

RELIGION 341: RELIGIONS OF INDIA (Spring 2016)

Professor Luke Whitmore

Office Hours: CCC 417 (and sometimes Zest) Wednesday 1-4 and by appointment.

DESCRIPTION

This course examines religious life in South Asia. We will focus on the religious tradition, or perhaps more accurately the set of overlapping religious traditions today that are today understood as Hinduism. We will consider a diverse set of topics ranging from philosophical questions about the nature of karma to ritual details about which fruits one should eat on a particular day of a particular month. We will explore a variety of ways in which religious ideals connect to social and political realities. Participation in this course will provide a good general understanding of Hindu traditions and their place in the broader religious landscapes of South Asia. Our work together this semester will also broaden your understanding of how one goes about studying a “religion.”

This course offers you the tools necessary to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Understand and actively use key terms connected to Hindu traditions.
2. Explain how South Asian (particularly Hindu) religious traditions change over time and space.
3. Imagine, at both intellectual and experiential levels, ways of being in the world that are VERY DIFFERENT from those with which you are familiar.
4. Interact in informed, respectful, and successful ways with persons connected to South Asian (particularly Hindu) religious traditions.

COURSE MATERIALS

Text Rental:

Sources of Indian Tradition, Second Edition, Volumes One and Two. Ed. And Rev. by Ainslie T. Embree and Stephen Hay.

The Life of Hinduism. Ed. Hawley and Narayanan.

Hindu Art by T. Richard Blurton.

NOTE: We will not read each of these books in its entirety but rather use selections from each.

Text Purchase

Everyday Hinduism by Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger

The Bhagavad Gita translated by Laurie L. Patton (Penguin Classics)

REQUIRED ARTICLES: If I do not provide copies of an assigned reading, you must print out the reading (you will find PDF versions on D2L) and bring to class at a magnification you can read. You may NOT use a smart phone in class. Tablets and laptops are fine. You do NOT have to print color PDFS and websites.

WHENEVER A READING IS ASSIGNED, BRING THAT TEXT TO CLASS.

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: (5%)**Participation and Preparation: (10%)**

This includes contributions to group work in class and to the discussion forum on D2L.

Pop Quizzes: (10%)

Pop quiz questions will usually be drawn from the study questions listed on the Schedule of Assignments.

Unit 1 Test: (Take-Home, 20%): Details will be given well in advance.

Book Review Essay and Oral Presentation: (20%)

An approximately 1000 word book review which summarizes and evaluates a scholarly book about religion in South Asia (approved in consultation with Professor Whitmore) and a 3-5 minute oral presentation to the class about the review. Details will be provided in advance.

Annotated Bibliography and Summary Essay with Oral Presentation: (20%)

Choose a focused topic relevant to contemporary South Asian religion and assemble an annotated bibliography comprising 10 or more sources relevant to your focused topic. Write an approximately 500-word summary of what you have learned about your topic, and the debates surrounding this topic, from your research and give a 3-5 oral presentation to the class that summarizes your findings. Detailed guidelines will be provided in advance.

Final Exam: (Take-Home, 15%): Details will be provided well in advance.

Percentage to Letter Grade Conversion

A: 94–100, A-: 90–93, B+: 87–89, B: 83–86, B-: 80–82, C+: 77–79, C: 73–76, C-: 70–72, D+: 67–69, D: 65–66, F: 64 or lower

NOTES**ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES**

If you are not able to turn in an assignment due to extenuating circumstances, some flexibility may be possible. If this is the case, you must receive permission from me no later than the day the assignment is due. Without permission, a grade penalty will be assigned and the assignment may not be accepted.

ATTENDANCE

More than two unexcused absence will adversely impact your grade. Please do not inform me in advance if you simply cannot make it to class unless you are making a request that the absence be excused. I would also strongly prefer that you not ask me what you have missed until you have done the reading and gotten notes from a colleague. At that point, I will be very happy to meet with you and go through the class material in as much detail as necessary.

CHANGES TO SYLLABUS:

There are many places in the syllabus that say TBD (to be determined). You should keep checking Schedule of Assignments – I will occasionally change or add to assignments.

PARTICIPATION:

Participation matters and may come in many forms: steady effort, openness, and respect for others

being of primary importance. These aims build on the rights and responsibilities that frame the UWSP community as a whole. If you have not read about UWSP Rights and Responsibilities you are strongly encouraged to do so:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/rightsCommBillRights.pdf>

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability Services Office and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center. For more information, check here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf> You can also find more information here: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>

PLAGIARISM:

When you use the words and/or ideas of others you must cite them properly and make it clear that they are not your own words and/or ideas. For detailed information, see the following:

<http://library.uwsp.edu/guides/vrd/plagiarism.htm> Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) is taken very seriously. Don't do it! Penalties for academic misconduct (of any sort, not limited to plagiarism) range from oral reprimand to expulsion from the university. For more information, see the UWSP "Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures" section of the Rights and Responsibilities document, Chapter 14, and can be accessed here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

I ASSUME THAT YOU HAVE REVIEWED THIS DOCUMENT.

Schedule of Assignments

- Unit 1
 - Week 1
 - Tuesday, January 26
 - Thursday, January 28:
 - Life of Hinduism (henceforth LOH): 1-16; 33-52
 - Study Question: What in your view are three key points LOH makes about how to approach "Hinduism"?
 - Fill out and upload the "About Me" document on D2L
- Week 2
 - Tuesday, February 2
 - Everyday Hinduism (henceforth FLUECKIGER): 1-17
 - Sources of Indian Tradition (henceforth SOIT): "The Primeval Sacrifice" (17-19)
 - Study Question: What in your view are three key points that Flueckiger makes about how to present and learn about "Hinduism" and does she agree with LOH?
 - Thursday, February 4
 - Davis, A Brief History of Religions in India (Handout, PDF on D2L, henceforth DAVIS): 3-14
 - SOIT: "The Sacrificial Horse" (30-31), "The Essential Reality Underlying the World" (36-38)
 - LOH: 76-87
 - Study Question: Attempt to summarize Davis 3-14 in a single paragraph and think how Davis relates to LOH 76-87.
 - handout of Bhagavad Gita question for take-home test.
- Week 3
 - Tuesday, February 9 (FILM)
 - DAVIS: 14-22
 - BHAGAVAD GITA: vii-xxv
 - By the beginning of class, please post to the discussion forum a three-five sentence explanation of how this reading relates to what we did in Week 2 and what questions came up for you during the reading.
 - In-Class Viewing of Tulsidas and the Fire of the Veda or Four Holy Men
 - Thursday, February 11 (FACULTY FORUM)
 - BHAGAVAD GITA: First, Second, Third Discourses (3-48)
 - DAVIS 22-27
 - Study Questions: Be prepared to share your Bhagavad Gita entry with the class. Summarize, in one sentence each, your understanding of the following: Vishnu, Shiva, Devi.

- Week 4
 - Tuesday, February 16
 - BHAGAVAD GITA: Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Discourses (49-83)
 - DAVIS 27-31
 - BLURTON: 111-115, 118-129. Focus on the different FORMS of Vishnu and his STORIES. Do not worry about the finer art-historical details, unless you are an art-historian!
 - Study question: How did what you read in Davis connect to what you read in Blurton?
 - Thursday, February 18
 - FLUECKIGER: 18-45 (Chapter 1: Families of Deities)
 - Study Question: What are the main deity groupings Flueckiger describes in this chapter? What questions/reactions did you have about these groupings?
- Week 5
 - Tuesday, February 23
 - BHAGAVAD GITA: Seventh-Fourteenth Discourses (84-162)
 - Study questions: continue with *Bhagavad Gita* journal and be prepared to share in class.
 - Thursday, February 25
 - FLUECKIGER: 46-72 (Chapter 2: Oral and Visual Narratives and Theologies)
 - Study Question: What does Flueckiger argue about the relationship of the verbal and the visual and what are two examples she uses?
- Week 6
 - Tuesday, March 1
 - *Bhagavad Gita* Fifteenth, Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth Discourses (163-205)
 - Study question: be ready to share your summaries of these chapters.
 - Thursday, March 3
 - FLUECKIGER: 73-96 (Chapter 3: Bhakti, Murtis, Puja)
 - Smithsonian Video: "Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion"
 - Study Question: How does what Flueckiger says in this chapter connect to your understanding of the *Bhagavad Gita*?
- Week 7
 - Tuesday, March 8
 - BLURTON: Shiva: 76-78; Devi: 154-157
 - Study questions: Carefully examine the images and captions throughout both chapters. Come to class with specific questions prepared about each chapter.
 - Thursday, March 10
 - **Unit 1 Take-Home Test Due.**
 - In-class film viewing worth extra credit.

- Week 8
 - Tuesday, March 15
 - Davis: 31-44
 - Study Question: How would you summarize the main developments in this reading in three sentences?
 - Open-book quiz on Davis 31-44.
 - Thursday, March 17
 - Open-book quiz on Davis 31-44 and on *Dharm* (in-class film)
 - Quiz will create extra credit that will go towards Take-Home Test score.
 - If you have not been able to see *Dharm* in-class, here is a link:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvTHVI4GI08>
 - Consultations about book review.
 - Come to class with some ideas in mind about a topic connected to the class that interests you.
 - Film viewing and discussion.
- SPRING BREAK
- Week 9
 - Tuesday, March 29
 - SOIT 371-375; 406-407, 430-433; 464-468; 486-487 (Bulhe Shah)
 - Start thinking about your book review and/or start reading the book you have chosen.
 - Book List
 - Karma by Johannes Bronkhorst
 - Mountain Goddess by William Sax
 - Jessie
 - Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India and America by Harold Coward
 - Joanna
 - The Goddess Lives in Upstate New York by Corinne Dempsey
 - Hannah
 - River of Love in an Age of Pollution by David Haberman
 - Amber
 - Justice
 - Siva in the Forest of Pines by David Shulman and Don Handelman
 - Daniel
 - Palkhi: An Indian Pilgrimage by D.B. Mokashi
 - Meghan
 - Storytellers, Saints, and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teaching by Kirin Narayan
 - Joshua
 - Mondays on the Dark Night of the Moon: Himalayan Foothill Folktales by Kirin Narayan

- Miranda
 - People Trees by David Haberman
 - Sami (Samantha)
 - Elizabeth Spry
 - Gandhi: A Spiritual Biography by Arvind Sharma
 - Katie
 - Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice by Mark Singleton
 - Cassie
 - Caste in India by Diane Mines
 - Bill
 - Elizabeth R.
 - When the World Becomes Female: Guises of a South Indian Goddess by Joyce Flueckiger
 - Debra
 - Nammalvar: Hymns for the Drowning by A.K. Ramanujan
 - Nicole
 - Thursday, March 31
 - LOH: "Militant Hinduism" (Chapter 17) and "Tolerant Hinduism" (Chapter 18)
 - Study Question: Prepare a one-sentence summary about how each chapter describes relationships between Hindus and Muslims.
- Week 10
 - Tuesday, April 5
 - FLUECKIGER: Chapter 4
 - Thursday, April 7
 - excerpt from *Journey Through the Twelve Forests* (PDF on D2L)
 - Note: The excerpt comprises the first chapter of this book. Of specific concern to us are pages 29-40. Pages 3-29 are extremely worthwhile but will not be the focus of what we do in class.
- Week 11
 - Tuesday, April 12
 - work on Book Review.
 - Thursday, April 14
 - DAVIS 43-50
 - Haberman: "On Trial: The Love of the Sixteen Thousand Gopees" (PDF on D2L)
 - Optional: Selections from "Ecology and Equity: The Use and Abuse of Nature in Contemporary India" (PDF on D2L); "Caste and the Colonial State" (PDF on D2L)
- Week 12
 - Tuesday, April 19
 - Video about Edward Said's Orientalism (link on D2L)

- Reread and continue to think about "On Trial: The Love of 16000 Gopees." Make sure to bring PDF to class.
 - Select Primary Sources Relating to "Hinduism" in the Colonial Period (Handout, PDF on D2L)
 - Study Question (there will almost certainly be a quiz about this): How does this video connect to "On Trial: The Love of 16000 Gopees"?
 - Thursday, April 21
 - Book Review due by beginning of class. Presentations in Class.
- Week 13:
 - Tuesday, April 26
 - Flueckiger: Chapter 6: Vrats
 - Thursday, April 28
 - Flueckiger: Chapter 7: Samskaras
 - Contemporary Hinduism Assignment Discussed
- Week 14:
 - Tuesday, May 3
 - Project Work.
 - Class creates Terms and Approaches document.
 - Bring all of your course materials to class.
 - Schedule given for presentations.
 - Thursday, May 5
 - Flueckiger 8: Healing, Possession, Astrology
 - Flueckiger Afterword
- Week 15
 - Tuesday: Student Presentations. Schedule will be given on Tuesday, May 3.
 - student presentations:
 - Thursday: Student Presentations, Final Remarks

Final Take-Home Exam questions handed out.