

NISHA GUPTA

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

CONTACT

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University of West Georgia
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PORTFOLIO

www.nishagupta.org
www.phenomenologicalart.com

EDUCATION

Ph.D.

in APA-accredited Clinical Psychology program
Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA
Department of Psychology
Degree awarded: 2018

Dissertation:

"Illuminating the Trauma of the Closet among Sexual Minorities: A Cinematic-Phenomenological Study of Existential Rights"

www.illuminatethecloset.com

M.A.

in Counseling for Mental Health and Wellness
New York University, New York, NY
Department of Applied Psychology
Degree awarded: 2012

B.S.

in Psychology and Communications, Cum Laude
New York University, New York, NY
Steinhardt School of Education
Degree awarded: 2006

BIOGRAPHY

I am an **arts-based phenomenological researcher, creativity scholar,** and **liberation psychologist** who disseminates research about lived experiences of psychological and sociocultural phenomena as art for community healing. My work as a researcher, artist, and educator embraces the creative process as a vehicle for building solidarity across difference, evoking empathy and compassion, and fostering joy and empowerment. Projects include: "**ILLUMINATE**" a phenomenological film about being in the LGBTQ closet, for which I received the 2020 APA Division 5 Distinguished Dissertation Award in Qualitative Methods; and "**DESI EROS**," a series of surrealist folk art paintings about reclaiming South Asian erotic power, which was featured on the NPR-affiliated podcast "The Academic Minute." At UWG, I launched the "**Phenomenological Art Collective**," an arts-based research lab through which I teach students to disseminate qualitative research to the public as art for community healing. I was also trained clinically as a psychotherapist for eight years, and prior to that I have five years of advertising industry experience as a qualitative researcher and creative strategy consultant to develop purpose-driven media campaigns.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION & AWARDS

Distinguished Dissertation Award, American Psychological Association (APA) Division 5 of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods, 2020

Distinguished Dissertation Award in the Humanities, Duquesne University, 2019

Top three finalist for International Institute for Qualitative Methodology's PhD Dissertation Award, 2019

Award winner of "best special effects," "best soundtrack," and "most artistic" for "illuminate" short film, Colorado International Activism Film Festival, 2018

Dissertation Fellowship Award (\$15,000), Duquesne University McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts, 2018

University-Wide Graduate Teaching Award, Duquesne University McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts, 2017

Psychology Department Teaching Award, Duquesne University McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts, 2017

Graduate Assistantship Award, Duquesne University McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts, 2012-2017

TEACHING

**Associate Professor of Psychology, Tenure-Track
Department of Psychology, Anthropology, and Sociology
University of West Georgia
Carrollton, GA
2018—present**

Graduate courses taught: Liberation Psychology, Mind-Body Studies, Psychology and Filmmaking, Explorations into Creativity, Research Workshop 2, Research Workshop 1

Undergraduate courses taught: Liberation Psychology, Culture and Psychology, Social Psychology, Theories of Psychology, Psychology as a Human Science, Explorations into Creativity

Student work supervised

Chair, James Akpan (Ph.D. dissertation in progress). "Discerning A New Psychic Identity by Attuning Beyond Black Racial Trauma"

Chair, Marta Stefanyshyn (Ph.D. dissertation in progress). "Embodying signature character strengths in social situations: An arts-based phenomenological research study of realizing human potential"

Chair, David Wise (M.A. thesis, 2021): "Queer people's lived experiences of leaving FEC: A phenomenological study"

Chair, Alison Hall (M.A. 2021): "The lived experience of #metoo stories: A poetic-phenomenological study"

Chair, Holly Gibson (M.A. thesis, 2020): "Exploring the meaningful aspects of BDSM sexuality through existential-humanistic theory."

Chair, Theo Holt (Ph.D. dissertation, 2019). "Black undergraduate students' experiences of thriving at a predominantly White institution: A photovoice study"

Chair, Toyosi Pius (M.A. thesis, 2019) "1st and 2nd generation immigrants' experiences of assimilation to American culture: A phenomenological research study"

Reader, Rose Dessaint (Ph.D. dissertation in progress). "Dying to Live: An Autoethnography and thematic analysis of the meanings of life in the context of death via self-written eulogies."

Reader, Britney Gedler (Ph.D. dissertation in progress). "Coming in: A poetic inquiry."

Reader, Lisa Watts (Ph.D. 2021). "Incorporating a mental health approach in parent-child sexual health education: An exploration of parental perspectives before and after a psychosexual health education intervention."

Reader, Lena Simon (M.A. thesis, 2022). "The intergenerational generations of Black women: The strong black woman."

Reader, Charlotte Gibson (M.A. thesis, 2020). "A thematic analysis into the lived experience of gastroparesis."

Chair, Brittany Doucet (M.A. exit interview, 2022).

Reader, Danielle Friedman (M.A. exit interview, 2022).

Reader, Christopher Reece (M.A. exit interview, 2022).

Reader, Peder Schillemat (M.A. exit interview, 2020).

Reader, Brian Patrick Harris (M.A. exit interview, 2020).

Advisor, Joshua Mollenkamp. (M.A. Independent study, in progress). "Sociocultural praxis."

Advisor, India MacSweeney (Ph.D. Independent study, 2022). "Arts-based research lab."

Advisor, Isabel Tweedle; Lori Jordan Fountain; Melissa Najpaver; Jeremiah Boatright; Benjamin Goldstein; Jim Buuk. (Ph.D./M.A. independent study, 2021). "Arts-based research lab."

Advisor, Deedra Climer Bass (M.A. independent study, 2020). "Maternal bereavement: An autoethnography."

Advisor, Larissa McPherson (B.S. honors thesis, 2020). "Processing trauma: Art therapy and expression of the inner world."

Advisor, Rose Dessaint. (Ph.D. independent study, 2019). "Liberation psychology and healthcare policy: What is the meaning of life and death from those in hospice care?"

Advisor, Holly Gibson (M.A. independent study, 2019). "Bittersweet memory: A phenomenological virtual reality simulation of Alzheimer's & dementia."

Advisor, Isabel Tweedle and Lori Jordan Fountain (Ph.D. independent study, 2019). "Merleau-Ponty and phenomenological filmmaking."

Advisor, Olivia Basant (B.S. independent study, 2019). "What is the lived experience of gender dysphoria among youth?"

**Doctoral Student Course Instructor
Department of Psychology, Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA
2013—2016**

Undergraduate courses taught: Introduction to Psychology, Social Psychology, Psychology of Cultural Diversity and Social Justice

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Publications in peer-reviewed journals

Gupta, N., McMorrow, D., Robbins, B.D., Visse, M. (in preparation): Introduction to the special section on arts based phenomenological research. *Qualitative Psychology*.

Gupta, N. (in preparation), DESI EROS: Reclaiming South Asian erotic power through arts-based phenomenology and Hindu epistemology. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*.

Gupta, N. (2022). "Truth, Freedom, Love, Hope, and Power: An existential rights paradigm for liberation psychology." *The Humanistic Psychologist*.

Greene, E. and Gupta, N. (2021). Introduction to the special issue on the cultural therapeutics of film. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology: Special issue on Film as Cultural Therapeutics*.

Gupta, N. (2020). Teaching phenomenological research as a method of therapeutic art-making: A Covid-19 case study. *Qualitative Methods in Psychology Bulletin*.

Gupta, N. (2020). Illuminating the trauma of the LGBTQ closet: A cinematic-phenomenological study and film about existential rights. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*.

Gupta, N. (2020). Singing away the social distancing blues: Art therapy in a time of coronavirus. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Special issue on Covid-19*.

Gupta, N., Simms, E., and Dougherty, A. (2019). Eyes on the street: Photovoice, liberation psychotherapy, and the emotional landscapes of urban children. *Emotion, Space and Society*.

Gupta, N. (2019). The phenomenological film collective: Introducing a cinematic-phenomenological research method for social advocacy filmmaking. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*.

Gupta, N. (2018). Harnessing phenomenological research to facilitate conscientização about oppressive lived experience. *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology; Special issue: Radical Humanism, Critical Consciousness, and Social Change*.

Gupta, N. (2018) Stories of faith, stories of humanity: Fusing phenomenological research with digital storytelling to facilitate interfaith empathy. *Special Issue of Qualitative Research in Psychology: Creative Representations of Qualitative Research*.

Gupta, N. (2017). Exploring the schizoid defense of the closet through the existential-phenomenology of R.D. Laing. *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. 5(2), 170-189.

Gupta, N. (2015). The cinematic chiasm: Evoking societal empathy through the phenomenological language of film. *Janus Head: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature, Continental Philosophy, Phenomenological Psychology, and the Arts*, 14(2), 35-48.

Book chapters

Gupta, N. (in press). Finding God in the bedroom: The sacred goodness of sexual pleasure. *Eros and Psyche: Humanistic and Existential Approaches to Sex and Sexuality*. University Professors Press.

Non peer-reviewed publications

Gupta, N. (2020). Covid-19 art therapy: Transforming trauma into beauty. *Covid Action Network*.

Gupta, N. (2016). Phenomenological research meets social advocacy filmmaking. *The GPPA Report: The Official Newsletter of the Greater Pittsburgh Psychological Association*.

Art exhibitions and publications

Alpharetta Arts Center. (August-September 2022). "Colors of India" Fine art exhibition. Alpharetta, GA. "Flow State" and "Power"

Vault Gallery (April 2022). "Flow State: A Collaboration between UWG Psychology and the Arts." Student fine art exhibition. Newnan, GA.

Book cover artist for "A 21st Century Plague: Poetry from a Pandemic," (June 2021) published by University Professors Press. Title of Painting: "Social Distancing Blues."

LACPA's Virtual Art Exhibition: Mirrors of the Mind: The Psychotherapist as Artist in a Time of Coronavirus. (November 2020.) Title of Painting: "She."

Black Iris Gallery (November 2019). Group exhibition on Eco Martyr Portraits: Faces of the Slain, curated by Richard Bargdill, Ph.D. Richmond, VA. Title of painting: "Archad Ayao."

Muses & Vices Magazine (October 2019). Special edition issue on Erotic Joy. Title of painting; "The Moment of Surrender."

Colorado International Film Festival (July 2018). Film screening and award winner of best special effects, most artistic, and best soundtrack in the documentary genre. Title of short film: "Illuminate."

Research labs

Phenomenological Art Collective, University of West Georgia (2018 — present): Launched arts-based phenomenological research lab to teach and mentor UWG psychology students to disseminate phenomenological research to the mainstream public through the expressive arts such as film, dance, visual arts, poetry and music: www.phenomenologicalart.com

Placelab Research Group, Duquesne University (2015 — 2017): Senior doctoral research assistant in a qualitative research lab engaged in participatory action research with local communities in Pittsburgh. Duties included: developing and facilitating research projects, collecting and analyzing data, authoring papers for publication, consulting with peer researchers and community leaders, and mentoring undergraduate students in lab.

PRESENTATIONS AND MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Conference presentations

Boyd, S., Gupta, N., Ramsey, N., and Windsor, E. (2022). "Supporting Students and Faculty of Color." Innovations in Pedagogy Annual Conference, University of West Georgia. Carrollton, GA.

Gupta, N., Stefanyshyn, M., and Visse, M. (2022) "Aesthetic Spaces for Healing and Care: Theories and Approaches." Health Humanities Consortium Virtual Conference.

Freeman, M., Gupta, N., Sugarman, J., Slaney, K. (2022) "Beyond Knowledge: Opening the Door to Unknowing." Div 24 APA Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology Annual Virtual Conference.

Gupta, N. and Weiner, T. (2021, June). "Qualitative Inquiry in a Global Pandemic: Reflections and Future Directions," The Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology Virtual Conference.

Gupta, N. (2021, April). "DESI EROS: A decolonizing study of South Asian women's experiences of reclaiming of erotic power through surrealist folk art." Society for Psychological Anthropology Virtual Conference.

Gupta, N. and Fountain, L.J. (2021, March). "Phenomenological Art as a Vehicle for Women's Liberation," The Association of Women in Psychology Virtual Conference.

Gupta, N. (2019, March). "Illuminating the LGBTQ Closet through Phenomenological Filmmaking: A Cinematic-Phenomenological Research Study and Film Screening." APA Division 32 Society for Humanistic Psychology Conference. Oregon State University: Corvallis, OR.

Bargdill R., Crouch, C., and Gupta, N. (2019, March). "Phenomenology as Creative Practice and Play: A Workshop" APA Division 32 Society for Humanistic Psychology Conference. Oregon State University: Corvallis, OR.

Gupta, N. (2018, June) "Eyes on the Street: Using Photovoice as a Tool for Emotional Empowerment and Community Trauma Healing among Youth." International Human Science Research Conference: Spartanburg, SC.

Jenkins, J., Gruner, D., and Gupta, N. (2018, May). "Research as Sociopolitical Intervention." Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology (SQIP) Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.

Gupta, N. (2017, August). "The Intergenerational Trauma of the Gay Closet: Healing Familial Bonds of Shame." APA Convention, Washington D.C.

Gupta, N. (2017, April). "Building Intimate Dialogue within the Multicultural College Classroom: Guideposts from Liberation Psychology." APA Division 32 Society for Humanistic Psychology Conference: Point Park University, Pittsburgh, PA.

Gupta, N. (2016, October). "Nightmares of the Closet Across the Generations: A Psychoanalysis of Intergenerational LGBTQ Trauma." Association for Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society Conference, Rutgers, NJ.

Gupta, N. (2014, October). "Exploring the 'Social Pathology' of Closeted Gay Individuals through the Existential-Phenomenology of R.D. Laing." The Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences Conference: New Orleans, LA.

Gupta, N. (2013, August). "Stories of Faith, Stories of Humanity: Disseminating Phenomenological Research through Digital Storytelling to Facilitate Interfaith Empathy." International Human Science Research Conference: Aalborg, Denmark.

Invited speaker

Gupta, N., Allison (in preparation for Spring 2023) "The Therapeutic Power of Filmmaking." Invited Speaker for *The Other Night School Lecture Series*, UWG School of the Arts, Newnan, GA.

Gupta, N. (2022, September) "Arts-Based Phenomenological Research for Healing and Justice." Invited Speaker for webinar presentation and workshop at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) Fall Intensive, San Francisco, CA.

Gupta, N. (2021, July). "Liberation Psychology for Queer Rights." Invited speaker for webinar presentation at the Amity University Mumbai, India's Department of Psychology, Mumbai, India

Gupta, N. and Simms, E. (2021, March). "Eyes on the Street: Photovoice as liberation psychotherapy." Invited speaker for virtual presentation at the Center for Community-Engaged Teaching and Research, Duquesne University. Pittsburgh, PA.

Gupta, N. (2018, December). "Disseminating human science research to the mainstream public for hope of liberation: An invitation." Invited Keynote Speaker for the 12th Annual Undergraduate Qualitative Research Symposium, Point Park University: Pittsburgh, PA.

Media interviews

UWG School of the Arts "A Word With" (2021): Interviewed about arts-based research and therapeutic filmmaking for liberation psychology.

Thought Row Podcast (2021): Interviewed about arts-based research and the psychology of creative genius.

Community Building Art Works "United Against Silence" podcast. (2021): Interviewed about depth and phenomenological approaches to the creative process.

The Brown Taboo Project podcast (2021): "Episode 2: Decolonizing and Reclaiming the Erotic with Dr. Nisha Gupta."

UWG News (2020): "UWG Takes Over 'The Academic Minute': Psychology Professor Discusses Empowerment from Sexual Oppression"

The Academic Minute podcast and WAMC radio segment (2020): "Art and Social Advocacy"

We Are Moving Stories (2018): "illuminate: a cinematic poem about being in the closet. Interview with Director Nisha Gupta."

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Psychology Program Service, UWG

Interim Director of M.A. psychology program, Fall 2022-present

Student Psychology Annual Research Conference (SPARC) Faculty advisor, 2021-2022

Faculty search committee member, 2018 & 2021

M.A. Committee member, 2020-present

Diversity and Inclusion in Curriculum Design organizer, 2020

Ph.D. Committee member, 2018-2020

Psychology Department website re-design supervisor, 2019

Departmental mission and vision contributor, 2018

University Service, UWG

School of the Arts (SOTA) Advisory Committee member, Fall 2022-present

Faculty Advisor for Queer Student Alliance, 2022-present

Quality Enhancement Planning (QEP) Committee, 2022

CACSI Diversity and Inclusion Committee, 2021-2022

Faculty Senator, Fall 2020

Institutional Planning Committee member, 2020-2021

Becoming UWG Strategic Planning stakeholder, 2020

Center for Diversity & Inclusion Webinar co-facilitator, 2020

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology (SQIP):

Communications Chair and Executive Committee member, 2020-present

APA Division 5 Qualitative and Qualitative Methods:

member, 2020-present

APA Division 32 Humanistic Psychology: member, 2020-present

Journal of Humanistic Psychology: member of Editorial Board, 2020-present

INVITED PEER-REVIEWER

Humanistic Psychologist; Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare; Journal of Humanistic Psychology; Qualitative Inquiry; Lesbian and Gay Mental Health; Frontiers in Psychology

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION

Community Building Art Works: art therapy workshop facilitator for veterans and healthcare providers, 2021-22

Keshav Suri Foundation: art therapy workshop facilitator for Queer Indian people, 2022

Queer South Asian Womxn's Network: therapy workshop facilitator for queer South Asian community, 2021

Women in eDiscovery: invited panelist for dialogue about prioritizing mental health during the pandemic for women who are working professionals, 2021

South Asian Sexual and Mental Health Alliance: art therapy workshop facilitator for South Asian community, 2021

Ad Council and COVID Collaborative: consumer research and campaign strategy consultant for nationwide Covid-19 Vaccine Education campaign, 2020: www.covidcollaborative.us and getvaccineanswers.org

Natwest Group: Invited speaker for corporate mental health and wellness event, 2020

Lyftd: invited panelist for dialogue about navigating relational trauma in intimate relationships, 2020

Re:Imagine ATL: trauma consultant for youth therapeutic filmmaking non-profit organization, 2018

Psychology Confluence Alliance: invited panelist about intersectional feminism in Pittsburgh, 2016

Vox Populi: co-editor and website developer of literary e-zine, 2016

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Invited moderator for intergenerational dialogue at **Festival of India**, sponsored by Indian American Cultural Association, 2022

University of West Georgia's COVID-19 Hopes and Challenges collection: invited consultant for Covid-19 photovoice project for the UWG community, 2021

PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING

**American University Counseling Center
Doctoral Clinical Intern
Washington D.C.
2017–2018**

Completed APA-accredited clinical internship program with 2000 pre-doctoral internship hours. Provided individual psychotherapy to undergraduate and graduate students with diverse, intersecting, cultural identities. Integrated psychodynamic, relational-cultural, mindfulness, and liberation psychology approaches to therapeutic work. Conducted outreach projects, i.e. a self-care kit for student activists; a needs assessment for gay, bi, and questioning men of color students; and Woman of Color Empowerment and Healing Circle for women of color students. Conducted crisis interventions and intake assessments. Supervised doctoral practicum students in psychodynamic therapy. Co-facilitated process-oriented group therapy. Attended didactic seminars and conducted case presentations. Collaborated with campus partners.

**Persad Center
Clinical Practicum Trainee
Pittsburgh, PA
2015-2016**

Provided individual psychotherapy to members of the LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS communities. Attended didactic seminars to acquire cultural competence working with sexual and gender minorities. Co-led an LGBTQ support group regarding authenticity, vulnerability, and shame. Helped brainstorm ways to adapt CBT trauma-focused therapy for the LGBTQ population. Conducted crisis interventions, treatment planning, and intake assessments. Referred clients to physicians for hormone treatment and psychiatric consultation.

**Children's Art and Talk (CHAAT) Group Counseling Program (Sponsored by Duquesne University Psychology Clinic and The Center that CARES)
Student Psychotherapist
Pittsburgh, PA
2015**

Co-facilitated a six-week art therapy program for pre-adolescent African-American kids residing in a low-income neighborhood of Pittsburgh, in collaboration with local artists of color. Art projects incorporated African and African-American heritage via drum-making, mask-making, and quilt-making. Used collaborative art-making to facilitate community pride, positive relationships, and emotional vulnerability between kids.

**Duquesne Psychology Clinic
Graduate Student Clinician
Pittsburgh, PA
2012–2016**

Provided individual and couples psychotherapy to diverse, adult residents of Pittsburgh. Presenting problems included: grief, PTSD, panic attacks, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, identity issues, sexual issues, family/relationship distress, sociocultural/community trauma, and academic concerns. Conducted diagnostic and personality assessments and consulted with on-site psychiatrist.

**Baruch College Counseling Center
Psychotherapy Extern
New York, NY
2011–2012**

Provided individual psychotherapy to undergraduate and graduate college students. Integrated cross-cultural approaches with psychodynamic psychotherapy regularly with first-generation immigrant and international students at one of the most predominantly international universities in the United States. Delivered case presentations and participated in individual and group supervision. Consulted with a team of psychiatrists, academic and career advisors, and supervisors with diverse theoretical orientations.

**Women & Children's Art Therapy Circle: Seva Mandir Shortstay Home (as part of NYU's Art Therapy Graduate Program and the Foundation for Sustainable Development)
Art Therapy Intern
Udaipur, India
2011**

Co-facilitated daily, art therapy group sessions for women and children of a local Indian village who had endured domestic violence. Developed multicultural sensitivity working within a Rajasthani and Hindu context.

ADVERTISING AND MEDIA WORK

The Village Productions
Researcher and Strategy Consultant
New York, NY (remote)
2020

Helped develop strategies for the 2021 Ad Council's COVID-19 Vaccine Education nationwide public health campaign, an initiative in collaboration with the CDC, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and multiple other scientific and medical institutions. Duties included reviewing research about vaccinate hesitation and developing multimedia strategies to create cultural dialogue and education about vaccination. Campaign can be viewed at www.covidcollaborative.us and getvaccineanswers.org

Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising
Strategic Storyteller/Planner
New York, NY
2007–2010

Youth Connection Consumer Insights: Conducted ethnographic research among youth demographic (ages 5-18) to develop consumer insights. Produced digital media content to creatively express insights to youth brand marketing clients (General Mills, JCPenney). Collaborated with creative directors to design advertising campaign strategies and executions.

Circle of Respect Anti-Bullying Campaign: Helped develop advertising strategy for a national, multimedia anti-bullying intervention launched by the National Crime Prevention Council to diminish bullying behaviors among children and adolescence.

Together Counts Healthy Living Campaign: Helped develop advertising strategy for a national anti-obesity intervention to promote healthier lifestyle habits among parents and children. Campaign was pitched to Michelle Obama to be considered for her “Let’s Move” initiative.

BBDO Worldwide
Assistant Account Executive
New York, NY
2006-2007

Worked in account management on the global Oral-B business, and conducted research to inform strategic planning innovation for Sony and Fedex-Kinkos.