RELI 313

Spring 2018

MW 3pm-4:15pm

Krug Hall 204

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1pm-4pm

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**\*\*\**to be updated for 2019\*\*\****

**Hinduism: From the Vedas to Today**

*Overall Goals and Structure of the Class:*

This course is an introduction to the diverse traditions that, since the British institutionalized the category in the 1800’s, we call Hinduism. We will focus on the beginnings and evolution of sacred texts, stories, ideas, practices, and political identities over a period spanning about 3,500 years, from the revelation of the Vedas to Hindu politics in India today. Our class will proceed in six short units: 1) Vedas and Upaniṣads; 2) Epics and Purāṇas; 3) Philosophy; 4) Ritual and Devotion; 5) Hinduism under the Mughals and British; 6) Hinduism Today. Our overall goal is to develop a broad understanding of the content, evolution, and influence of Hindu traditions.

As an upper-level Humanities course, this class will allow you to apply and further refine advanced skills related to reading, critical analysis, research, and writing. Although there are no specific pre-requisites, in order to do well in this class you will have to be able to read large amounts of complex primary and secondary source material, come to class prepared to discuss these materials, and write extended, coherent papers based on them. One of your papers will be a close reading of our course materials, and one will be an independent research paper. While I am happy to help you work on your writing, it is ultimately your responsibility to have or develop competencies in these areas.

**Grading structure:**

All assignments are submitted via Blackboard. You do not have to turn in physical copies of any assignment.

**The honor code is in effect at all times in this class.** I take plagiarism very seriously and there will be consequences, ranging from failing the assignment to being reported to GMU’s Honor Committee, if you do not properly cite any and all sources you use in your assignments. If you’re not sure about the Honor Code or what plagiarism is, please check https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/

**1) Questions and Attendance: 50% (+ up to 4% extra credit on your final grade)**

By 11am the day of each class, you’ll submit two questions on our readings via Blackboard. ***Each of these questions is worth 1% of your final grade*. *This is a lot.*** You’ll have to come to class to get at least half credit for your questions (so, for example, if you submit two questions but don’t come to class, you’ll get 1 point out of the possible 2 points for that day). You won’t get any credit for just coming to class but not submitting questions. The reason for this is that I integrate your questions into my lectures and use them to guide discussion each day. For this same reason, there will be NO credit given for questions submitted after 11am on the day they’re due.

If there are two readings for a given class (most classes have two readings), you’ll need to submit one question on each. There are 27 classes that you’ll submit questions for. Notice that 27x2=54. This is on purpose. You can miss up to two days’ worth of questions/ attendance and still get full credit in this category. Alternately, if you do all of them and come to class, you’ll get up to 4% extra credit on your final grade.

**2) Midterm Paper due Friday, March 2nd at 11:59pm (20%)**

1000-1250 words (approximately 4-5 pages). I’ll provide a topic in class on Wednesday, February 21st. This paper will be based on our class readings. You should NOT do outside research for this paper. All sources must be properly cited within the text of the paper. You must give page numbers in your citations.

**3) Final Research Paper Series (30%)**

The final product will be a 1750-2000 word (approximately 7-8 pages) paper on a topic related to our class that you chose and I approve. You will have to incorporate at least two sources from our class AND at least three ***peer-reviewed academic sources*** that you find from outside of our class.

1. ***Topic due by Friday, April 13th at 11:59pm (5%)***

You’ll submit a topic and I’ll let you know if it’s feasible or not. If I tell you that your topic won’t work, then you have until *Sunday, April 1st at 11:59pm* to submit a new topic. After this time, you’ll start accruing late marks. I’m more than happy to talk with you about your paper topic earlier in the semester so that this doesn’t end up being too much of a crunch.

1. ***Annotated bibliography due by Friday, April 27th at 11:59pm (5%)***

You’ll submit at least five sources, two from our class and three ***peer-reviewed academic sources*** from outside of our class, along with a 1-2 sentence summary for each source of how you’ll be using it in your final paper. You must use either APA, MLA, or Chicago for your bibliography style. If you don’t know how to do this, go to <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> for an overview. *Entries that are not in a proper format will not receive credit*. *Sources that are not peer-reviewed will not receive credit and should not be used for the final paper.*

1. ***Final research paper due by Wednesday, May 14th at 11:59pm (20%)***

You’ll write a thesis-driven research paper 1750-2000 words long on the topic I’ve approved and using the sources you’ve submitted. You can use additional ***peer-reviewed academic sources*** or readings from our class if you want. If you didn’t submit enough sources on your annotated bibliography or if some of your sources weren’t peer-reviewed, then you’ll have to submit new ones to reach the requisite three outside sources. Within the paper, all sources must be properly cited using the same citation style as you use in your bibliography. This includes sources from our class. You must give page numbers in your citations.

 **Late Policy:**

*You will not be given any credit for questions submitted after 11am on the day of the class that the material they’re based on is being discussed*. Remember that there is some flexibility built into the grading for these questions; if you are sick or otherwise absent for a day, or even a week, then the questions you don’t submit will be absorbed by the extra 4 points inherent to the category. Also remember that even if you can’t come to class, you’ll get half credit for submitting the questions on time. If there’s a bigger problem and you’ll be missing more class, ***talk to me as soon as possible***.

For all other assignments, if you do not ask me for an extension, I will deduct 1% from your final grade for each day that the assignment is late.  This is a hard and fast policy. If you would like an extension, please send me a ridiculous excuse. It can be a story about how an alien in a blue telephone booth whisked you away to the far corners of the universe, an account of how mutant dinosaurs devoured your computer, or anything else you fancy. It can be short and you can ask for the extension at 11:58pm the day the assignment is due if you need to. Just talk to me and try not to worry.

**Required Texts:**

Mittal and Thursby, eds, *The Hindu World*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

\*\*\*Many of our readings will be selections from longer works. I will post these readings on Blackboard as PDF’s.\*\*\*

*Course Schedule*

Opening Week

**Monday, January 22nd:** Go over syllabus and requirements for the course; talk about how to read and how to write

 **Wednesday, January 24th:** Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism*, “Introduction: Contesting the Unity of Hinduism,” 1-5; Lipner, “On Hinduism and Hinduisms: The Way of the Banyan,” *The Hindu World*, 9-34.

***Begin submitting questions for today’s class***

**Part I: Vedas and Upanishads**

Week 1: Rg Veda and context

**Monday, January 29th:** Patton, “Veda and Upaniṣad,” from *The Hindu World*, 37-51, Holdredge, “Dharma,” from *The Hindu World*, 213-248

**Wednesday, January 31st:** selections from the Ṛg Veda

Week 2: Upaniṣads and context

**Monday, February 5th:** Ganeri, *The Concealed Art of the Soul*, “Hidden in the Cave: the Upaniṣadic Self,” 13-38, and “Appendix B,” 223-228

**Wednesday, February 7th:** Selections from the Upaniṣads

**Part II: Epics and Purāṇas**

Week 3: *Rāmāyaṇa*

**Monday, February 12th:** Goldman and Goldman, “*Rāmāyaṇa*,” from *The Hindu World*, 75-96; Selections from the *Vālmīki* *Rāmāyana***.** *In-class Film: Sita Sings the Blues*

**Wednesday, February 14th:** A.K. Ramanujan, “300 Ramayanas”; Shulman, “Bhavabhūti on Cruelty and Compassion,” 49-82.

Week 4: *Mahābhārata*

**Monday, February 19th:** Fitzgerald, “*Mahābhārata*,” from *The Hindu World*, 52-74; Selections from the *Mahābhārata*

**Wednesday, February 21st:** Ganeri, *The Concealed Art of the Soul*, “A Cloak of Clever Words,” 61-94; selections from the *Bhagavadgītā*

***Midterm paper topic given out in class***

Week 6: Purāṇas

**Monday, February 26th:** Narayana Rao, “*Purānas,*” from *The Hindu World*, 97-118; ANOTHER READING TBD

**Wednesday, February 28th:** Selections from the Purāṇas (via selected *Amar Chitra Kathā* (comic books))

***MIDTERM PAPER DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 2nd AT 11:59PM VIA BLACKBOARD***

**Part III: Philosophy**

Week 7: Nyāya/Vaiśeṣika; Sāṃkhya/Yoga

**Monday, March 5th:** Ganeri, “The Motive and Method of Rational Inquiry,” *Philosophy in Classical India*, 7-41; Bartley, “Chapter 8: Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika,” *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 92-119.

**Wednesday, March 7th:** Nicholson, “Chapter 7: Vedānta and Sāṃkhya in the Orientalist Imagination,” *Unifying Hinduism*, 124-143; Bartley, “Chapter 7: Sāṃkhya and Yoga,” 82-91

**Monday, March 12th & Wednesday, March 16th Spring Break No Class**

Week 8: Mīmāṃsā; Vedānta

**Monday, March 19th:** Ram-Prasad, “Knowledge and Action: On How to Attain the Highest Good,” *Indian Philosophy and the Consequences of Knowledge*, 101-132; Bartley, “Chapter 9: The Mīmāṃsā Vision,” *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 119-135.

**Wednesday, March 21st:** Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism*, “Chapter 3: Vijñānabhikṣu’s ‘Difference and Non-difference’ Vedānta,” 39-66; Bartley, “Chapter 11: Advaita Vedānta,” *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*,134-168.

**Part IV: Ritual and Devotion**

Week 9: Theism and Devotionalism

**Monday, March 26th:**

**NO CLASS I’ll be at a conference. However, please still do the following reading and submit your two questions:**

Flood, “Śaiva,” Erndl, “Śākta,” and Clooney, “Vaiṣṇava,” *The Hindu World*, 119-184.

**We’ll talk about these and bhakti next class**

**Wednesday, March 28th:** Lorenzen, “Bhakti,” *The Hindu World*, 185-210

Week 10: Ritual

**Monday, April 2nd:** McGee, “Saṃskāra,” from *The Hindu World*, 332-356, McGee, “Ritual Rights: The Gender Implications of Adhikāra,” *Jewels of Authority*, 32-50.

**Wednesday, April 4th:** Bharati, “Pilgrimage in the Indian Tradition,” 135-167; Sanderson, “Meaning in Tantric Ritual,” (selections: 24-29, 36-53, 76-87).

**Part V: Mughals and British**

Week 11: Mughals

**Monday, April 9th:** Smith, “Islam and Hinduism,” *Hinduism and Modernity*, 49-64; Stein, “Early Modern India,” *A History of India*, 155-176.

**Wednesday, April 11th:**; Talbot, “Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-colonial India,” *India’s Islamic Traditions*, 83-117; Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism*, “Chapter 10: Hindu Unity and the Non-Hindu Other,” 184-206.

***FINAL PAPER TOPIC DUE BY FRIDAY, APRIL 13TH AT 11:59PM VIA BLACKBOARD***

Week 12: British Raj

**Monday, April 16th:** Rocher, “The Creation of Anglo-Hindu Law,” in *Hinduism and Law*, 78-88; Khilani, “Who is an Indian?,” from *The Idea of India*, 150-195

**Wednesday, April 18th:** Killingley, “Modernity, Reform, and Revival,” *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, 509-525; Falk, “By What Authority? Hindu Women and the Legitimization of Reform in the Nineteenth Century,” *Jewels of Authority*, 139-156.

**Part VI: Hinduism Today**

Week 12: Hindutva and Contemporary Politics

**Monday, April 23rd:** Ram-Prasad, “Contemporary Political Hinduism,” *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, 526-550; Savarkar, “Who is a Hindu?,” from *Hindutva: The Essence of Hinduism*, 102-116.

**Wednesday, April 25th:** Narula, “Law and Hindu Nationalist Movements,” *Hinduism and Law*, 234-251. Bacchetta, “Hindu Nationalist Women: On the Use of the Feminine Symbolic to (Temporarily) Displace Male Authority,” *Jewels of Authority*, 157-176.

***FINAL PAPER ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE ON FRIDAY, APRIL 27TH AT 11:59PM VIA BLACKBOARD***

Week 14: Global Hinduism

**Monday, April 30th:** READINGS ON DIASPORA HINDUISM

**Wednesday, May 2nd (last day of class):** \*\*\**Contemporary news items and context\*\*\**

***FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE MONDAY, MAY 14TH BY 11:59PM VIA BLACKBOARD***