

HISTORICAL HINDUISM

Important Dates

- Outline of Ritual Theory
- Due Friday Oct 18

- Quiz #2
- Monday Oct 21

Outline of Ritual Theory: FAQs

- PLEASE DOWNLOAD AND READ INSTRUCTIONS (.docx file)
- Make sure you use the Title Page attached
- Make sure you attach the Rubric



Outline of Ritual Theory Assignment Instruction and Citation Guide

Please find attached two important files for your Outline of Ritual Theory Assignment: 1. the Instructions for the assignment 2. a guide for citations Please read both carefully before you begin your assignment.

Outline of Ritual Theory: Citations

- Cite after:
 - Direct quotation: Symbols “are things (material, and sometimes non-material) that represent more than their material properties” (Nye 2008, 135).
 - Paraphrasing: When looking for symbols, we are looking for things that represent more than just what they are (Nye 2008, 135).
 - Bringing up anything you did not already know: Symbols can be material or non-material (Nye 2008, 135)
- Only cite Nye
- Do not cite the scholars that he cites

Third Paragraph

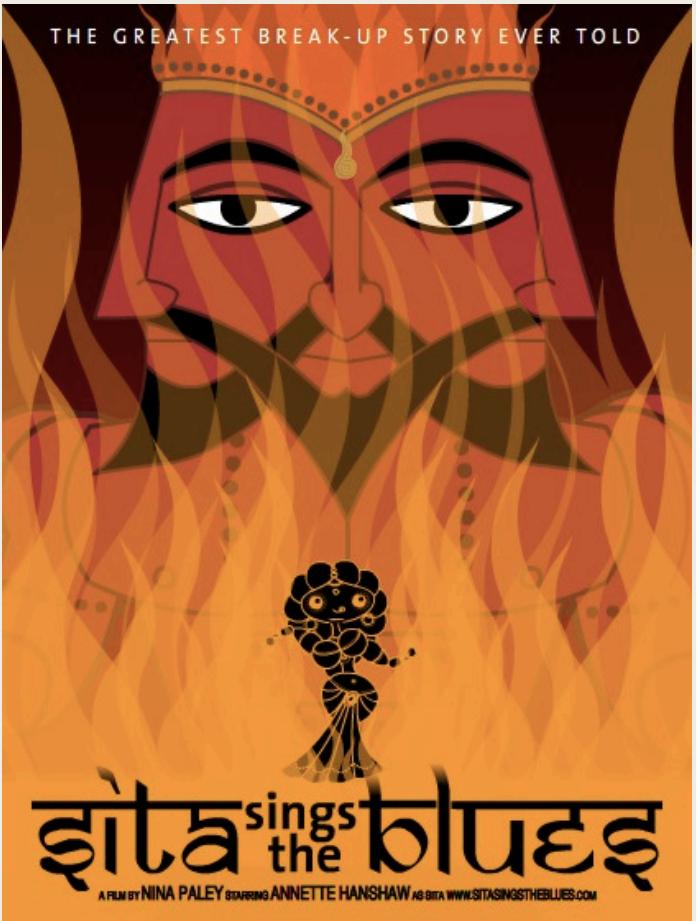
- If you have not visited your site yet, use this section to think about why the theory of ritual you are using might be useful.
 - For example: "I am using the theory of ritual and dance, so I am going to look for practices where the rules are strictly regulated. To do so I'm going to pay attention to instructions that the leader of the service gives to everyone else"
 - *Note, you don't have to be “right” here. The thing you're going to look for might not actually be there.*
- If you have already visited your site, tell me about some of the things that you looked for, and why you think they will be good to analyze.
 - *No analysis required here, just note some things you saw*

Hinduism

- Origins with Indus Valley Civilization (3200-1600 BCE), Dravidian people, Aryans (c. 1500-1000BCE)
- *Shruti*: Revelation and Scripture
 - *Four Vedas*
 - *Deities of the Vedas: Agni, Indra, Soma, Shiva*
- *Smriti*: Tradition
 - *Mahabharata*
 - *Ramayana*

Ramayana

- Compiled between 300BCE and 300CE
 - Continues to be told and retold today
 - Over 300 versions of the Ramayana



SITA SINGS THE BLUES (2008)

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1172203/?ref_=fn_al_tt_2



RAMA: AVATAR OF VISHNU, IDEAL RULER, MAIN CHARACTER



SITA: AVATAR OF LAKSHMI, IDEAL WIFE, MAIN CHARACTER



LAKSHMAN: BROTHER OF RAMA



HANUMAN: VANARA ("OTHER MAN") MONKEY PRINCE, DEVOTEE OF RAMA



RAVANA: DEMON KING OF LANKA, MAIN ANTAGONIST

24,000 verses

- Rama is exiled for 14 years
- Sita and Lakshman go with him
- In wilderness Sita is kidnapped by Ravana
- Rama fights war with Ravana, kills him, saves Sita

- Sita goes through fire to show she is still pure
- Rama returns and rules as ideal king

- Rama's subjects think that Sita is still impure
- She is exiled to the wilderness (while pregnant) where she gives birth to two sons
- Her sons finally meet their father (Rama) who accepts them, and after this Sita returns to Mother Earth

Important Themes

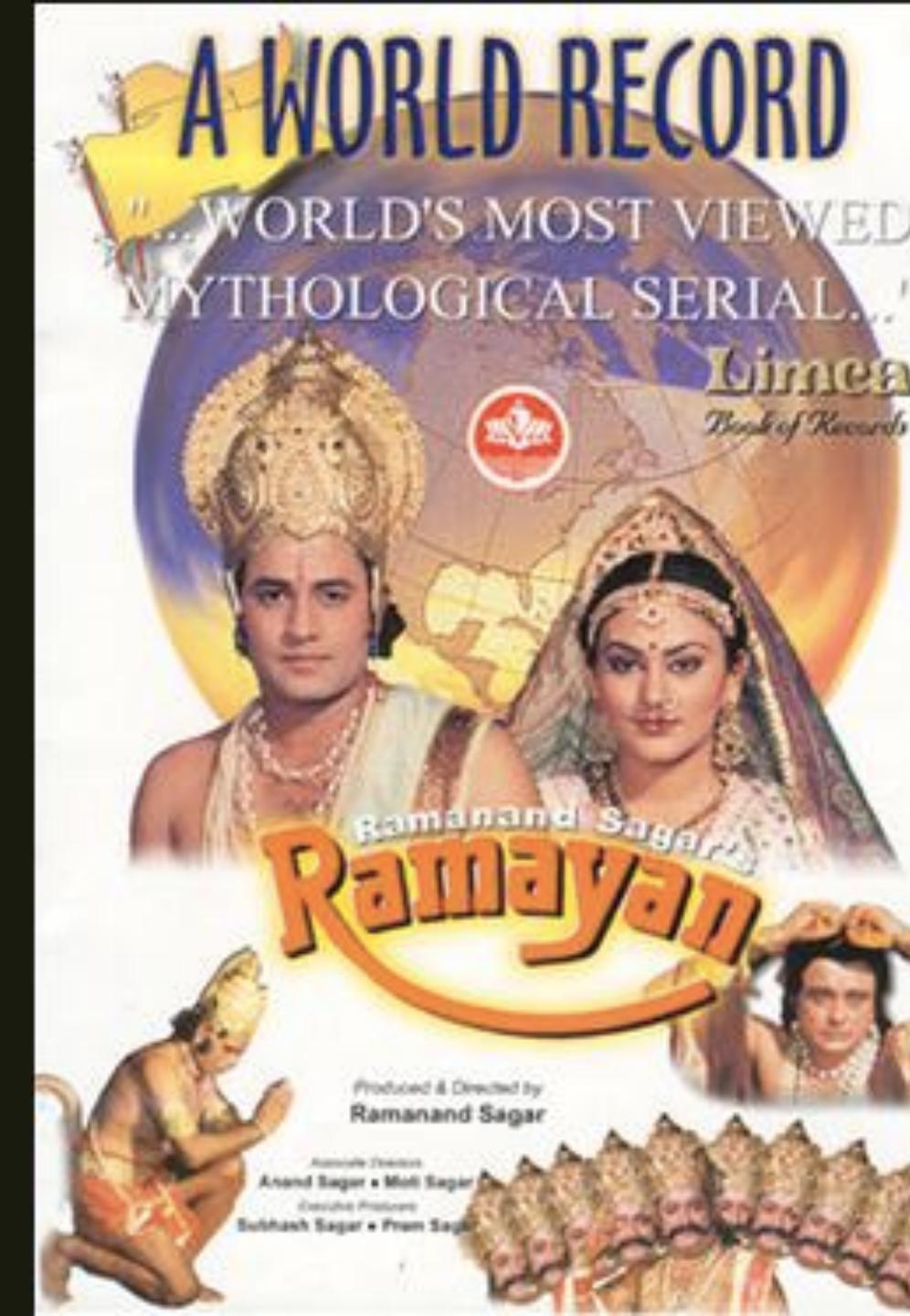
- Kingship
- Rama is presented as the ideal ruler
 - *He obeys his father unconditionally*
 - *He puts the needs of his people ahead of his own*
- Wife/Womanhood
- Sita is the ideal wife and woman
 - *She goes with Rama in exile*
 - *She maintains her purity in Ravana's house*
 - *She undergoes tests to confirm her purity*
 - *She leaves when her presence causes Rama's subjects distress*

Significance

- Reverence for Rama
- Worshipped as a virtuous leader who upholds the dharma, sometimes at great cost to himself (exiling Sita)
- Reverence for Sita
- She is the ideal woman and wife

Modern Import

- *Ramayan* 1987-88
- Television show that tells the story of the Ramayana
- Most watched show in India
- Revived Hindu nationalism
- Broke with India's historical taboo by broadcasting a “religious” epic on a nationally owned TV channel





SITA SINGS THE BLUES

Sita Sings the Blues (2008)

- Modern reimagining by non-Hindu American artist (Nina Paley)
- Focuses on Sita
- Presents her as mistreated by Rama
- Many accolades (and a very beautiful film)
- Negative reaction from right-wing Hindu nationalists who saw it as insulting to Hinduism



- Positive reaction from feminists in India
- Saw film as reclaiming the epic for those excluded by the Rama-centric versions

- <https://feminisminindia.com/2016/11/23/sita-sings-the-blues-film-review/>

Ramayana as Myth

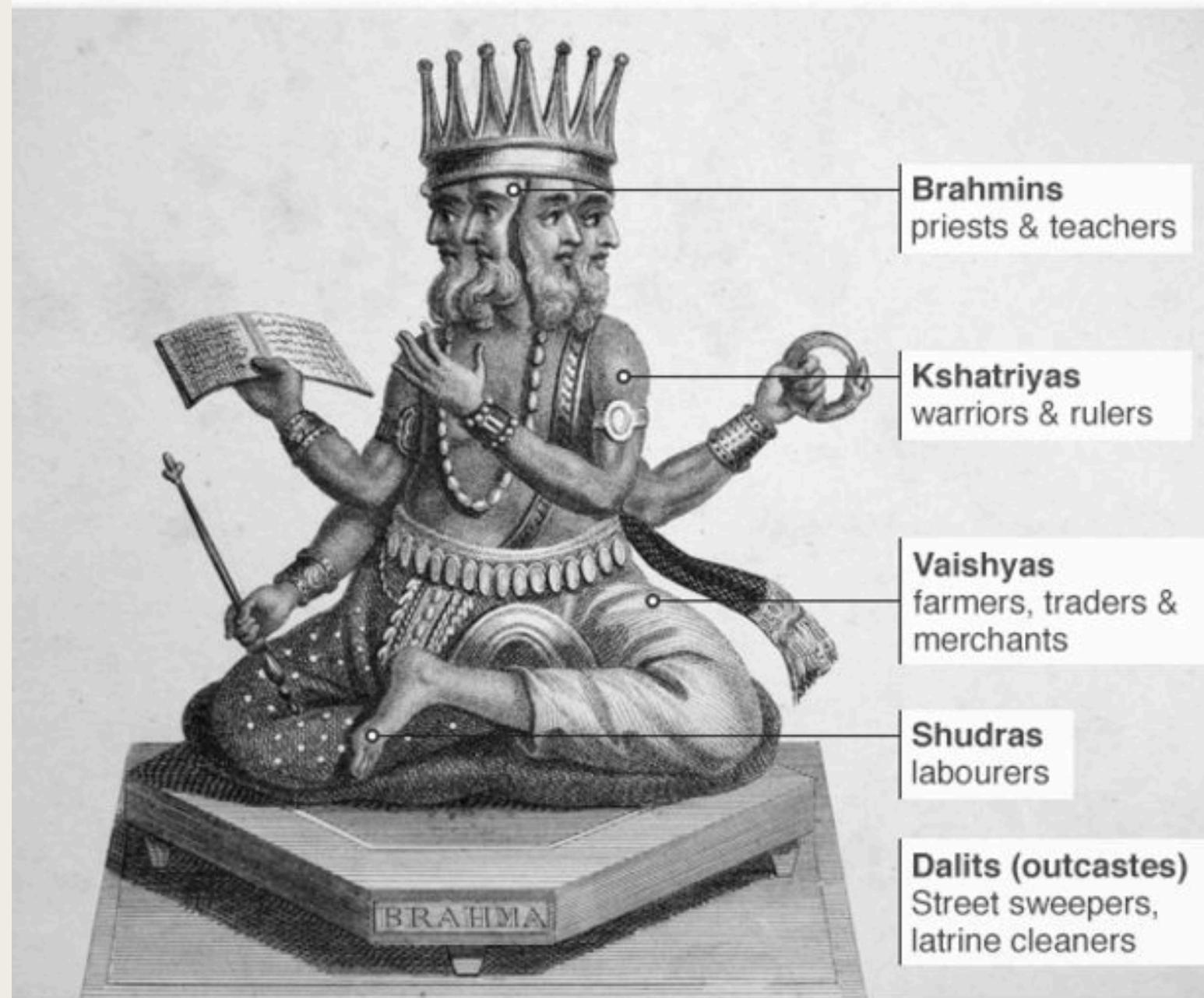
- Influences people's behaviour in the present
 - *Hindu Nationalism supports Ramayan, rejects Sita Sings the Blue*
- Continues to be told and retold
- Takes on new meanings in new times and places

Practices (Rituals)

- Caste System
- Gunas
- Four Goals for Hindus in life

Caste System

Brahma and the origins of caste



Brahmins

- Holders of Knowledge
- Religious ritual specialists
- Required to study and teach
- Make up apr. 4-8% of the population in India (varies region to region)

Kshatriya

- Warrior class
- Duty to protect their subjects
- The King is the head of the Kshatriya caste

Vaishya

- Merchant class
- Includes bankers, farmers, crafts persons, and landowners
- Morally responsible for wealth

Shudra

- Labourers in service to the other castes

Dalit (untouchable)

- A class outside of the twice born upper four
- Believed to be ritually impure, and therefore “untouchable”
- Ghandi renamed them “Harijan” (people of God)
- Apr. 16% of India’s population

Origins of Caste System

- Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas are all mentioned in early Vedic texts
- Shudras are distinguished from Vaishyas in later Vedic texts
- Vedic texts do not mention untouchable people, and Dalits may actually be a colonial category

Colonialism and Caste

- British reinforced caste system with caste-based censuses
- (Re)Enforced caste hierarchy for purpose of governance and colonial control

Modern Hinduism in India

- It is illegal to discriminate based on caste
- Caste-based discrimination is still extremely common