Indian rivers have been the locus of projects both spiritual and secular. Diverse practices, ranging from devotion to dam-building, have radically transformed how different social groups relate to rivers. This lecture will discuss the various cultural meanings that rivers embody in contemporary India, and how these meanings are contested in ongoing struggles over the place of rivers in nature and culture. In particular, it will focus on the conflicts around the Narmada river in central India and on the Yamuna river in the city of Delhi.

Dr. Amita Baviskar is affiliated with The Institute of Economic Growth (IEG). Established in 1958 with a focus on economics, demography and sociology, IEG is one of India’s leading research institutions in the fields of economic and social development. More info on Dr. Baviskar can be found at www.iegindia.org/baviskarcv.htm.

Sponsored by the Water Institute, the Center for Women’s Studies and Gender Research, the Department of Religion, and the Center for the Study of Hindu Traditions (CHiTra)