

India's Religious Worlds
Religion 283 / SAS 283 Fall 2016 TTh 2:00 - 3:20 HL 111

Instructor: Ann Grodzins Gold email: aggold@syr.edu
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T.A.: Maria Carson email: mjcarson@syr.edu Office hrs.: M 3:00-5:00 pm in Pages Cafe

Our focus is on the rich diversity of religious experience in modern India's plural, democratic society. We explore intersecting religious worlds of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Christians and others, considering distinctive cosmologies and shared cultures; bounded identities and converging practices.

This course is designated a "critical reflections" course as well as a "writing intensive." Course requirements and class sessions are organized in a fashion designed to fulfill those missions.

Readings

The following books are required readings and are available for purchase at the University Bookstore. They have also been placed on one-day reserve in Bird library:

Hirst, Jacqueline Suthren and John Zavos. 2011. *Religious Traditions in Modern South Asia*

Suri, Manil. 2002. *The Death of Vishnu*

Additional readings available in PDF format on Blackboard; I will try to get these up at least a week before you need them! final selections will be made during the semester:

Cort, John E.. 1995. "The Rite of Veneration of Jina Images" in *Religions of India in Practice*, 326-332. Princeton University Press.

Gold, Ann G. 2013. "Ainn-Bai's *sarvadharm yatra*: A mix of experiences." In *Lines in Water: Religious Boundaries in South Asia*, edited by Eliza Kent and Tazim Kassam, 300-329. Syracuse University Press.

Hansen, Kathryn. 1992. Excerpt from *Grounds for Play: The Nautanki Theatre of North India*. University of California Press.

Metcalf, Barbara, ed. 2009. Selections from *Islam in South Asia in Practice*. Princeton University Press.
Jap-ji, from *Teachings of the Sikh Gurus*, Shackle, Christopher and Arvind Mandair, eds. & transl., 1-19. Routledge.

Taneja, Anand V. 2016. Excerpt from *Jinnealogy: Time, Islam, and Ecological Thought in the Medieval Ruins of Delhi*. Stanford University Press (forthcoming)

Requirements (additional details provided on pp.6-7)

I. Prepared participation including syllabus-based writing assignments

faithful attendance + contributions (10)		
prearranged discussion leader (5)	15	
total of 8 syllabus-based reflection papers (or 7 syllabus based + 1 recommended event based)		
2 (4-page) worth 10 each; 6 (2-page) worth 5 each	50	
		total 65%

II. Guided research paper

topic exposition or rationale plus preliminary source list (2-pages)	5	
rough and partial draft or detailed outline (about 5 pages)	10	
final draft (8-10 pages)	20	
oral presentation	<i>can raise your paper grade</i>	
		total 35%
<i>Extra credit potential</i>	<i>5 max</i>	

Special Events

Our class is ultra-fortunate this semester! Several exciting and rare events relevant to learning about India's cultures and religions will take place at Syracuse University in fall 2016. There will be musical and dramatic performances as well as academic lectures. Sponsors for these events include the South Asia Center, Syracuse Symposium, the Departments of Religion and of Art and Music Histories.

We will have two classroom visitors in association with these events:

Anand Taneja, assistant professor of Religious Studies at Vanderbilt will join us on September 20 to take your questions on his work.

<http://as.vanderbilt.edu/religiousstudies/people/taneja.php>

Devendra Sharma, who will be offering a one-credit course in folk drama, and producing a Nautanki performance, will join us on October 25 to tell you all about it.

http://www.devnautanki.com/artist_devbio.html

I also want to encourage you to go *outside* the classroom to take advantage of opportunities to experience Indian cultural performances! There will be separate handouts to inform you how to respond to outside events in writing -- either in place of a designated assignment, or as extra credit. Stay tuned!

Daily schedule (like all else in this world of flux, subject to change)

Note: Each reading assignment should be completed before our class meeting on the designated date. When only one textbook chapter is assigned for an entire week, *begin* this chapter before Tuesday class and *finish* it before Thursday! All required writings are due on Thursdays; all student-led discussion sessions take place on Thursdays.

Week/Date Topic/Readings

Orientations

1 Tu 8/30 Organizational and introductory session

Th 9/1 History of religious traditions in India: overview through the 12th century
(ancient and classical Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and a visit from St.
Thomas)
Read: "Introducing South Asia . . ." in *Religious Traditions in Modern South Asia*
(hereafter *RT*), 1-10
• hand-out for Reflection #1 •

2 Tu 9/6 Historical overview continued (Islam enters, Sikhism emerges, the British rule,
the Dalit movement turns to Buddhism, Independent India declares itself a
secular state)
Read: "Introducing South Asia . . . ," *RT*, 10-24

Th 9/8 What is pluralism, here and there? why snapshots? why a kaleidoscope?
and other critical reflections
student self-introductions and *discussion*
•• Reflection #1 due in class ••

Explorations

- discussion leader self-enrollment groups ready to form on Blackboard •
- virtual hand-out for syllabus-based reflection papers available on Blackboard •

3 Tu 9/13 Deity
Read: "Deity," *RT*, 27-50

Th 9/15 Deity (continued)
Read: "Deity," *RT*, 27-50; "Jap-ji" Blackboard **pdf**; "Grinding and Spinning Songs"
Blackboard **pdf**
•• Reflection #2 due in class ••

Sun 9/18, 8 pm, Setnor Auditorium

Recommended event: Aditya Prakash and JASS Quartet

Tues 9/20 at 12:30 pm, 341 Eggers

Recommended event: South Asia seminar by Anand Taneja

The Afterlife of Islamic Architecture: Ethics, Ecology, and Other Times . . .

4 Tu 9/20 **Guest in the classroom! Anand Taneja, Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University**
Read: Taneja, Blackboard **pdf**
Everyone will bring 2 questions for the author; write them down; turn them in!

Th 9/22

Texts and their authority

Read: "Texts and their authority," *RT*, 51-71

student led discussion # 1

•• Reflection #3 due in class ••

Tues 9/27 at 12:30 pm, 341 Eggers

Recommended event: South Asia seminar by Naveeda Khan

Bovine Tales of Global Warming

5 Tu 9/27

Myth

Read: "Myth," *RT*, 72-92

• *virtual* handout for research projects •

Th 9/29

Myth (continued)

Read: "Myth," *RT*, 72-92; TBA Blackboard pdf

• initial formation of project groups •

•• Reflection #4 due in class ••

Tues 10/4 at 12:30 pm, 341 Eggers

Recommended event: Seminar: Finding Their Place: Social Change and Merasi Identity

6 Tu 10/4

Ritual, worship, and *music*

Read: "Ritual and worship," *RT*, 93-114; "Shi'i Mourning" Blackboard pdf

Tues. 10/4 at 8 pm, Slocum Auditorium Super Strongly recommended event:

Performance: Merasi Musicians from Desert Rajasthan

Th 10/6

Ritual and worship (continued)

Read: "Ritual and worship," *RT*, 93-114; Cort, "Veneration" Blackboard pdf

student led discussion # 2

•• Reflection #5 due in class ••

Tues 10/11 at 12:30 pm, 341 Eggers

Strongly recommended event: South Asia seminar by Bhrigupati Singh, Brown University
Poverty and the Quest for Life: Somewhere between the Rural and the Urban in South Asia

7 Tu 10/11

Gurus, pirs, and other guides

Read: "Teachers and their traditions," *RT*, 115-138

Th 10/13

Teachers (continued) **plus** share and talk about research topics

Watch: *Music in the Ashram* (15 minutes)

Read: "Teachers and their traditions," *RT*, 115-138

•• research topic due in class ••

Tues 10/18 at 12:30 pm, 341 Eggers

Strongly recommended event: South Asia seminar by Stephen Christopher, Syracuse University
Tribal Cosmos: Gaddi Modernization in Dharamsala

- 8 Tu 10/18 Hierarchy, part 1
 Read: "Caste: social relations, cultural formations," *RT*, 139-156
- Th 10/20 ***Guest in the classroom!*** *Dr. Daniel Heifetz, instructor in Asian American Studies at Syracuse will give a presentation based on his research in India on the Gayatri Parivar, a teacher tradition that engages hierarchy; his talk will be followed by discussion*
 instructor absent, attending Conference on South Asia, Madison WI
 Maria will run the class; students are strongly encouraged to incorporate material from Dr. Heifetz's class into the next reflection paper!

- 9 Tu 10/25 Hierarchy, part 2 and also Drama
 Read: "Confluence of caste and religion," *RT*, 159-171; Hansen, Blackboard pdf
Guest in the classroom! Devendra Sharma will be with us for about 15 minutes to describe the one-credit experience course he is offering on Nautanki Dance-drama

Th 10/27 Hierarchy, (continued)
 Read: "Confluence of caste and religion," *RT*, 159-171
student led discussion # 3
•• Reflection #6 due in class ••

- 10 Tu 11/1 Boundaries
 Read: "Construction of Religious Boundaries," *RT*, 190-209
 Watch: (selections) *Had-Anhad (Bounded-Boundless): Journeys with Ram and Kabir* (2008)

Tues, 11/1 8 pm, Setnor Auditorium Super Strongly recommended event: Nautanki Performance

Th 11/3 Boundaries, continued
 Read: "Construction of Religious Boundaries," *RT*, 190-209
•• Reflection #7 due in class ••

- 11 Tu 11/8 Spaces
 Read: "Public and Private Space," *RT*, 210-228

Th 11/10 Spaces, continued
 Read: "Conflicting Paradigms," *RT*, 229-245; Gold, Blackboard pdf
 Watch: TBA on Ayodhya (20-30 minutes)
student led discussion # 4
•• Reflection #8 due in class ••

imagining Mumbai

- 12 Tu 11/15 City-scapes: neighbors, family . . .
 Read: *Death of Vishnu*, Ch. 1-4, 13-84
 Watch: *Bombay*, begin

Th 11/17 faith . . . romance . . . struggle
Read: *Death of Vishnu*, Ch. 5-7, pp. 85-149. . .
Watch: *Bombay*, continued
••• **DRAFTS** of research projects due •••

13 *THANKSGIVING BREAK! ALL WEEK LONG*

14 Tu 11/29 death . . .
Read: *Death of Vishnu*, Ch. 8-11, 150-224. . .
• drafts returned with comments •

Th 12/1 heaven?
Read: *Death of Vishnu*, Ch. 12-16, 225-295
student led discussion #5
••• Reflection #9 due in class •••

project presentations (final 2 class sessions)

15 Tu 12/6 student project presentations Day 1 + evaluations

Th 12/8 student project presentations Day 2 + Indian snacks
••• **due date for final draft of research paper** •••

More about student responsibilities and requirements

I. Prepared participation and syllabus-based writings

15% of your grade is assessed on the basis of presence and preparation. Your discussion leader turn is 5%; the remaining 10% is assessed on the basis of presence and preparation. Everyone starts with 8 out of 10 (B+). This is maintained through coming to class regularly, complying with classroom courtesy guidelines and maintaining attendance. Better than good attendance, excellence in spontaneous discussion contributions, or other evident efforts can raise this grade, while the opposites can lower it.

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. ***Please come to class prepared to talk about the week's readings and related issues; bring your book.***

There are five *student-led discussion sessions*. Part of your participation requirement is to take one turn to join a small group in preparing questions and helping to lead class discussion on the assigned materials on one of these days. There will be a sign-up process on blackboard around Monday, 9/12; keep in mind that you may not get your first choice.

Discussion leadership will be graded by your classmates on a 5-point scale from which I will calculate the average. Groups are graded collectively (unless it is clear that a particular member has totally failed to contribute).

Each group requires one volunteer coordinator. Coordinators must get the group together at least once before their day and make sure every person in the group knows what to do. I expect each group to keep discussions going for at least 50 of the 80 minute class period. Discussion leaders do **not** summarize or present the readings;

what they *should* seek to do is to formulate questions and strategies to **open discussion**. You are welcome to be creative (role-playing, reading aloud, debate, focus groups, storytelling, or anything you can think of *except Jeopardy and similar games that require nothing but bits of information*).

All five designated student led discussion days are also paper due-dates. Even on their discussion-leader turn date, students are required to turn in papers as well as lead the discussion (the two tasks should be complementary). Each group must also hand in their questions or other notes on preparation, however rough.

Attendance counts, but we are not unreasonable about this. Beginning Thursday, September 8, your TA, Maria, will do her best to keep an accurate written record of student attendance. Each class member is allowed a generous 3 "no fault" unexcused absences. For each **additional** absence participation points will drop by 2. It is your responsibility to sign the sheet!

The only excused absences are documented medical and family emergencies; religious holidays (notify instructor via MySlice; see p. 8 below) and -- for participants in athletic programs -- prearranged documented events. Students missing class for any reason are responsible for finding out what they missed and turning in their work. Contact instructor or TA by email and be sure to check our course Blackboard site for announcements.

In the course of the semester you are required to turn in *eight* syllabus-based writing assignments, due on boxed dates. Six of these are 2-page reflections and two are 4-page essays. On the four yellow, bold, boxed due dates *everyone* must turn in the paper; no flexibility. Among the remaining five azure, non-bold boxed due dates for 2-page reflections, every student may skip *one* paper as they wish. If you write all five, we will drop the lowest grade. An additional handout supplies many crucial details on syllabus-based writings! It will be available by the end of the second week of classes.

Some class time will be devoted, as needed, to writing issues. *Unless you specifically request in writing (by email is fine) that I not do so, I will freely extract sentences or paragraphs from any of your papers for examples of both terrifically good writing and particular problems in composition. Authors' names will **always** be withheld!*

II. Guided research projects

This course follows our main textbook in looking at India's Religious Worlds across boundaries. Student research papers will focus on a selected topic *within* a single named religion.

Detailed guidelines will be provided by 9/27. Papers will be individually written, but students will form into groups in order to give a coherent presentation on a single named tradition or a specific set of practices or concepts appearing across communities. These groups will make presentations during the last week of classes.

Learning Outcomes

In keeping with University-wide concerns to assess learning outcomes, Religion department courses share a set of aims. At the broadest level, your grades in this course, based on written and classroom performance, will reflect successful practices indicative of these achievements. As a 200-level course, REL/SAC 283 is designed to enhance students' abilities to:

examine the degree of religious diversity in the world both historically and today;

appreciate the crucial role that religion has played in the course of human history;

critically and imaginatively analyze the role of religion in human expression, thought, and social institutions both historically and in the present day.

**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. If you need to miss any class session of "India's Religious Worlds" during the fall semester due to a faith tradition observance, ***please make sure to take care of filing your notification(s) immediately.*** For further information, see http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm

disability The mission of the Office of Disability Services (ODS) is to engage the University Community to empower students, enhance equity and provide a platform for innovation and inclusion. 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 Syracuse University's academic integrity policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of academic integrity policy. SU students are required to read an online summary of the university's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice. For more information and the complete policy, 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; for the same reason, please do not leave and return while class is in session. Once class begins, you must refrain from personal conversations. You must put away all non-course reading materials (e.g. newspapers). Normal practice is to turn off and put away all electronic devices unless they are specifically required to access course materials; if that is the case, inform instructor. Please avoid premature preparations to leave class; your instructor will let you know when class is over. You may be asked to leave the class for the day if you do not follow these rules.