

RSOC 85: Hinduism
Fall 2017 TR 10:20 AM- 12:00 noon Kenna Hall 212

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Office Hours: Mon. 10 AM-12 noon, 1-2 PM; WR 1-2 PM, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, which fulfills the RTC 2 requirement for the core curriculum, will survey the history of the development and of Hinduism in South Asia and in diaspora in North America. We will explore in depth distinctively Hindu spiritual practices, such as yoga and puja, and the beliefs concerning the nature of the self and the nature of the divine that underlie them. The course will employ, and students will be expected to gain a basic level of mastery in, several methodological approaches. These approaches include the theological; we will seek to understand key Hindu teachings and practices as understood by Hindus themselves. We will do so through critical engagement with a wide variety of primary source texts, ranging from Vedic hymns, the key theological texts such as the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita*. We will also utilize religious historical methodologies, in order to heighten our understanding of how Hindu traditions have changed through time. Here our sources will involve an historical introduction to the religion, a collection of essays on contemporary female gurus in India and North America, and a contemporary novel by an Indian author. Lastly, we will also employ the art historical approach as we explore the central importance of religious art and iconography in Hindu religious practice. Our understanding of both the religious history and theology of Hinduism will be enhanced by viewing several short documentaries that focus on the contemporary practice of Hinduism.

COURSE GOALS

1. Students will gain a basic appreciation of Hinduism, with understanding of both its history and key teachings and practices, as well as the art-historical dimensions of the tradition.
2. Students will be expected to gain the ability to apply multiple methodological approaches to the study of Hinduism.
3. Students will gain an appreciation for the contemporary practice of Hinduism in the modern world.

DEPARTMENT GOALS

1. Students will master a coherent body of material in order to broaden and deepen the "database" that students use to think about religions, religious issues, and all the possible interdisciplinary connections.
2. Students will master a discrete body of material in its own terms, to draw on this new knowledge in addressing issues framed by other disciplines, and to be alert to the way knowledge is organized and appropriated.

The Religious Studies departmental learning goals are embedded in the course goals.

CORE CURRICULUM LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This course fulfills Santa Clara's Core Requirement Religion, Theology, and Culture 2.

Core Learning Goals: Habits of Mind and Heart: Complexity, Critical Thinking, Religious Reflection

Core Learning Objectives:

1. Be able to analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief.).
2. Be able to integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena.
3. Be able to clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING:

Reflection Papers (90%, 30% each)

Over the course of the quarter students will be asked to write a series of three papers (1000-1500 words) that will ask them to reflect upon Hinduism from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Reflection Paper #1: Theological Reflection (30%)

The first paper will ask students to focus on a single issue from a single disciplinary perspective. *This will assess course goal #1 and core learning objective #1.*

Reflection Paper #2: Methodological Reflection (30%)

The second short paper will ask students to analyze a single religious phenomenon (such as a devotional song or icon) from multiple disciplinary perspectives. *This will assess course goal #2 and core learning objectives #1 & 2.*

Reflection Paper #3: Contemporary Hinduism (30%)

The third paper will focus on the experience of contemporary Hindus, with a focus on communities centering around female gurus in India and abroad. *This will assess course goal #3 and core learning objective #1 & 3.*

Class Participation (10%)

Participation in class discussions and active engagement with the course readings are requirements of this class. This class will have structured discussions, in which students will be required to prepare in advance reflections on course readings, discuss them in small groups, and present the key points of their discussions to the class. These discussions are intended to assess the students' knowledge of the traditions studies, their ability to reflect upon them critically, and their ability to work and learn collaboratively. Participation will both be directly measured by the instructor, and indirectly measured by the students' progress in the other assignments. *This will indirectly support, but not directly assess, all of the course goals and core learning objectives.*

Students will be asked to assess the course via mid-quarter and end-quarter narrative evaluations.

Students will receive regular feedback on their work from their instructor to help them improve their understanding and analytic skills.

POLICIES

Attendance

Regular attendance is required. If you must miss a class, you should inform the instructor in advance when possible, and you are responsible for making up missed work. While absences due to unavoidable problems (sickness, etc.) will be excused, I will **NOT** excuse absences for activities associated with other classes. **Unexcused absences will significantly lower your final grade.**

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. For more information about Santa Clara University's academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see www.scu.edu/academic-integrity.

In order to avoid the sanctions applied to cases of academic dishonesty, please make sure that you properly cite all sources that you utilize in your writing, including works that are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. Your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited. Quoting or paraphrasing another work *without acknowledging it* IS plagiarism.

Disabilities Resources

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, <http://www.scu.edu/disabilities> as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting

In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medically related needs. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Alternatively, a pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodations through Disability Resources.

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)

Santa Clara University upholds a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the

University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy [at http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb](http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb) or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043, bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through <https://www.scu.edu/osl/report/> or anonymously through Ethicspoint <https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/>

ASSIGNMENTS

Papers should be submitted as digital files (via Camino or email) by end of the day (i.e., 12 midnight) on the day that they are due **OR** submitted as a hard copy in class. In order to save paper, I prefer digital submissions, and do not require a hard copy. Please email me your papers as documents in the Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Pages (.pages) formats if possible, or as text files (.pdf, .txt, or .rft). If you submit your paper via email, I will email you a confirmation when I have received it. If you do NOT receive a confirmation within 24 hours, please check with me to confirm that I have received it. If you email me a paper and I do not receive it, I WILL count it as late if you do not check in with me within 24 hours. Late work will only be accepted with the permission of the instructor, and will be penalized at the rate of 5 points per day late (including weekends), unless the instructor has granted an extension in advance (i.e., at least 24 hours prior to the due date). Note that if instructor does grant an extension, but the assignment is turned in late, i.e., after the extended due date, the late penalty will be calculated based on the day the assignment was originally due.

Grading Scale

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|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 94.0–100 A | 87.0–89.9B+ | 77.0–79.9C+ | 67.0–69.9D+ |
| 90.0–93.9A- | 83.0–86.9B | 73.0–76.9C | 63.0–66.9D |
| | 80.0–82.9B- | 70.0–72.9C- | 60.0–62.9D- |

CLASS TEXTS

- IH** Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge UP 1996)
- HS** Dominic Goodall, *Hindu Scriptures* (UC Press 1996)
- SSI** John S. Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India* (Oxford UP 2008)
- Diana Eck, *Darshan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Columbia UP 1998)
- K. Pechilis, *The Graceful Guru: Hindu Female Gurus in India and the United States* (OUP 2004)
- U. R. Ananthamurthy, *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man* (Oxford 1976)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Introductions

Tues. 9/19 During the first class we will engage in the usual introductory rituals, and will discuss the significance of India and Hinduism in the past and contemporary time periods.

1. Ancient Hinduism

Thurs. 9/21 **Hinduism: Overview and Prehistoric India**

We will begin our study of Hinduism with an overview of the subject itself. We will attempt to define the religion, and hence the scope of the class. We will begin with an overview of the ancient, prehistoric background to the tradition.

•IH 5-35

Tues. 9/26 **Vedic Hinduism**

We will explore the Vedic tradition of ancient India, which characterized the “mainstream” of early Hindu belief and practice.

•IH 35-50

Thurs. 9/28 **Discussion: The Rg Veda and Atharva Veda**

We will read and discuss excerpts from the Vedas, one of the world’s oldest bodies of literature, and the foundational early Hindu scripture.

•HS 3-37

Tues. 10/3 **Ideal Visions of Society & Early Hindu Mystical Philosophy**

We will examine key Indian ideas regarding the individual and her or his roles in society, as well as the rules and moral obligations that govern social life as envisioned by Hindu thinkers. We will then turn to the key theological scriptures of early Hinduism, the *Upaniṣads*.

•IH 51-93

Thurs. 10/5 **Discussion: The Upaniṣads**

We will examine the development of the Hindu tradition, as influential religious thinkers turn away from the external practice of ritual, and toward the contemplation of the self and its relation to the divine.

•HS 41-202

Suggested Topics for Paper #1: Theological Reflection distributed

2. Classical Hinduism

Tues. 10/10 **Samkhya and Yoga**

We will explore two influential Hindu schools of thought and practice regarding the possibility of attaining *mokṣa*, liberation from cyclic existence.

•IH 94-102, 224-236

Thurs. 10/12 **Yogīs and Liberation**

We will watch a documentary on the tradition of yoga as practiced in a traditional Indian context.

•Paula Fouce, “Origins of Yoga” (2005, 50 min.)

Paper #1 Due

Tues. 10/17 **The Bhagavad Gīta: Background**

During this class we will explore one of the most influential Hindu scriptures, the “Song of the Lord,” as well as its impact on the development of Hindu theology.

•IH 103-127

Thurs. 10/19 **Discussion: The Bhagavad Gīta**

We will read and discuss in small groups chapters from this major work of religious literature.

•HS 205-292

Tues. 10/24 **The Path of Devotion**

We will explore the rise of the *bhakti* movement in medieval India.

•IH 236-249

•SSI 3-7

Thurs. 10/26 **Discussion: Songs of the Saints of India**

We will discuss the lives of the medieval North Indian saints, and the popular devotional songs attributed to them.

• SSI 9-173

Tues. 10/31 **Śaivism, Śākta Traditions, and Tantrism**

We will discuss the history of the Śaiva and Śākta traditions of Hinduism, as well as one of their major contributions to Hindu practice, the Tantric tradition of ritual and meditation.

•IH 148-197

•HS 341-370

Thurs. 11/2 **Śaivism, Śākta Traditions, and Tantrism**

We will watch a documentary on the tradition on contemporary tantric practice in India.

- Andy Lawrence, "The Lover and The Beloved: A Journey into Tantra, Part 1" (2011, 70 minutes). Available online at:

<https://santaclarau.kanopystreaming.com/video/lover-and-beloved-journey-tantra-0>

3. **Contemporary Hinduism**

Tues. 11/7 **Puja: Worship in the Home or Temple**

In order to better understand the significance of Hindu iconography and the use of icons in Hindu worship, we will read and discuss a work exploring these themes in the context of the city of Varanasi, a sacred Hindu pilgrimage center. We will also explore the Shaiva tradition of Hinduism during this class.

- IH 198-223

- Diana Eck, *Darśan*, 3-75

Suggested Topics for Paper #2: "Methodological Reflection" distributed

Thurs. 11/9 **Authority in Contemporary Hinduism: The Figure of the Guru**

We will explore one of the central facets of contemporary Hindu practice, the figure of the guru, the enlightened spiritual master who serves as a spiritual guide for the community. We will examine the figure of the guru in the classical and contemporary traditions, and will also explore the status of women in Hinduism & the Shakta tradition.

- IH 174-197

- GG 3-36

Tues. 11/14 **Discussion: *The Graceful Guru***

We will discuss female gurus highlighted in *The Graceful Guru* anthology.

- GG, selected chapters

Paper #2: "Methodological Reflection" due

Thurs. 11/16 No class

11/21 & 23 **Thanksgiving break!**

Tues. 11/28 **The Guru Tradition: *Darshan: The Embrace***

We will watch the film “Darshan: The Embrace,” a documentary focusing on Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, a South Indian guru widely known as ‘Amma” or “Ammachi.”

- Jan Kounen, “Darshan: The Embrace” (2005, 90 minutes)

Thurs. 11/30 **Discussion: Samskara**

For our final class we will discuss, in small groups, U. R. Ananthamurthy’s novel *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man*, which portrays life in a 20th century rural Indian town, and addresses a number of interesting religious and social issues.

- Ananthamurthy, *Samskara*

Final Paper due Thurs. 12/7