

## **Dhanashree Thorat; Mississippi State University**

### Bio:

Dr. Dhanashree Thorat is an Assistant Professor of English at Mississippi State University. She is also a founding Executive Council member of the Center for Digital Humanities, Pune in India. Her research is situated at the intersection of Asian American Studies, Postcolonial Studies, and Digital Humanities. She examines how colonial and racial ideologies shape the technological imagination, specifically in technical infrastructures, platforms, and policies.

### Presentation Title:

Racial Terror and Infrastructural Imperialism

### Abstract:

Our global Internet connectivity relies on a network of fiber optic cable lines traveling underwater between continents. This talk traces the imprint of colonialism on this material infrastructure of the Internet. I will focus on Google's Equiano project, an undersea fiber optic cable line to be built between Portugal, Nigeria, and South Africa, to highlight the stakes of infrastructural development embedded in colonial and racial ideologies. Reading Olaudah Equiano's autobiographical account of enslavement over and against the oceanic site of the cable project, I reveal the violent subtext of slavery concealed in the project's name. Operating in the liquid pathways of colonialism, these new cable projects commodify datafied subaltern bodies while controlling an infrastructure critical to the sovereignty of postcolonial nation-states.