

# CASI Seminar Series

## Spring 2025



# Automatic for the People ?

## Labor, Machines, and Ecology in Modern India

**Benjamin Siegel** (Boston University) | **March 20 (12pm)**

In partnership with the South Asia Center, South Asia Studies Dept, Dept of History & Dept of History and Sociology of Science

Benjamin Siegel is an Associate Department Chair; Associate Professor of History at Boston University. He is a scholar of transnational economic life, politics, agriculture, and the environment. His work examines how people in modern states conceptualize, debate, and leverage their material and non-material resources, returning frequently to a geographic focus on South Asia and its entanglements with the wider world. Professor Siegel's latest book, *The Ghost Ship: Pharmaceutical Opioids and Political Power in the Modern World*, is forthcoming in 2025 from Oxford University Press. The book offers a new account of how opium, a quintessential colonial commodity, was remade into a twentieth-century resource for modern medicine in the global north and state-building and national development in the global south. His first book, *Hungry Nation: Food, Famine, and the Making of Modern India* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), demonstrated how questions of food and scarcity structured Indian citizens' understanding of welfare and citizenship in the twentieth century.

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Light refreshments will be served