



Religions of India-REL 3330

—Fall 2015—

MWF Period 6 (12:50-1:40 PM)
Matherly Hall (MAT), Room 11

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Course Description

In this course we will explore the historical development of some of the major concepts, concerns and practices of the religious traditions of India, focusing on Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, the three major ancient Indian religions. Emphasis will be on the interactivity and mutual overlap between these traditions, on the wonderful difficulties of separating the rich and variegated diversity of India's manifold cultural practices into discrete religious categories. The readings in the course will prioritize the philosophical contributions of the traditions and the religious and social context in which they existed. The goal of this course is to give us the conceptual tools to understand these religious traditions, especially their philosophies, on their own terms and to establish the historical foundations for thinking critically about contemporary manifestations of Indian religion in India and beyond. This course, in short, seeks to internationalize the student experience.

Course Objectives

- To understand how Indian religious thinkers conceived of key philosophical issues such as the self or soul, the body, the experienced reality, the ultimate reality, and the meaning of a good life;
- To understand and critically interpret primary and secondary texts on Indian religion;
- To identify the beliefs and practices of the religious traditions of India;
- To broadly sketch the emergence and development of these religious traditions over time.

Required Books

1. M, Miller, Barbara Stoler and Barry Moser. 1986. *The Bhagavad-Gita*. Columbia University Press.
2. B, Bryant, Edwin F. 2009. *The Yoga sūtras of Patañjali*. New York: North Point Press.
3. L, Long, Jeffery D. 2010. *Jainism: an introduction*. New York: I.B. Tauris.
4. S, Siderits, Mark. 2009. *Buddhism as philosophy: an introduction*. Aldershot: Farnham.
5. PDF, All handouts and PDFs unless marked "optional", for example:
 - Bernie Machen, "Do Humans Still Need to Study the Humanities," *The New Republic*.
 - Chapple, Christopher K, and John T. Casey. *Reconciling Yogas: Haribhadra's Collection of Views on Yoga*. State University of New York Press, 2003
 - The Sūryaśataka (100 verses for the sun) by Mayūra (Jain poet). George P. Quackenbos. *The Sanskrit Poems of Mayūra*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1917.

Course Requirements

1. *Attendance & Participation (10%)*: A participation grade will be determined on the basis of 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 (10%)*: 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 2 unannounced assessments throughout the semester.
3. *Brief Reading Responses (35%)*: Students will complete four written assignments of 3–4 pages (or 750 – 1,000 words) during the semester on the readings and lectures. The response papers should accomplish: (1) an analytic discussion of a reading and lecture from a topic prior to the due date of the paper, and (2) a short evaluation of your perspective on the reading and lecture content. Paper 3 is, however, slightly different, as we will discuss in class. See below for due-dates.
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 regular time. The exam will consist of a combination of short answers and essays.
5. *Final Exam (25%)*: The final exam will be designed to evaluate students' understanding of the themes covered in the weekly lectures and discussions. The exam will consist of a combination of short answers and essays.

Grading Breakdown

Participation: 15%; Homework Assignments: 20% Quizzes: 20%; Midterm Exam: 20%; Final Exam: 25%. Grades will be computed based on the percentages given above according to the following grading scale: A: 100–93 A-: 92–90; B+: 89–87 B: 86–83 B-: 82–80; C+: 79–77 C: 76–73 C-: 72–70; D+: 69–67 D: 66–63 D-: 62–60; E: 59 or below. For more info about UF's grade system: www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html

Academic Honesty and Students with Disabilities

Guidelines for academic honesty at the University of Florida can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx#honesty>

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the guidelines detailed at the above sites and adhere to them. Any student with a disability must register with the office of the Dean of Students:

<http://accessibility.ufl.edu/>

Absences, Make-Up Assignment, and Etiquette

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. 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. Students are expected to arrive on time and prepared to discuss the readings for the week. 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.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. See Netiquette Document at teach.ufl.edu

Academic Honesty, Students with Disabilities, and Getting Help

Guidelines for academic honesty at the University of Florida can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx#honesty>

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the guidelines detailed at the above sites and adhere to them. Any student with a disability must register with the office of the Dean of Students: <http://accessibility.ufl.edu/>. I am happy to help in any way that I can.

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning, please contact the UF Help Desk at: learning-support@ufl.edu, (352) 392-HELP - select option 2, <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Disclaimer

This syllabus represents current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

Week 1 – Introduction To Indian Religion

- **PDF**, Bernie Machen, “Do Humans Still Need to Study the Humanities,” *The New Republic*
- **B**, “Introduction” - the Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali in the context of Indian philosophy
- *Optional*: Gerald Larson. 2004. “A Beautiful Sunset... Mistaken for a Dawn”: Some Reflections on Religious Studies, India Studies, and the Modern University. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 72 (4):1003-1019.

Week 2 – The Early History of Yoga in India

- **B**, “Introduction” - the Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali in the context of Indian and Hindu philosophies
- **PDF**, Chapple, “Chapter Two: Haribhadra and Patañjali” - Yoga in a Jain context
- *Optional*: Pollock, Sheldon (1985). The Theory of Practice and the Practice of Theory in Indian Intellectual History. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. Vol 105, No 3, pp. 499-519.

Week 3 – The Goal and Definition of Yoga in the Yoga-sūtra

- No Class: Labor Day, Sept 7
- **B**, YS 1.1-12; 4.34
- *Optional*: Mohanty, J. N. (1995). Theory and practice in Indian philosophy. *Australasian journal of philosophy*, 73(1), 1-12.

Week 4 – Yogic Theology and Against Buddhist Theories

- **B**, YS 1.13-1.23
- **B**, YS 4.15-21
- *Paper 1 due*

Week 5 – The Eight Limbs of Yoga and Powers

- **B**, YS 2.29-2.32; 2.45-2.46; 2.49; 2.54; 3.1-3.3; 4.1; 3.13-41 (cf. New Testament, John 6:16-21!)
- *Optional*: Vasudha Narayanan, “Hinduism: Practicing tradition today.” Pechilis, Karen, and Selva J. Raj. 2012. *South Asian religions: tradition and today*. New York: Routledge.

Week 6 – The Yogas of the Bhagavad Gītā

- **M**, Bhagavad Gītā, “Ch 1” – Viṣāda Yoga and Introduction to Arjuna’s dilemma
- **M**, BG, “Ch 3” – Karma Yoga (exemplar, Mahatma Gandhi)

Week 7 – The Yogas of the Bhagavad Gītā

- M, BG, “Ch 4 and 6” – Jñāna Yoga (exemplars, Swami Vivekananda and Ramana Maharshi)
- M, BG, “Ch 12 and 18” – Bhakti Yoga (exemplars, Swami Bhaktivedanta and Neem Karoli Baba)
- *Paper 2 due*

Week 8 – Exam and Introduction to Buddhism

- **Midterm Exam** (Monday, 12 Oct 2015)
- S, Ch 2

Week 9 – The Doctrine of No-Self

- S, Ch 3
- *Optional:* Ram-Prasad, Chakravathi. “The phenomenal separateness of self: Udayana on body and agency.” *Asian Philosophy* 21.3 (2011): 323-340.

Week 10 – The Rise of Mahāyāna

- S, Ch 7
- *Optional:* S, Ch 5: “The Nyāya Interlude”

Week 11 – Madhyamaka: Doctrine of Emptiness

- No Class: Homecoming, Nov 6 (Friday)
- S, Ch 9

Week 12 – Visiting Harn Museum

- No Class: Veterans Day, Nov 11
- Visit to Harn Museum, Nov 9 and 13 (class to start 10 mins late and to end 10 mins early for transportation)
- **PDF**, Selections from “Sūryaśataka (100 verses for the sun)” by Mayūra, and other praise poetry

Week 13 – Introduction to Sikhism, Jainism and Mahāvīra, and Stotras

- **PDF**, Pashaura Singh, “Sikhism: Practicing tradition today.” Pechilis, Karen, and Selva J. Raj. 2012. *South Asian religions: tradition and today*. New York: Routledge.
- L, Ch 1
- *Paper 3 due* (Harn Museum assignment)

Week 14 – No Class: American Academy of Religion and Thanksgiving

- Catch up on readings, etc.

Week 15 – The Jain Path and Relativity

- L, Ch 4-5

Week 16 – More on Relativity and Humanity

- L, Ch 6-7
- *Paper 4 due*
- Final Exam on Wednesday, December 16, 2015, time of class