

The Hindu Traditions Graduate Seminar
Spring 2017
Vasudha Narayanan,
Distinguished Professor, Department of Religion, University of Florida

TIME: Wed periods 9, 10, and 11; 4:00-7:00 pm
CREDITS: 3 Semester Hours
Office Hours: Wednesday 1.30- 3.00 pm and by appt.
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PLACE: CBD 230
Office: 107 Anderson Hall
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Course Description

This is an *advanced* course focusing on Hindu Traditions. It is expected that students taking this course will be familiar with the academic study of Religion, Asian Religions, and have had some knowledge of the Hindu traditions. This course is designed to get students to think about the categories in the study of the Hindu Tradition and for a deeper understanding of specific themes. The course will push you to think about getting a good bibliography for the topics on hand and evaluating the sources.

This seminar-style course will involve a lot of reading (books or several articles each week), writing and discussions.

Requirements: Regular attendance and preparation for the topic to be discussed for the week. After the first week, students are expected to do the required reading *before* each class and have a written summary/impressions of the material ready **to present** in the class for discussion. The purpose of the assignment is to push you to do some specific reading and be prepared to initiate and participate in the discussion. Feel free to change and revise your draft in light of the discussions and turn the required papers in at the appointed time.

Class participation: this is a seminar type course and there will be very few lectures. Active participation is expected.

Short lectures and presentations: the emphasis this semester is to encourage and strengthen your ability to give short lectures in classroom settings or short research papers. We will do this in class to get a critical evaluation in a friendly and supportive environment.

We will encourage field work, analyses of websites, and viewing of videos and / or performances and visiting of art galleries in addition to readings. I will pass on information on any events in the area which may pertain to the course.

During our first meeting, we will decide on discussion leaders for the first few weeks of classes. Discussion leaders will research out and share reading materials with the other students about a week ahead of each class and eventually share some of the notes and annotations with others. In other words, one of the objectives of this course is to encourage research skills by making you work on bibliographies and find suitable materials for each topic. Please check with me with your biblio – after I see yours, I will suggest more resources from the pool that I have assembled over the last few years.

Students who are leading the discussion should distribute an initial bibliography about a week before the scheduled class.

Mid-term and Final projects: choice of regular academic term papers, “conference papers” which can be presented in class, a portfolio of syllabuses, or other creative ideas. I will discuss your projects with you regularly. The final projects will be shared in the class.

Grading:

Class participation, presentations (33%), weekly annotated bibliographies and the mid-term project report (33%), and the Final project (33%): all count equally for the final grade.

For more information about UF's minus grade system visit: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Quizzes

Attendance

Regular attendance and class participation required for the seminar. Unexcused absences will lead to lowering of final grade.

The fine print: Incompletes will only be given under very special circumstances: when students who have finished most of the assignments satisfactorily cannot complete the final requirements due to unforeseen events. If this is the case, students must arrange for the incomplete before the end of the semester.

University Rules on Attendance policies/ absences from classes are posted on

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>

Students with Disabilities. Students requesting classroom accommodation or special consideration must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation or special consideration.

Academic Honesty

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

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the guidelines detailed at the above site and related links and adhere to them.

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/>

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a disability must register with the office of the Dean of Students:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Readings:

We will be developing annotated bibliographies through the course of the semester.

The following are the class meeting dates with a tentative list of discussion topics. If we do not finish the discussion in any one class, we will continue it the following week.

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to modification)

Week 1 (January 11): Course Introduction and framing the course

Week 2 (January 18): The Bhagavad Gita

Weeks 3, 4, 5 and 7 January 25, Feb.1, Feb. 10 (Friday, make up class); and Feb 22): Please note that on **Week 6 (February 15)** we will have a special CHiTra talk by Professor Francis Clooney, Harvard University, in lieu of our class.

Dharmasastras

Law by Donald Davis, Mittal and Thursby

Works by Donald Davis and Patrick Olivelle

Kane's History of Dharmasastra, multiple volumes. What are the major themes?

Discussion on major themes: *Varnasrama* *dharma* *Food; weddings; Death; gender; rituals/ domestic, samskaras, pilgrimages*. Ruptures and connections over the last millennium.

Kane is available free online; the volumes are also in the set of books on the pen drive that I gave you last year.

Week 8 March 1. Mid-term projects student presentations.

Week of **March 6**—Spring break

Week 9-10-11-12-13. March 15, 22, 29, April 5, and 12. History of and Literature on Vaishnavism, Saivism, and Devi-worship

Week 14, April 19 Student presentations, Final projects