

Fall 2014
SPECIAL TOPICS IN HINDU TRADITIONS (REL 5937) Independent Study
Vasudha Narayanan
Distinguished Professor, Department of Religion, University of Florida

TIME: Tuesday 5.15-6.30
CREDITS: 3 Semester Hours
Office Hours: Tues 4.00-5.00pm and by appt.
Email: vasu@ufl.edu

PLACE: 117 Anderson
Office: 107 Anderson Hall
Phone: 352 392 1625

This course is an *advanced* course focusing on the Hindu Traditions. It is expected that students taking this course will be familiar with the academic study of Religion and Asian Religions. The course content involves rotating topics; in Fall 2014, we will be focusing on selected themes, including (but not limited to) some common topics and some topics focusing on your research interests. Common topics will include: A “chronological” history and “interdisciplinary” ways of the Hindu traditions, Philosophy, colonialism, relationship between religions; we will add Literature and global Hindu traditions to this mix if we have time. Interdisciplinary ways will include working on materials from the viewpoints of art, architecture, numismatics, law, etc..

This seminar-style and individual meetings 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 when meeting as a group. Students are expected to do the required reading before each class and have a written summary/impressions of the material ready for classroom discussion. This can be a handwritten draft if necessary. The purpose of the assignment is to push you to do some specific reading and be prepared for participation in the discussion.

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.

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.

University Rules on Attendance policies/ absences from classes are posted on <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>

The readings given in this syllabus are just “starter” readings. 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. 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 with others.

A separate sheet with what is expected of a discussion leader will be handed out.

Students are expected to do the readings before class and if two people are leading the discussions, do meet before class and review literature/materials together. I would like 2-3 students to lead the discussion each week.

In addition to leading the discussions and the reaction papers, students will be expected to generate a “mock” proposal for a grant application on their research topic, and a final project that we can discuss individually.

Grading:

Class participation, presentations: 25%

Proposal writing and short projects (short papers 2-3): 25%

Final project: 50%

Class participation: Please do the reading before the class and come with a set of prepared comments and a summary of the reading. Feel free to change and revise your draft in light of the discussions and turn the papers in at the appointed time.

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.

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.

Final project: 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.

The following dates are potential meeting dates.

Tuesday, August 26

Thursday, September 4

Tuesday, September 9

Tuesday, September 16

Tuesday, September 23

Tuesday, September 30

Tuesday, October 7

Tuesday, October 14

Tuesday, October 21

Tuesday, October 28

Tuesday, November 4

Tuesday, November 11 – Veteran’s Day -Holiday

Thursday, November 13

Tuesday, November 18

Thursday, November 20

Tuesday, November 25 American Academy of Religion Meetings, San Diego

Tuesday, December 2

Tuesday, December 9 – last day

Interdisciplinary approaches: initial bibliography:

Craven, Roy C., *Indian Art: A Concise History*. New York, N.Y: Thames and Hudson, 1997.

(or:

Blurton, T R. *Hindu Art*. London: Published by British Museum Press for the Trustees of the British Museum, 1992.

Huntington, Susan L., and John C. Huntington. 1985. *The art of ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. New York: Weatherhill.)

Examples:

Begley, W.E., *Viṣṇu's Flaming Wheel: The Iconography of the Sudarśana-cakra*, New York, 1973.

John Cort, 1996. "Art, Religion, and Material Culture: Some Reflections on Method." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63/ 13:613-632

Sivaramamurti, C., "The Weapons of Vishnu," *Artibus Asiae* 18/2, 1955, 128-136.

Archeological approaches: See works of Mark Kenoyer and others.

Examples of Studies which primarily utilize inscriptions:

Law:

Baird, Robert D. 1993. *Religion and Law in Independent India*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors.

Baird, Robert D. 1991. "'Secular State' and the Indian Constitution." *Essays in the History of Religions*. Toronto Studies in Religion. NY, New York.

Larson, Gerald James. 2001. *Religion and personal law in secular India: a call to judgment*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

The Beginnings of Colonialism and the Study of Hinduism

Viswanathan, Gauri. 1989. *Masks of conquest: literary study and British rule in India*. New York: Columbia University Press.

We can download works of the following scholars and major players in Indian History:

"Orientalists:" Sir William Jones; Horace Hayman Williams; et al.

William Jones, 1824 *Discourses Delivered to the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the Religion, Poetry, Literatures, etc. of the Nations of India*. 2 volumes.

(the actual lectures were given in 1784)

Missionaries: Alexander Duff

Duff, Alexander. 1840. *India and India Missions: Including Sketches of the Gigantic System of*

Hinduism Both in Theory and in Practice. Edinburgh: John Johnstone.

Political/ Educational Documents:

Wood's Despatch
Macaulay's Minute;

Proclamation by the Queen in Council to the Princes, Chiefs, and People of India, 1858. (published in 1908). Published by the Governor General of India, Allahabad, November 1, 1858. London: Wyman and Sons. Also available at <http://www.csas.ed.ac.uk/mutiny/confpapers/Queen%27sProclamation.pdf>

Wood, Charles. 1854. "Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company, to the Governor General of India in Council, (No. 49, dated the 19th July 1854)." In Richey, J. A. (ed.). 1922. *Selections from Educational Records, Part II (1840-1859)*. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing. Reprint. Delhi: National Archives of India, 1965, 364-393. Reproduced at <http://www.sdstate.edu/projectsouthasia/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&PageID=853940>

Religious Movements in "modern" India:

Focus on the history, organization, and social contexts of:
Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission/ Vivekananda, Swami Sivananda etc.
Baird, Robert D. 1995. *Religion in modern India*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers.

Hinduism: Relationship with other traditions

Raj, Selva J., and Corinne G. Dempsey. 2002. *Popular Christianity in India: riting between the lines*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gottschalk, Peter. 2000. *Beyond Hindu and Muslim: Multiple Identity in Narratives From Village India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 11-40; Skim case studies in later chapters.

"The Strains of Hindu-Muslim Relations: Babri Masjid, Rituals, Music, and other Areas where the Traditions Cleave" by Vasudha Narayanan. *Hinduism and Secularism: After Ayodhya*, edited by Arvind Sharma. London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2001, 159-202.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2002. *Ethnic conflict and civic life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. pp. 1-54, 281-300; Skim case studies in middle chapters

Suggestions for the presentations and summaries:

Vasudha Narayanan

These are just suggestions to facilitate discussions, to help those without a background in this subject, and to have a crisp response paper. You are welcome to add other “best” practices. Not all of these may be relevant to the theme which you are discussing in any given week.

We should decide ahead of the class how much time you should have for your presentation. Keep to that time.

Feel free to distribute an outline of your presentation ahead of time or even at the beginning of the class.

Where you feel it is *relevant*, include a sentence or two about the author and his/her works and impact.

Have a short summary of the reading with the main points made by the author. This can be longer in the presentation and much shorter in the written paper.

What is the author’s methodology? What kind of sources? Is it textual, ethnographic, focusing on art history, architecture, or interdisciplinary? Is there a theoretical framework?

Who do you think is the intended audience for the work? –author’s intention, your opinion?

Is there a political/ social agenda/ bias in this article, subtle or explicit?

Stand back; if you know anything about this subject, do you feel something has been left out? Is anything overly rationalized or uber-theorized? Do you have any critical reflections on this work?

Are there any “applications” or modern contexts for concepts raised here? For instance, in discussing dharma are there situations today where issues of dharma are raised? Abortion, euthanasia, etc.? How does Indian law deal with dharma? Or for kama, where are these principles played out?

IMPORTANT: what kinds of questions come up in the reading that we can discuss in class? Raise a couple of questions. How are these themes connected to the study of “religion,” variously defined? (The “religion” connection is primarily for students in religious studies). Is it fair to include these themes in the study of the Hindu traditions, keeping in mind the history of the term, “Hindu?” If relevant (and they may not be), are these themes to be considered more properly to be in the “secular” realm? Would, say, performance, or forehead marks be sacred, secular or both? If both, what are the criteria we may use to make such distinctions?

If relevant and only for Religion students: if you were to do a 1 hour class for undergraduates on this topic, what would you discuss? Are all the topics you want to cover in your lecture covered by this essay/ chapter/ article?

Logistics: in many of the weeks, we will be covering multiple topics. If you are a presenter/ discussion leader, feel free to do your response paper just on your topic (say, “dharma.”). If you are not presenting, you may choose any of the topics we discussed.

If, however, we are discussing multiple sources on one theme (say, “Bollywood”)—I would like you to use all the relevant sources, even if you have not presented on that book, in your response paper. For major topics, we may take more than a week for the response paper.

As we come up with more helpful suggestions—and feel free to email me your thoughts—we can add them to this list. The idea is to maximize your learning experience and facilitate articulation of these ideas in a larger canvas.

All response papers are to be emailed to me; trying to save one more tree, so try not to give me hard copies. Thanks!