

SMU History Department

Religion, Race, and Global Dallas Research Internship

The religion, race, and global Dallas research internship allows students to work within a specific East Dallas community through archival and oral research methods. Students will contribute to a larger book and documentary project that explores the history of ISCKON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) movement in the heart of east Dallas. Previous work on the ISCKON movement has been largely limited to the east and west coasts, and its international presence. Yet, in one small pocket of Dallas beginning in the 1970s there was a thriving community of devotees who bought Mount Auburn Christian Church in 1971 and converted it to the Radha Kalachandji Temple, a short five years after Prabhupad founded in the movement in New York City in 1966.

In addition to the ISCKON presence in east Dallas beginning in the early 1970s, Dallas became the home base for Tamal Krishna Goswami (née Thomas G. Herzig), one of Prabhupad's most trusted disciples, and the spiritual leader of the movement after Prabhupad's death in 1977. Goswami enrolled at SMU in 1995 and graduated in 1998 with a BA in Religious Studies. During his time at SMU, he wrote a memoir titled *A Hare Krishna at SMU*.

This project has local roots in Dallas with global connections. The book and the documentary will rely on interviews with some of the earliest Dallas Hare Krishna devotees. During the 1970s and into the 1980s, ISCKON arranged international marriages for many of its devotees, which resulted in a new generation of multi-cultural children of devotees who were the first to be raised in the ISCKON tradition. These international marriages spanned the globe, with devotees from Fiji, the Philippines, and Italy (to name a few) setting up their lives around the Hare Krishna temple in Dallas.

The book and documentary will trace the transitions in the east Dallas Hare Krishna movement over a thirty-year span, from 1971 (the establishment of the ISCKON temple in Dallas) until 2002 (which marks the unexpected demise of Goswami).

Student interns will work closely with the writer and documentarian to develop skills in archival research, community engagement, and documentary film production.