

India's Religious Worlds

Religion 283 / SAS 283 Fall 2009 TTh 11:00 - 12:20 HL 105

Instructor: Ann Grodzins Gold email: aggold@syr.edu
Office hrs.: Tu 4-5 pm or by appointment HL 507 tel: x-5717 / 3861

T.A.: Jill Petersen Adams email: jpadam02@syr.edu
Office hrs.: Th 2-3 pm HL 514

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, Buddhists 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 contain required readings and are available for purchase at both the Orange and the University bookstores. They have also been placed on 24-hour reserve in Bird library:

Mittal, Sushil and Gene Thursby, ed. 2006. *Religions of South Asia: An Introduction*.
Routledge

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

Additional required and recommended readings, listed below, will be available through our Blackboard course web site; log on at <http://bbprod.syr.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp> and go to REL/SAS.merged.FALL09.India's Religious Worlds.

On the syllabus these additional readings are identified either as *bbDOC* for "Blackboard Course Documents" or as *bbCR* for "Blackboard Course Reserves." Documents are accessible from the opening page, but to reach Course Reserves you need to use the "Tools" menu.

Cozort, Daniel. 1995. *The Sand Mandala of Vajrabhairava* (selected sections). Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.

Gold, Ann Grodzins. 2003. "Pilgrimage" in *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Peter J. Claus, Sarah Diamond and Margaret Mills, 475-478. New York: Routledge.

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

Gold, Daniel. 2005. The Sufi Shrines of Gwalior City. *Journal of Asian Studies* 64 (1):127-150.

- Hasan, Mushirul and M. Asaduddin, eds. 2000. Chughtai's "Sacred Duty," Amarkant's "The City of Death" and Singh's "The Infidel Parrot" in *Image and Representation*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Heehs, Peter, ed. "Indo-Persian Sufism," from *Indian Religions: A Historical Reader of Spiritual Expression and Experience*. New York: New York University Press.
- Henderson, Carol and Maxine Weisgrau, eds. 2007. Part 3: "Tourism and Spiritual Spaces," pp. 161-201 (chapters by Cort and by Sanyal) from *Raj Rhapsodies: Tourism, Heritage and the Seduction of History*. Ashgate.
- Kelting, M. Whitney. 2009. Candanbala's hair: Fasting, beauty, and the materialization of Jain wives. *Religion* 39 (2009) 1–10
- Madan, T. N. 2003 "Religions of India: Plurality and Pluralism" in *The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 775- 801. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- McLeod, Hew. 1995. "Sikh Hymns to the Divine Name," 126-132 and "The Order for Khalsa Initiation," 321-325, in *Religions of India in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Princeton University Press.
- Moon, Vasant. 2001. Ch 6 "Religious Hymns" 39-45; Ch 18 "Cultural Transformation" 107-117; Ch 20, "The Welfare of the World" 124-156 from *Growing up Untouchable in India: A Dalit Autobiography*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Premchand. "Idgah" ("Festival of Eid," also published in English as "A Toy for Hamid"), translated by Kushwant Singh.
- Richman, Paula. "Tamil Songs to God as Child," 209-224 in *Religions of India in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Princeton University Press.
- Shackle, Christopher and Arvind-pal Singh Mandair, eds. and transl. 2005. "Japji," 1-19 and "Guru as Word," 103-113 from *Teachings of the Sikh gurus: Selections from the Sikh Scriptures*. Routledge.
- Srinivas, Smriti. 2001. "The Advent of the Avatar: The Urban Following of Sathya Sai Baba and its Construction of Tradition," pp. 293-309 in *Charisma and Canon: Essays on the Religious History of the Indian Subcontinent*, eds. Vasudha Dalmia, Angelika Malinar and Martin Christof. Oxford University Press.
- Stewart, Tony K., transl. 2004. "The Wazir's Daughter Who Married a Sacrificial Goat," pp. 29-50 and "The Princess Who Nursed Her Own Husband," pp. 195-233, from *Fabulous Females and Peerless Pirs: Tales of Mad Adventure in Old Bengal*. Oxford University Press.
- Vallely, Anne. 2006. "These Hands are not for Henna," in *Women's Renunciation in South Asia*, eds. Meena Khandelwal, Sondra Hausner and Ann G. Gold, 223-246. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zelliot, Eleanor. 1992. "Buddhist Sects in Contemporary India," pp. 235-248, from *From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*. Delhi: Manohar.

Requirements (see syllabus pp. 7-8 for additional details)

I. Prepared participation including syllabus-based writing assignments

faithful attendance + contributions, prearranged and spontaneous	21	
4 shorter (2 page) response papers (@ 5 points)	20	
2 longer (4-5 page) essays (@ 12 points)	24	
		total 65%

II. Research projects

topic statement plus bibliography (about 2 pages)	5	
rough and partial draft or detailed outline (about 5 pages)	10	
final draft (about 10 pages)	20	
oral presentation	<i>can raise your grade</i>	
		total 35%

Extra credit potential opportunities TBA 5 points max

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

Notes:

Each reading assignment should be completed in time for our class meeting on the date designated.

•*Single bullets*• indicate items the instructor vows to upload to Blackboard Assignments before class meets on that date.

•••*Triple bullets*••• indicate items students are required to submit on paper in class on that date.

Week/Date Topic/Readings

introductory orientations:

historical, demographic, geographic, cultural, social, theological (2 weeks)

- | | | |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | Tu 9/1 | Organizational and introductory session |
| | Th 9/3 | History of religious traditions in India: overview through the 12th century (ancient and classical Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, and a visit from St. Thomas)
<u>Read:</u> Mittal and Thursby, "Introduction," 1-11
• guidelines for syllabus-based writing assignments • |
| 2 | Tu 9/8 | Historical overview continued (Islam enters, Sikhism emerges, the British rule, the Dalit movement turns to Buddhism, Independent India declares itself a secular state)
<u>Read:</u> Richman, "Tamil songs to God as a child" bbCR; Madan, bbCR, begin |

Th 9/10 Pluralism and its meanings: critical reflections
Read: Madan, "Religions of India: Plurality and Pluralism" bbCR
student self-introductions and *discussion*
••• paper #1 (2-page response) due •••

*exploring everyday and extraordinary plural worlds:
gurus and pirs; pilgrimage and festivals; cosmic diagrams and urban landscapes (2 weeks)*

3 Tu 9/15 **guest lecture**: Angela Rudert, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Religion, Syracuse will speak about her research on a female guru, Anandmurti Gurumaa, who embraces multiple religious visions
Read: Srinivas, "Advent of the Avatar" bbDOC

Th 9/17 pilgrimage and festivals
Read: Gold, "Ainn Bai's Sarvadharm Yatra" bbDOC; Premchand, "Idgah" bbDOC; Gold, "Pilgrimage" bbCR
Note that Monday September 21 is holiday Eid-ul-Fitr recognized at Syracuse.
• sign-up for student-led discussion sessions •

4 Tu 9/22 introduction to Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, the Tibetan diaspora in India, *mandalas*
Read: M & T, "Bauddha Dhamma," 103-121; Cozort, "Sand Mandala" bbDOC; hand-out from *Sacred Games*
From 9 am today Tibetan monks will be creating a mandala in the Eggers Commons. Around 11:55 we will walk there together to observe this at its early stages.

Highly recommended: stop by again later in the week to see a more complete mandala. You are also invited to join the procession on Sept. 25th when the sands used to make the mandala will be carried to a nearby body of water to be submerged.

Th 9/24 the plural cityscape; multiple religious worlds; lines in water?
Read: Gold, D., "Sufi Shrines" bbDOC
••• paper #2 (4-5 page essay) due •••
student led discussion # 1

cosmology, society and practice in India's religious worlds (5 weeks)

5 Tu 9/29 Hinduism cosmology & society
Read: M & T, "Hindu Dharma," 15-50 (50-57 on philosophies is optional)
• handout for research projects •

Th 10/01 Hinduism ritual practice
Read: M & T, "Hindu Dharma," 57-84
DVD Living Above Hippopotamus Street: Religion and Community
(35 minutes)
• initial formation of project groups •

Recommended event: Place / No Place: Spatial Aspects of Urban Asian Religiosity

Schedule of events at <http://mellonplaceconf.syr.edu/index.htm>

For South Asian religions see especially presentations by N. Ali, A.G. Gold, D. Gold, M. Lohokare, S. Srinivas, J. Waghorne

6 Tu 10/6 Jainism: cosmology and society
Read: M & T, "Jaina Dharma," 87-101
video: The Frontiers of Peace: Jainism in India (40 minutes)

Th 10/8 Jainism: ritual and renunciation in contemporary Jain society
Read: Valley, "These Hands are not for Henna" bbCR; Kelting, "Candanbala's Hair" bbDOC
••• paper #3 (2-page response) due •••
student led discussion # 2

7 Tu 10/13 Islam cosmology and society
Read: M & T, "Indian Muslim Tradition," 201-227

Th 10/15 Islam in India: Sufism; vernacular and lived Islam
Read: M & T, "Indian Muslim Tradition," 227-245 **and** Hasan & Asaduddin, eds.
bbCR: *each student should select one of the three stories*; Heehs, "Indo-Persian Sufism" bbDOC
••• research topic due •••

8 Tu 10/20 Sikhism cosmology & society
Read: M & T, "Sikh Dharam," 131-148; Shackle and Mandair bbDOC

Th 10/22 Sikhism ritual practice
Read: McLeod, "Sikh Hymns" and "Order for Khalsa initiation" bbCR
Video: Sikhism: The Golden Temple (15 minutes)

9 Tu 10/27 Islam and Sikhism
••• paper # 4 (4-5 page essay) due •••
student led discussion # 3

Th 10/29 Parsis, Jews and Christians
Read: M & T, "Indian Zoroastrian Tradition"; "Indian Judaic Tradition" 151-184;
"Indian Christian Tradition," 151-200

regional religious worlds:
ritual and gender hierarchies, imagination & miracles (1 ½ weeks)

- 10 Tu 11/3 Ambedkar and Buddhism in 20th-21st century Maharashtra
Read: Moon, "Cultural Transformation"; Zelliott, "Buddhist Sects" bbCR
- Th 11/5 Satya Pir in 18th-19th century Bengal
Read: Stewart, *Fabulous Females* . . . choose **one** of two tales bbDOC
- 11 Tu 11/10 Tourists and pilgrims in 21st-century Rajasthan
Read: Henderson and Weisgrau, eds., chapters by Cort and Sanyal
bbDOC
••• paper # 5 (2-page response) due •••
student led discussion # 4
- urban religious worlds: imagining Mumbai (2 weeks)*
- Th 11/12 City-scapes: neighbors, family . . .
Read: *Death of Vishnu*, Ch. 1-4, 13-84
- 12 Tu 11/17 faith . . . romance . . .
Read: *Death of Vishnu*, Ch. 5-7, pp. 85-149
DVD: Bombay, Part 1
••• **DRAFTS** of research projects due •••
- Th 11/19 . . . death . . .
Read: *Death of Vishnu*, Ch 8-11, 150-224
DVD: Bombay, Part 2
- 13 Tu 11/24 . . . heaven?
Read: *Death of Vishnu*, Ch 12-16, 225-295
• drafts returned with comments •
••• paper # 6 (2 page response) due •••
student led discussion #5
- Th 11/26 THANKSGIVING NO CLASSES**
- project presentations (final 3 class sessions)*
- 14 Tu 12/1 student project presentations Day 1 + evaluations
- Th 12/3 final project writing workshop / consultations with T.A. Jill Adams
[instructor attending Anthropology meetings in Philadelphia]
- 15 Tu 12/8 student project presentations Day 2
- Th 12/10 student project presentations Day 3 + Indian snacks

Tu 12/15 ••• research projects final draft due in 501 Hall of Languages ••

more about student responsibilities and requirements

I. Prepared participation and syllabus-based writings

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. **Please come to class prepared to discuss readings indicated for that given date on the syllabus.** Some class time will be devoted, as needed, to writing issues.

There are five *student-led discussion sessions*. 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. Discussion leaders' tasks are **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 may have four or five students acting as leaders; each group requires one volunteer to coordinate tasks (who will receive 1 extra-credit point).

There will be a sign-up sheet on September 17th; please look at the syllabus and decide what days you prefer (have at least two in mind as you may not get your first choice).

21% of your grade is assessed on the basis of presence and preparation. Everyone starts with 18 points (B+). This is maintained through coming to class regularly, and a responsible performance on your discussion leader turn. Better than good attendance, more frequent discussion contributions, or other evident efforts can raise this grade; negligence such as a no-show on your discussion leader turn day or excessive absences will lower it.

attendance counts, but we are not unreasonable about this. Beginning Tuesday, Sept. 8, your TA, Jill, will do her best to keep an accurate written record of student attendance. Each class member is allowed 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 by prearrangement; and -- for participants in athletic programs -- prearranged events.

Students missing class for any reason are themselves responsible for finding out what they missed and turning in their work. Contact instructor or TA by email; check with the Department of Religion secretary; check our course Blackboard site for announcements and assignments.

Two-page papers are a chance for you to respond to the readings often in a more informal style and personal voice. You may write your opinions and comparative reflections; sometimes a reading journal option is available. **However**, although these papers need not construct an argument, they **must** always: 1) display a genuine engagement with required readings; 2) be composed in grammatical English, spell-checked and carefully edited. This includes journal-style papers. Sloppy writing and sloppy thinking are extremely closely related, and we seek to avoid both at once.

Five-page essays demand a more formal writing style. You will be expected to select a unifying theme or argument and to use examples from the readings to explore your themes or to demonstrate the points which support your argument.

important: Late work is bad for you and bad for us. On the other hand, we acknowledge the complexities and balancing acts of college life. We will accept papers one class late, with a late penalty of one point on 5-point papers and two points on 12-point papers. **Absolutely no** syllabus-based papers will be accepted beyond one class late.

II. Research projects

Research projects offer an opportunity for students to select an area to explore from a limited set of topics that are not covered, or only slightly covered, on the syllabus. Detailed guidelines will be provided. Papers will be individually written, but students will form into groups focused on related subjects and present their research to the class after Thanksgiving Break.

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 DISABILITY, INTEGRITY AND COURTESY: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

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 the Office of Disability Services website, <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. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/> Students in REL/SAS 283 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.

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.