Course Description
This course introduces students to the beliefs and practices of the religious traditions of India. This course maintains a special focus on the rich and diverse history and development of the Hindu traditions. Throughout the semester, students will examine Buddhist, Jaina, Islamic, Sikh, Christian and Jewish religious traditions from a range of intellectual lenses and methodological approaches.

The course focuses on tradition and today, analyzing not only the emergence of these religious traditions in India but also their relevance and influence in the contemporary period. As we learn about the religions of India, we will ask ourselves the following questions: (1) What constitutes a religion? (2) What are the major themes discussed in prominent texts? (3) In what ways do those themes manifest in practice?

Course Objectives
- Analyze primary and secondary texts critically
- Identify the beliefs and practices of the religious traditions of India
- Broadly sketch the emergence and development of these religious traditions

Evaluation & Grading Policy
1. **Attendance & Participation (10%)**: A participation grade will be determined on the basis of the student’s attendance, preparedness and active participation in the discussions throughout the semester. Students are allowed three unexcused absences; however, every absence thereafter will be penalized unless appropriate documentation of medical or other emergency is provided.
2. **In-class Quizzes (15%)**: In order to ensure students are completing the required course readings in a timely fashion, unannounced assessments in the form of short answer questions will be administered throughout the semester. Students should expect 5 – 7 unannounced assessments throughout the semester. The lowest grade will be dropped.
3. **Brief Reading Responses (30%)**: Students will complete three written assignments of 3 – 4 (750 – 1,000 words) during the semester. The response paper topics will be announced in class. The response papers will address theoretical and methodological issues mentioned in the readings, lectures and class discussions. The papers will be due on Sunday, September 21, Sunday, October 26 and Sunday, November 23.
4. **Midterm Exam (20%)**: The midterm exam will be designed to evaluate students’ understanding of the themes covered in the weekly lectures and discussions. The midterm exam will be held in class during our two hour block. The exam will consist of a combination of identifications, short answers
and essay questions. Students are expected to answer these questions based on their knowledge of the materials covered in class.

5. **Final Exam (25%)**: The final exam is designed to evaluate students’ understanding of the themes covered in the weekly lectures and discussions. The exam will consist of a combination of identifications, short answers and essay questions. Students are expected to answer these questions based on their knowledge of the materials covered in class.

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>D-</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
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<td>85-81</td>
<td>78-75</td>
<td>75-72</td>
<td>71-69</td>
<td>68-66</td>
<td>65-62</td>
<td>61-60</td>
<td>59-0</td>
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**Class Policies**

**Academic Honesty**

Students should familiarize themselves with the University’s standards of academic honesty and integrity. If students are caught or suspected of plagiarizing, cheating or violating the Honor Code in any assignment for this course, they will be reported to the Student Conduct Committee at the Dean of Students’ Office. For further information about academic honesty please visit the following website: [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/).

**Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodations or special consideration must first register with the Dean of Students’ Office. The Dean of Students’ Office will provide the necessary documentation to the student, who is then required to give that documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. For further information, please visit the following website: [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/).

**Absences**

In order to maximize on their learning experiences, students are expected to attend every single class. Students are allowed three unexcused absences. Thereafter, students will be penalized for any unexcused absence.

**Late or Make-Up Assignments**

Students can request an extension on an assignment only in extraordinary circumstances. If the instructor does not grant an extension, late assignments will be marked down 1/3 grade for each day late.

**Written Assignments**

All written assignments should be submitted electronically via Canvas. Please make sure that all written assignments are typed, double-spaced, and have standard fonts (Calibri or Times New Roman, 12 pt.) with 1” margins.

**Required Readings**


All additional readings for the semester will be available via Canvas. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Classroom Etiquette
Students are expected to arrive on time and prepared to discuss the readings for the week. Students should not arrive late to class as it is disruptive to the instructor and their fellow classmates. Before entering the classroom, students should turn off their cell phones. Students who engage in disruptive behavior during class (including, receiving or making calls, sending text messages, whispering, talking in class etc.) will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

Class Schedule

Week 1

August 26 Introduction
August 28 Introduction


Week 2

September 2 Vedic Traditions

- Michael Woods, The Story of India (film)

September 4 Vedic Traditions


Week 3

September 9 Jaina Traditions


September 11 Buddhist Traditions


Week 4

September 16 Buddhist Traditions

September 18  **Dharma and The Epics: Ramayana**

  **Response Paper # 1 due Sunday 9/21**

**Week 5**

September 23  **Bhagavad Gita**
- Mahabharata Overview Reading: TBA

**Recommended Resources:**
- Search/Watch clips of the *Mahabharata* on your own on YouTube and/or children’s/comic books
- [https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Religions/texts/gita.html](https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Religions/texts/gita.html)

September 25  **Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita**

**Week 6**

September 30  **Gods and Goddesses: Visnu, Siva, Devi**
- Narayanan, Vasudha. “Gods and Goddesses” pp. 131-173

**October 3  Hindu Traditions (Rituals and Festivals)**

**Week 7**

**October 7  Hindu Traditions (Temples)**
- Additional Reading: TBA

**October 9  Hindu Traditions (Gurus)**

**Week 8**

**October 14  Midterm Exam**

**October 17 Tribal Religious Traditions**

**Week 9**

October 21 *Hindu Devotional Traditions*


October 23 *Islam*


*Response Paper # 2 due Sunday 10/26*

**Week 10**

October 28 *Islam (Sufism)*

• Embree, Ainslee et al. *Sources of Indian Tradition: From the Beginning to 1800*, pp. 447-489.

Recommended Reading:

October 30 *Islam in Practice*

• Flueckiger, Joyce B. *In Amma’s Healing Room*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006. (selections)

**Week 11**

November 4 *Sikh Traditions*


November 6 *Sikh Traditions in Practice (Pilgrimage)*


**Week 12**

November 11 Veteran’s Day, No Class

November 13 *Judaism*

**Week 14**

*November 18  Christianity*


*November 20 Christianity in Practice*


  **Response Paper # 3 due Sunday 11/23**

**Week 15**

*November 25 AAR Annual Meeting, No Class*

*November 27 Thanksgiving Holiday, No Class*

**Week 16**

*December 2 Contemporary Issues*

• Readings: TBA

*December 4 Global Religions of India*


• Web Search Assignment

**Week 17**

*December 9 Course Conclusion*

Final Exam Date: TBA