Aims, scope, methods

This course introduces Hindu traditions and practices. Our strategy is to move between cosmological, theological and philosophical understandings, and the ways these motivate ordinary and extraordinary human lives. We see these understandings expressed through myth and moral teachings, storytelling and poetry, ritual and devotion. Thus our syllabus materials include some classic texts and teachings of ancient Indian civilization and more recent poetry, tales and ethnographic descriptions. Throughout the course we remain interested in contemporary Indian society where Hinduism’s many streams of thought have ongoing significance.

Textbooks

The following five books, all of which are small and slim, contain required readings and are available for purchase at the University bookstore. They have also been placed on 2-hour reserve in Bird library.

Johari, Harish  The Monkeys and the Mango Tree: Teaching Stories of the Saints and Sadhus of India. Inner Traditions.

Other required readings, listed below, should be available through Blackboard on the merged course site: REL/SAS.185.Merged.FALL11.Hinduism 35140.1121c

Gold, A.G. "Practical Hinduism" from Britannica online [electronic resource]  
Gold, A.G. "Showing Miracles in Rajasthan" in Miracle as Conundrum, 85-103.  
Olivelle, Patrick, transl. Upanisads. Oxford University Press. (Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, Chapter 3, pp. 34-52 + notes; Chandogya Upanisad, Chapter 6, pp. 148-156 + notes; Mundaka Upanisad, pp. 266-277 + notes)

Please make a habit of bringing with you to class any given day's syllabus readings.

Success / Requirements

First and above all: KEEP UP WITH THE READINGS! EVERYTHING THAT FOLLOWS DEPENDS ON THIS. Some weeks the readings are very light; others not so light. Please keep in mind that this balances out over the semester.

Second, and almost equally important: Be prepared sometimes to feel confused. As is the case when studying any religion, outsiders may see Hinduism as filled with beauty, but also with things they find difficult to understand; to insiders, these same things may be evidently how the world makes sense. Because the academic study of a religion is very different from participation in a religion, the course may raise different kinds of complicated questions for both insiders and outsiders.

Gargi, possibly Hinduism's earliest female philosopher, probes deeply into the nature of reality. Yajnavalkya admonishes her, "Don't ask too many questions, Gargi, or your head will shatter apart!" In this course, asking questions -- of the instructor, the readings, one another, and oneself -- is encouraged as part of the learning process; a shattered head is a necessary risk, as Gargi knows. Just remember that all answers are bound to be imperfect.

Course requirements intentionally provide a variety of tasks, tapping different kinds of skills. Participation reflects responsibility and thoughtfulness. Response papers -- although handed in and graded -- allow you to write informally what you are thinking about the readings, almost as if you were talking. Essays help you to focus on specific subjects in greater depth and to practice polished writing skills. With quizzes both students and instructor keep tabs on how well specific, limited items of information which are essential to grasp broader course material have been assimilated. All your work is normally based only on required readings, lectures, discussions, and media presentations.

I. Prepared participation (see note that follows)
   faithful attendance
   5 informal 1-2 page response papers (@ 5 points) 25%

A.G. Gold    REL / SAS 185 fall 2011  2
contributions, including at least one
prearranged turn at raising discussion questions
15%

II. Essays
Topic 1 (3-4 pages) 20%
Topic 2 (5-6 pages) 25%
total 40%

III. Quizzes
2 vocabulary and fact quizzes
(1 @ 7 points, 1 @ 8 points) 15%
total 15%

*Extra credit potential 5 % max
Opportunities may arise during the semester to write responses (worth 2 points) to outside events -- lectures, concerts or religious functions -- that enhance your knowledge of Hinduism, or your understanding of Indian culture. These will be announced as they come along. I normally organize an optional field trip to one of the Hindu Temples in Syracuse. Coordinating discussion groups is rewarded with one point.

More about participation
This is a lecture / discussion class. Although certain days are designated discussion (and you should arrive with your thoughts well in order), the 80-minute time-slot allows ample opportunity for questions and comments every meeting.

There are seven dedicated discussion days; on five of these (numbered 2 - 6), we will have student groups leading discussion. Part of your participation requirement is to take at least one turn to prepare questions and bring these to class on one of these days, when you will help to lead class discussion on the assigned materials. There will be advance sign-up sheets for this. Your responsibility is not to summarize or present the readings, but rather to open discussion. You are welcome to use creative strategies (role-playing, reading aloud, debate, focus groups, storytelling, or anything you can think of) to do this. Depending on enrollment, each discussion session should have 7 to 9 students acting as discussion leaders; each group requires one or two volunteers to coordinate tasks.

While 25 participation points are based on written response papers, 15 points are assessed solely on the basis of presence and preparation. Everyone starts with 12 out of 15 (B+). This is maintained through coming to class regularly, and a responsible performance on your discussion leader turn. Better than good attendance, excellence in discussion contributions, or other evident efforts can raise this grade; negligence such as a no-show on your discussion leader turn day will lower it.

Beginning Tuesday, 9/6, Soonki will do her best to keep an accurate written record of student attendance. Each class member is allowed 2 "no fault" unexcused absences. For each additional absence your participation points will drop by 2. It is your responsibility to sign the sheet!
Note: The only excused absences are documented medical and family emergencies; religious holidays by prearrangement (see p. 8 for important additional information); and -- for participants in athletic programs -- prearranged, documented events.

**Important advice:** Students missing class for any reason are themselves responsible for finding out what they missed, turning in their work, and obtaining assignments. Contact instructor or TA by email, check with the Department of Religion secretary in 501 HL, or check Blackboard. After 9/1, all "hand-outs" will be paperless and available as Blackboard "assignments."

**Late work is bad for you and bad for us.** Any written work that is one class late will lose a full letter grade (one point off on the 5-point response papers; 3 points off on the essay). Absolutely no response papers will be accepted beyond one class late. No matter what your accumulated points, you cannot pass this course without completing the required assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic/Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>approaching the study of Hinduism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu 8/30</td>
<td>introductory session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th 9/1</td>
<td>overviews, historical and conceptual</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read: Knott, Preface and Ch. 1</td>
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<td>• hand-out for RP 1 •</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu 9/6</td>
<td>Vedic ritual and its legacies</td>
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<td>Read: Knott, Ch. 2</td>
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<td>videos: selections from <em>Altar of Fire</em> and <em>Tulsidas and the Fire of the Vedas</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Th 9/8</td>
<td>issues of insider/outsider and scholar/devotee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>discussion 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read: hand-out material; Knott, Preface and Ch. 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>•• RP 1 due ••</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sign up for discussion leader, sessions 2-3-4</td>
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<td>• hand-out for RP 2 available on Blackboard •</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**ultimate reality and the self; the aims of moral duty (dharma) and liberation (moksha)**

<p>| <strong>3</strong> | <strong>the end of the Vedas: Upanisadic thought</strong> |
| Tu 9/13 | Read: Knott, Ch. 3; <em>Upanisads</em> (3 selections) access via Blackboard course documents |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</table>
| Th 9/15 | A.  | *Varnashrama dharma* (morality according to caste and life stage) and the four human aims  
Read: Knott, Chs. 4-5, & review pp.16-20; Johari, Saint and Scorpion, 57-58 |
| 4      | Tu   | life, the universe and everything  
*discussion 2 (student-led)*  
Read: review week 3 readings + Johari, The Butter in the Milk, 29-30  
•• RP 2 due •• |
| Th 9/22 | A.  | Introducing deities and their worship  
*video*: Puja (15 minutes);  
*Read*: Grewal, 19-35 *access via Blackboard course documents* |
| 5      | Tu   | Ganesha, and the mythology of Shiva  
Read: Grewal, 35-54; Johari, Shiva and the Demon, 121-124  
*video*: Elephant God (19 minutes)  
• topics for essay 1 available on Blackboard • |
| Th 9/29 | A.  | The Devi as mother, consort and warrior  
Read: Grewal, 57-98 |
| 6      | Tu   | Vishnu and his avatars; introducing *Ramayana*  
Read: Narayan, Introduction & 1-61; review Knott, 38-43 |
| Th 10/6 | A.  | Ram's divine story: adventures, lessons, battles and morals  
Read: Narayan, 62-105  
•• Quiz # 1: 15 minutes •• |
| 7      | Tu   | Ram's divine being: religious, social and performative lives of a text; darshan and durdarshan  
*video* clips from TV *Ramayana* and animated *Ramayana* (about 40 minutes)  
Read: Narayan, finish |
| Th 10/13 | A.  | Mythic characters and human lives  
*discussion 3 (student-led)*  
•• essay 1 due in class •• |
### the Bhagavad Gita's teachings

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tu 10/18</td>
<td>Krishna and the <em>Gita</em></td>
<td>Das, &quot;Central Story&quot; <a href="#">access via Blackboard course documents</a>; <em>Bhagavad Gita</em>, Introduction pp. 1-13; text, pp. 21-61</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• hand-out for RP 3 available on Blackboard •</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• sign up for discussion leader, sessions 5-6 •</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Th 10/20</td>
<td><em>Gita</em> in the <em>Mahabharata</em></td>
<td>instructor absent (attending Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin)</td>
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<td>film: TBA</td>
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<td>Read: <em>Bhagavad Gita</em>, pp. 62-87</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Tu 10/25</td>
<td><em>Gita</em>: meanings, messages, uses</td>
<td><em>Bhagavad Gita</em>, pp. 89-141; Das, &quot;Arjuna's Despair&quot; <a href="#">access via Blackboard course reserves</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>discussion 4 (student-led)</td>
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<td>• RP 3 due •</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Th 10/27</td>
<td><em>What should Arjuna do?</em></td>
<td>review <em>Gita</em>, Das, and Knott, 32-37</td>
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<td>discussion 4 (student-led)</td>
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<td>• RP 3 due •</td>
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**bhakti and sannyasa: devotion and renunciation in the lives of saints and ordinary people**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tu 11/1</td>
<td>devotion to the Lord with and without qualities</td>
<td>Ramanujan, pp. 19-55</td>
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<td>• hand out for RP 4 available on Blackboard •</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Th 11/3</td>
<td>songs of the saints</td>
<td>Ramanujan, pp. 61-90</td>
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<td>DVD: Music in the Ashram (15 minutes)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Tu 11/8</td>
<td><em>sannyasa</em> -- renunciation and its meanings; stories about holy persons</td>
<td>Johari, Sweeper, 19-24; Merchant, 33-38; Shankara, 41-43; Dhapli Baba, 61-63; Guru &amp; 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</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Th 11/10</td>
<td>languages of devotion and expressions of resistance to class and gender hierarchies</td>
<td>Ramanujan, pp. 111-142; Knott, Ch. 7</td>
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<td>• RP 4 due •</td>
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<td>discussion 5 (student-led)</td>
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</table>
elements of practice: rituals, festivals, miracles, pilgrimages

12 Tu 11/15 Introduction to Hinduism in practice
instructor potentially absent (returning from Columbia University)
Read: Gold, "Practical Hinduism" access via Blackboard course
documents
either Gold's lecture on Jahazpur festivals or films with Soonki TBA

Th 11/17 life cycles and life cycle rituals
Read: Gold, "Death . . . " access via Blackboard course documents
• hand-out for RP 5 available on Blackboard

13 THANKSGIVING BREAK! ALL WEEK LONG

14 Tu 11/29 special times: calendrical festivals
Read: Bahadur, Marriott access via Blackboard course documents

Th 12/1 special places: shrines, temples and miracles
Read: Gold, "Showing Miracles"; Dempsey, "Science of the Miraculous"
access via Blackboard course documents
•• Quiz #2 (15 minutes)

15 Tu 12/6 Living religion: Hinduism in practice
discussion 6 (student-led)
•• RP 5 due ••
• topics for essay 2 available on Blackboard

Th 12/08 Virtual Hinduism
discussion 7 Living Hinduism on the world wide web
every student should visit one or more of the suggested web sites and
come to class prepared to talk about what they learned
concluding comments + evaluations + food + your questions on essay 2

There is no exam for REL / SAS 185. On the date of our class's scheduled final exam -- Th Dec. 15 -- your take-home essay 2 is due at noon in 501 Hall of Languages.

Learning Outcomes
In keeping with University-wide concerns to assess learning outcomes in undergraduate courses, the religion department advises all students of the following goals. You will learn:
to understand better what we mean by "religion" and to think more critically about the subject;
to become more aware of a diversity of perspectives within the study of religion;
to know and understand better diverse manifestations of religion within human cultures and
societies, and be able to describe and interpret them.
Your grades in this course, based on written and classroom performance, will reflect your
achievement of these goals, at the broadest level.
IMPORTANT NOTICES REGARDING

FAITH TRADITION OBSERVANCES, DISABILITY, INTEGRITY AND COURTESY:

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

faith tradition observances  SU’s religious observances policy recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through MySlice/Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class. This is the first year in which on-line notification is required! If you need to miss Hinduism class during the fall semester due to a faith tradition observance, please make sure to take care of filing your notification(s) immediately.
http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm

disability  Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see http://disabilityservices.syr.edu

academic integrity  The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. Students in REL/SAS 185 found violating academic integrity in any aspect of their class work will receive the grade F for that assignment. Students have a right to appeal. Please see http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/

academic courtesy  All students are expected to follow simple rules of academic courtesy to fellow students and instructors. Please come to class on time to avoid disrupting the class. Once class begins, you must refrain from personal conversations. You must put away all non-course reading materials (e.g. newspapers). Turn off and put away all cell phones and MP3 players. Refrain from using computers for any non-course related activities. Please avoid premature preparations to leave class; your instructor will let you know when class is over. Eating is not allowed during class. You may be asked to leave the class for the day if you do not follow these rules.