History grad student earns award in Arrington writing contest

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Kirtan Patel, a graduate student in History, has received second place in the annual Arrington writing contest.

History graduate student Kirtan Patel earned second place in a writing contest held in conjunction with the annual Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture. Kirtan Patel received a $500 cash prize for second place for his essay "Postcolonial Trauma: Indian Devotion to the Land." Patel is the Charles Redd Fellow and research assistant to Dr. Ravi M. Gupta, a professor of religious studies.

The writing competition is open to university students studying at any of the region’s universities. The lecture was held in the fall of 2016 and featured Dr. Patty Limerick, professor of history, faculty director and chair of the Board of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado. The winning essays were in response to, and expanded upon, the lecture Limerick delivered in the Logan Tabernacle entitled “Hair-Raising Tales from the Department of the Interior.” Patel completed a bachelor’s in history in 2015 at the University of Oxford. He was born and raised in London. Following his studies at Oxford, he studied Sanskrit in India for nine months. He is currently pursuing a graduate degree in history at USU and is interested in the development of religious traditions in colonial Gujarat, particularly the ways in which religious authority is negotiated.

First prize went to Chad Nielsen a freelance Mormon studies researcher, for his essay “Damned Rascals and the Constitution: The Paradox of Mormon Attitudes Towards Government.”