



SHAPING A MORE PEACEFUL AND DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

AN IMPACT REPORT PREPARED FOR DR. JENNIFER SIMONS
AND THE SIMONS FOUNDATION CANADA

January 2026

THANK YOU

We are proud to showcase the significant difference your gifts have made to SFU's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Faculty of Environment, and to the countless students and researchers whose work and lives have been enriched by the incredible opportunities that your support has made possible. Because of you, we've been able to provide a world-class global education inside and outside the classroom, as well as engage members of the public on topics addressing some of the most critical challenges of our time.





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INSPIRING A GLOBAL MINDSET

Students who are part of SFU's School for International Studies, Institute for the Humanities, and Graduate Liberal Studies program are encouraged to channel their passions into tackling real-world issues and exploring the ideas and values that shape our society. Your support ensures that students continue to have diverse and unique learning opportunities—from fellowships and fieldwork to international exchanges and internships.



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Dear Dr. Jennifer Simons and friends at The Simons Foundation Canada,

On behalf of SFU's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, we wanted to extend our deepest gratitude to you for your remarkable commitment to promoting the ideals of peace, disarmament, international law, and human security.

Your generous support has enabled transformative initiatives within the School for International Studies. This past year's highlights include a workshop run by Dr. Megan MacKenzie, the Simons Chair in Peace, Disarmament and Human Security, where she convened world-leading scholars to explore the role of postsecondary institutions in advancing nuclear disarmament education; the welcoming of Jemima Ackah-Arthur, a researcher with regional expertise in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the field of global conflict and security; and the continuation of graduate fellowship opportunities and invaluable experiences abroad for aspiring changemakers.

Thanks to your thoughtful investment, the Institute for Humanities is building bridges between the academy and community through programming like the annual Chinmoy Banerjee Lecture in Anti-Racism and other engaging public events. Last fall, we hosted the “Fascist Neo-liberalism and the Fate of Radical Democracy” international conference featuring participants from Brazil, Germany, the UK, Europe, and North America to explore the interconnected political, gender, and ecological crises.

The Graduate Liberal Studies program continues to carry the spirit and wisdom of Dr. Jerry Zaslove, offering immersive field schools in the UK and Europe and embarking on an exciting new venture to establish the SFU Graduate Liberal Studies Centre for Narrative Arts in partnership with the Oxford Centre for Life-Writing. The new centre will bring together international scholars and storytellers to create human stories that spark widespread dialogue, understanding, and civic engagement.

Your efforts have greatly enriched the learning and development of future leaders who will champion justice, equity, and global citizenship. Thank you for believing in the power of education—and SFU—to shape a more peaceful and democratic tomorrow.

S. Laurel Weldon

Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada
Dean, SFU's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Distinguished SFU Professor, Political Science



ADVANCING PEACE AND SECURITY



"Over many years of consistent support, Dr. Jennifer Simons and The Simons Foundation have helped make SFU's School for International Studies one of Canada's most vibrant and productive hubs of internationally oriented research, education, and policy and public engagement.

In providing graduate student scholarships, the Simons Foundation Canada Postdoctoral Fellowship, and funds for students' international learning opportunities, you have helped prepare the next generation of critically informed, experienced, and engaged global citizens and scholars. Your ongoing support of the

Simons Chair in Peace, Disarmament and Human Security has provided multiple additional opportunities for critical interdisciplinary scholarship and connections that influence Canadian and international policy and public discourse.



As we mark the School's 20th anniversary in 2026, we feel privileged to have your ongoing support, and we are motivated by your exceptional commitment to building the expertise required to secure a safer and more just world."

Elizabeth Cooper
DIRECTOR AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



MOVING RESEARCH INTO IMPACT



Since 2020, Dr. Megan MacKenzie has held the **Simons Chair in Peace, Disarmament and Human Security**, where she supports students and early-career scholars on various topics, including gender and war, military culture, international security, disarmament and demilitarization, and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

Engagement and education

- Led SFU's second DREAM lab (Defence Resources Exploring Alternatives to Militarism), which brings together undergraduate and graduate students to help them reimagine defence budgets in ways that would bolster the everyday security of Canadians. (2025).



Dr. MacKenzie and DREAM Lab students at Capilano River Regional Park.



DREAM Lab workshop on how Canadian militarized spending could be reallocated.



DREAM Lab students present their ideas to activist and author David Vine (pictured at top).

- Helped organize a workshop entitled "Advancing Nuclear Disarmament Education" in Vancouver. This brought together over 20 world-leading scholars and is ongoing. (2024).
- Organized the Andrew Mack annual lecture, which features an emerging scholar doing work on human security, broadly defined. (2024 and 2025).
- Organized several events, mentored students, and helped publish a number of policy briefs focused on women, peace, and security through the Research Network on Women, Peace and Security.

Major recognition

- Named a Women and Public Policy Program Research Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School. (2025-2026).
- Awarded a Mobilizing Insights in National Defence and Security (MINDS) grant of \$750,000 CAD over three years, as co-director. (2023).

Professional service

- Serves as co-editor of the *Feminist Reimagining International Studies* book series with Bristol University Press.
- Serves as co-director of the Research Network on Women, Peace and Security, a national bilingual hub in Canada advancing gender, militarism, and peace research.

- Has led or co-led major institutional-level studies on racism and sexism in academia, and investigations into institutional barriers to equity, inclusion, and decolonization.

Publications and scholarly contributions

- Goldsmith, B.E., MacKenzie, M., & Wynter, T. "Racial Bias in Academia: An Audit Experiment Revealing Disparities in Faculty Responses to Prospective Students." *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 20(1), 1–23. (2024).
- Luna, K.C. & MacKenzie, M. "Postcards from the Pandemic: Women, Intersectionality, and Gendered Risks in the Global COVID-19 Pandemic." *International Studies Review*, 26(4). (2024).
- MacKenzie, M. & Wegner, N. "Gender and Security: Tackling Insecurity Inside the Canadian Military." In Aisha Ahmad (Ed.), *Securing Canada's Future: Vital Insights from Women Experts*. University of Toronto Press. (2024).
- Collins, J.C., MacKenzie, M., Schneider, C.R., Chaar, B.B., & Moles, R.J. "Developing and Testing a Novel Method to Explore Implicit Bias in the Community Pharmacy." *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 19(7). (2023).
- MacKenzie, M. "Iconic war images and the myth of the 'good American soldier.'" *Media, War & Conflict*, 12(9). (2023).

- MacKenzie, M. "Sexual Misconduct and the Crisis of Defence Culture." In *Canadian Defence Policy in Theory and Practice*, 2:9–28. (2023).
- MacKenzie, M. & Wadham, B. "Is the Problem with Military Culture One of Bad Apples or Bad Orchards?: War Crimes, Scandals, and Persistent Dysfunction." *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 58(3): 298–308. (2023).
- MacKenzie, M., Gregory, T., Sarvary, B., & Razack, S. "Australian War Crimes in Afghanistan: Race, Gender and Responsibility." *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 58(3): 247–255. (2023).
- MacKenzie, M., Sensoy, Ö., Johnson, G. F., Sinclair, N., & Weldon, L. "How Universities Gaslight EDI&I Initiatives: Mapping Institutional Resistance to Structural Change." *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 19(1). (2023).

Public commentary

- MacKenzie, M. "When 'warrior standards' are a cover for sexism." *Stars & Stripes*. (2025).
- MacKenzie, M. "'Male soldiers can't help themselves' is among the many rape myths that need debunking." *The Conversation*, September 7. (2023).
- MacKenzie, M., Sensoy, O., Johnson, G., Sinclair, N., Weldon, L. "4 Ways Universities Gaslight DEI Initiatives." *Inside Higher Education*. (2023).

- Frequently intervened in media and policy debates around military sexual violence, militarism, and institutional accountability (e.g. via public talks, media interviews, commentary).

Selected invited talks and keynotes

- Featured speaker in NATO's Deep Dive: Women's Recruitment and Retention in the Armed Forces session. (2025).
- Keynote speaker for Open Door / Women Veteran's Australia / Defence Force Welfare Association's symposium "Calling It What It Is: Language, Justice, and Giving Power back to Victims" on military sexual violence. (2025).



Dr. MacKenzie speaks at Open Door symposium on military sexual violence.

- Key speaker on gender and security at the Harvard Belfer Center 50th Anniversary Reunion and Conference. (2024).
- Invited speaker at the Royal Higher Institute for Defence conference featuring Nobel Laureate Denis Mukwege and attended by the Queen of Belgium. (2024).
- Lectured at the University of Ottawa on *Good Soldiers Don't Rape* (2023).

ENRICHING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

THE SIMONS FOUNDATION CANADA GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Since 2020, The Simons Foundation Canada Graduate Fellowship in International Studies has supported 20 bright students in pursuing a graduate degree at SFU:

2023/24

\$33,700 to support three students

2024/25

\$20,000 to support two students



MIRIAM ABEL

2024 RECIPIENT

Miriam's research focuses on Sts'ailes First Nation approaches to justice and their guiding philosophy. Central to this approach is S'iyołemtel—the process of “making things better”—and where justice is understood as communal restoration rather than individual punishment. Her findings offer specific practices for the Sts'ailes to build their own self determined justice processes, and outline practical steps for Canada to support this process through respectful partnerships. Currently, Miriam and the Sts'ailes are actively implementing the findings of her research in the community, such as through the Meh and Teh program.

Thank you from Miriam:

“Elders shared personal stories with me, as well as deeply sacred cultural teachings and oral histories. Because of this fellowship, I was able to compensate the Elders, making my research more reciprocal and less extractive.

Without this funding, I would have never been able to pursue a master's degree in Canada. As an international student who comes from a low socio-economic background, the fellowship enabled me to pursue my passion and put my knowledge and resources to good use. The impact of the fellowship goes beyond me personally; it extends toward Sts'ailes and all Indigenous groups who seek to pursue their own self-determined justice system.

Gratitude does not capture what this funding has meant for me. I thank you and I hold my hands up to you. Your support has shown me what I can become when someone unconditionally believes in me.”



TANAYA PARMAR

2023 RECIPIENT

Domestic work, predominantly performed by Black women in Kenya, takes place within the intimate setting of the employer's home, where intersections of race, gender, class, and other social identities often heighten workers' vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. While much of the existing scholarship focuses on Black–White dynamics, contemporary relationships between Africans and Indians in Kenya remain largely overlooked. Through interviews with both Black female domestic workers and Indian employers in Kenya, Tanaya found a complex interplay of care, exploitation, and discrimination shaping these relationships. The home emerged as a microcosm of broader inequalities, revealing how racial hierarchies and anti-Black racism continue to operate in Kenya, while also highlighting how everyday interactions in domestic work can both reinforce and challenge these structural power dynamics.

Thank you from Tanaya:

“Without this fellowship, I would never have been able to take part in this life-changing program. Coming from a middle-class family in Kenya, pursuing a master’s degree abroad would have been financially out of reach for me. This fellowship turned what felt like a distant dream into a reality, and allowed me to focus on producing meaningful research rather than worrying about how to afford it.

Thank you for making this opportunity possible and for investing in the growth and development of students like me. Your generosity has made a profound difference in my life, allowing me to pursue my passions and explore important questions.”



ELIF POYRAZLI

2023 RECIPIENT

How can a public matter turn into a security problem, enabling the justification and use of emergency tools, powers, and higher political action? Elif’s research aims to shed light on the level of urgency and importance that Canadian Members of Parliament (MPs) give to the climate crisis. By conducting an examination of 391 House of Commons transcripts, she was able to identify the MPs who securitize climate change and the policy areas they embed in their political discourse, as well as the often obscured coalitions and power dynamics within the House of Commons when it comes to the existential threat of climate change.

Thank you from Elif:

“I was a recent victim of a major earthquake in my hometown in Turkey before I came to SFU. In the earthquake, my family lost all means of financial support avenues which made the idea of living and studying in Vancouver a difficult path for me. At a time of such stress and anxiety, this fellowship fundamentally changed the course of my studies and my life. Thanks to this scholarship, I was able to ace my courses and finish with a strong project.

I would like to thank Dr. Jennifer Simons and the Simons Foundation Canada for paving the way for me to contribute to a high stakes area such as climate security through my studies in a time of personal challenges and adversities.”



MATTHEW MONCHAK

2023 RECIPIENT

Matthew pursued two distinct areas of research: the weaponization of queer identity in geopolitical conflicts, notably the Russia-Ukraine War; and the confluence of wildlife conservation and cultural nationalism in India. His first research topic has shown the ways in which politically homophobic states, and specifically Russia, use queer people and identities as pawns to achieve aims within their own borders and beyond, claiming “moral sovereignty” over their human rights obligations. State-led anti-queer policies, he has found, are often less rooted in deeply held convictions related to culture, tradition, and religion than they are in political expediency. His second research topic highlights how better understanding the vastly different cultural, social, political, economic, and geographical realities in different states in India allow for alternate drivers of wildlife conservation to be employed to support the reach and efficacy of global wildlife conservation efforts. By looking at cultural politics in the Indian context, his outlook decentres Western hegemony and supports a more fulsome analysis of the unique dynamics that drive wildlife conservation in India.

Thank you from Matthew:

“Moving to a new city and leaving behind a 9-5 job to pursue further education is a daunting decision. The Simons Foundation Canada Graduate Fellowship in International Studies greatly buoyed my confidence that I was making the right decision to follow my passions and better myself in the process. In the midst of studies, seemingly small things like having a proper meal can become big dilemmas due to financial constraints and worries. This funding helped alleviate those concerns and allowed me to look after myself, and, in turn, bring to light two unique areas of research that open the door to further inquiry by myself and others. I am extremely grateful for the funding from the fellowship—much thanks to all of those who made this possible for me.”

THE SIMONS FOUNDATION CANADA POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The Simons Foundation Canada Postdoctoral Fellowship in International Studies enables us to hire one scholar annually.

Our 2025 postdoctoral fellow is Jemima Ackah Arthur (\$70,000).



JEMIMA ACKAH-ARTHUR

2025 RECIPIENT

Jemima's research investigates how developing countries manage terror threats within their own borders, and how governments, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, respond to insurgent activities across and within areas facing violence.

Looking to countries like Nigeria that are facing terror attacks, her research has three focal points: how governments build their capacity and resources to respond to violence in local communities; how partnerships between different state actors and community-based armed groups such as militias help the government to address terror incidents; and how the relations between insurgent groups and the local populations impact the ability of the government to curb such incidents.

Through her work, Jemima aims to help students, policymakers, and other stakeholders better understand how social and interpersonal connections between state and non-state actors in countries with weak capacity governments, especially in Africa, are crucial in the regulation of activities and bolstering government competencies in security provision during periods of violence.

Thank you from Jemima:

“Through my fellowship, I have gained more experience as an academic. I've had the opportunity to teach and participate in many social activities within the School for International Studies, allowing me to interact and mentor graduate, senior undergraduate, and incoming students. Such interactions remind me of my own academic journey and give me the chance to share my own experiences with these students to support them.

Through your immense financial support, I feel more confident in building my academic ideas and career in conflict, peace, and security, conducting research independently, and taking on more challenging roles in academia in the future. I am so glad to have been given this opportunity, and incredibly grateful for your generosity.”

EXPANDING HORIZONS

The Simons Foundation Canada International Travel Award provides students within the School for International Studies with the opportunity to dive into diverse cultures, supplement classroom learning, and broaden horizons.

The awards are valued at a maximum of \$8,000 each and are granted to students embarking on an international learning experience in a country that is not their home country.



LARK ANDERSON

2024 RECIPIENT

Lark spent six months in Lao People's Democratic Republic with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), whose Alternative Development projects aim to provide communities in Houaphanh and Phongsaly provinces vulnerable to opium cultivation with the opportunity to pursue alternative legal livelihood through coffee cultivation.

Thank you from Lark:

“The Simons Foundation International Travel Award allowed me to gain hands-on experience, learn new skills, and advance my knowledge in the development field. For example, to better communicate both professionally and personally, I began learning to speak the Lao language. While I still have much to learn, some of the most memorable moments during my internship came when I could communicate with stakeholders in their language. Their patience with me reinforced the importance of listening, and participation in project delivery.

From supporting the Vanmai Coffee Cooperative, a farmer-owned and Fairtrade-certified coffee cooperative, to revising field-level reporting systems and assisting with international cooperation frameworks, the internship deepened my understanding of what it means to work collaboratively with local and global communities. Thanks to this funding, the themes and topics that I had explored in my undergraduate studies became tangible in my daily work.”



CHE GOONDIWALA

2024 RECIPIENT

Che travelled to Uganda in summer 2024, where he was matched with a local NGO called Sawa World. The organization works with various partners to empower youth to generate their own income through skills training or to provide them with basic needs. One standout program involved urban farming, in which Sawa World would train beneficiaries to create farms in the compact urban spaces where many live. These farms would, in turn, serve as a food source and an income generator. During this time, Che was able to work in the field with beneficiaries from the various communities across central Uganda and see the profound impact of local solutions.

Thank you from Che:

“My experience in Uganda allowed me to truly explore where a degree in international studies could take me and pushed me to add my unique experiences and abilities to the field. Working and learning in Africa further amplified my desire to have a career here—a dream I have had since I first took an interest in international relations. I would like to thank the Simons Foundation Canada for giving me the opportunity to embark on this journey of personal and professional self-discovery.”



SOPHIE MCCANN

2025 RECIPIENT

Sophie spent spring and summer 2025 on Awaji Island, a rural island off the coast of mainland Japan known for its nature and farming, where she joined a human resources and staffing solutions agency called Pasona. During her internship, Sophie worked alongside a diverse group of educators from around the world to help run the Awaji Island International School (AIIS), which provides free preschool, kindergarten, and after-school care for children of employees. As large percentages of youth leave their hometowns for larger cities like Tokyo and Osaka, the creation of AIIS is one of the ways that Pasona is creating employment and life solutions on the island to attract both local and international employees.

Thank you from Sophie:

“The Simons Foundation Canada International Travel Award was integral to funding my travels and life within Japan, allowing me to afford my flight, housing, and contribute to monthly expenses such as food and internet bills. Living and teaching in Japan was an amazing opportunity for me to build my confidence, meet inspiring and welcoming people from across the globe, and lay a foundation for me to pursue work abroad in the future.”

EXPLORING CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON TRADITIONAL IDEAS

"The Simons Foundation Canada's generous gift to support Graduate Liberal Studies (GLS) at SFU enabled us to grow our wide-ranging program to better serve students from all professional and personal backgrounds interested in exploring ideas, knowledge, and experience.

GLS started as a primarily in-person program for students residing in Vancouver but, like many other programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, had to pivot to online delivery. Today, we are proud to be able to offer a hybrid delivery model, which continues to see great success with students both locally and as far as North Vancouver Island, Ottawa, and Iran.

This year, we ran very well-received hybrid field schools in Rome and Oxford exploring food history and leading figures in biography, autobiography, and life writing, respectively. The Oxford field school is part of a much larger initiative to establish the new SFU Graduate Liberal Studies Centre for Narrative Arts in partnership with the Oxford Centre for Life-Writing. This marks an incredibly exciting time to be

in GLS as we build, plan, experiment, and consult, and we couldn't do any of this without the support of donors like you."

Sasha Colby

**DIRECTOR, GRADUATE LIBERAL STUDIES
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



EXPERIENCING THE WORLD THROUGH TRAVEL STUDIES

2025 marked an extensive travel-study period for Graduate Liberal Studies (GLS) with students exploring Italian food and cultural history in Rome and then historical and contemporary writing at Oxford Centre for Life-Writing (OCLW).

Leveraging some of the most popular aspects of recent GLS Italian travel study, the Rome field school focused on the history, politics, economics, art-historical, religious, and environmental contexts of Italian food history and culture. The week abroad was rigorous as students participated in a wide variety of seminars, museum visits, historical walking tours, food tastings, and cooking workshops. The experience was enriched by the expertise of Italian partners such as food historian and restauranteur Guido Farinelli, film and cultural critic Carolina Ciampaglia, archaeologist Mariella Mastrogiovanni, and art historians and museum guides specifically chosen to bring the vivid history of Rome to life.

An immersive visit to the OCLW enabled students to participate in faculty-led seminars and talks with

leading figures in biography, autobiography, and beyond. During their intensive on-the-ground week in Oxford, students explored the many and varied ways lives have been represented across time, genre, and media through a combination of walking tours, site visits, lectures, and dedicated seminars with Oxford writers and academics. Their focus was twofold: the aesthetic and social thought generated by 19th- and 20th-century literary and artistic Oxford lives (particularly Ruskin, Pater, Wilde, Brittain, Naipaul, and Winterson); and the trends and techniques in contemporary life writing. Students also had the opportunity to research their final academic papers or research-based creative projects in the University's Bodleian Library, one of Europe's oldest libraries.

Both hybrid field schools are building blocks toward the planned Oxford-partnered SFU GLS Centre for Narrative Arts (CNA), a brand-new international research hub offering more scholarly opportunities for GLS students, alumni, and the broader community starting in Fall 2028. The mandate of this partnership is to achieve research excellence and public engagement through the study of story in its many forms and the production of compelling, scholarship-based narratives that reach wider and more diverse audiences outside of academia. As the inauguration nears, GLS will consult with students and alumni in 2026 about the new centre's formation and direction. The creation of the CNA heralds an exciting new chapter in GLS' story at SFU and represents the growth and resilience of the program.



Divinity School, University of Oxford.



Learning how to cook authentic Italian cuisine in a local Roman kitchen.



Attending a specially curated exhibit on English writer Vera Brittain.



Museum and archaeological site visits in Rome.

What our students are saying:

“The Oxford Field School experience has been transformative in ways I’m still working to unpack. It has expanded my horizons around what it means to be a student, as well as how I understand myself to be situated in history. To visit the birthplace of so many ideas was an incredible experience, and the structure and support from both the SFU and Oxford organizations made it both comfortable and accessible.”

SCOTT GIBSON

“They say travel makes the world feel smaller, more familiar, while at the same time expanding your horizons. Rome was like that for me. Early on my first morning, as I sat at the foot of the statue of Giordano Bruno in the Piazza Campo de’ Fiori and watched the stall keepers set up their wares, I thought of my grandfather. A tall, handsome Northern Italian emigrant affectionally known as “Big Louie” during his early first years working the coke ovens in Michel, B.C., he was intellectually (and culinarily) curious, much like Bruno. Despite few opportunities for formal learning, he pursued knowledge of the natural world, from botany to cosmology, and taught me how to see and translate wonder into words and art. As I observed, collected, and reflected on layers of knowledge about Italy through our readings and my on-the-ground observations, I noticed connections between food, ideas, relationships, and spaces that broadened my understanding of the world and my place within it. This experience sparked my explorations in ways that evoke my grandfather’s spirit and will stay with me.”

MELANIE MONK

“The appeal of the Rome GLS travel study is not just the destination; it is the community of learners that share an intense week of academic and self- discovery. By connecting with other intellectually curious adults around a central theme, the travel experience becomes more than a mere tourist visit, it becomes the basis for this curiosity to continue well after the travel study is over. This opportunity is ideal for those who are looking for a rich experience that is more about self than selfies, discourse instead of tourism. Even for those who may have ‘seen’ Italy before, the unique experiences and perspectives that GLS travel study provides is well worth it.”

SERENA

Watch this video, filmed in October 2025, highlighting SFU’s field school in Oxford:





ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



**TESSA PERKINS
DENEAULT (MA '23)**

The GLS program is one of the most practical for anyone who is working full time and doesn't want to, or can't afford to, put their career on hold to complete a master's degree. The ability to take courses in other departments, and the interdisciplinary nature of the courses within GLS, also set it apart.

"My experience in the program overall was fantastic. I started the program in September 2020; my cohort was the first one to be taking classes online, and we missed out on the GLS tradition of weekly meals before seminar, but despite that we were still able to get to know each other. We met up a few times in person, and I created a Slack workspace for our cohort to chat in between classes.

In 2021, GLS celebrated its 30th anniversary, and I had the opportunity to work as a research assistant, assisting with planning and promoting the anniversary seminar series. I decided to complete the program with a thesis project, which would allow me to pursue further graduate studies. At first, I planned on doing a project about the intersection of Marxism and veganism, but during my sixth and final course I changed my mind. I took a course with Sasha Colby, "Writing the Modern Self," about different forms of life writing, and for my assignment I started a biography of Iris Garland.

Partway through the course, I realized I wanted to continue that work. My thesis, Iris Garland: Modern Movement, is a biography of Garland who joined SFU as a charter faculty member in 1965 and started the dance program here. I'm planning to continue this work for a book length biography. My thesis is dedicated to my daughter who was born just after I completed my fifth course."

DEVELOPING ACTIVE CITIZENS

"Now in its 42nd year of research and public programming, SFU's Institute for the Humanities continues to facilitate the development of active engagement in society with the aim to promote greater interaction between the academy and community."

The Institute has convened scholars, policymakers, and activists from five continents, drawing approximately 18,000 participants over the past fifteen years. The Institute demonstrates its commitment to equity and inclusion in initiatives such as the Chinmoy Banerjee Lecture in Anti-Racism (since 2021) and partnerships with Indigenous and South Asian organizations.

As an early supporter of the Institute, your enthusiastic support and encouragement, not to mention generous ongoing financial support, has enabled us to make our programming almost entirely free and accessible to the public. The importance of this cannot be over-stated in a period when virtually everything is commodified and

out of reach for most people. Thank you for your commitment to promoting greater interaction between the university and the community."

Samir Ganesha
**DIRECTOR AND
PROFESSOR,
INSTITUTE FOR
THE HUMANITIES**



FACILITATING PUBLIC OUTREACH

Thanks to your investment, the Institute has been able to offer several exciting events in 2024 and 2025 that are open, accessible, and close to free to the public:

Events

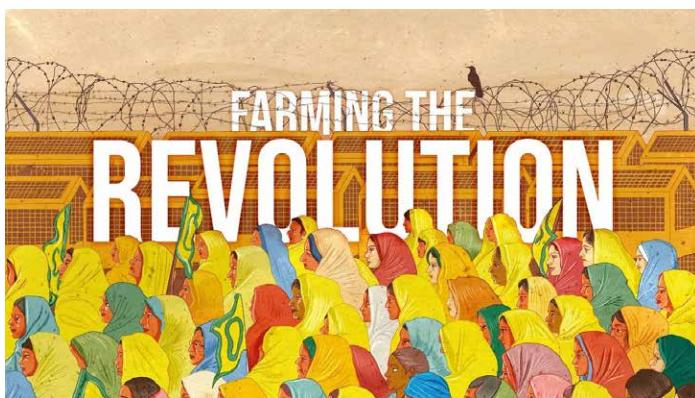
- Annual Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture: "Decoding Dr. Ambedkar: Ideas of Nation Building and Buddhism"
- Annual Dr. Hari Sharma Memorial Lecture: "India and Israel: Partners in Genocide"
- Anti-fascist philosophy collaboration with the Nietzsche Kolleg and the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna
- Book launch: *Dwelling in the Wilderness: Modern Monks in the American West*
- Book launch: *Maya Wind's Towers of Ivory and Steel*
- Book launch and discussion: *The New Lives of Images: Digital Ecologies and Anthropocene Imaginaries in More-than-Human Worlds*
- Book launch: *The United Nations and the Question of Palestine*
- Book talk: *The Fall and Rise of American Finance*



Adrian J. Ivakhiv

Eco-philosopher and cultural theorist Adrian Ivakhiv presents an incisive new way of thinking about images and imagination in his book *The New Lives on Images*.

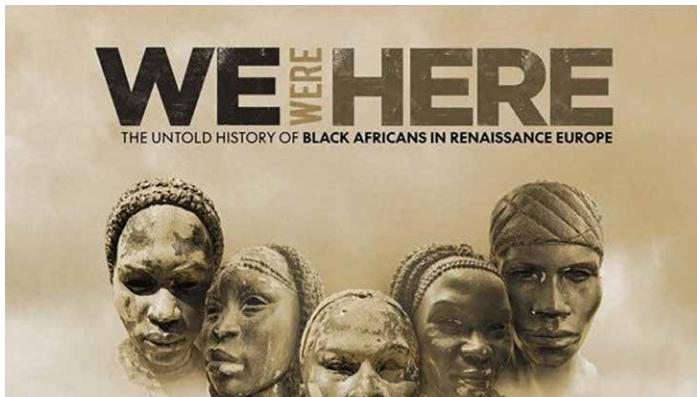
- Book talk: *Connecting the Holocaust and the Nakba Through Photograph-based Storytelling: Willing the Impossible*
- Co-sponsored a conference on Theodor W. Adorno with BUAP University in Puebla, Mexico
- David Graeber Memorial Lecture: “Conditions of Life Calculated: On the Gaza Genocide”
- Edward Said Memorial Lecture with Cornel West: “Where Do We Go from Here? The Future of Justice and Solidarity”
- Film screening and Q&A with director: *Farming the Revolution*
- Film screening and Q&A with director: *IAm Gitxsan*
- Film screening: *Israelism*
- Film screening and Q&A with director: *We Were Here: The Untold History of Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*
- Hybrid webinar series on “Radical Hope in Feverish Times”
- Manjeet Sarkar in Vancouver: “Untouchable: Laughing Out Caste”
- Memorial panel discussion and reading for Roy Miki (1942–2024)
- Panel discussion: “Razing Gaza: Israel’s War on Palestinian Health and Wellbeing”
- Professor Chinmoy Banerjee Memorial Lecture on anti-racism featuring Pragna Patel: “The Challenge Before Us: Moving from a Politics of Identity to a Politics of Solidarity”
- Public lecture: “Homegrown Radicals: A Story of State Violence, Islamophobia, and Jihad in the Post-9/11 World”
- Public lecture: “How the Humanities First Cracked the Nazi Code”
- Public lecture: “Marx’s Late Writings: Theories of Revolution Change and of Alternatives to Capitalism”
- Public lecture: “The Anthropocene, Global Capitalism and Global Futures: Times out of Joint”
- Public lecture: “The Political Transition in Bangladesh”
- Speaker series: Dan Collins on Jacques Lacan’s Middle Seminars (XII and XIII)
- The Middle East and Islamic Consortium Student Conference
- Three-day conference in Puebla, Mexico: “Adorno in Dark Times: Negativity and Praxis”



Farming the Revolution is a documentary that takes you to the epicenter of India's historic farmers' movement.



I am Gitxsan is a documentary highlighting the impact of colonialism on the Gitxsan Nation.



We Were Here sheds light on the overlooked presence of African and Black individuals in Renaissance Europe, highlighting their depiction in masterpieces by some of the era's most celebrated artists.



The Professor Chinmoy Banerjee Memorial Lecture in Anti-Racism featured feminist and antiracist activist, Pragna Patel. She reflected on her work in giving voice to some of the most marginalized black and minority women and girls in the UK.



This "Fascist Neo-liberalism and the Fate of Radical Democracy" conference explored how the interconnected political, gender, and ecological crises can be analyzed and challenged in pursuit of radical democracy.

- Three-day conference in Weimar, Germany: "What is Anti-Fascist Philosophy?"
- Three-day conference on authoritarianism: "Fascist Neo-liberalism and the Fate of Radical Democracy"
- Two-day Joanne Brown Symposium on Violence and its Alternatives: "Generative AI, Techno-Authoritarianism, and the Future of the Critical Humanities"
- Lacan Salon's 2025 Clinical Seminar Series (March–June): "A Psychoanalysis Begins: From Preliminary Interviews to the Orientation of Treatment"
- Two-day MEICON ("The Middle East & Islamic Consortium) Student Conference

Media

- The newly re-launched *Journal of Adorno Studies* released its first issue and is working on its next three issues
- Achieved sizeable impact on YouTube channel: 136 videos archived and 259K subscribers
- CJSF 90.1 Radio interviewed Samir Gandesha, director of the Institute for the Humanities, on fascism, populism, and zionism



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



RAPHAEL SANTOS DAS MERCÊS

2025 RECIPIENT

Raphael Mercês, a PhD student under the supervision of Samir Gadesha, completed a summer internship with the Institute in 2025 thanks to the support of the Simons Foundation Canada. He has since stayed on as a research assistant to continue helping with the copyediting and publishing of the Institute's two journals and several other book projects.

His research draws from several disciplines in the humanities, including philosophy, sociology, psychology, and political science, focusing on the psychosocial implications of the process of digitalization.

A few words from Raphael:

“In this role, I gained valuable insight into a practical side of academia that we, as aspiring professors and researchers, hardly will see in our classes: the process of managing and planning both one-time and continuous publications.

This experience undoubtedly had a very positive impact on my studies. It gave me a more concrete understanding of how academic knowledge is produced and disseminated, and also helped me develop practical skills in project management and communication that are directly applicable to my career.

This support was essential in providing me with this wonderful experience, and I am truly grateful for the investment in my professional and academic development.”

SHAPING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

As the first Faculty of Environment in Western Canada, SFU is dedicated to creating learning environments that are challenging, collaborative, and ethically-informed. Our faculty and students explore the complex relationships between humans and their built and natural environments from the past to the present. We also tackle the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, economic, and social with an aim to make positive impacts locally and globally. With your support, we've been able to provide students with opportunities to engage in experiential, interdisciplinary, and skills-based applications that will empower civic engagement.



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Dear Dr. Jennifer Simons and friends at The Simons Foundation Canada,

Thank you for your extraordinary investment in the next generation of environmental leaders through The Simons Foundation Canada Graduate Awards in the Faculty of Environment.

With your generosity, we were able to support eight scholars in 2024/25 with diverse research interests spanning from water and climate adaptation across B.C. to exploring Canada's commitment to Reconciliation and Indigenous sovereignty while the country continues to support fossil fuel expansion.

Because of you, our graduate students can find innovative solutions to advance climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and the health of our people and the planet. In the pages ahead, you can learn more about our changemakers, the difference they hope to make, and how you've changed their lives through this funding.

We are grateful for your partnership in this vital work. Thank you for being a catalyst for progress and for your inspiring dedication to building a more sustainable world.

Sean Markey
Dean, SFU's Faculty of Environment

THE SIMONS FOUNDATION GRADUATE AWARDS IN THE FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT

WORDS FROM OUR SCHOLARS



ANWEN REES

2024 RECIPIENT

Dear Dr. Jennifer Simons and The Simons Foundation Canada,

Thank you so much for creating and funding this award. I was honoured to receive it last summer, and it was a massive help to me as I entered into the second year of my PhD.

My PhD is focused on water governance and planning, and I am working with Squamish Nation and the City of Prince Rupert on a project supporting infrastructure in rural and Indigenous contexts. I decided to attend SFU's resource and environmental management program in 2021 for my master's degree, as I was interested in working to support water and climate adaptation across B.C. I fell in love with the program, and was offered an opportunity to continue on to my PhD after completing my master's degree in 2023.

Receiving this award was hugely helpful for me last summer. I had to navigate some life changes, including needing to figure out a new living situation, with much higher rent. It was a stressful and difficult time, and because of your award, my financial stress was significantly reduced.

Once I finish my schooling, I am hoping to continue working in the water governance space. I know for sure that it is important to me in my career to do my best to make the world a better place. I'm not sure what form that will take yet, but I know that I love research, and I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to learn in the resource and environmental management program.

Again, I would like to reiterate how impactful this was to me. Thank you again for supporting students through your award.

Anwen Rees



VLAD KRAKOV

2024 RECIPIENT

Dear Dr. Jennifer Simons and The Simons Foundation Canada,

This award empowered me financially to complete a master's degree in archaeology that was truly transformative for me. Thanks in part to this award, I had the financial capacity to relocate for the final year of my master's to Xwe'etay/Lasqueti Island, the island whose archaeology I was studying and the present-day community of which would be most impacted by this research.

Beyond studying the subject through a computer screen, I was able to walk the landscape on a regular basis, form close relationships with the local community, and learn about the complex pre-colonial and colonial history of the island, all of which served to enrich both my experience and the thesis itself.

In December 2024, I successfully defended my thesis. Later this year, once I return to Canada, I will begin to look for a position at a cultural resources management firm in British Columbia, to look for further ways to serve Indigenous heritage in the region and all of us who benefit from its protection.

Thank you sincerely for your generous support of my journey!

With gratitude,
Vladislav Krakov



NICK GOTTLIEB

2024 RECIPIENT

Dear Dr. Jennifer Simons and The Simons Foundation Canada,

For the last few years, I have been working primarily as a researcher and writer focused on climate change, ecological crisis, and political economy. I'm pursuing doctoral studies as a way to continue developing my writing skills, to build intellectual community, and to find mentorship. I chose SFU specifically because of my supervisor, Geoff Mann, because of his record of writing for the public and his commitment to help me leverage my doctoral program as an opportunity for writing my first book.

Completing my doctoral studies will be a milestone in establishing my career as a writer as well as in the development of my ability to communicate important issues to the Canadian public. Publishing my dissertation as a book geared towards a lay audience will be a significant step forwards in communicating the dynamics of the ongoing struggles over new fossil fuel infrastructure, Reconciliation, and colonialism in northern British Columbia and Canada more broadly.

Because my work is independently directed and not part of a larger research project, I'm responsible for funding my position myself. The Simons Foundation Graduate Award has been a significant help in ensuring that I have the financial support needed to pursue this research full time.

Thank you,
Nick Gottlieb



EMMA GRIGGS

2024 RECIPIENT

Dear Dr. Jennifer Simons and The Simons Foundation Canada,

I'm writing to convey my sincere thanks for your generous support as I pursue my master's degree. Like many British Columbians, I grew up in nature, clomping around in hiking boots, falling out of kayaks and canoes, and climbing granite walls. Sadly, what I also have in common with many others in my generation is that I have seen with my own eyes the dramatic change occurring in these areas. Climate change and intensive resource extraction continue to threaten the future of these places and the activities I had hoped to do with my own children, as well as all the other species that depend on them.

In my work as a graduate student, I am performing a deep dive analysis into policy and legislation, focusing on B.C.'s salmon watersheds. After graduation, I hope to join some of the transformational salmon conservation work occurring in B.C.'s northern watersheds. Many of these watersheds still have healthy salmon populations, and while it's important to recover other populations where we can, I also believe in fiercely fighting for improving the management of relatively "in tact" watersheds. This will enable us to steward systems before they are pushed to the breaking point, and instill resilience for future generations.

There was no other choice but SFU for my dreams of studying environmental management. The faculty at this university are endlessly supportive, innovative, and inspiring. The work is truly cutting-edge, and it is such an exciting place to be. And, doubtlessly, I would not be able to live as a graduate student without financial support which allows me to completely focus on my project without also shouldering significant financial stress.

In all honesty, mental health of graduate students can be challenging to manage, juggling our own personal lives and responsibilities, tight budgeting of our funds, the expectations of supervisors and publishing, as well as our own determination to succeed and have a positive impact with our work. Many of us also have climate anxiety hanging over us, so feeling additional support and encouragement from generous funders is so meaningful!

Again, thank you for your support. Awards like this make all the difference in graduate school.

Warmly and with gratitude,
Emma Griggs

OTHER SCHOLAR BIOS



DAMON TARRANT 2025 RECIPIENT

Damon is a master's student undertaking research on identifying human remains from forensic contexts in collaboration with the B.C. Coroner's office. He applies novel isotope methods to assist the coroner in identifying if the remains are archaeological or forensic. Although still in the early days of his graduate work, Damon has already had a paper accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.



ASHLEY TEGART 2024 RECIPIENT

Ashley graduated with her master's degree in GIScience in 2025. Her focus was on environmental correlates related to runnability (evaluation of environmental features promoting running). She worked on two projects: a Runnability Scoping Review to determine all runnability correlates in the published academic literature, and a second project to conduct environmental scans of the most popular running segments on Strava in Metro Vancouver.



HANNAH HERRICK 2024 RECIPIENT

Hannah is a PhD candidate investigating the materials and processes involved in the production of archaeological lime plaster. Her research aims to better understand the element of human choice and innovation in a widespread technology, with emphasis on evaluating the resultant natural resource consumption. This line of inquiry also contributes to the discussion of the Anthropocene, and how humans began to impact the environment on a global scale.



JADE BAIRD 2024 RECIPIENT

Jade graduated with her master's degree in geography in 2025. She is passionate about the climate crisis, and motivated by a sense of justice and love for nature. Her research was focused on asking if there is a glass ceiling to state-led environmental action, with a focus on the critically endangered southern resident killer whales. She was interested in exploring why the species continues to decline even with many conservation laws and policies dedicated to protecting them.



OUR APPRECIATION

On behalf of Simon Fraser University, thank you for making a profound difference in the lives of our students, faculty, and the communities we serve. We are proud to work together toward our shared vision of an inclusive and sustainable future.

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