

**Panel 12:** Ritual and Healing in South Asia

**Convener:** Anthony Cerulli, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Dept. of Religious Studies

**Abstract:** This panel explores the categories of “ritual” and “healing” in two critical ways in the South Asian context. First, each paper discusses ritual as a theoretical concept *per se* by querying ritual as, among other things, social process; ordering activity amidst unstable environments; repetition; purposefulness; and action meant to define and connect conceptual and physical spaces. Second, each paper moves from a theoretical consideration of ritual to an analysis of ritual practices that are meant to be therapeutic. The types of healing discussed in the papers include physical, psychological, and spiritual healing. The papers will explore specific case studies in various locations throughout South Asia, and a number of them examine textual traditions that are important in South Asian history and contemporary culture (e.g., Ayurveda and *Mahabharata*).

Panelists will employ a number of different methodologies to address the themes of ritual and healing, including ethnography, textual-hermeneutics, historiography, and feminist analysis. Special consideration will be given to the study of the application of rituals of healing due to factors such as, but not limited to, environmental conditions, economics, religion, politics, gender, migration, and newly emerging media/technologies.

**Contact:** Anthony Cerulli : cerulli@hws.edu