

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”

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 a **liberation psychologist, arts-based phenomenological researcher,** and **creativity scholar** who disseminates research about lived experiences of oppression and empowerment as art for social advocacy and community healing. My work as a researcher, artist, educator, and healer embraces the creative process as a vehicle for building solidarity across difference, evoking empathy and compassion, and fostering joy and empowerment. My liberatory arts-based research and scholarship can be viewed at: nishagupta.org

I was also trained as a **psychotherapist** for eight years (M.A./Ph.D.), using **psychodynamic, liberation psychotherapy,** and **trauma-informed approaches** for clients with diverse intersecting identities, especially queer people of color. I currently offer therapeutic art workshops for community organizations and clinical consultation in liberation psychotherapy for postdoctoral and intern clinicians' didactic training seminars.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION & AWARDS

- Nominated for Big Six Professor Employee Award, University of West Georgia, 2024
- 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

PSYCHOTHERAPY AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

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 therapy.
- Conducted outreach projects, i.e. needs assessment for queer men of color, and a Woman of Color Empowerment and Healing Circle.
- Conducted crisis interventions and intake assessments.
- Supervised doctoral practicum students
- Co-facilitated process-oriented group therapy.
- Attended didactic seminars, conducted case presentations, collaborated with campus partners.

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

- Provided individual psychotherapy to LGBTQ community members at one of the oldest LGBTQ-affirmative mental health centers in the U.S.
- Co-led an LGBTQ support group regarding authenticity, vulnerability, and shame.
- Helped identify 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.

Chatham University Counseling Center Clinical Practicum Trainee Pittsburgh, PA, 2014 – 2015

- Provided individual psychotherapy to college students at an all-women's college. Integrated a feminist framework with psychodynamic therapy to address women's issues such as sexual abuse, eating disorders, domestic violence
- Attended weekly didactic training and professional development seminars.
- Delivered case presentations and participated in individual and group supervision.
- Conducted a psycho-educational outreach workshop on mindfulness meditation for the campus community.

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, 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 with first-generation immigrant/international students at one of the most predominantly international universities in the U.S.
- Consulted with psychiatrists, academic advisors, and supervisors with diverse theoretical orientations.

CLINICAL CONSULTATION

Emory Health Service Psychology: Postdoctoral Residency Clinical Training Consultant, 2024

American University College Counseling Center: Postdoctoral Residency and APA-Internship Program Clinical Training Consultant, 2023

- Provided didactic seminars for Emory's and AU's postdoctoral and intern clinicians on theory and clinical application of liberation psychotherapy

THERAPEUTIC ART WORKSHOPS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Shashikala Foundation: therapeutic art workshop facilitator for Indian women's empowerment, 2023
- Community Building Art Works: therapeutic art workshop facilitator for veterans and healthcare providers, 2021-23
- Keshav Suri Foundation: therapeutic art workshop facilitator for Queer Indian people, 2022
- Queer South Asian Womxn's Network: therapeutic art workshop facilitator for queer South Asians, 2021
- South Asian Sexual and Mental Health Alliance: therapeutic art workshop facilitator for South Asian community, 2021

TEACHING

Associate Professor of Psychology, Tenured
Department of Psychology, Anthropology, 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, Senior Integrative Seminar

The Phenomenological Art Collective (2018-present):
Arts-based research lab launched at UWG that guides undergraduate and graduate students to disseminate phenomenological research to the public through the expressive arts for community healing, psychoeducation, and social change. www.phenomenologicalart.com

Ph.D. dissertations supervised

- Chair, James Akpan (in progress). "Discerning A New Psychic Identity by Attuning Beyond Black Racial Trauma"
- Chair, Christopher Zieske: (in progress). "Living in a Screen: An Arts-based phenomenological research study of digital immersion in videogames"
- Chair, Marta Stefanyshyn (2024). "Embodying signature character strengths in social situations: An arts-based phenomenological research study of realizing human potential"
- Reader, Rose Dessaint (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 (in progress). "Coming in: A poetic inquiry."
- Reader, Lisa Watts (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."
- Chair, Theo Holt (2019). "Black undergraduate students' experiences of thriving at a predominantly White institution: A photovoice study"

M.A. theses supervised

- Reader, Lena Simon (2022). "The intergenerational generations of Black women: The strong black woman."
- Chair, David Wise (2021): "Queer people's lived experiences of leaving Fundamentalist Evangelical Christianity: A phenomenological study"
- Chair, Alison Hall (2021): "The lived experience of #metoo stories: A poetic-phenomenological study"
- Chair, Holly Gibson (2020): "Exploring the meaningful aspects of BDSM sexuality through existential-humanistic theory."
- Reader, Charlotte Gibson (2020). "A thematic analysis into the lived experience of gastroparesis."
- Chair, Toyosi Pius (2019) "1st and 2nd generation immigrants' experiences of assimilation to American culture: A phenomenological research study"

Independent studies supervised

- Joshua Mollenkamp. (M.A, 2022): "Sociocultural praxis."
- India MacSweeney (Ph.D, 2022). "Art therapy."
- Isabel Tweedle; Lori Jordan Fountain; Melissa Najpaver; Jeremiah Boatright; Benjamin Goldstein; Jim Buuk. (Ph.D./M.A.. 2021). "Arts-based research lab."
- Deedra Climer Bass (M.A. 2020). "Maternal bereavement: An autoethnography."
- Rose Dessaint. (Ph.D., 2019). "Liberation psychology and healthcare policy: What is the meaning of life and death from those in hospice care?"
- Holly Gibson (M.A., 2019). "Bittersweet memory: A phenomenological virtual reality simulation of Alzheimer's & dementia."
- Isabel Tweedle and Lori Jordan Fountain (Ph.D., 2019). "Merleau-Ponty and phenomenological filmmaking."
- Olivia Basant (B.S., 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

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Published articles in peer-reviewed academic journals

- Gupta, N. (in press). Arts-based research as a cultural therapeutic: Facilitating sexual empowerment for Desi women across the diaspora through South Asian erotic folk art. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*.
- Gupta, N. (2024). DESI EROS: Reclaiming South Asian erotic power through arts-based phenomenology and Hindu epistemology. *Qualitative Psychology*.
- Gupta, N. and Zieske, C. (2024): Arts based phenomenological research: Theory and praxis. *Qualitative Psychology*.
- Head, J.C., Gupta, N., Korobov, N. (2023). Reflecting back and imagining forward: Qualitative inquiry in psychology at the dawn of a new era. *Qualitative Psychology*.
- Gupta, N. (2022). Truth, Freedom, Love, Hope, and Power: An existential rights paradigm for anti-oppressive psychological praxis. *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. (accepted). Arts-based research as a cultural therapeutic: Facilitating sexual empowerment for Desi women across the diaspora through South Asian erotic folk art. *Art & Care: Edited Volume*.
- Gupta, N. (2023). 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.

ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Peer-reviewed conference presentations

- Gupta, N. Morrill, Z. Hoffman, L., Rubin, S. (2024). "Humanistic Psychology: the next 25 years." APA Division 32 Society for Humanistic Psychology conference. Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Gupta, N., Bhatia, S. and Morrill, Z. (2023). "Radical Vulnerability as an Ethical Demand for Liberatory Qualitative Research" APA Division 5 Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology conference. Santa Cruz, CA.
- Gupta, N., Fountain, LJ, Zieske, C., and McWeeney, L. (2023). "Phenomenological Filmmaking: Theory and Praxis." APA Division 24 Society for Philosophical and Theoretical Psychology conference. Boston, MA.
- Gupta, N., Freeman, M., and Sugarman, J. (2023). "What are the psychological humanities and why should they matter?" APA Division 24 Society for Philosophical and Theoretical Psychology conference. Boston, MA.
- 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). "Qualitative Inquiry in a Global Pandemic: Reflections and Future Directions," The Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology Virtual Conference.
- Gupta, N. (2021). "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, LJ. (2021). "Phenomenological Art as a Vehicle for Women's Liberation," The Association of Women in Psychology Virtual Conference.
- Gupta, N. (2019). "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). "Phenomenology as Creative Practice and Play: A Workshop" APA Division 32 Society for Humanistic Psychology Conference. Oregon State University: Corvallis, OR.
- Gupta, N. (2018) "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). "Research as Sociopolitical Intervention." Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology (SQIP) Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Gupta, N. (2017). "The Intergenerational Trauma of the Gay Closet: Healing Familial Bonds of Shame." APA Convention, Washington D.C.
- Gupta, N. (2017). "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). "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). "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). "Stories of Faith, Stories of Humanity: Disseminating Phenomenological Research through Digital Storytelling to Facilitate Interfaith Empathy." International Human Science Research Conference: Aalborg, Denmark.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Invited speaker talks

- Gupta, N. (2023) "Seeing with Spirit." Invited Speaker *The High Museum Oasis* programming, Atlanta, GA.
- Gupta, N., Umminger, A.(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) "Transforming trauma into beauty: Community healing and solidarity-building through the phenomenological arts" Invited Speaker for Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association annual conference.
- Gupta, N., Freeman, M. Lehmann, O..(2022) "The Power of the Aesthetic in Qualitative Inquiry" Invited Speaker for the Society of Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology (SQIP) Virtual Salon series.
- Gupta, N. (2022) "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). "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). "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). "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.
- Works "United Against Silence" podcast. (2021): Interviewed about depth and phenomenological approaches to the creative process.
- American Psychological Association Division 5 *The Score* Newsletter (2021): An interview with the Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology communications chair.
- 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."

Art exhibitions and publications

- Peachtree and Alliance Galleries. (Sept-Oct 2023). Fulton County Public Arts Programming: "Visions of India" fine art exhibition. Atlanta, GA. "Flow State" and "Power"
- Decatur Arts Alliance. (May-June 2023). Decatur Fine Arts Exhibition: Small Changes. Decatur Public Library, GA. "Other Mummy"
- Doraville Art Center. (April-May 2023). Raksha Art exhibition. Doraville, GA. "SHE" and "Wrecking Love"
- 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."

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Psychology Service, University of West Georgia

- Head of M.A. psychology program, Fall 2022-present
- Faculty search committee member, 2018, 2021, 2024
- Student Psychology Annual Research Conference (SPARC) Faculty advisor, 2021-2022
- M.A. Committee member, 2020-2022
- 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, University of West Georgia

- Internal Advisory Board Member of UWG Stone Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 2024-present
- UWG Momentum Summit participant, Spring 2024
- 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

APA/ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICE

Qualitative Psychology: member of Editorial Board, 2023-present

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

Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology (SQIP): Communications Chair and Executive Committee member, 2020-2023

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, Qualitative Psychology*

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 vaccine 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.