Introduction to Hinduism

RELG 210 — Spring 2015
Mondays & Wednesdays 2:20-3:35
Location TBA

Professor Mari Jyväsjärvi Stuart
Office: Rutledge 327
Office hours: Mon 11-12:30 and by appointment
Email: stuartmj@sc.edu
Phone: 777-2023

Course Overview

The Hindu tradition is one of the world’s most ancient religious traditions and, with almost one billion followers worldwide, the third largest. This course explores the fascinating Hindu religious culture in both its historical and contemporary dimensions. From Vedic cosmology and ritual and the philosophy of the Upanishads, we move on to classical Hindu mythology with its many gods and heroes. We examine the multiple ways in which “Hindu dharma” has been articulated over the centuries by devotees, philosophers, storytellers, and ascetics. The last part of the course turns to Hinduism in the modern world, seeking to understand how the legacy of colonialism, Indian nationalism, globalization, and social justice movements have shaped, and continue to shape, what Hinduism means to those who practice it. In addition to study of ancient primary texts in translation, we also approach Hinduism visually – through images, video clips, and a visit to a local Hindu temple.
Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to

- demonstrate their familiarity with the key historical developments, concepts, and terms of the Hindu tradition
- critically engage and analyze primary texts
- explain some of the approaches to these texts and traditions adopted by religious studies scholars
- demonstrate awareness of their own perspective and how it shapes their perception, and an ability to engage respectfully with views other than their own

Required Readings

- Course readings on Blackboard (B)
- Diana Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*
- Cornelia Dimmitt and J. A. B. van Buitenen (trans.), *Classical Hindu Mythology: A Reader in the Sanskrit Purāṇas*
- Barbara Stoler Miller (trans.), *The Bhagavad-gītā: Krishna’s Counsel in Time of War*
- T. Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*

Course Requirements and Grading

1. *Participation*, including class discussion, in-class group projects, and the field trip (20%)
   Your contributions in class should reflect careful and thoughtful reading of the assigned materials, and active engagement with the ideas. If you have concerns about class participation, please come and talk to me.

2. *Quizzes* (10%)

3. *5 short responses to readings* (15%)
   Short written responses (2-3 paragraphs) to the readings submitted on the Class Forum on Blackboard on 5 out of the 10 class days specified in the syllabus (“Response Option”), in response to a prompt posted online. These are due by 9am the morning of the class. At least 2 should be submitted before Fall Break.

4. *Mid-term exam* (25%)
   This essay examination will be administered in class on September 30 and is based on prior lectures and readings.
5. **Final essay 30%**
   An 8-10 page essay based on the lectures and readings from the semester; no additional reading is necessary. Students choose a topic from among several prompts that will be posted on the Blackboard. You may also propose your own topic, but you must have it approved by the instructor at least one week before the essay is due. Deadline: Friday, May 1, at 5pm.

**Grading Scale**
100-90 A; 89-87 B+; 86-80 B; 79-77 C+; 76-70 C; 69-67 D+; 66-60 D; 59 and below F

**Course Policies**

**Academic Integrity**
The University of South Carolina has clearly articulated its policies governing academic integrity and students are encouraged to carefully review the policy on the Honor Code in the Carolina Community. Any deviation from these expectations will result in academic penalties as well as disciplinary action. The area of greatest potential risk for inadvertent academic dishonesty is plagiarism. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, paraphrasing or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement.

**Attendance**
Prompt and regular attendance is crucial for success in the course. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. We will follow the university's policy regarding attendance and the effect of unexcused absences on a student's course grade. If you are absent for an excusable reason, be sure to present the needed documentation to the instructor immediately upon your return (e.g., if you are absent for a legitimate medical reason, bring a doctor's note as soon as you come back to class). The University attendance policy specifies that students may miss up to 3 class meetings (10% of class time) without penalty. Beyond that, class absences will affect your class participation grade.

**Classroom Conduct**
All cell phones are to be turned off or silenced during class; there is no text messaging, web browsing, etc, during class. Please come to class on time, and be respectful of everyone else in the class. Refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Disrespectful or disruptive behavior, such as talking out of turn, may result in dismissal from class and/or an academic penalty.

**Assignment Submission**
All assignments should be submitted using Blackboard’s "submit assignment" link. Assignments lose 20% of their point value per day late and will be counted as if the whole assignment was submitted at the time of the latest timestamp present.

**Midterm Exam**
Makeup exams will be allowed only with pre-approval of the instructor or with an acceptable, documented reason. Acceptable reasons for makeup exams include severe illness, family emergencies or other unavoidable events including dangerous weather conditions and car accidents. Exam format for makeup exams may be different than the original exam and will likely utilize a short answer format. An oral examination may also be utilized if deemed appropriate by the instructor.

**Accommodating Disabilities**
Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Office of Student Disability Services: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email sasds@mailbox.sc.edu, or stop by LeConte College Room 112A. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Student Disability Services.
Course Schedule

Week 1: Points of Departure

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/12</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
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<td>1/14</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>The Vedas: Imagining Creation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Selections from Doniger O’Flaherty (trans.), <em>The Rig Veda: An Anthology</em>, pp. 25-40, 148-51, 225-27 (B)</td>
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Week 2: The Vedic World

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY – no classes</td>
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<td>1/21</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>The Vedas: Vedic Fire Sacrifice</td>
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<td>• Selections from Doniger O’Flaherty (ed.), <em>The Rig Veda: An Anthology</em>, pp. 59-70, 97-107, 131-36 (B)</td>
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Week 3: Upanisads

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>The Fire Within</td>
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<td>• <em>The Upaniṣads</em>, trans. Patrick Olivelle (selections) (B)</td>
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<td>• Introduction, xxiii-xxxiii</td>
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<td>• <em>Brhadāraṇyaka</em> Ch. 3-4</td>
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<td>• <em>Chāndogya</em> 6.1-16, 8.7-12</td>
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<td>1/28</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>The Self in the Upanishads</td>
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<td>• <em>The Upaniṣads</em>, trans. Patrick Olivelle (selections) (B)</td>
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<td>• <em>Taittirīya</em> 3</td>
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<td>• <em>Katha</em> (all)</td>
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<td>• <em>Śvetāśvatara</em> (all)</td>
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*** Response option # 1 ***

Week 4: Dharma

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<tr>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Householder’s Dharma</td>
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<td>• Selections from <em>Manu’s Code of Law</em>, trans. Patrick Olivelle (B)</td>
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<td>• QUIZ in class</td>
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<td>2/4</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Yoga and Asceticism</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• <em>Manu’s Code of Law</em> continued (B)</td>
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<td>• Patrick Olivelle, “Ascetic withdrawal or social engagement,” pp. 533-46 (B)</td>
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*** Response option # 2 ***
**Week 5: The Bhagavad-gītā: The Song of the Lord in an Epic of Battle**

2/9 (M)  Arjuna’s Dilemma  
• Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Bhagavad-gītā: Krishna’s Counsel in Time of War*

2/11 (W)  The Three Paths to God  
• Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Bhagavad-gītā: Krishna’s Counsel in Time of War*

***Response option # 3***

**Week 6: Bhakti, Temple, Image, Ritual**

2/16 (M)  Seeing and Being Seen by a Hindu God: Introducing Bhakti  
• Diana Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*

2/18 (W)  Class Visit to the Hindu Temple of South Carolina – exact timing TBD

**Week 7: Vishnu**

2/23 (M)  Viṣṇu and his avatāras  
• Dimmitt and van Buiten, *Classical Hindu Mythology*, Ch. 2

2/25 (W)  Vishnu bhakti  
• A. K. Ramanujan, trans., *Hymns for the Drowning: Poems for Viṣṇu by Nammāḻvār*, pp. 4-13, 22-25, 33-43 (B)  
• Vidya Dehejia trans., *Āṇṭāḷ and Her Path of Love: Poems of a Woman Saint from South India*, pp. 75-97 (B)

***Response option # 4***

**Week 8: Krishna**

3/2 (M)  The Playful Cowherd God  
• Dimmitt and van Buiten, *Classical Hindu Mythology*, Ch. 3  
• QUIZ in class

3/4 (W)  Mid-Term Exam

*SPRING BREAK*

**Week 9: Śiva**

3/16 (M)  Śiva, the God of Paradox  
• Dimmitt and van Buiten, *Classical Hindu Mythology*, Ch. 4 (pp. 147-70, 179-188, 198-212)
3/18 (W) Devotion to Śiva
   • A. K. Ramanujan, trans., Speaking of Śiva (B)
     o Basavaṇṇa, pp. 62-71, 82-89
     o Mahādēviyakka, pp. 111-133

*** Response option # 5 ***

Week 10: The Goddess

3/23 (M) The Loving and Terrifying Mother
   • Dimmitt and Buiten, Classical Hindu Mythology, Ch. 5
   • David Kinsley, Hindu Goddesses, pp. 132-50 (B)

3/25 (W) The Power of the Goddess, the Power of Women
   • Tracy Pintchman, “Is the Hindu Goddess a Good Resource for Western Feminism?,” pp. 187-202 (B)
   • QUIZ in class

*** Response option # 6 ***

Week 11: Questions of Gender

3/30 (M) Gender in the History of the Hindu Tradition
   • Katherine Young, “Women and Hinduism,” 3-19 (B)
   • Frédérique Apffel Marglin, “Female Sexuality in the Hindu World,” 39-59 (B)

4/1 (W) Hindu Women’s Rituals
   • Anne Mackenzie Pearson, “Because It Gives Me Peace of Mind: Meanings and Functions of Vrats in Hindu Women’s Religious Lives,” 193-221 (B)

*** Response option # 7 ***

Week 12: Colonialism and Modernity

4/6 (M) Colonialism
   • Brian K. Pennington, “Introduction,” in Was Hinduism invented?: Britons, Indians, and colonial construction of religion, pp. 3-21 (B)

4/8 (W) Indian responses to colonialism
   • Selections from Sources of Indian Tradition vol. 2, ed. Stephen Hay (B)

*** Response option # 8 ***
**Week 13: Hindu Nationalism**

4/13 (M) Religion, Identity, and Communal Violence in Modern India
- *The Saffron Wave*: read Introduction and Ch. 2
- QUIZ in class

4/15 (W) The Saffron Wave
- *The Saffron Wave*, Ch. 3, 5
- Film clip: “In the Name of God (Ram Ke Naam)” dir. Anand Patwardhan

*** Response option # 9 ***

**Week 14: Being Hindu outside India**

4/20 Hindu Diaspora and Questions of Hindu Identity
- Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, pp. 265-73 (B)
- Steven Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora*, pp. 7-38 (B)

4/22 Viṣṇu in Bronx, Gaṇeśa in Michigan…
- “Afterword: Seeing the Divine Image in America” in Diana Eck, *Darśan*
- Explore the Pluralism Project website: pluralism.org

*** Response option # 10 ***

**Week 15: Telling a New Story**

4/27 Last day of class
- Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*, pp. 22-47 (B)
- Film clip: “The Namesake” dir. Mira Nair

Final paper due Friday, May 1, at 5pm