

SYLLABUS
R.123. Religions of India
Fall, 2008

Dr. St. John
(610) 861-1585 (O)
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Ofc. Comenius-204
MWF 2:00-3:00
TR. 2:00-4:00

Course Content.

This course will examine the beliefs, values, and practices of South Asian Hinduism and Buddhism. The course will examine early foundational texts of Hinduism, such as the *Vedas* (including *The Upanishads*), and the *The Bhagavad-Gita*. The second section of the course will examine popular or village Hinduism. The third section we will examine South Asian Buddhism especially the Pali Canon and *The Dhammapada*. We will finish with a consideration of the influence of religion on the politics 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 material 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

- Eck, Diana Darsan: *Seeing the Divine Image in India*. 3rd. Ed., Columbia Univ. Press, 1998.
- Fowler, Jeaneane. *Hinduism: Beliefs and Practices*. Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1997.
- Gandhi, Mahatma. *All Men are Brothers*. New York: Continuum Publishers, 1992.
- Knisely, David. *The Sword and the Flute*. Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1995
- Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli and Charles A. Moore. *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- Walpola, Rahula. *The Teachings of the Buddha*. 2nd ed. New York: Grove Press, 1999.

OUTLINE

Date	Topic	Assignment
August 25	Introduction to the Course	

I. HINDUISM: THE ORIGINS

August 27	The Indus River Civilization Vedic Religion Hymns to the Devas	Fowler, Ch. 12 Fowler, Ch. 13 Radhakrishnan: Indra: 5,7 Agni: 9 Surya: 12 Usas: 13
August 29	Priests (Brahmins) and Sacrifice (Yajna)	Radha: Agni: p.7 Vak: 15 Purusa: 19 Prajapati: 24 Brhaspati: 10 Of Creation: 23
September 01	No Class. Labor Day.	
September 03	Transition to Vedanta	Fowler, Ch. 14
September 05	The <i>Katha Upanishad</i> Death's Answer: Path of Knowledge The Individual and Universal Self Ignorance and Wisdom Levels of the Human: Yoga and Knowledge of Self	Radh. pp. 42-50
September 08	The <i>Mundaka Upanishad</i> Lower and higher knowledge Lower and higher Self or selves The limited nature of rituals and good deeds Knowing Brahman is becoming Brahman The <i>Aitareya Upanishad</i> Creation of the universe	Radh.51-55;60-1 Radh. 63-64
September 10	The <i>Chandogya Upanishad</i> The Dialogue of Shvetaketu and Uddalaka Prajapati and the Gods	Radh.68-70;72--77
September 12	The <i>Brihadaranyake Upanishad</i> Maitreyi and Yajnavalkya: The Nature of Brahman and Atman (Self) (Read: <i>Taittiriya Upa.</i> pp.60-61 on Bliss) The contrast between desire and renunciation; ignorance and knowledge Karma (good and evil deeds), Death-Rebirth (Samsara), and Liberation moksha)	Radh. 77-89

II. THE BHAGAVAD GITA AND THE WAY OF ACTION

September 15	Varnashramadharm	Fowler, Chs. 1,3,4
September 17	Arjuna and Krishna	<i>Gita</i> , Chs. 1&2
September 19	Action or Contemplation?	<i>Gita</i> , Chs. 3&4
September 22, 24	Sankya-Yoga * Action	<i>Gita</i> , Chs. 5,6,13

September 26	Krishna as the Lord	<i>Gita</i> , Chs. 7,9,10
September 29	The Way of Devotion	<i>Gita</i> , Chs. 11-12
October 01	EXAM #1	

III. POPULAR HINDUISM

October 03	<u>Devotionalism (Bhakti)</u> "Seeing" and Devotionalism Video: "Land of 330 Million Gods"	Eck Ch.1
October 06	Fall Break. No Class	
October 08	The Nature of the Hindu Image	Eck, Ch.2
October 10	Worship (Puja) in Home & Temple	Fowler, Ch. 6
October 13	Pilgrimage Video: "Kashi: City of Lights"	Eck, Ch. 3 Fowler, Ch. 11

Vaishnavism: Krishna & Radha

October 15	Rise of Vaishnavism	Fowler, Ch. 15 Knisley, pp.56-65
October 17	Krishna & Radha (1)	Knisley, pp. 9-?
October 20	Krishna & Radha (2)	Knisley, pp. ??-55

Shaivism: Shiva & Kali

October 22	Shiva and Shaivism	Internet Research
October 24	Kali & Shiva	Knisley, 90-96; 101-108; 114-126
October 27	Kali: Interpretations Exam #3 (TAKE HOME)	Knisley, Ch. 4

IV. BUDDHISM: Basic Teachings

The Buddha

October 29	The Buddha Video. "In the Footprints of the Buddha"	Rahula, Ch. I
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The Teachings (Dhamma/Dharma)

October 31	Dukkha (Suffering, Dis-ease)	Rahula, Ch II Radh. pp.274-8
November 03	Anatta (No-Self)	Rahula, Ch VI Radh. pp. 280-4
November 05	Tanha & Nibbana/Nirvana	Rahula, Chs III, IV Radh. pp. 289-292

November 07	Magga: The Path	Rahula, Ch V
November 10	Mindfulness/MentalCult.	Rahula, Ch VII and pp.109-114
November 12-17	The <i>Dhammapada</i>	Radh. (Selections)

Mahayana: Emptiness, Compassion & the Bodhisattva

November 19	The Bodhisattva Ideal	Internet Research
November 21	Mahayana Philosophy	Handouts
November 24	7:00 p.m. FILM: Gandhi (Prosser) Read: Handout	
November 26,28	No Class. Thanksgiving Break	

V. MAHATMA GANDHI AND THE WAY OF ACTION

December 01	Religion, Truth and Ethics Read: Gandhi, pp.51-76
December 03	Ahimsa, Non-Violence Read: Gandhi, pp.77-97
December 05	Self-Discipline, Poverty and Plenty Read: Gandhi, pp.97-112; 118-125
December 08	Democracy and Women Read: Gandhi. pp.126-137; 146-152
December 10	Review
T.B.A.	FINAL EXAM

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October	15	Democracy and Women Read: Gandhi. pp.126-137; 146-152	
October	17	Exam #2	

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Bhagavad Gita

VI. 32

Sanskrit

*atmaupamyena sarvatra
samam pasyati yo 'rjuna
sukham va yadi va dukkham
sa yogi paramo matah.*

Radhakrishnan's Translation

He, O Arjuna, who sees with equality everything,
in the image of his own self,
whether in pleasure or in pain,
he is considered a perfect yogin.

Easwaran's Trans

When a person responds
to the joys and sorrows of others
as if they were his own,
he has attained the highest state
of spiritual union.

VI. 46

*tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogi
jnanibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikah
karmibyas ca 'dhiko yogi
tasmad yogi bhava 'rjuna*

Radhakrishnan Transl.

The yogin is greater than the ascetic;
he is considered to be greater
than the man of knowledge,
greater than the man of ritual works,
therefore do thou become a yogin,
O Arjuna.

Easwaran Transl.

Meditation is superior to severe
asceticism and the path of
knowledge. It is also superior
to selfless service. May you at-
tain the goal of meditation,
Arjuna