

# HISTORY WORKSHOP

## The Department of History

Tuesdays ~ 12:30-1:30 pm ~ ZOOM

### *Guldarra: The Buddha and the Unknown in Afghanistan*

Dr. Vimalin Rujivacharakul

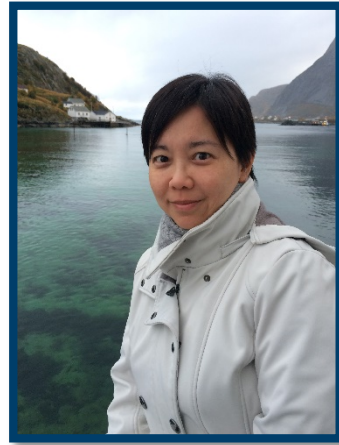
University of Delaware

April 20, 2021

12:30-1:30 pm

[Zoom ID: 946 2190 5729](#)

P/W: UDHistory



How do we write history when the subject's chronology cannot be established? This paper tackles this question through the eyes of archaeologists, architectural historians, art historians, and conservators who have tried for nearly two centuries to solve the puzzle of the Stupa of Guldarra. Renowned as one of the most elegant and best-preserved archaeological sites in Afghanistan, Guldarra has become an icon of the Buddhist past of the country's post-*Bamiyan* age. But little is known about the monument, whether its age, construction date, or reasons why it was abandoned. More challengingly, its physical elements—from façades, forms, structural methods, materials, and excavated artifacts—suggest variable dates of construction, not as the sequence of restorations but as an archaeological site filled with evidence suggesting multiple timelines. Many have said that an object can tell its own story. But when the object is telling many stories simultaneously, which one should we prioritize? And why does that matter?