

Welcome to the **Fall 2016 Speaker Series** of the
Indian Ocean World Centre

Speaker: **Dr. Yoshina Hurgobin**
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Indian Ocean World Centre
Department of History and Classical Studies
McGill University

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5:45 pm Peterson Hall 116

Labour Movements, Citizenship and the Politics of Nationalism in Ceylon and Mauritius

Between 1826 and 1925, thousands of immigrant workers from southern and north-eastern India traveled to Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) and Mauritius, two islands in the Indian Ocean, to labour on various plantations. A confluence of factors led to this labour migration. Declining production of coffee and sugar cane in former Caribbean slave colonies and the recent abolition of slavery in the British empire all created ripe conditions for the arrival of these workers in Ceylon and Mauritius. Despite the several shortcomings of the labour systems enabling these migrations - kangany system in Ceylon and indentured labour system in Mauritius - immigrant workers and their descendants settled on the islands. They eventually made citizenship claims to the colonial state. This talk examines how and why immigrant workers in Ceylon and Mauritius articulated citizenship rights and the extent to which these rights materialized.

