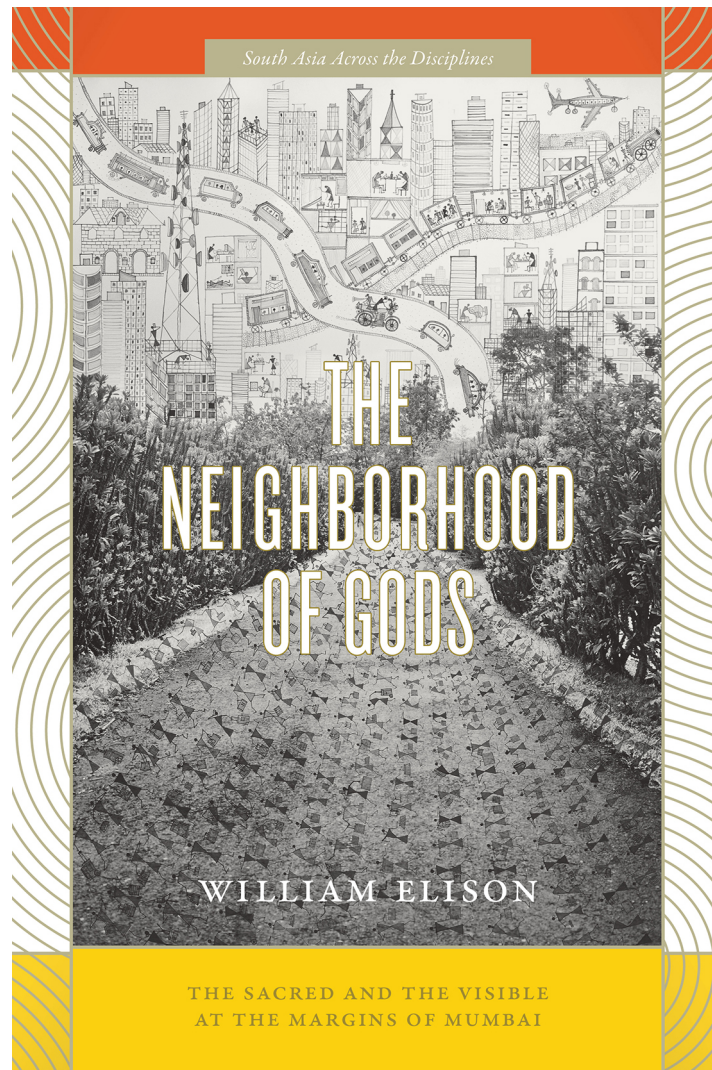


*Photography as Embodiment?
Questions of Representation and Duplication
in the Cult of Sai Baba of Shirdi*

William Ellison



Wednesday, February 27 / 3:00 pm / 3041 Humanities and Social Sciences Building

Portraits of Sai Baba of Shirdi (late 1830s–1918) are everywhere to be seen in public space in Mumbai. Are these images sacred? According to the saint himself, historical exponents of his teachings, and many ordinary Mumbai residents, the answer is “Yes.” What does it mean to encounter divine power in a mass-reproduced image? Drawing on material from his just-released book, *The Neighborhood of Gods: The Sacred and the Visible at the Margins of Mumbai* (University of Chicago Press, December 2018), William Ellison’s talk will trace rival logics in the cult of the saintly icon across three historical junctures.

William Ellison is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at UCSB who specializes in modern Indian religious practices and visual culture. In addition to his ethnography of Mumbai, *The Neighborhood of Gods*, he is the coauthor of “*Amar Akbar Anthony*”: *Bollywood, Brotherhood, and the Nation*.