Hinduism Final Study Guide

* **tirtha**: ford or crossing; places for connection between humans and the divine
* **Yuga**:
  + Krita/Satya: 4 legs
  + Treta: 3 legs
  + Dvapar: 2 legs
  + Kali: 1 leg
* **Manu and the Fish**: fish (first Vishnu avatara) is in danger, Manu saves it, fish helps him survive flood
* **The Aryans**: nomadic people who migrated from the caucauses; linguistic group
* **The Veda (Rig Veda)**: oldest Hindu texts
* **Indra**: king of gods; killed demon and allowed creation of world; realizes insignificance by seeing parade of ants that were once gods
* **Agni**: fire god; intermediary between humans and gods
* **Soma**: gave gods strength to fight demons; moon is filled with it; also a god
* **Yajna**: the sacrifice; ritual of fire sacrifice
* **The** **Upanishads**: “sitting down near to”; secret knowledge; big questions; more inward approach that Vedas; ritual action becomes less important than knowledge
* **Tapas**: creative, transformative heat
* **Vac**: cosmic feminine sound energy; also god; Om
* **Brahman**: priest
* **Atman**: the inner, universal self that trancends the ego
* **Tat tvam asi**: that is how you are; Svetaketu
* **Jnana**: knowledge of ritual practice
* **Samasara**: cycle of rebirth
* **Karma**: a universal force that one accumulates based on deeds
* **Moksha**: enlightenment, escape from samsara (rebirth)
* **Varna**: social classes
  + Brahman: priests
  + Kshatriya: warriors
  + Vaishya: working class, merchants, etc.
  + Shudra: servants
* **Ashrama** – 4 ashramas
* **Jati**: subclasses of varnas
* **Dharma**: that which upholds and sustains; truth duty, righteousness law; cosmic principle;  human behavior
* **Shruti**: that which is heard; more important; Vedas, Upanishads, Baghavad Gita, Tantras (higher than vedas)
* **Smriti**: that which is remembered; Mahabharata, Ramayana, Puranas
* Three (or Four) Aims of Life  –
  + dharma
  + artha: money, wealth, political power, success –
  + kama: pleasure and desire –
  + moksha (later)
* **Kama**: desire
* **Artha**: an aim of life; Upanishadic; money, wealth, political power, success
* **Mahabharata**: story of war between Pandavas and Kauravas
* **Pandavas** **and** **Kauravas**:
  + Pandavas: 5 sons of Pandu
  + Kauravas: 100 sons of Dhritarashtra
* **Bhagavad** **Gita**: portion of Mahabharata where Krishna councels Arjuna
* **Arjuna**: protagonish of Bhagavad Gita; discourses with Vishnu his charioteer
* **Three Yogas (of Gita)**: yoga is discipline
  + Bhakti: devotion
  + Karma: action
  + Jnana: knowledge
* **Ramayana**: story of Rama
* **Valmiki**: writer of oldest full version of Ramayana
* **Rama**: avatara of Vishnu; protagonist of Ramayana; defeats Ravana
* **Sita**: wife of Rama; born of the earth; daughter of Janaka
* **Lakshmana**: half brother of Rama; goes with him into the forest when he is banished
* **Hanuman**: monkey servant of Rama
* **Ravana**: demon; gained power through worship of Shiva who granted him boon that he can’t be killed by gods or demons
* **Tulsidas/Ramcaritmanas**: Author of North Indian version of Ramayana; Rama is more god-like
* **Ram Lila**: festival in which Ramayana was reenacted
* **The Puranas**: stories and myths
* **The Tantras**: liturgical guidelines
* **Brahmanization** **&** **Sanskritization**
  + Brahmanization: top down
  + Sanskritization: bottom up
* **Nirguna v.** **saguna**: representation of god
  + gun: quality
  + nir: without
  + sa: with
* **Vishnu**: sustainer; many avataras
* **avatara**: descent; human incarnation of god
* **Shiva**: portrayed about ascetic
* **Devi** (Mahadevi): the goddess
* **purity/pollution**
* **auspiciousness**
* **Parvati**
* **Shakti**
* **Ganesh**
* **Durga**
* **Kali**
* **Bali**
* **Logic of blood sacrifice**
* **Lakshmi**
* **Krishna**
* **Radha**
* **Darshan**
* **Puja**
* **Arati**
* **Prasad**
* **Murti**
* **Pranam**
* **Tilak**
* **Jyotish (astrology)**
* **Diwali**
* **Holi**
* **Samskara**
* **Delhi Sultanate**
* **Sufism/Sufis**
* **Ulama (mullah)**
* **Shaykh/pit**
* **Dargah**
* **Khanqah**
* **People of the Book**
* **Dhmmi status (jizya tax)**
* **Akbar the Great**
* **Rasa**
* **Lila**
* **Bhakti**
* **Bhajan**
* **Satsang**
* **Hagiography**
* **Nanak**
* **Mirabai**
* **Ravidas**
* **Kabir**
* **Orientalism**
* **Rebellion of 1857**
* **Census of 1872**
* **Swami Vivekananda**
* **Partition/Independence**
* **“Hindu” (origin/original use)**
* **“Hinduism” (as a World religion)**
* **communalism**
* **V.D. Sarvarkar**
* **Hindutva**
* **Congress Party**
* **RSS (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak)**
* **BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)**
* **Babri Masjid (Babri Mosque)**
* **Ayodhya – Dec 6, 1992**
* **Godhra (Gujarat), 2002**
* **Indian secularism**
* **Shah Bano case**
* **“the sacred cow”**
* **Cow Protection Movement**
* **Laws of Many (Manu-smriti)**
* **Dalits**
* **Untouchability (practices of)**
* **B.R. Ambedkar**

Essay Questions

1. What is bhakti? What are the key and distinctive features of "the bhakti movement" that is said to have swept throughout India? What links and what separates these four famous north Indian bhakti saints: Kabir, Ravidas, Mirabai, and Nanak? How can they be categorized into groups based on their message and style? What is distinctive about each one? What unites all four?
   1. Kabir
   2. Ravidas
   3. Mirabai
   4. Nanak
2. What is the Upanishads' basic understanding of the world as we know it, our human situation, and the way to spiritual bliss? How does this vision contrast with that of earlier Vedic sacrificial religion? How do notions of"the sacrifice" continue on, yet get re-interpreted, in the Upanishads? Make sure to discuss the concepts of samsara (and what binds us in it), karma, jnana, brahman, atman, and moksha (and the way to it).
   1. Upanishad specs
   2. On samsara
   3. Karma
   4. Jnana
   5. Brahman
   6. Atman
   7. Moksha
3. Discuss Hindu-Muslim relations in late-medieval and early-modern north India (c. 1200-1700) by answering the following sub-questions: (a) When did Persian culture and Islam first become important presences in India? (b) How did Muslim rulers typically deal with their predominantly Hindu subjects and why? (c) What was the logic behind their destruction/desecration of Hindu temples? (d) Explain what dhimmi/zimmi status is and how it fits into this discussion of Hindu- Muslim relations in India. (e) What was the role of Sufis and Sufi institutions (dargahs and khanqahs) in the expansion of Islam in India, especially in relation to and in conversation with Hindu populations?
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4. What is the origin and initial meaning of the word "Hindu"? When and why did it first begin to acquire religious connotations? How did the British colonial presence harden "Hindu" and "Muslim" religious identities (as well as caste identities)? Relatedly, in what ways did Orientalist scholars construct (some might even say "invent") "Hinduism" as a "world religion"? (How did Orientalist and Protestant Christian biases come into play?) How did elite Hindu reformers (e.g., Vivekananda) then respond to these conceptions in seeking to build a modern Hinduism? What lessons does the history of the construction of "Hinduism" and a "Hindu" religious identity teach us about impacts and implications of colonialism, orientalism, and the power of (formulating) knowledge?
5. Choose two deities (e.g., Shiva, Rama, Krishna, Kali) that have interested you in this course and write an essay answering these questions: (a) How have these two figures helped you to understand key dimensions of the Hindu tradition? (Make sure to provide detailed information regarding the iconography, mythology, and theology associated with each deity and how each deities illuminates certain features of Hinduism.) (b) What aspects of the Hindu tradition do these two deities NOT shed light upon? (Please give two or three examples offacets of Hinduism that these two deities do NOT speak to, but which are important in thinking about the Hindu tradition as a whole.)
6. How is the Hindu deity "Ram" connected to the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya? Are there other understandings of "Ram" that would be opposed to the sentiments involved in this destruction? [Specify them.] What happened and what role did Hindu nationalism and ideas of "Hindutva" play in this controversial event? Drawing esp. on the assigned readings by Amartya Sen (Apr 18th), explain (a) how an advocate of "Hindutva" might defend (and even celebrate) the incident, (b) how other more pluralistic Indians might criticize the event and the Hindutva ideology behind it (and how their visions/understandings of "Ram" might differ from those of Hindu nationalists), and (c) what some other (potentially more compelling) foundations are for Indian (cultural & national) identity and unity.