College of Arts & Sciences Program in Religious Studies

REL 3900 - INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM

Credits: 4.00 Fall 2018. Instructor: Dr. Shalini Jayaprakash Online. Course section: Email: jayaprakash@oakland.edu

General Religious Studies Mission Statement:

In keeping with the institutional goal of Oakland University to nurture student success, foster an environment for creative endeavors, and engage with the general public, Religious Studies undertakes the interdisciplinary exploration of world religious traditions, beliefs, and practices to develop critical thinking concerning the role of religion and spirituality in human affairs, and to cultivate cross-cultural competencies among students and the broader community. Through such courses, students should be able to think both empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims, get an introduction to the the history and culture of one major religious tradition, and through religious inquiry and analysis to understand his/her role in society.

General Learning Goals for Religious studies and your Introduction to Hinduism:

Through an interdisciplinary exploration of the Hindu tradition, students will enhance their understanding of the people, doctrines, rituals, institutions, and values historically associated with the Hindu life and thought. Students will sharpen their critical skills and better appreciate the ways Hindus in India and the world over, shape and are shaped by the ever changing culture, politics, technology, and society. Through utilizing an academic approach to the study of religious traditions, cross-cultural competencies and critical thinking skills will be fostered. The course will prepare students to

demonstrate knowledge of the role that a different religious heritage, past and present, plays in forming values in another part of the world, enabling the student to function within a more global context.

REL 3900 examines the Hindu traditions in the context of its historical roots as well as its contemporary relevance in India, the country of its origin. The course includes insights into the sacred texts and writings of Hinduism as well as the different branches of Hindu faiths. Also, this course outlines some of the basic social order created by Hinduism as well as some of the prominent Hindu thoughts, and the complexities of Hindu life. At the same time, we would also look in to how Hinduism continues in India as a vibrant and alive religion even today, along with some of the ways in which it has evolved into a world religion.

Overall, the course endeavors to introduce students to the fundamentals and varieties of Hinduism and its practices, while sharpening both critical reasoning skills and an informed appreciation of the tradition's historical specificity, timelessness, and its nature as one of the oldest religions in the world. Through written assignments, students will also enhance their skills at effective communication.

Learning objectives:

At the end of the course, students will have a rounded understanding of the basic tenets of Hinduism. They will learn about the major religious traditions of contemporary Hinduism in all its aspects with special emphasis on Hindu beliefs, practices, books, and core philosophical and theological tenets.

Course outcomes:

1) Comprehend the terms Hindu and Hinduism. 2) Understand the origins and evolution of Hinduism and its contemporary

significance. 3) Know the key Hindu beliefs, the concept of self, the divine and the process of

revelation. 4) To get introduced to some of the aspects of seeing the divine images in everyday

lives of a Hindu in India and to understand the diversity of its expressions. 5) Become familiar with the origins, scriptures, beliefs, gods, rituals, customs, main

philosophical, ethical and theological teachings of Hindu religion. 6) Understand the key spiritual truths of Hinduism and how these are handed down 7) Become aware of the contemporary situation and influence of Hindu religion in

India and around the world. 8) Understand and appreciate the cultural and religious diversity of Indian society. 9) Look into the future of Hinduism in the changing religious landscape of the US. Required Primary Texts

1. An Introduction to Hinduism by Galvin D Flood 2. Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India by Diana L. Eck 3. The Monkeys and the Mango Tree: Teaching Stories of the Saints and Sadhus

of India

by Harish Johari

4. Movie Viewing: All these movies are mandatory viewingfor this course. 1)Understanding Hinduism Series: Mystic India

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qPQZFSkSeE&t=326s 2)Hinduism: My life, my Religion

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hfhka-OvLSA 3) Hinduism: 330 million Gods

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7OLjwEg5pQ 4)Understanding Hinduism-Common

Questions Answered by Swami Chinmayananda

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFHCCzgDGiQ 5) Altar of Fire

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvvI3bIAgVA 6) Ramayana The Epic- English Movie

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mer0SA5gu9E 7)Mahabharat

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOP3nvxj14A 8)The Bhagawad Gita

http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/gita/watch/9) Puja Expressions of Hindu Devotion

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9LSdqRLIVM 10) Kumbh Mela Documentary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ4aJ5tQQcU

PARTICIPATION AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In order to make the course productive, each student is required to address the readings thoroughly, understand the key ideas and analyze two or three questions or problems the readings raise in the student's mind. All responses should show some prior reflection and should go beyond a mere enumeration of details. In the analysis of the stories, students are to show an emotional engagement with it by applying it to their own lives and the religion or beliefs that they follow.

You have to be prompt in turning in your assignments. You solely are responsible for any classes/assignments you may have missed and are accountable for all coursework deadlines and any information during the semester.

Students are responsible for completing all reading assignments including those found posted on the Moodle website. Moodle postings are provided to focus on the readings. Finishing readings on schedule is critical to the overall success of the class, and to the graded performance of each student. I look forward to you playing an important role in the discussion forum and responding to each other's viewpoints with constructive criticism, and writing out your papers without resorting to plagiarism or deception. Here is a link to a tutorial on the subject of plagiarism found on the Kresge Library website. Take the tutorial and send me a screenshot of the completion page. https://research.library.oakland.edu/sp/subjects/tutorial.php?faq_id=35

PLEASE NOTE: THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED IN ONE OR TWO WEEK BLOCKS. EVERY HW ASSIGNMENT SHOULD BE SUBMITTED ON THE 2ND FRIDAY OF THE BLOCK BY 9.59 PM. FOR EXAMPLE, FOR THE WEEK 2 &3 HW ASSIGNMENT, ALL HW SHOULD BE POSTED BY THE LAST FRIDAY OF WEEK 3 BY 9.59 PM. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ARE ACCEPTABLE, UNLESS CLEARED WITH THE PROFESSOR AHEAD OF TIME.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

To a western eye, Hinduism can be really confusing. Be prepared to be confused. The academic view of Hinduism might be very different from the practitioner's point of view. SO be prepared for such baffling situations and questions.

Gargi, the first woman philosopher of the world and wisdom of the Vedic times kept asking Yajnavalkya, the scholar, questions on the essence of the Brahman, to which Yajnavalkya said: "O Gargi, do not ask too much (improper questions) lest thy head should fall off. Thou askest the Deity about which we are not to ask too much. Do not ask too much, O Gargi." But in this course, you are to ask questions to yourself, to me, to each other, and to your 'self'.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Hinduism Glossary 7x5 = 35 points): 5% Pick up at least 10 terms from each two- week module (starting from week 2 up to the second to last week's readings, videos and discussions (Total 7). Write a definition for each of the terms in your own words. The definition should be clear and intuitive. You can turn one in every second Friday on Moodle. Glossary must be alphabetical and may not use any Internet-based sources. The entire Glossary should incorporate no less than 70 terms. If you complete the assignment you get the full 35 points.

2. Short Writing Responses – $(15 \times 6 = 90 \text{ points})$ 15%

Students will be required to 6 submit short written responses to the assigned readings. Responses are designed to encourage deeper engagement with the key concepts analyzed in the course, to facilitate better in-depth understanding, and to reward students for completing the assigned readings. While these responses may be informal, they are expected to be composed in full, grammatical sentences, to contain at least one question pertaining to the reading, and to run no more than 150 words. These responses will be submitted electronically the second Friday, no later than 9:59 p.m. Late responses will not be accepted.

3. Discussion Boards: (10X5= 50 points) 10%

In this class, online discussions will count towards your grade in the course. The purpose of the discussion board is to frame and promote collaborative learning. Active and regular participation is not only important for me to see, but also important for you in learning the course content and in developing your thoughts and positions on various topics. The three most important rules of the DB are that you should maintain an environment of mutual respect in the virtual classroom while posting. Your participation is essential. It is required on your part to participate in a meaningful and thoughtful way. You will have to participate in all the 5 Discussion Boards. You should comment and respond to other participant's threads. Posting should be a minimum of one short paragraph and a maximum of two paragraphs. Word totals for each post should be in the 100-200 words range. Whether you agree or disagree explain why with supporting evidence and concepts from the readings or a related experience. Include a reference, link, or citation when appropriate.

Points to note:

- Read postings by your classmates with an open mind; think critically about which posts are the most provocative to you.
- When responding, use the student's name and describe the point so that your whole class can follow along. Example: Jessica, you make an interesting point about Hinduism....
- Whether you are asserting agreement or disagreement, provide clear and credible evidence to support your response.
- Avoid using unsupported personal opinions, generalizations, or language that others might find offensive.
- When in disagreement, keep responses respectful and academic in tone.
- Ask open-ended questions, rather than questions that can be answered with yes or no. Those types of answers end the conversation, rather than pushing it forward. Rubrics will be posted.
- 4. 7 short Essays: ($25 \times 7 = 175$ points) 35% Each Essay should be a minimum of two pages. You will have to turn in the rough draft of your essay for a feedback. Dates for submission of both the rough drafts and the final short essays have been specified in the syllabus sections. Rubrics will be posted.

5. Temple visit assignment: 50 points 10%

YOU SHOULD VISIT A HINDU TEMPLE anywhere in the Metro Detroit area. After the visit you will turn in a report on your visit. I will accompany you on your visit. Let me know the specific temple and the day on which you plan to visit and we can plan to meet there. Here is a list of temples in the Metro Detroit area.

https://www.yelp.com/search?cflt=hindu_temples&find_loc=Detroit%2C+MI

AFTER THE TEMPLE VISIT, YOU WILL HAVE TO TURN IN A REPORT GIVING ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. THE COMPLETION OF THIS TASK WILL GIVE YOU FULL POINTS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT. THE IMPORTANT PART IN THIS ASSIGNMENT IS YOUR REFLECTION OF THE WHOLE EVENT FOCUSING ON WHAT YOU TAKE OUT OF THE EXPERIENCE.

Questions to help you discuss your impressions of your visit to the Hindu Temple:

1) What were your expectations before you went to the temple? What do you expect to see? 2) What are some thoughts about going to a new religious place? Do you have any apprehensions or concerns? 3) When you look at the temple what do you see? How do you feel about it? 4) When you go inside, describe what you see? What seems to be the focal point? 5) Are there statues or images of God or gods, a founder or saints? 6) Are there people around? What are they doing? Are they sitting on chairs, cushions? 7) What is the service like? Who leads the service? What do they do? What do the people do? How is it different from what you usually do at worship or expect worship to be? 8) Answer this question at home. How do you feel now that you have been there? What impressions of the religion do you have?

6. Final Research Paper: (100 points X 1 = 100 points) =25%

You may choose any topic on Hinduism. I will be testing your critical, creative and active thinking skills at understanding Hinduism at large. You must be able to explain, develop and elaborate the ideas that you have formed from the reading of course texts and present them in a logical and convincing manner. Feedback will be provided on the rough draft of the essay, after which students are expected to submit a final version taking into account the feedback. This first draft will be the time to raise questions, concerns, clarify, discuss, critically analyze the research question.

Here is a suggestive list of themes:

1. Hinduism and women 2. Hinduism Vs Christianity 3. Hinduism Vs Buddhism 4. Destiny and Hinduism 5. How does the ideal Hindu compare with the ideal follower of other religions? Pick another religion and do the contrast. Consider both actions and attitudes. 6. Gandhi thought of Hinduism as being the "universal religion," one that could include and account for other religions. Was he correct? Would the followers of other religions be satisfied with a Hindu account of their religions? Should they be satisfied with it?

7. Why do we? Explanations of Hindu Rituals 8. Concept of Feminine and Goddess in Hindu Dharma - Why is it unique? 9. Stories of ancient Indian temples like Ayodhya, Mathura, Kashi, Meenakshi,

Guruvayur, Tirupati, Amarnath GRADE BREAKUP

1) 7 Hinduism Glossary: 35 points - 5% 2) 6 Short Writing Responses: 90 points - 15% 3) 5 Discussion Boards: 50 points - 10% 4) 7 short Essays: 175 points - 35% 5) Temple visit assignment: 50 points - 10% 6) Final Research Paper: 100 points - 25%

Rubrics for all assignments will be posted for you on Moodle.

Final grades will be based on the total points earned as follows:

Percentage Earned

Letter Grade 93-100% A 90-92 A- 87-89 B+ 84-86 B 80-83 B- 77-79 C+ 74-76 C 70-73 C- 67-69 D+ 64-66 D Below 64% F

Reference Books: These books are available in Kresge Library

1. Renou, L. (1961). Hinduism. New York: G. Braziller. 2. Doniger, W. (2014). On Hinduism. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 3. Zaehner, R. (1966). Hinduism ([2nd ed.].). Oxford ;: Oxford University Press. 4. Hinduism. (1992). New Delhi: Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Office; Library of

Congress Photoduplication Service. 5. Sundararajan, K. (1969). Hinduism. Patiala: Punjabi University. 6. Gurudasananda, S. (1975). Hinduism. Thanjavur: Gurudasananda. 7. Goshen-Gottstein, A. (n.d.). Same God, Other God: Judaism, Hinduism, and the

Problem of Idolatry. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 8. Kinsley, D. (n.d.). Hinduism, a cultural perspective (pp. xi–164). Retrieved from

http://search.proquest.com/docview/839160047/

9. Eliot, C. (n.d.). Hinduism and Buddhism, An Historical Sketch, Vol. 1. Retrieved from http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/15255 10. Shattuck, C. (2011). Hinduism.

Reference Websites

a. Hindutva:

http://www.hinduweb.org/home/general_sites/sita/sitakasansar/hindutva.ht m b. ISKCON: http://www.iskcon.com/ c. http://iskconeducationalservices.org/HoH/index.htm d. Vedanta Society: http://www.vedanta.org/ e. Hinduism Today: http://www.hinduismtoday.com/ f. Ramakrishna Mission: http://www.ramakrishna.org/ g. Encyclopedia Britannica https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hinduism/The-history-of-Hinduism#toc 8984 h. Ramayana simplified http://www.dlshq.org/books/es44.htm k.

http://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/concepts/kasi.asp l.

https://sites.google.com/a/jpsonline.org/abram-brosseit/chapter-11-world-

war-i/hinduism/hinduism-web-sites A good resource for videos on many topics on Hinduism

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS:

Week 1 NOT GRADED

➤ Write a paragraph on the relationship of your personal journey to this course on Hinduism. Include your background, if any, in studies in religion. Post your paragraph on Moodle. ➤ Watch the video Hinduism: My life, my religion

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hfhka-OvLSA ➤ Post a summary of the video and pose three questions to address. ➤ Go through the syllabus in detail and clarify any doubts, if any.

HW DUE DATE: Friday Sep 12, 2018 by 9.59 pm

Week 2 & 3 1) Flood, Ch 1 Points of Departure pp 5-22 2) Watch two videos:

a) Understanding Hinduism Series: Mystic India https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9l9izo7cds b) Hinduism: 330 million Gods https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7OLjwEg

HW ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE WEEK

1) Writing response (WR) 1: Post the summary of both the videos in 500 words. 2) Discussion Board 1: Comment on the videos a and b. Comment on how the video illustrates the concepts read in the week. Then read the posts of your classmates and comment on one of them, giving a response or observation. 3) WR 2: Personal Reflection: What are the points of departure that Hinduism takes

when you compare it with your own religion/practice? 4) Hinduism Glossary 1

HW DUE DATE: Friday Sept 21, 2018 by 9.59 pm Week 4&5 1) Flood, Ch 2 Ancient Origins 2) Flood, Ch 3 Dharma 3) Johari, Sweeper, 19-24; Merchant, 33-38; Saint and Scorpion, 57-58; Monkeys, 83-85;

Merchant, 87-92

HW ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE WEEK

1) Essay 1: This is an objective essay based off your findings in the origin of

Hinduism. Handout will be posted. 2) WR 3: Relate the concept of Dharma in at least three short stories that you have

read. 3) Hinduism Glossary 2

Rough Draft of Essay 1 due: Sunday, Sept 30, 2018 by 9.59 pm

HW DUE DATE: Friday Oct 5, 2018 by 9.59 pm

Week 6&7 1) Flood, Ch 4 Yoga and Renunciation 2) Johari, Shankara, 41-43; Dhapli Baba, 61-63; Guru & King, 69-73; Difficult Job, 79-84, Merchant who would not, 87-90; Wish-fulfilling cow, 101-107; Narada and the Crazy Saint, 127-132 3) Watch two videos:

a) Understanding Hinduism-Common Questions Answered by Swami

Chinmayananda https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFHCCzgDGiQ b) The Altar of Fire https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvvI3bIAgVA

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE WEEK

1) Essay 2: Analyze the idea of renunciation as a true mark of spiritual life and relate it to the stories you read. 2) WR 4: What were some of the answers you got from the video by Swami

Chinmayananda? 3) Discussion Board 2: a) What did you find confounding about the video? What

questions are left unanswered? b) Provide answers to another student's questions. 4) WR 5: Turn in a Video Response Sheet on the video The Altar of Fire. Handout will

be posted. 5) Hinduism Glossary 3

Rough Draft of Essay 2 due: Sunday, Oct 14, 2018 by 9.59 pm

HW DUE DATE: Friday Oct 19, 2018 by 9.59 pm Week 8 & 9

1) Flood, Ch 5 Narrative Traditions and Early Vaisnavism 2) Flood Ch 6 The Love of Vishnu 3) Read Lord Vishnu's Dashavtar (10 incarnations)

http://www.divyajyot.org/Data/Sites/1/dashavatar.pdf

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE WEEK

1) Essay 3: Part 1 a) Analyze the concept of divine incarnation or avatar.

Part 2 b) Trace the development of Vishnu worship. Base your essay on the two chapters you read. 2) Hinduism Glossary 4

Rough Draft of Essay 3 due: Sunday, Oct 28, 2018 by 9.59 pm

HW DUE DATE: Friday Nov 2, 2018 by 9.59 pm

Week 10&11

- 1) Flood Chp 7 Shaivism and Tantric religion 2) Flood Chp 8 The Goddess and Sakta tradition 3) Johari, Shiva and the Demon, 121-124 4)
- http://www.sanatansociety.org/hindu_gods_and_goddesses/shiva.htm#.V7DmcZgrK
- 00 5) http://www.srimatham.com/uploads/5/5/4/9/5549439/facets_of saivism.pdf ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE WEEK
- 1) Essay 4: Write an essay outlining the duality of the principle of Shiva and Shakti.

Reflect on the concept. Do you agree/disagree? Why? 2) Discussion Board 3: The idea of 'shakti' admits women as vessels of both creative and destructive power. Some feminists and scholars criticize this categorization of women into these binaries, since this has led to the labeling of women as either virtuous or vicious. They feel that as long as women show benevolent qualities of forgiveness, compassion, and tolerance, they are regarded as virtuous. Any transgressions on the part of women are unacceptable in a patriarchal society and considered destructive and disruptive to the very fabric of social structures. However, others argue that the idea of shakti can be used to empower Indian women to resist patriarchy. What would be your take on this? Respond to another student's comments. 3) Post Glossary 5

Rough Draft of Essay 4 due: Sunday, Nov 11, 2018 by 9.59 pm HW DUE DATE: Friday Nov 16, 2018 by 9.59 pm Week 12&13

- 1. Flood Ch 10 Hindu Theology and Philosophy 2. Johari, The Butter in the Milk pp 29-30 3. Ramayana and Mahabharata, The Epics
- a) Story of Ramayana:

https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=anBzb25saW5lLm9yZ3xhYn JhbS1icm9zc2VpdHxneDoyNTUwMjc3ZjY2ZDU1Njgw b) For a brief summary or Essence of Ramayanam Read http://www.dlshq.org/books/es44.htm#bala c) Mahabharat https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOP3nvxj14A d) The Bhagawat Gita: Context and Text:

http://www.pdf-archive.com/2014/10/18/barbara-stoler-miller-the-bhagavad-gita/b arbara-stoler-miller-the-bhagavad-gita.pdf pp 7-20 e) http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/gita/watch/ HW ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE WEEK

1. ESSAY 5: Choose one of the topics. a) Explain the setting of the Bhagavad Gita and the dilemma faced by Arjuna. b) What is Krishna's advice to Arjuna? c) How does the Bhagavad Gita express the central teachings of the Upanishads?

d) What do you think of Krishna's advice to Arjuna and the teachings given? e) To what extent are they relevant today? 2. WR 6: IDEA OF DHARMA IN RAMAYANA BY ANALYZING THE ACTIONS

OF ANY TWO CHARACTERS. HANDOUT WILL BE POSTED. 3. Discussion Board 4: List at least 5 similarities and differences between the two Sanskrit epics The Mahabharata and Ramayana. Which strikes you as more significant, the similarities or the differences and why? Comment on another post. 4. Post Glossary 6

Rough Draft of Essay 5 due: Sunday, Nov 18, 2018 by 9.59 pm

HW DUE DATE: Friday Nov 23, 2018 by 9.59 pm Week 14&15

1. Flood Ch 9 Hindu Rituals 2. Video: Puja Expressions of Hindu Devotion

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9LSdqRLIVM 3. Eck pp 32-58 "The Nature of the Hindu images" 4. Read http://sanskritdocuments.org/articles/Hindu Rituals.pdfpg 1-21

5. Johari, Shiva and the Demon pp 121-124

HW ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE WEEK

1. Essay 6: Choose a topic on Hindu iconography. Please get my consent before you start your work. Some of the questions you could consider are: Eg: Research your deity, answering the following questions: a. Which aspects of life and truth does this deity represent? b. What are some of the stories associated with this deity? c. Are there any special ritual practices associated with this deity? Who worships this deity, and why? d. What are the special physical attributes of this deity (include possessions, mounts, etc.) 2. Discussion Board 5: After reading the document on rituals, answer these questions and give a reason why. Also comment on one another post. a) Which Hindu ritual were you aware of? b) Which Hindu ritual is new to you? Which one is funny/weird? Which one is interesting? Which one would you want to adopt? 3. Temple Assignment: This assignment requires you to visit a Hindu Temple in and around your residence and reflect on your visitation. Questions have been posted in the assignment section of the syllabus. 4. Post Glossary 7

Rough Draft of Essay 6 due: Sunday, Nov 25, 2018 by 9.59 pm

HW DUE DATE: Friday Nov 30, 2018 by 9.59 pm

Week 16

1) Eck pp 59-76 "Image, temple, and pilgrimage" 2) Kumbh Mela Documentary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ4aJ5tQQcU 3) Supplemental reading: Pilgrimage in the Indian Tradition by Agehananda Bharati for discussion http://www.centenary.edu/academics/religion/dotto/rel265/Bharati.pdf

4) Eck pp 77 -85 "Seeing the Divine Image in America" 5) Flood Ch 11 Hinduism and the modern world

HW ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE WEEK

1. Final Research Essay. Details have been given in the assignment section 2. Essay 7: A self-reflection essay - Discuss what you have learned during the class and how it will assist you in achieving further life goals. How has this course altered your world view? Handout will be posted.

Rough Draft of Final Research Essay due: Sunday, Dec 2, 2018 by 9.59 pm

HW DUE DATE: Friday Dec 7, 2018 by 9.59 pm