

# *Schedule of Events*

Thursday, January 22

Engage Your World Series

**5:30 - 6:30 PM** Opening Keynote Speaker • GME Auditorium

“It’s All Greek and Sanskrit: Reflections on Western and Indian Narratives in Filmmaking” with Somnath Sen

Friday, January 23

South Asian Media & Cultural Studies Conference

**8:30 - 9:00** Coffee and Tea • GME Auditorium

**9:00 - 10:15** Opening Plenary Session • GME Auditorium

“Trust, Truth, Timing & Taking Risks: How to Advance the Peace Talks in Myanmar”  
Dr. Evan Hoffman, Dept. of Conflict Analysis & Resolution, Nova Southeastern

**10:15 - 10:30** Break

**10:30 - 11:45** Panel One\* • GME Room 2300

**10:30 - 11:45** Panel Two\* • GME Room 2600

**12:00 - 1:30** Luncheon Keynote • GME Cafeteria

“The U.S. Pivot to Asia” - Former Ambassador Michael Thurston

**1:30 - 3:00** Panel Three\* • GME Room 2300

**1:30 - 3:00** Panel Four\* • GME Room 2600

**3:00 - 3:15** Break

**3:15 - 4:45** Panel Five\* • GME Room 2300

**3:15 - 4:45** Panel Six\* • GME Room 2600

**5:00 - 6:00** International Coffee Hour • GME Lounge

**6:00** Screening of Somnath Sen film • GME Auditorium

\* see reverse for panel schedule

*South Asian Media  
& Cultural Studies  
Conference*

# Speaker Biographies



**Somnath Sen** is Head of Academic Affiliations at Whistling Woods International Institute for Film, Television, Animation, and Media Arts in Mumbai, India. After a career in engineering, he completed the Master's program in Film Directing at the University of Southern California. In his career of more than two decades in the visual medium, he has worked as Director, Director of Photography, Editor, Scriptwriter and in production oriented activities in over one hundred productions including feature films, documentaries, music videos, television series and commercials in India and in the U.S. Somnath Sen's film and video credits as Director include the critically acclaimed, award winning film, *Leela*, (Feature, 2002), *Faisla* (Feature, 2004), *Diploma* (Feature, 2006), *Like I Love You* (Telefilm, 2010), and *Gora* (TV Series, 2012). He is currently in the U.S., conducting a series of film workshops for Whistling Woods International.



**Dr. Evan Hoffman** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (DCAR) at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He is also a Senior Associate at the Canadian International Institute of Applied Negotiation (CIAN), an Associate Faculty member with the School of Peace and Conflict Management at Royal Roads University, and a roster member with the UN's Mediation Support Unit. He holds a PhD in Political Science from University of Canterbury (New Zealand). His doctoral research focused on the question of why mediation sometimes produces a durable peace and this research culminated in the creation of a new model for durable peace, and these research findings are presented in an easily-accessible handbook format entitled "The Mediator's Handbook for Durable Peace" (2010).



**Michael Thurston** is currently the Diplomat in Residence at Florida A&M University. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Thurston served in Afghanistan as the political advisor and senior civilian to the Special Operations Joint Task Force/ NATO Special Operations Command and as the Charge d'Affaires (acting ambassador) in Burma. His previous posts include Australia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mexico, New Zealand Rwanda, South Africa (Durban) and Sri Lanka.

## Organizing Committee:

The conference is an interdisciplinary project sponsored by several groups at Florida State University, including the Center for Global Engagement, the South Asian Media Studies research area in the School of Communication, the Department of Religion, the College of Social Sciences and Public Policy, and the College of Education.

The faculty organizing committee includes Kathleen Erndl, Dept. of Religion, FSU; Ayesha Khurshid, College of Education, FSU; John Mayo, College of Social Sciences and Public Policy, FSU; Aleks Nestic, Center for Global Engagement, FSU, and; Stephen McDowell, College of Communication and Information, FSU. Student assistants include Roy Samuelson, Mariam Shaikh, and Gabriela Timis.