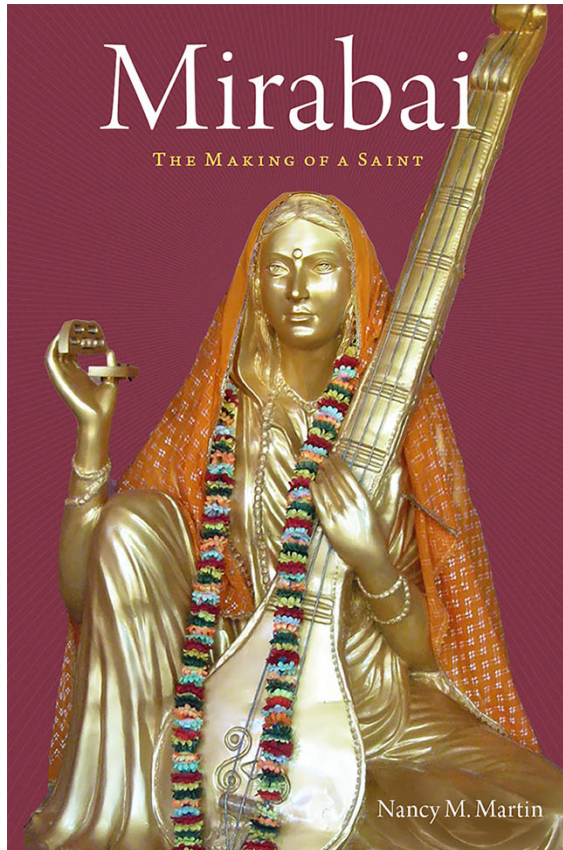


The IHC South Asian Religions and Cultures Research Focus Group Presents

*Seeking Mirabai:
The Making of a Saint and Cultural Heroine*

Nancy M. Martin

Religious Studies, Chapman University



Wednesday, May 22 / 4:00 pm / 3041 Humanities and Social Sciences Building

In this talk Nancy Martin will trace the making of the sixteenth-century royal rajput devotee Mirabai into a saint and cultural heroine through the varied portrayals of her across the centuries found in hagiography, rajput historiography, nationalist rhetoric, and oral epic song traditions. She will also examine the early twentieth-century mobilization of Mirabai as a cultural heroine by Gandhi, Tagore, and others, culminating in Subbulakshmi's film portrayal of the saint on the cusp of Indian Independence. The talk will challenge the persistent nineteenth-century "historical" domestication of Mirabai's character and will present a more dynamic portrayal of the saint that is the wellspring of her continuing power to inspire as well as of the ambivalence that still attends her into the twenty-first century.

Nancy M. Martin is Professor and Chair of Religious Studies at Chapman University and Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge University. Her research focuses on Hindu devotional traditions, gender and religion, and comparative religious ethics. Her recently published book *Mirabai: The Making of a Saint* (Oxford University Press 2023) is the culmination of three decades of research on the sixteenth-century saint Mirabai and is the first of three volumes. The second volume focuses on Mirabai's poetry and the third volume on postcolonial and global incarnations and invocations of the saint.



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