

SYLLABUS

R.123.Religions of India: Hinduism and Buddhism
Fall, 2007

Dr. St. John
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Ofc. Comenius-204
MWF 1:30-2:00
TR 1:00-2:00
3:30-4:00

Course Content.

This course will examine the beliefs, values, and practices of South Asian Hinduism and Buddhism. The first half of the course will examine foundational texts in the traditions, including *The Upanishads*, *The Bhagavad-Gita* and *The Dhammapada*. The second half of the course will examine popular or village Hinduism in India as well as the influence of religion on the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi.

Teaching and Learning Objectives.

This course is designed so that students will:
(1) develop an understanding of the methods and perspectives proper to the academic study of religion; (2) develop an informed appreciation for the beliefs, values and practices of South Asian Hinduism and Buddhism; (3) improve their ability to analyze and interpret culturally unfamiliar texts; (4) become more aware of their own cultural and personal assumptions, beliefs, and biases; (5) develop skills to think critically about their own and others' worldviews; (6) develop an appreciation for writing as a way both to clarify for themselves the content of the course and to communicate their understanding to others.

Format: Lecture/Discussion

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the texts and any problems they might have had understanding them. Writing-to-learn assignments, whether outside or inside class, are intended to help students grasp the material and re-present it in their own words. Participation in discussions is expected.

Evaluation

(1) Writing-to-learn assignments. Frequent but short writing-to-learn assignments will encourage students to be actively engaged with the material and prepared for in-class discussions. These assignments will be written either at home or in class at the beginning of the period. They will (normally) be graded "S" or "U". A missed assignment is automatically given a "U" and cannot be made up (except in unusual circumstances). If 80% or more of the graded

assignments receive an "S", a student's final grade will be raised one level (e.g. C to C+). If 50% or fewer of graded assignments are graded Satisfactory, the final grade will be reduced by one-level (C to C-). Otherwise, it will not change (51%-79%).

(2) Essay Exams. Three non-cumulative essay exams (including the final) will enable the student to demonstrate his or her grasp of the material under consideration. Analytic as well as synthetic skills will be evaluated.

(3) Participation. There is no separate grade for participation. However, the instructor reserves the right to reward participation of a consistent and high quality where deemed appropriate, e.g. when a final grade average is borderline.

(4) Plagiarism. Zero tolerance on either a writing assignment or an essay exam. An automatic "F" for the course. Consult the "Academic Honesty Policy" in the Student Handbook or clarify with the instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTS

<http://sanatan.intnet.mu/upanishads> (Upanishad selections)

Easwaran, Eknath, trans. *The Bhagavad-Gita*. Tomales, CA: Nilgiri Press, 1985.

Easwaran, Eknath, trans. *The Dhammapada*. Tomales, CA: Nilgiri Press, 1986.

Fowler, Jeaneane. *Hinduism: Beliefs and Practices*. Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1997.

Fuller, C.J. *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Gandhi, Mahatma. *All Men are Brothers*. New York: Continuum Publishers, 1992.

COURSE OUTLINE

| <u>Date Due</u> | <u>Topic</u> |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| August 27 | Introduction to the Course |

I. HINDUISM

- August 29 A. THE VEDIC RELIGION
Vedic Religion I
Read: Fowler, Ch. 12
- August 31 Vedic Religion II
Read: Fowler, Ch. 13
- September 03 No Class. Labor Day.
- September 05 Transition to the Upanishads
Read: Fowler, Ch. 14
- September 07 B. Text: *THE UPANISHADS*
Katha Upanishad
<http://sanatan.intnet.mu/upanishads/katha.htm>
Part Chapter:Verse(s)
One 1:1-9&20-29; 2:1-5&18-25; 3:3-17
Two 1:1-15; 2:6-15
- September 10 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
<http://sanatan.intnet.mu/upanishads/brihadaranyaka.htm>
Part Ch:Vv
Three 1:1-2; 8; 9:1
Four 3:31-38; 4:1-25; 5:1-7
- September 12 Chandogya Upanishad
<http://sanatan.intnet.mu/upanishads/chhandogya.htm>
Part Ch:Vv
Three 14
Six 1:1-7; 2; 9-13
Eight 7-12
- September 14 Mundaka Upanishad
<http://sanatan.intnet.mu/upanishads/mundaka.htm>
First Mundaka 1; 2: 7-13
Second Mundaka 1
Third Mundaka 1:1-8; 2
- September 17 Kena and Isa Upanishads
<http://sanatan.intnet.mu/upanishads/kena.htm> (Complete)
<http://sanatan.intnet.mu/upanishads/isa.htm> (Complete)
- September 19 Varnashramadharma
Read: Fowler, Chs. 1,3,4
- II. HINDUISM: DEVELOPMENT
- September 21 A. The Rise of Classical Hinduism
The Bhagavad-Gita Translated by E. Easwaran,
Read: "Introduction"
- September 24 B. TEXT: *The Bhagavad-Gita*
Arjuna and Krishna
Gita, Chs. 1&2

September 26 Action or Contemplation?
Gita, Chs. 3&4

September 28 Yoga and Selfless Action
Gita, Chs. 5&6

October 01 Krishna as the Lord
Gita, Chs. 9-11

October 03 The Way of Devotion
Gita, Chs. 12-13

October 05 Exam #1

October 08 No Class Fall Break

October 10 C. Village or Popular Hinduism
Video: Land of 330 Million Gods

October 15 The Rise of Devotionalism
Fowler, Ch. 5

October 17 Vaishnavism, Krishna, and Radha
Fuller, pp. 155-163
Online Assignment: Krishna

October 19 Shaivism, Shiva and Kali
Fuller, Ch. 2

October 22 Worship (puja)
Fuller, Ch. 3

October 24 Sacrifice (bali)
Fuller, Ch. 4

October 26 Saints, and Swamis
Fuller, pp. 163-181
Video: "Four Holy Men"

October 29 Pilgrimage
Fuller, Ch. 9

October 31 Festivals
Fowler, Ch. 6
Video: "Holi"

November 02 Handling Misfortune
Fuller, Ch. 10

November 05 EXAM #2

III. BUDDHISM

November 07 A. Early Buddhism
The Buddha
Read: Easwaran, *The Dhammapada*, "Introduction", pp.7-33

November 09 The Basic Teachings
Read: Easwaran, "Introduction", pp.34-46; 58-72

November 12 Theravada Buddhism: Sri Lanka

Video: "In the Footprints of the Buddha" November 12

November 14 B. Text: *The Dhammapada* (Path of the Truth)
Chs. 1-8
November 16 Chs. 9-14
November 19 Chs. 15-20
November 26 Chs. 21-26
November 21&23 Thanksgiving Break
November 28 The Bodhisattva Ideal
"Introduction" to *The Way of the Bodhisattva*
On Reserve
November 30 No Class
7:00 p.m. FILM: *Gandhi* (Prosser) 7:00P.M.
Read: Handout

V. MAHATMA GANDHI: RELIGION, POLITICS
AND THE BIRTH OF FREE INDIA

Text: *All Men are Brothers* by Mahatma Gandhi

December 03 Religion, Truth and Ethics
Read: Gandhi, pp.51-76
December 05 Ahimsa, Non-Violence
Read: Gandhi, pp.77-97
December 07 Self-Discipline, Poverty and Plenty
Read: Gandhi, pp.97-112; 118-125
December 10 Democracy and Women
Read: Gandhi. pp.126-137; 146-152
T.B.A. FINAL EXAM