Description
This course provides an overview of Hindu traditions. Working more or less chronologically, you will spend the first two thirds of this course reading a wide variety of key Hindu texts at home while we discuss their contexts and meanings in class. During the final third of the course, we will focus on how Hindus have engaged with modernity from a variety of scholarly perspectives and insider accounts. Students will leave this course with an enhanced ability to relate to Hindus they meet in their everyday lives, to think critically about the role of religion in human society, and to communicate their thoughts in writing.

Grading

Essays (50%)
This class will include two essay assignments which will require you to demonstrate your familiarity with the material, your ability to make connections between the various topics we have discussed, and your ability to think analytically about the material. I will distribute prompts with further instructions on the dates listed below. Late essays will be accepted for one week with a full grade level deduction.

- Midterm Essay: 20% of grade, 2-3 pages, assigned 2/26, due 3/5, covers 1/13-2/26
- Final Essay: 30% of grade, 3-4 pages, assigned 4/28, due 5/5, covers 3/3-4/28

Quizzes (20%)
Two short (~20 minute) quizzes will evaluate your knowledge of vocabulary and fundamental concepts through multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions. Make-ups will only be available for students with university sanctioned excuses.

- Quiz 1: 10% of grade, administered on 2/12, covers material from 1/13-2/10
- Quiz 2: 10% of grade, administered on 3/31, covers material from 2/12-3/26

Engagement Assignments (10%)
During twelve unannounced class meetings, normally at the very end of the period, I will ask students to take five minutes to write down their informal reflections about what transpired in class that day. These writing assignments should demonstrate that you are intellectually engaged when you are in class by referencing something that I or one of your classmates said and offering some personal analysis and insight. Students who participated in class that day may opt to simply repeat and expand upon what they have already said. Make-ups are not allowed, but your lowest two scores will be dropped.
Reading Responses (20%)
These six short (100-200 word), informal writing assignments should respond to the reading that is due the same day (e.g., a response that is due on 1/15 should cover the reading that is due on 1/15). You may only focus your reading response on Knott on 1/15. Good reading responses must demonstrate that you have done the reading and comprehend it, but at least half of what you write should be dedicated to offering insightful analysis of what you have read. Submission is by e-mail in the body of the e-mail (not as an attachment) with the subject line “Response [letter+number]” Late responses will not be accepted for credit.

Responses are grouped into A and B tracks, listed along with readings and assignments as response A1, A2, etc. and response B1, B2, etc. At the beginning of the semester, you must join one of two groups, which will determine which responses you should do.

-Group A will focus on philosophical issues, and must write responses for 4 of the 6 dates listed in track A and 2 of the 6 dates listed in track B.
-Group B will focus on literature, and must write responses for 4 of the 6 dates listed in track B and 2 of the 6 dates listed in track A.

Examples: Sītā is a paragon of dharma with an interest in philosophy, so she joins group A promptly after the first class. She writes responses A1, A2, B2, A3, B3, and A5. By getting so much of her work done early in the semester, she gets lots of writing feedback before the midterm essay. On the other hand, the wicked rākṣasa Kumbhakarna was asleep when everyone else was picking groups, so he got stuck being in group B. He was busy eating everyone in sight for the first few weeks of the semester, and wound up having to do responses B3, B4, A5, B5, A6, and B6. He had less time to prepare for finals because he was writing all of his responses so late in the semester.

Readings
The following books are required for the course. They are available at the library and the University Bookstore, but are widely available from other major booksellers as well.


All other required readings are available on Blackboard.

I. Introduction
   1/13
   1/15 -- Knott, 1-11, 109-117; Response A1

II. Vedas and Upaniṣads
   1/22 -- Doniger, Rig Veda 1.1, 8.14, 8.48, 10.90 and 10.129; Knott, 12-25; Response B1
   1/27 -- Olivelle, BU 3, 4.5 and CU 6; Knott, 26-31
   1/29 -- Olivelle, KaU 1-3, MuU; Response A2
III. *Itihāsa (Epics)*
2/3 -- Prime, Rāmāyaṇa Bks 1-2; Knott, 40-46
2/5 -- Prime, Rāmāyaṇa Bks 3-4; Response B2
2/10 -- Prime, Rāmāyaṇa Bks 5-7

IV. *Bhagavad Gītā*
2/12 -- Miller, BG 1-5; Knott, 34-39; Quiz 1
2/17 -- Miller, BG Ch 6-18; Response A3

V. *Purāṇas*
2/19 -- Venkatesananda, BhP pp. 50-52, 169-178, 190-210, and 225-227; Knott, 47-48
2/24 -- Venkatesananda, Bhāgavata Purāṇa pgs. 235-281; Response B3
2/26 -- Venkatesananda, Bhāgavata Purāṇa pgs. 281-336; Essay 1 assigned

VI. *Vedānta, Yoga, and other Philosophical Schools*
3/3 -- Mayeda, Upadeśasāhasrī 2.1; Knott, 31-34, 118; Response A4
3/5 -- Miller, Yoga Sūtras pp.29-32 and 51-63; Essay 1 due
Spring Break

VII. *Bhakti*
3/17 -- Prentiss, 97-100; Ramanujan, selections
3/19 -- Hess and Singh, selections; Hawley and Juergensmeyer, 32; Response B4
3/24 -- Ramanujan et al., selections; Hawley and Juergensmeyer, 134-140, 162-173

VIII. *Colonial India*
3/26 -- Desai, 125-134; Knott, 67-79; response A5
3/31 -- Urban, 169-189; Quiz 2

IX. *Popular Piety*
4/2 -- Gold, 85-101; Knott, 50-66
4/7 -- Bahadur, 91-98 and Marriott, 99-111; Response B5
4/9 -- Sikand, 21-34

X. *Hinduism and Identity Politics*
4/14 -- Banerjee, 10-16; Knott, 80-93
4/16 -- Ilaiah, 20-35; Response A6

XI. *Global Hinduism*
4/21 -- Williamson, 147-164; Knott, 94-105
4/23 -- Hawley, 112-134; Response B6
4/28 -- Virtual Hinduism (various websites); Essay 2 assigned

5/5 -- Essay 2 due
Policies

Technology
Students who wish to use laptops, tablets, or other related devices must first seek my permission. I will require evidence that you can use technology responsibly. I reserve the right to revoke this permission at any time if I feel you are using your device inappropriately.

Courtesy
Students should arrive on time, refrain from side conversations during class, and use technology appropriately and only with my expressed permission. Additionally, because we will be discussing sensitive subjects in this course, it is imperative that we treat the beliefs and opinions of others with respect, even when we are expressing disagreement. Students who are habitually discourteous in these ways will have their final grades lowered. If you anticipate that your schedule will frequently make you late, (e.g. from back-to-back classes) please notify me so that I can try to accommodate you.

Academic Integrity
Syracuse University’s 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 course-specific expectations, as well as about university policy. 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 offense by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of Academic Integrity Policy. The standard sanction for a first offense by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. For more information and the complete policy, see http://academicintegrity.syr.edu

Disability-Related Accommodations
If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), http://disabilityservices.syr.edu, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Religious Observances Policy
SU religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays 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 are 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/StudentServices/Enrollment/MyReligiousObservances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.