

Devotional Literature of India

ANS 340/ R S 341

The University of Texas at Austin

Spring 2019

Class meets: TTH 12:30-2:00 at MEZ 1.122

Office hours: 2:30 to 3:30 TTH

Prof. Dalpat Rajpurohit

Department of Asian Studies

WCH 4.104B

512-471-1219

drajpurohit@austin.utexas.edu

T.A. Justin Ben-Hain

jbenhain23@gmail.com

Course description:

In this course we will discuss the songs of major saints and their role in shaping the religious communities of India. *Bhakti* (or Devotion)—which is passionate love towards god—is very much a part of the religious lives of Indians and their popular culture. *Bhakti* is often thought to be a movement against restrictive social and scriptural norms. Looking critically at the idea of this so called “*Bhakti* movement”—that is understood as a force binding the south to the north, together with other parts of India—we will read and compare devotional songs from different geographical and linguistic regions of India from the 9th to 18th century. These include: Kabīr, Tulsīdās and Sūrdās (from the northern side of India), Mīrā (Rajasthan), Guru Nānak (Punjab), Narsinha Mehtā (Gujarat), Tukārām (Maharashtra), Rāmprasād (Bengal) and Āṇṭāl from Tamil Nadu. The list is not exhaustive, but these selections will give us a good introduction to how holy men and women expressed their religiosity through the medium of songs and poetry over the centuries.

All these works will be studied in translations.

Goals:

- To get acquainted with major devotional singers and songs from different regions of India.
- To discuss the religious, mythological and cultural aspects of the poetic compositions.
- To improve critical thinking and academic writing skills by reading and discussing varied secondary sources.

Required course material:

1. Hawley, J. S. & Juergensmeyer, M. (2008). *Songs of the Saints of India*. Oxford University Press.
2. Course packet available for purchase at <https://squareup.com/store/paradigmbooks/>

Assessment:

Attendance and class participation:	20%
Reading homework (total 25 @ 1 point each):	25%
Two Response papers (On any two poet-saints covered):	30%
Final paper	25%

Attendance and class participation: Full attendance is required. Absences will negatively impact your grade for attendance and class participation.

Reading homework: You are required to complete the assigned reading and write a summary/discuss the main argument(s) or poetic theme(s) in 1-2 pages and post them on Canvas before any given class.

Two response papers: The papers should be submitted before class on February 28th and March 28th. Response papers should be limited to at least 1500 words per assignment, typed in Times new roman, doubled spaced, with a 12.0 font.

Final paper: A 2500 words paper on a poet-saint other than the topic of your response papers. Students can also choose a poet-saint of their choice beyond the syllabus by discussing with professor. Students are required to read additional texts and secondary sources on their topic. Bring your ideas to office hours at least three weeks before the final paper submission date.

Grades: Over all grades can be tracked by discussing with your professor during office hours. Grades are not posted/updated on Canvas.

Grading Scale:

A 93-100,	A- 89-92,	
B+ 86-88,	B 82-85,	B- 79-81,
C+ 76-78,	C 72-75,	C- 69-71,
D+ 66-68,	D 62-65,	D- 59-61,
F 0-58		

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Scholastic Dishonesty and Academic Integrity: Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act. For further information please visit the Student Judicial Services Web site: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>.

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Religious Observance Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of religious observance. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.