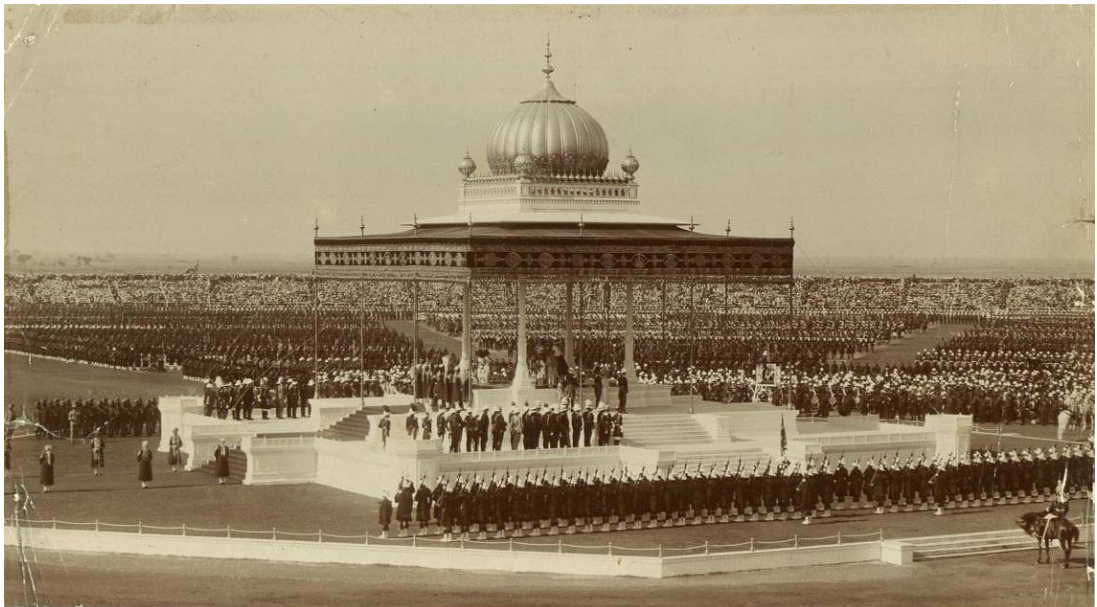


Welcome to the **Fall 2018 Speaker Series** of the  
**Indian Ocean World Centre**

Speaker: Alastair McClure, Postdoctoral Fellow  
Indian Ocean World Centre, McGill University  
19 September 2018  
4:30 pm, Peterson Hall, Room 116

## **Sovereignty, Law, and the Politics of Forgiveness in Colonial India**



The logic of colonial sovereignty and its relationship to law is generally understood through acts of extreme violence, often encapsulated by episodes of martial law. However colonial sovereignty, the suspension of legal norms, and ultimately the political rationality of colonial violence, can also be found in other sovereign interventions. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858, her first gesture as the sovereign figurehead of India, offered clemency to large numbers of those involved in the earlier rebellion of 1857-58. This instrument of sovereign intervention then became a semi-regular colonial procedure, specific to governance in India. Jubilee celebrations for instance, saw the return of royal clemency, in which ten per cent of the prison population were released. Analysing the occasions in which this form of forgiveness was offered, this paper firstly examines the underlying political calculations being made to decide who represented a suitable recipient of this forgiveness. It then considers how these practices of forgiveness fed into larger colonial discourses about Indian society, and more broadly acted as an attempt to consolidate colonial power.