

HDS 3750/Religion 1615

The *Bhagavad Gītā* as Wisdom, Devotion, and Yoga:

According to the Interpretation of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī

Tuesdays, 3-530 Classroom: Divinity Hall 211

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Note on required course texts:

1) Georg and Brenda Feuerstein, *The Bhagavad-Gītā: A New Translation*. Shambala Books. 2011. Paperback. Some copies will be available for sale at the Coop, and it can be bought through Amazon, etc.

2) Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. *Bhagavad Gītā with the annotation of Gūḍhārtha Dīpikā*. Tr. Swami Gambhirananda (Advaita Ashrama, 2013): may be bought on the web, **but a limited number of copies are available from Professor Clooney for purchase, at \$20.00 – for a 1,000 page book! These are available first come, first served based, with priority for students enrolling in the course for credit.**

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MTS Area(s) of Focus: Comparative Studies; Hindu Studies; South Asian Religious Traditions; Theology

MDiv Distribution: Scriptural Interpretation

Special Consideration

Students with concerns about the style of the course or with any special learning needs are requested to consult the professor as soon as possible, to insure that accommodations are made to enhance your learning experience as much as possible.

Required texts for this course that students should purchase (or use on reserve); see also the fuller bibliography below:

1) Georg and Brenda Feuerstein, *The Bhagavad-Gītā: A New Translation*. Shambala Books. 2011. Paperback. Available at the Coop.

Many other fine translations are available, but for our common purpose, we will use Feuerstein, which as the Sanskrit (Devanagari and Roman scripts) on the left-hand side, and the translation on the right-hand side.

Also recommended: R C Zaehner, *The Bhagavad Gītā translated with a commentary based on original sources*. Oxford University Press, 1969.

2) Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. *Bhagavad Gītā with the annotation of Gūḍhārtha Dīpikā*. Tr. Swami Gambhirananda (Advaita Ashrama, 2013) Available at discount from Professor Clooney

Students are welcome to consult other traditional and modern commentaries, but Madhusūdana's is the one that is the substantial text for this course.

Older translation of Madhusūdana's Gītā commentary (for comparison only):
Madhusūdana Sarasvatī on the Bhagavad Gītā. Tr. By SK Gupta. Motilal Banarsidass, 1977.

3) For each chapter we read as background: Angelika Malinar, *The Bhagavad Gītā: Doctrines and Contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. This book will be available on reserve, and select chapters only at Canvas.

Course Papers:

Two 12-15 page exegetical papers, drawing on some particular section of the Gītā, or theme arising across several chapters, and with some specific attention to the commentary of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī: due March 27 and May 14.

Weekly Routine

1. read the assigned chapter/chapters of the Gītā in translation
2. read the relevant sections of Malinar on the chapter/s in question
3. read the pertinent chapter or chapters of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī
 - a. as needed, and on issues arising, read the relevant secondary sources on Madhusūdana
4. **due on the day of class:** 2 pages on a key verse/theme pertinent to the week's reading

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Schedule for Reading the Gītā and commentary by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī

(subject to adjustment during the semester)

January

28 Introduction; the Gītā and the nature of this course; general background on Gītā: Feuerstein, introduction, ix-46; Malinar, *The Bhagavad Gītā: Doctrines and Contexts*, introduction and chapter 1; Davis, *The Bhagavad Gītā: A Biography*; for reference, Khair, *Quest for the Original Gītā*, on the likely three-stage composition of the Gītā

February

4 Overview:

- review of background, Feuerstein's introduction, ix-46; Malinar, introduction and chapter 1; overview of Madhusūdana's place among commentators on the Gītā
- *background readings*:
- Sanjukta Gupta, "A 16th century Bengali philosopher of Advaita-Vedānta and theologian of Kṛṣṇabhakti," *Advaita Vedānta and Vaiṣṇavism: the Philosophy of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī*, 1-13
- Lance Nelson, "Bhakti-Rasa for the Advaitin Renunciate: Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's Theory of Devotional Sentiment," *Religious Traditions* 12 (1989), 1-16; Nelson, "Madhusūdana Sarasvatī on the 'Hidden Meaning' of the Bhagavad Gītā: Bhakti for the Advaitin Renunciant," *Journal of South Asian Literature* 23.2 (1988), 73-89
- Madhusūdana's introduction to the Gītā

Tvam: the Human

11 *focus text i*) Gītā c. 1.1-47, c. 2.1-10, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar on the chapter

18 *focus text ii*) Gītā c. 2.11-38, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar

25 *focus text iii*) Gītā c. 2.39-72, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar

March

3 *focus text iv*) Gītā c. 3.1-43., with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar; note Madhusūdāna's "second introduction" at the start of Chapter 3

10 *focus text v*) Gītā c. 4.1-42, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar

17 *Harvard spring break week*

24 Review, catch-up, on the course thus far; (briefly), *focus text vi*) Observation on yoga in Gītā c. 6, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar

March 27 first paper due

Tat: Reality

31 *focus text vii*) Gītā 7.1-30, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar

April

7 *focus text viii*) Gītā c. 9.1-32, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar

14 *focus text ix*) Gītā cc. 10-11, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar

21 *focus text x*) Gītā 12.1-20, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar

tat tvam asi: the Reality of the Human

28 *focus text xi*) Gītā c. 18.41-78, with Madhusūdāna, and Malinar

May 14 second paper due

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Bibliography (full bibliography at Canvas)

Gita Translation for class use: Georg and Brenda Feuerstein, *The Bhagavad-Gītā: A New Translation*. Shambala Books. 2011. Paperback. This edition has the translation on the right side, and the Sanskrit on the facing left page, in Devanagari and Roman scripts. Of course there are multiple good translations of the Gītā, and you may consult any of them, but this is the one we will use in class.

Some useful secondary sources on the Gītā

Richard Davis. *The Bhagavad Gītā: A Biography* (2015)

Gajanana Sripata Khairā (Khair). *Quest for the Original Gītā*. Bombay, Somaiya Publications, 1969.

¹ Madhusūdāna sees the Gītā as an explication of the famous statement from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6, tat tvam asi, That thou art, or That's how you are: tvam = cc. 1-6, tat = cc. 7-12; tat tvam asi, cc. 13-18

Angelika Malinar, *The Bhagavad Gītā: Doctrines and Contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007

Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī

Primary translation (available for purchase from professor at reduced rate)

Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī. *Bhagavad Gītā with the annotation of Gūḍhārtha Dīpikā*. Tr. Swami Gambhirananda (Advaita Ashrama, 2013)

Older translation of the primary text

Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī on the Bhagavad Gītā, tr. by SK Gupta (Motilal, 1977)

Some key secondary sources on Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī

Sanjukta Gupta, *Advaita Vedānta and Vaiṣṇavism: the Philosophy of Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī*. Routledge, 2006, especially chapter 8, “Bhakti,” 119-144

PM Modi, *Translation of Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī's Siddhānta Bindu*. Self published by PM Modi, 1929: Introduction, and Appendix III (“Madhusūdāna and Śaṅkara on Bhaktimārga in Gītā”)

Lance Nelson,

Bhakti in Advaita Vedānta: A translation and study of Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī's Bhaktirasayana. McMaster University dissertation, 1986.

“Bhakti-Rasa for the Advaitin Renunciate: Madhusūdāna Saravatī's Theory of Devotional Sentiment,” *Religious Traditions* 12 (1989), 1-16

“Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī on the ‘Hidden Meaning’ of the Bhagavad Gītā: Bhakti for the Advaitin Renunciant,” *Journal of South Asian Literature* 23.2 (1988), 73-89

“The Ontology of Bhakti: Devotion as Paramapuruṣārtha in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32 (2004), 345-394

“Krishna in Advaita Vedānta: The Supreme Brahman in Human Form,” *Krishna: A Sourcebook*. Edited by Edwin Bryant. OUP 2007, 309-328.

“Theological Politics and Paradoxical Spirituality in the Life of Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī,” *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 15.2 (2007), 19-34

Gianni Pellegrini, “‘Old Is Gold!’ Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī's Way of Referring to Earlier Textual Tradition,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2014) 43:277-334

Niranjan Saha, *Philosophy of Advaita Vedānta according to Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī's Gūḍhārthadīpikā* (SOAS Dissertation, 2014) (At course website; used with author's permission.)

Some other pertinent classical commentaries on the Gītā

Śaṅkarācārya.

Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. Translated by A.G. Krishna Warriar. 1st ed. Madras, India: Sri Ramakrishna Math, [1983]

Bhagavad Gītā with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya. Tr. By Swami Gambhirananda. Advaita Ashrama, 2012.

Śrī Śaṅkara's Gītā Bhāṣya: Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on the Gītā. Translation by C.V. Ramachandra Aiyar ; foreword by Swami Ranganathananda. 1st ed. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1988.

Yāmūnācārya (predecessor of Rāmānuja), *Gītārthasaṃgraha*. (A summary of the *Gītā* in 32 verses; found in various places, including in Rāmānuja 1969)

Rāmānuja.

Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya, translation by Svami Adidevananda. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1991.

The Gītābhāṣya, translated into English by M.R. Sampatkumaran. 1st ed. Madras: Prof. M. Rangacharya Memorial Trust: M.C. Krishnan, Vidya Press, 1969

Rāmānuja on the Bhagavad Gītā. Tr. (in part) by JAB van Buitenen. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968.

Other commentaries on the Gītā

Abhinavagupta. *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā with Gītārthasaṃgraha*. Part 2. Translation by S. Śaṅkaranarayana. Tirupati: Sri Venkateswara University. 1985.

Jñāneśvar. *Jñāneśvar's Gītā: A Rendering of the Jñāneśvarī*. By Swami Kripananda et al. SUNY, 1989.

Madhva. *The Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya and Tātparyanirṇaya*. Bombay: Vasantik Prakashan, 1995.

Some modern commentaries on the Gītā

Vinobha Bhave. *Talks on the Gītā*. Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1974.

AC Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada. *The Gītā As It Is*. New York: Macmillan, 1972

Bede Griffiths. *River of Compassion: a Christian commentary of the Bhagavad Gītā*. New York, N.Y.: Continuum, 1995.

Dayananda Saraswati. *The Teaching of the Bhagavad Gītā*. New Delhi: Vision Books, 1988.

BG Tilak. *Gītā Rahasya*. (or Karma Yoga Śāstra). Poona: Kesari Press, 2000.

Swami Vivekananda. *The Bhagavad Gītā as viewed by Swami Vivekananda*. Advaita Ashrama, 2014.

Some additional key secondary literature on the Gītā

Catherine Cornille. *Song Divine: Christian Commentaries on the Bhagavad Gītā*. Leuven; Dudley, MA: Peeters/W.B. Eerdmans (2006)

J N Farquhar. *Permanent Lessons of the Gītā* (1912) and *Gītā and Gospel* (1917)

"Gītā Comes West," thematic issue of *The Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies* 16.1 (2007)

- Mislav Jezic, "Textual Layers of the Bhagavadgita as Traces of Indian Cultural History," *Sanskrit and World Culture*, 1986, 628-638.
- Julius Lipner, ed. *The Fruits of Our Desiring: An Enquiry into the Ethics of the Bhagavad Gītā for Our Times*. Calgary: Bayeux Arts, 1997.
- Roger Marcaurelle. *Freedom through Inner Renunciation: Śaṅkara's Philosophy in a New Light*. Pp. 194-202. (SUNY Press, 1999)
- Robert N. Minor. *Modern Indian Interpreters of the Bhagavad Gītā*. Albany: State University of New York Press, c1986.
- Catherine A. Robinson. *Interpretations of the Bhagavad-Gītā and Images of the Hindu Tradition: the Song of the Lord*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Arvind Sharma. *The Hindu Gītā: ancient and classical interpretations of the Bhagavad Gītā*. London: Duckworth, 1986.
- Eric Sharpe. *The Universal Gītā*. LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1985.
- Steven Tsoukalas. *Bhagavad Gītā: exegetical and comparative commentary*, 2007.