

Winter Semester 2021/2022

## SDAC Guest Lecture Series

Validating Marriages Across Cultures: Negotiating  
Multiple Normative Orders in Decision-Making  
ProcessesRama Srinivasan  
Università Ca' Foscari of Venice, Italy  
Legal Anthropology and Asian StudiesWednesday  
10.11.21  
6-8pm c.t.

**Dr. Rama Srinivasan** is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the Department of Asian and North African Studies, Ca' Foscari University of Venice. She is also affiliated as visiting faculty with the International Institute of Information Technology, India, and is currently a visiting scholar at the University of Paris Nanterre. Her EC-funded project, *\*Spousal Reunification\* and Integration Laws in Europe*, studies the modes through which immigrant couples and families from South Asia navigate visa/residency processes in Germany, Italy and France. She completed her PhD in Anthropology at Brown University in 2017 and she has also been a visiting postdoctoral fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. In 2020, her monograph, *\*Courting Desire: Litigating for Love in North India*, was published by the Rutgers University Press. It studied cases of legal interventions on elopements in North India and explored the larger transformations in marital patterns in the country.

In this lecture, Rama Srinivasan will discuss some broad themes from her previous and current projects on marital patterns in South Asia and among the South Asian diaspora in Europe. Along with a broad overview of classical anthropological works on marriage, kinship, and family, the talk will explore how both couples and their families perceive their individual situation and larger socioeconomic realities when they make decisions on courtship and marriage. In particular, she will discuss the phenomenon of elopements in North India and the decisions of couples to visit the courts and seek the validation for relationships that defy kinship and cultural norms. The presentation will also explore how marriages are assessed and validated in state spaces, both locally and in transnational settings, via visa and residency processes. Through examples of her ethnographic research in North India and in Europe, Srinivasan will delineate the ways in which the institution of marriage emerges in the research data as a legal category. This legal definition of marriage builds on social and cultural norms but also often contradicts or exceeds its more traditional definitions. These contradictions are particularly highlighted when couples present themselves and their intimate relationships up for evaluation by immigration authorities who may be working with a very limited understanding of South Asian norms on marriage. Srinivasan will end the presentation with some preliminary findings and observations on the topic of marriage migration in the European context.

This event will be held in person.  
Please contact Prof. Dr. Dominik  
Müller to register  
([dominik.m.mueller@fau.de](mailto:dominik.m.mueller@fau.de)).



**ELITE MASTER'S PROGRAM**  
Standards of Decision-Making Across Cultures