

## HINDUISM

REL / SAS 185 Fall 2017  
TuTh 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM HL 202

Instructor: Ann Grodzins Gold office: HL 507 voice mail: x-5717; dept.: x-3861  
email: aggold@syr.edu office hrs.: Th 12:30 – 1:30 or by appointment

T.A.: Aarti Patel email: apatel10@syr.edu  
office: HL 514 office hrs.: Tu 1 – 2 pm

### 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 such understandings expressed through myth and moral teachings, storytelling and poetry, ritual and devotion. Our syllabus materials include classic texts and teachings of ancient Indian civilization as well as devotional poetry, stories, and ethnographic descriptions. Throughout the course we remain interested in contemporary Indian society where Hinduism's many streams of thought have ongoing, everyday significance.

### Required Readings

The following four books contain required readings and are available for purchase at the University bookstore. They have also been placed on reserve in Bird library.

Flueckiger, Joyce B. 2015. *Everyday Hinduism*. Wiley Blackwell.

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

Miller, Barbara Stoller, transl. *The Bhagavad Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*. Bantam. Prime, Ranchor. *Ramayana: A Tale of Gods and Demons*. Mandala Classics.

Other required readings, listed below, will be made available through Blackboard under "Content" in the folder "Required Readings PDFs" on the *merged* course site for: REL/SAS.185.Merged.FALL17.Hinduism (13380.1181m). These are marked "PDF" on the syllabus.

Das, Gurcharan. "Arjuna's Despair": "There are no victors in war" from *The Difficulty of Being Good: On the Subtle Art of Dharma*, 88-116; also pp. xvi-xxviii (central story, cast of characters, genealogical table). Penguin.

Dempsey, Corinne. "The Science of the Miraculous at an Upstate New York Temple" in *Miracle as Modern Conundrum in South Asian Religious Traditions*, edited by Corinne Dempsey and Selva Raj, 119-138. State University of New York Press.

Gold, A.G. "Death at a Ripe Old Age" and "the Ganges Pilgrimage from Rajasthan" from *Fruitful Journeys*, 79-99 and 202-213. University of California Press.

Gold, A.G. "Showing Miracles in Rajasthan" in *Miracle as Modern Conundrum*, 85-103.

Kabir and Mirabai, Selections from Hess and Singh, transl. *The Bijak of Kabir*, plus selections from Hawley and Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India*. Oxford University Press.

Myths. 3 selections in separate PDFs from Grewal, *Book of Gahesha* [retelling from variety of sources]; "Churning," "Parvati," & "Devi" in one file [exact translations from Sanskrit sources]; Patil, "Amrit" ("Nectar") from *Adi Parva* [creative, illustrated retelling]

Olivelle, Patrick, transl. *Upanisads*. Oxford University Press. (*Brihadaranyaka Upanisad*, Chapter 3, pp. 34-52 + notes; *Chandogya Upanisad*, Chapter 6, pp. 148-156 + notes

Patton, Laurie L. 2004. "Veda and Upaniṣad" in *The Hindu World*, 37-51. Routledge.

Ramanujan, A.K., transl. Selections from *Speaking of Siva*.

**Success / Requirements** (you will find more useful details on p. 6)

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. This balances out over the semester.

Second: **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 will often 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 fearless Gargi knows. Moreover, 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. (Note: "informal" does not mean you may ignore spelling and grammar!) *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 mastered. All your work is normally based *only* on required readings, lectures, discussions, and media presentations.

**I. Prepared participation**

faithful attendance		
5 informal 1-2 page response papers(@ 5 points)	25%	
contributions		
one prearranged turn at raising discussion questions	5%	
presence and participation	10%	
		total 40%

**II. Essays**

Topic 1 (3-4 pages)	20%	
Topic 2 (4-5 pages)	25%	
		total 45%

**III. Quizzes**

3 vocabulary and concept quizzes (@ 5 points)	15%	
		total 15%

*\*Extra credit potential* **5 points max**

Opportunities *will* arise during the semester to write responses (worth two points) to outside events -- lectures, concerts or other cultural functions that enhance your knowledge of Hinduism, or your understanding of South Asian culture. These will be announced as they come along, in class and on our Blackboard front page. Coordinating a discussion group is rewarded with *one* extra credit point.

## Daily schedule

Note: Each reading assignment should be completed *before* our class meeting on the designated date. A few Hindu festivals are noted on the schedule for your information; these may or may not come into our classroom discussions.

<u>Week/Date</u>	<u>Topic/Readings</u>
	<i>Aug 25 Ganesh Chaturthi</i>
	<i>approaching the study of Hinduism</i>
1	Tu 8/29      introductory session
	Th 8/31      overviews, historical and conceptual <u>Read:</u> Flueckiger, "Introduction," pp. 1-12 • hand-out for RP 1 •
2	Tu 9/5      Vedic cosmology and ritual, ancient and contemporary <u>Read:</u> Patton, "Veda and Upaniṣad" <b>PDF</b> ; <i>Bhr. Upanisad</i> <b>PDF</b> <u>watch:</u> selections from <i>Altar of Fire</i> and other film clips
	Th 9/7      issues of insider/outsider <i>self-introductions combined with discussion</i> •• RP 1 due •• • <b>discussion leader self-enrollment groups ready to form on Blackboard</b> • • hand-out for RP 2 available on Blackboard •
	<i>ultimate reality and the self; the aims of moral duty (dharma) and liberation (moksha)</i>
3	Tu 9/12      the end of the Vedas: Upanisadic thought <u>Read:</u> <i>Chandogya Upanisad</i> (selections) <b>PDF</b> ; Johari, <i>The Butter in the Milk</i> , pp. 29-30
	Th 9/14 <i>Varnashrama dharma</i> (morality according to caste and life stage) and the four human aims <u>Read:</u> Flueckiger, "A note on Caste," 13-17; Johari, <i>Sweeper</i> , 19-24; <i>Saint and Scorpion</i> , 57-58; <i>Monkeys</i> , 83-85; <i>Merchant</i> , 87-92
4	Tu 9/19      butter, honey and dharma <i>student-led discussion 1</i> •• RP 2 due ••
	<i>families of deities</i>
	<i>Sept. 21 fall Navaratri begins</i>
	Th 9/21      •• <b>Quiz # 1 distributed at 11 am: 15 minutes</b> •• introducing deities and their worship <u>watch:</u> <i>Puja</i> (15 minutes) <u>Read:</u> Flueckiger, Ch. 1, pp. 18-45

- 5 Tu 9/26 Shiva, and Ganesha  
Read: Flueckiger, Ch. 1, pp. 18-45 & Ganesha **PDF** (in Myths folder)  
watch: Elephant God (19 minutes)  
• topics for essay 1 available on Blackboard •
- Th 9/28 Devi in her many forms; Vishnu and his avatars  
Read: Amrit **PDF** & Churning, Parvati, Devi **PDF** (in Myths folder)
- Sept 29 fall Navaratri ends  
Sept 30 Dashera*
- teachings embedded in narratives*
- 6 Tu 10/3 Ram's divine story: adventures, lessons, battles and morals  
Read: Flueckiger, Ch. 2, 46-72; Prime, Introduction, viii-xviii & 1-52
- Th 10/5 Ram's divine being: religious, social and performative lives of a text;  
darshan and durdarshan  
watch: clips from TV *Ramayana*  
Read: Prime, finish (54-97)
- 7 Tu 10/10 Myth and life  
*student-led discussion 2*  
•• essay 1 due in class ••
- Th 10/12 Krishna divine childhood and charioteer; *Gita* in the *Mahabharata*  
Read: Das, "Central Story," cast of characters, genealogical table) **PDF**;  
*Bhagavad Gita*, Introduction pp. 1-13; text, pp. 21-61  
• hand-out for RP 3 available on Blackboard •
- 8 Tu 10/17 •• *Quiz # 2 distributed at 11 am: 15 minutes* ••  
*Gita*: meanings, messages, uses  
Read: *Bhagavad Gita*, pp. 62-87; Das, "Arjuna's Despair" **PDF**
- Oct 19 Divali**
- Th 10/19 *Gita*: interpreting and envisioning revelation  
Read: *Bhagavad Gita*, pp. 89-141
- 9 Tu 10/24 *What should Arjuna do?*  
*student-led discussion 3*  
•• RP 3 due ••
- Th 10/26 *instructor attending Conference on South Asia (Madison WI)*  
*Aarti will show one or more films; attendance will be taken as usual*
- devotion and worship; interior and exterior*
- 10 Tu 10/31 *bhakti*: introduction to devotion  
Read: Flueckiger, Ch. 3, 73-99  
• hand out for RP 4 available on Blackboard •

- Th 11/2      worship; ritual action and its meanings  
Read: Flueckiger, Ch. 3, 73-99  
 Guest presentation by Aarti Patel, PhD student, Department of Religion  
 on women's domestic rituals in the USA
- 11      Tu 11/7      devotional expressions resist social and gender hierarchies  
Read: Kabir and Mira, **PDF**; Ramanujan, transl. **PDF**
- Th 11/9      Devotion, inward and outward  
*DISCUSS & add either cyber puja or renunciation*  
Read: Kabir and Mira, **PDF**; Ramanujan, transl. **PDF**  
*student-led discussion 4*  
 •• RP 4 due ••
- 12      Tu 11/14      special places and miraculous events  
Read: Flueckiger, Ch. 4, 97-122; Gold, "Showing Miracles" **PDF**;  
 Dempsey, "Science of the Miraculous" **PDF**
- Th 11/16      calendrical festivals  
 Read: Flueckiger, Ch. 5, 123-144  
 • hand-out for RP 5 available on Blackboard •
- 13      *THANKSGIVING BREAK! ALL WEEK LONG*
- 14      Tu 11/28      women's vows  
Read: Flueckiger, Ch. 6, 145-168
- Th 11/30      •• Quiz # 3 distributed at 11 am: 15 minutes ••  
*samskaras* (life cycle rituals) astrology and healing  
Read: Flueckiger, Ch. 7 & 8, 169-192 & 193-219; Gold, "Death . . ." **PDF**
- 15      Tu 12/5      practical Hinduism  
Review: Flueckiger, Chs. 4-7; Gold, Miracles; Gold, Death; Dempsey  
*student-led discussion 5*  
 •• RP 5 due ••
- Th 12/7      concluding comments + evaluations + food  
 • topics for essay 2 available on Blackboard •

**Thursday December 14 at 5 pm: take home essay 2 is due electronically**

### ***More about participation and other important things!***

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 six dedicated discussion days; on five of these (numbered 1 - 5), we will have student groups leading discussion. Part of your participation requirement is to take 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 self-enrollment groups on Blackboard to organize this. Each group has one or two coordinators, who 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 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).

40 prepared participation points are based on 5 written response papers, 5 on your discussion leader turn; the remaining 10 are assessed solely 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.

Beginning on Thursday, 9/7, Aarti 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. 7 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, obtaining assignments and submitting their work. Contact instructor or TA by email and always check Blackboard. **After the first one, all "hand-outs" will be paperless only and available in the "Assignments" folder on our Blackboard site.**

Quizzes **cannot** be rescheduled; plan to be in class when they are administered. **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 response papers; 3 points off essays). **Absolutely no** written work will be accepted beyond one class late. *No matter what your accumulated points, you cannot pass this course without completing the required assignments.*

We do accept papers by email if a student is absent on a due date or has printer issues, etc. However: please follow these rules: a) 3 permissible formats: doc, docx or pdf; b) **name your file** with your last name and the assignment number: e.g. smith.rp3; c) look for a "got it" message from your instructor or TA -- **never assume** an emailed paper has been received!

*In recognition of the general difficulty and complexity of college life, each student will be issued a paper chit (an English word originating in India) worth 3 points. This may be used for a passing grade in place of any **one** quiz or of response papers 2 - 5 (not RP 1). At the end of the semester -- only if you have **taken every quiz and turned in every paper** -- an unused chit will count for **3** extra credit points. You cannot use your chit for essay 1, essay 2, or your discussion leader turn.*

It is often difficult to explain the difference between papers that receive grades of A, A-, B+, B. Therefore my practice is to scan selected successful papers, and make them available on Blackboard. **All names will always be removed!** Unless you specifically request in writing (email is fine) that we **not** do so, we will assume it is OK to post any of your papers or quiz answers as samples of A, A- or B+ work.

### *Learning Outcomes*

In keeping with University-wide concerns to assess learning outcomes, Religion department courses share a set of aims. As a 100-level course, REL/SAC 185 is designed to lead students towards the following abilities:

- to examine the degree of religious diversity in the world both historically and today;
- to appreciate the crucial role that religion has played in the course of human history;
- to critically and imaginatively analyze the role of religion in human expression, thought, and social institutions both historically and in the present day.

At the broadest level, your grades in this course, based on written and classroom performance, will reflect successful practices indicative of these developing abilities.

### **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 "Hinduism" 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](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://class.syr.edu/academic-integrity/>

*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 (and marked absent).