economy: Work and Workers in India's Information Technology Industry* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2008) and co-directed the ethnographic film series 'Coding Culture: Bangalore's Software Industry' (2006). Prof. Upadhyia is currently completing an ethnographic monograph on work, class and culture in the Indian software industry. She is co-director (with Mario Rutten of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam) of a collaborative research programme entitled 'Provincial Globalisation: The Impact of Reverse Transnational Flows in India's Regional Towns'.