

Religion 9 / AMES 9
Spring 2014

HINDUISM

MWF 11:15-12:20
X-hour: Tu 12:00-12:50
L01 Carson

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Office: 314 Thornton
Office Phone: 646-2114
Office Hours: MW 8:30-10:00

Course Description

This is an introductory course on the Hindu religious tradition of India. No background knowledge is required or presumed.

The term “Hinduism” is really an umbrella category used to refer to the family of religious traditions characteristic of the Indian subcontinent. This means that in comparison to other religions, Hinduism is extraordinarily diverse in nature, spanning a time-period of over 3,000 years and covering a wide geographical area characterized by dozens of languages, cultures, communities, and ethnic groups, and a bewildering variety of doctrines, beliefs, and practices. Within the limits of this course, it is impossible to study the full variety of religious expressions in such a vast area and over such a long period of time. We will focus on the major doctrines, practices, and institutions characteristic of the cluster of religious traditions we today call “Hinduism,” taking a historical and chronological perspective that begins in 2500 B.C.E. and moves down to the present day.

Attendance, Preparation, and X-Hours

Class attendance is obligatory, and I expect you to attend on a regular basis, as well as to have the reading assignment completed beforehand. In some cases, the reading assignment will include your viewing of a film (on streaming video), which should also be completed beforehand. Please be aware that we will be using three of our X-hours this term.

Required Texts

All required texts are available for purchase at both the Dartmouth Bookstore and Wheelock Books, and available on 2-hour reserve at Baker-Berry. The *Religion 9 Source Book*, which is also required, is available for purchase only at Wheelock Books.

Thomas J. Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition* — (Note: Unfortunately, this book is quite expensive. I have asked both bookstores to stock as many *used* copies as possible, and I

would prefer you to buy the book, if you are able to obtain a used copy. *Do not buy a new copy; it's too expensive.* In addition, however, I have also placed *four* copies on 2-hour reserve at the library. If you are unable to buy the book, I would strongly suggest that you borrow a reserve copy as soon as possible and xerox *all of the pages* we'll be reading throughout the term. This will save you from having to check the book out repeatedly.

The pages you will need are: 3-27, 36-63, 73-86, 90-95, 108-112, 121-124, and 131-134.)

Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Bhagavad Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*

Cornelia Dimmitt and J. A. B. van Buitenen, *Classical Hindu Mythology: A Reader in the Sanskrit Puranas*

Edward C. Dimock and Denise Levertov, *In Praise of Krishna: Songs from the Bengali Religion*
9 Source Book

Grading Criteria

(1) BLACKBOARD RESPONSES. Beginning with the second class-session (on March 26), there are 22 class-sessions (marked with an asterisk on the syllabus below) for which you may choose to submit a *response to the readings* on Blackboard. You are expected to submit **16** out of the 22 possible responses throughout the course of the term; any fewer than 16 responses will begin to lower this portion of your grade. *Responses are due by 6:00 am on the morning of the relevant class and will **not** be accepted late under any circumstances.* Your response should be one decent-sized paragraph long and may pertain to any aspect of one or more of the readings or films assigned for that day. You may use your response to reflect upon a point from the readings/films, raise a question that was left unanswered, express a personal opinion or reaction relating to the content of the readings/films, relate a point from the readings/films to outside material, etc. But in all cases, your response should reflect your careful engagement with the assigned readings/films. Responses will be graded on a check-minus, check, check-plus basis. Blackboard responses are worth 20% of the final grade.

To submit your responses on Blackboard: On the course Blackboard site, go to "Responses," click on the appropriate class day, click on "Create Thread," enter a title for your response under "Subject," enter your response in the box marked "Message," and then click "Submit." Blackboard will record the date and time when you submit your response.

(2) SHORT PAPERS. There will be two short paper assignments (5 pages each) asking you to critically engage selected topics we have covered. The first paper assignment will be handed out in class on Monday, April 7, and due back (via Blackboard) by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 16. The second paper assignment will be handed out in class on Friday, May 9, and due back (via Blackboard) by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 19. Both paper assignments will be based on the readings you have done and will require no additional reading. Each short paper is worth 20% of the final grade, for a total of 40%.

(3) MIDTERM & FINAL EXAMS. There will be an in-class midterm exam on Friday, April 25. It will be cumulative, covering material from the beginning of the course up to the class before the midterm. There will be a final exam at 8:00 AM on Friday, May 30 (as scheduled by the Registrar). It will focus on material covered after the midterm but include questions that

require a basic comprehension of the material covered in the whole course. Both exams will consist of short-answer and/or essay questions on the central themes of the lectures and readings. Critical thinking and clear writing will be essential to receiving a good grade. Each exam is worth 20% of the final grade, for a total of 40%.

(4) MAKE-UP POLICY. Blackboard responses may not be turned in late under any circumstances. Short papers may be turned in late only if you have a decent reason for doing so and have made arrangements with me for an extension *beforehand*. The midterm exam may be taken at an alternative time only if you have a very good reason and have made arrangements with me *beforehand*. There will be no possibility of making up the final exam (aside from something like serious medical illness or a death in the family), although taking the final exam *early* may be possible if you arrange it with me *beforehand*.

(5) SUMMARY OF GRADING SYSTEM: Blackboard Responses (20%); Short Paper No. 1 (20%); Short Paper No. 2 (20%); Midterm Exam (20%); Final Exam (20%).

(6) DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES. If you have a learning disability or any other condition that will require accommodation on my part, or if you will miss class because of a religious observance, *please give me plenty of advance warning*.

(7) SYLLABUS CHANGES. I reserve the right to change any aspect of this syllabus at my discretion (but I will, of course, inform you of such changes ahead of time).

Course Syllabus

Note: For the most part, “Reading No. 1,” “Reading No. 2,” etc., refer to numbered readings in the *Religion 9 Source Book*. Some of these numbered readings, however, are posted on Blackboard instead (as noted below). Therefore, there will be gaps in the numbered readings in the reader. There are also other readings on Blackboard (which were added to the course later) that are not numbered.

I. THE STUDY OF HINDUISM

Monday, March 24: Introduction to the course.

*Wednesday, March 26: What is “Hinduism”? And who speaks for “Hinduism”?

Reading No. 1: An introductory portrait of Hinduism and a brief historical outline of Hinduism. David R. Kinsley, *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Prentice Hall, 1993), 2-25.

[BLACKBOARD] Rachel Fell McDermott, “New Age Hinduism, New Age Orientalism, and the Second Generation South Asian,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 68: 4 (2000) 721-731.

Reading No. 2: Various course outlines.

II. VEDIC RELIGION

Friday, March 28: The Indus Valley Civilization and the Aryan Migration into India.

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 3-11.

[BLACKBOARD] Andrew Lawler, “Unmasking the Indus: Boring No More, a Trade-Savvy Indus Emerges,” *Science* 320: 5881 (2008) 1276-1281.

Reading No. 3: A brief summary of the debate over the Aryans’ relationship to the Indus Valley Civilization. Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 30-35.

*Monday, March 31: Early Vedic religion.

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 11-16.

Reading No. 4: Hymns to the gods from the *Rig Veda*. Ainslie T. Embree, ed., *The Hindu Tradition: Readings in Oriental Thought* (Vintage Books, 1966), 9-23.

Reading No. 5: Hymns to the gods from the *Rig Veda*. Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, trans., *The Rig Veda: An Anthology* (Penguin Classics, 1981), 219-227.

Tuesday, April 1 (X-hour): Late Vedic religion.

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 17-27.

Reading No. 6: Speculative hymns from Book 10 of the *Rig Veda*. Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, trans., *The Rig Veda: An Anthology* (Penguin Classics, 1981), 23-32.

*Wednesday, April 2: Late Vedic religion (continued). Vedic society and social ethics.

[BLACKBOARD] Reading No. 7: Description of a large public Vedic ritual—the *Rajasuya*. David R. Kinsley, *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Prentice Hall, 1993), 117-122.

Reading No. 8: Vedic society and social ethics—the concept of *dharma*. Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 52-58.

[On Reserve through Streaming Video] FILM—“ATAR OF FIRE” (*This documentary, filmed in 1975, provides an unprecedented look at an actual performance of an elaborate, large-scale public Vedic ritual known as the Agnichayana.*)

III. THE RELIGION OF THE UPANISHADS AND THE RISE OF NON-HINDU RELIGIONS

Friday, April 4: The new worldview of the early Upanishads.

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 36-51.

*Monday, April 7: The new worldview of the early Upanishads (continued). ASSIGNMENT FOR PAPER NO. 1 HANDED OUT.

Reading No. 9: A description of the Upanishads. Laurie L. Patton, "Veda and Upanisad," in *The Hindu World*, ed. Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby (Routledge, 2004), 45-50.

Reading No. 10: Passages from the Upanishads. Patrick Olivelle, trans, *Upaniṣads* (Oxford World Classics, 1996), 44-46, 64-71, 148-149, 153-155, 167, 171-175, 198-199, 227-230, 268-271.

*Wednesday, April 9: Seeing the Upanishads in context: India in the 6th c. B.C.E and the rise of non-Hindu religious movements (e.g., Buddhists, Jains, Ajivakas).

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 52-63.

Reading No. 11: An early Buddhist description of six non-Hindu religious teachers.

Maurice Walshe, trans., *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya* (Wisdom Publications, 1995), 91-97.

IV. ELEMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLASSICAL HINDUISM

*Friday, April 11: Hindu social order. The varnashramadharma system. Hindu rites of passage.

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 73-86.

Reading No. 12: Passages from the *Manusmṛiti*, the earliest and most important *Dharma Shastra*. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, eds., *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1957), 175-192.

[BLACKBOARD] Reading No. 13: A discussion of *samskaras* (Hindu rites of passage). Mary McGee, "Samskara," in *The Hindu World*, ed. Sushil Mittal & Gene Thursby (Routledge, 2004), 332-356.

*Monday, April 14: Varna and caste. The caste system.

[BLACKBOARD] Reading No. 14: The four varnas and the caste system. Taken from David R. Kinsley, *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Prentice Hall, 1993), 152-175.

Wednesday, April 16: The world of the epics—Mahabharata. PAPER NO. 1 DUE BY 5:00 PM.

Reading No. 15: A brief introduction to the Mahabharata epic. Taken from A. L. Basham, *The Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism* (Beacon Press, 1989), 68-75.

Reading No. 16: A summary of the Mahabharata epic and a discussion of its gradual growth and resulting structure. Taken from J. A. B. van Buitenen, trans., *The Mahabharata. I. The Book of the Beginning* (University of Chicago Press, 1973), xiii-xxxi.

*Friday, April 18: The world of the epics—Ramayana.

[BLACKBOARD] Reading No. 17: Discussion of the Ramayana epic tradition. Taken from Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, “Ramayana,” in *The Hindu World*, ed. Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby (Routledge, 2004), 75-96.

[BLACKBOARD] A. K. Ramanujan, “Three Hundred *Ramayanas*: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation,” in *Many Ramayanas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, ed. Paula Richman (University of California Press, 1991), 22-49.

*Monday, April 21: The Bhagavad Gita.

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 90-95.

Miller, *Bhagavad Gita*, 23 (starting with verse 20) – 69.

Wednesday, April 23: The Bhagavad Gita (continued).

Miller, *Bhagavad Gita*, 71-113, 143-154.

Friday, April 25: IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM.

V. RELIGION AND MYTHOLOGY OF THE PURANAS

*Monday, April 28: Introduction to the Puranic writings. Puranic accounts of creation and cosmology.

Dimmitt and van Buitenen, *Classical Hindu Mythology*, 15-29; from 30-58, please read the following selections: The Origin of Brahma from the Lotus in Vishnu’s Navel; The Origin of the World from Brahma; The Origin and Nature of Time; The Four Ages; The Kali Age; The Dissolution of the World in Vishnu; The Shape of Space; The Regions of Earth.

[On Reserve through Streaming Video] FILM—“HINDUISM: 330 MILLION GODS” [*This documentary, though quite old, provides a good overview of the fully developed Hindu tradition, as found in the Puranas.*]

*Wednesday, April 30: Puranic mythology of Vishnu.

Dimmitt and van Buitenen, *Classical Hindu Mythology*, 59-65; from 66-99, please read the following selections: Matsya, the Fish; Kurma, the Tortoise; Varaha, the Boar; Narasimha, the Man-Lion; Parashurama, Rama with the Axe; Vaikuntha, Vishnu’s Celestial City; Vishnu and Shri.

Friday, May 2: NO CLASS. PROFESSOR WILL BE OUT OF TOWN.

*Monday, May 5: Puranic mythology of Krishna.

Dimmitt and van Buitenen, *Classical Hindu Mythology*, 100-130.

FILM: "HOLI HEY" [*This documentary focuses on the raucous springtime festival known as Holi, which is closely associated with the god Krishna and wholly in keeping with his playful character.*]

*Wednesday, May 7: Puranic mythology of Shiva.

Dimmitt and van Buitenen, *Classical Hindu Mythology*, 147-154; from 155-218, please read the following selections: The Birth of Parvati; The Test of Parvati's *Tapas*; The Betrothal of Shiva and Parvati; Daksha's Insult; The Destruction of Daksha's Sacrifice; Ganesha; Karttikeya; Sunartaka the Dancer; The Dance of Shiva in the Sky; The Sages of the Pine Forest; Brahma, Vishnu, and the Linga of Shiva; The Origin of Women.

*Friday, May 9: Puranic mythology of the Goddess. Goddess-worship in Hinduism.
ASSIGNMENT FOR PAPER NO. 2 HANDED OUT.

Dimmitt and van Buitenen, *Classical Hindu Mythology*, 219-226; from 227-242, please read the following selections: The Demons Madhu and Kaitabha; The Origin of the Goddess from the Gods; The Death of Mahisha, the Buffalo Demon; The Birth of Kali and the Final Battle.

[BLACKBOARD] David R. Kinsley, "Kali: Blood and Death Out of Place," from *Devi: Goddesses of India*, ed. John Stratton Hawley and Donna Marie Wulff (University of California Press, 1996), 77-81.

FILM: "BEARING THE HEAT: MOTHER GODDESS WORSHIP IN SOUTH INDIA" [*This documentary focuses on the many different forms that goddess-worship assumes in contemporary South India.*]

VI. MEDIEVAL HINDUISM

*Monday, May 12: Temple Hinduism, puja, and darshana.

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 108-112.

Reading No. 18: A discussion of *puja*. "Worship," in C. J. Fuller, *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India*, rev. & expanded ed. (Princeton University Press, 2004), 57-75.

Reading No. 19: A discussion of Hindu temples. George Michell, *The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to Its Meaning and Forms* (University of Chicago Press, 1988), 61-76.

[BLACKBOARD] FILM CLIPS OF PUJA — On Blackboard, under "Readings," you will see a folder called "05/09 SHORT VIDEOS." This folder contains links to five different short video clips illustrating PUJA, the Hindu ritual of image worship. Please

watch any *three* of them. (They are all comparable in length, about five minutes each.)

*Wednesday, May 14: An example of medieval Hindu philosophy: Shankara's Advaita Vedanta (Non-Dualism) and Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Vedanta (Qualified Non-Dualism).

[BLACKBOARD] Reading No. 20: A discussion of Shankara's Advaita Vedanta (Non-Dualism). Taken from David R. Kinsley, *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Prentice Hall, 1993), 96-102.

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 121-124 (a discussion of Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita Vedanta [Qualified Non-Dualism]).

Reading No. 21: Short passages from the philosophical writings of Shankara and Ramanuja. Taken from Ainslee T. Embree, *The Hindu Tradition: Readings in Oriental Thought* (Vintage Books, 1966), 197-207.

*Friday, May 16: Overview of bhakti and the bhakti movements of medieval India. Early South Indian bhakti: the Nayanars and the Alvars.

Reading No. 22: An introduction to the bhakti movements of medieval India. Taken from Ron Geaves, "Bhakti Movement," in *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. Denise Cush, Catherine Robinson, and Michael York (Routledge, 2008), 89-97.

Reading No. 23: Early South Indian Tamil bhakti poetry dedicated to the god Shiva. Taken from Indira Viswanathan Peterson, *Poems to Siva: The Hymns of the Tamil Saints* (Princeton University Press, 1989), 104-105, 111, 113-114, 118, 127-128, 135-137, 151, 209, 213, 217-218, 224-225, 227, 234, 240, 245, 248, 252, 261-265, 267.

Reading No. 24: Early South Indian Tamil bhakti poetry dedicated to the god Vishnu. Taken from A. K. Ramanujan, *Hymns for the Drowning: Poems for Vishnu by Nammalvar* (Princeton University Press, 1981), 3, 4, 6, 8, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 32, 33, 35, 37, 49, 54, 56, 57, 60, 67, 68, 70, 71, 75, 76, 85.

*Monday, May 19: Late medieval bhakti in North India, example No. 1: Bengali Vaishnavism, the Radha/Krishna theme, and devotion to Krishna as lover. PAPER NO. 2 DUE BY 5:00 PM.

Dimock and Levertov, *In Praise of Krishna: Songs from the Bengali* (all poems).

*Tuesday, May 20 (X-hour): Late medieval bhakti in North India, example No. 2: devotional poetry by Surdas addressed to the child Krishna; and example No. 3: Islam in India, the *sant* tradition, *nirguna bhakti*, and the poetry of Kabir.

Reading No. 25: A brief introduction to Surdas and a selection of his poems. Taken from Kenneth E. Bryant, *Poems to the Child-God: Structures and Strategies in the Poetry of Surdas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 152-154, 156-158, 160-163, 168-178, 186-192, 206, 208.

Hopkins, *Hindu Religious Tradition*, 131-top of 134.

Reading No. 26: A discussion of Kabir and a selection of his poems. Taken from John Stratton Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India* (Oxford

University Press, 1988), 35-45, 50-57; and Linda Hess and Shukdev Singh, *The Bijak of Kabir* (Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 41-47, 55, 61.

VII. MODERN HINDUISM

*Wednesday, May 21: The “Hindu Renaissance”: British rule in India and Hindu reformers in British India.

Reading No. 27: Discussion of modern Hindu reform movements. Taken from Dermot Killingley, “Modernity, Reform, and Revival,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, ed. Gavin Flood (Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 509-525.

Reading No. 28: Selections from the writings of Rammohan Roy (founder of the Brahmo Samaj) and Dayananda Sarasvati (founder of the Arya Samaj). Taken from William Theodore de Bary, *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 2 vols. (Columbia University Press, 1958), Vol. 2, 21-25, 76-83.

*Friday, May 23: Hinduism and politics: Modern Hindu nationalism and fundamentalism.

Reading No. 29: A brief history of Hindu nationalism. Christophe Jaffrelot, “Introduction: The Invention of an Ethnic Nationalism,” in *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader*, ed. Christophe Jaffrelot (Princeton University Press, 2007), 3-24.

Monday, May 26: MEMORIAL DAY. NO CLASS.

Tuesday, May 27 (X-hour): Concluding thoughts: local Hinduism, regional Hinduism, pan-Indian Hinduism, global Hinduism.

Reading: TBA

*Wednesday, May 28: Concluding thoughts: The Hindu Diaspora in the United States.

[BLACKBOARD] Prema Kurien, “‘We Are Better Hindus Here’: Religion and Ethnicity Among Indian Americans,” in *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Communities*, ed. Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002) 99-120.

FINAL EXAM AT 8:00 AM ON FRIDAY, MAY 30