SYLLABUS
R.123. Religions of India
Fall, 2008

Dr. St. John                   Ofc. Comenius-204
(610) 861-1585 (O)            MWF  2:00-3:00
(610) 691-1797 (H)            TR.  2:00-4:00
e-mail. medps01@moravian.edu

Course Content.
This course will examine the beliefs, values, and practices of South Asian Hinduism and Buddhism. The course will examine early foundational texts of Hinduism, such as the Vedas (including The Upanishads), and the Bhagavad-Gita. The second section of the course will examine popular or village Hinduism. The third section we will examine South Asian Buddhism especially the Pali Canon and The Dhammapada. We will finish with a consideration of the influence of religion on the politics of Mahatma Gandhi.

Teaching and Learning Objectives.
This course is designed so that students will:
(1) develop an understanding of the methods and perspectives proper to the academic study of religion; (2) develop an informed appreciation for the beliefs, values and practices of South Asian Hinduism and Buddhism; (3) improve their ability to analyze and interpret culturally unfamiliar texts; (4) become more aware of their own cultural and personal assumptions, beliefs, and biases; (5) develop skills to think critically about their own and others’ worldviews; (6) develop an appreciation for writing as a way both to clarify for themselves the content of material and to communicate their understanding to others.

Format: Lecture/Discussion
Students should come to class prepared to discuss the texts and any problems they might have had understanding them. Writing-to-learn assignments, whether outside or inside class, are intended to help students grasp the material and re-present it in their own words. Participation in discussions is expected.

Evaluation
(1) Writing-to-learn assignments. Frequent but short writing-to-learn assignments will encourage students to be actively engaged with the material and prepared for in-class discussions. These assignments will be written either at home or in class at the beginning of the period. They will (normally) be graded "S" or "U". A missed assignment is automatically given a "U" and cannot be made up (except in unusual circumstances). If 80% or more of the graded assignments receive an "S", a student's final grade will be raised one level (e.g. C to C+). If 50% or fewer of graded assignments are graded Satisfactory, the final grade will be reduced by one-level (C to C-). Otherwise, it will not change (51%-79%).
(2) **Essay Exams.** Three non-cumulative essay exams (including the final) will enable the student to demonstrate his or her grasp of the material under consideration. Analytic as well as synthetic skills will be evaluated.

(3) **Participation.** There is no separate grade for participation. However, the instructor reserves the right to reward participation of a consistent and high quality where deemed appropriate, e.g. when a final grade average is borderline.

(4) **Plagiarism.** Zero tolerance on either a writing assignment or an essay exam. An automatic “F” for the course. Consult the “Academic Honesty Policy” in the Student Handbook or clarify with the instructor.

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**Required Texts**


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**OUTLINE**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>August 25</td>
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I. HINDUISM: THE ORIGINS

August 27  The Indus River Civilization Fowler, Ch. 12
Vedic Religion Fowler, Ch. 13
Hymns to the Devas Radhakrishnan:
Indra: 5,7
Agni: 9
Surya: 12
Usas: 13

August 29  Priests (Brahmins) and Sacrifice (Yajna)
Radha:
Agni: p.7
Vak: 15
Purusa: 19
Prajapati: 24
Brhaspati: 10
Of Creation: 23

September 01 No Class. Labor Day.

September 03  Transition to Vedanta Fowler, Ch. 14

September 05  The Katha Upanishad Radh. pp. 42-50
Death’s Answer: Path of Knowledge
The Individual and Universal Self
Ignorance and Wisdom
Levels of the Human: Yoga and Knowledge of Self

September 08  The Mundaka Upanishad Radh.51-55;60-1
Lower and higher knowledge
Lower and higher Self or selves
The limited nature of rituals and good deeds
Knowing Brahman is becoming Brahman
The Aitareya Upanishad Radh. 63-64
Creation of the universe

September 10  The Chandogya Upanishad Radh.68-70;72--77
The Dialogue of Shvetaketu and Uddalaka
Prajapati and the Gods

September 12  The Brihadaranyake Upanishad Radh. 77-89
Maitreyi and Yajnavalkya: The Nature of Brahman and Atman (Self)
(Read: Taittariya Upa. pp.60-61 on Bliss)
The contrast between desire and renunciation;
ignorance and knowledge
Karma (good and evil deeds), Death-Rebirth (Samsara),
and Liberation moksha)

II. THE BHAGAVAD GITA AND THE WAY OF ACTION

September 15  Varnashramadharma Fowler,Chs. 1,3,4

September 17  Arjuna and Krishna Gita, Chs. 1&2

September 19  Action or Contemplation? Gita, Chs. 3&4

September 22, 24 Sankya-Yoga * Action Gita, Chs. 5,6,13
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<td>September 26</td>
<td>Krishna as the Lord</td>
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<td>September 29</td>
<td>The Way of Devotion</td>
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### III. POPULAR HINDUISM

**Devotionalism (Bhakti)**

- **October 03**  "Seeing" and Devotionalism  
  Eck Ch.1
  Video: "Land of 330 Million Gods"

- **October 06**  Fall Break. No Class

- **October 08**  The Nature of the Hindu Image  
  Eck, Ch. 2

- **October 10**  Worship (Puja) in Home & Temple  
  Fowler, Ch. 6

- **October 13**  Pilgrimage  
  Eck, Ch. 3
  Video: "Kashi: City of Lights"  
  Fowler, Ch. 11

**Vaishnavism: Krishna & Radha**

- **October 15**  Rise of Vaishnavism  
  Fowler, Ch. 15

- **October 17**  Krishna & Radha (1)  
  Knisley, pp. 56-65

- **October 20**  Krishna & Radha (2)  
  Knisley, pp. ??-55

**Shaivism: Shiva & Kali**

- **October 22**  Shiva and Shaivism  
  Internet Research

- **October 24**  Kali & Shiva  
  Knisley, 90-96; 101-108; 114-126

- **October 27**  Kali: Interpretations  
  Knisley, Ch. 4

**Exam #3 (TAKE HOME)**

### IV. BUDDHISM: Basic Teachings

**The Buddha**

- **October 29**  The Buddha  
  Rahula, Ch. I
  Video: "In the Footprints of the Buddha"

**The Teachings (Dhamma/Dharma)**

- **October 31**  Dukkha (Suffering, Dis-ease)  
  Rahula, Ch II
  Radh. pp. 274-8

- **November 03**  Anatta (No-Self)  
  Rahula, Ch VI
  Radh. pp. 280-4

- **November 05**  Tanha & Nibbana/Nirvana  
  Rahula, Chs III, IV
  Radh. pp. 289-292
November 07  Magga: The Path  Rahula, Ch V
November 10  Mindfulness/Mental Cult.  Rahula, Ch VII and pp.109-114
November 12-17  The Dhammapada  Radh. (Selections)

**Mahayana: Emptiness, Compassion & the Bodhisattva**

November 19  The Bodhisattva Ideal  Internet Research
November 21  Mahayana Philosophy  Handouts

**November 24**  7:00 p.m. FILM: Gandhi (Prosser)
Read: Handout

November 26,28  No Class. Thanksgiving Break

**V. MAHATMA GANDHI AND THE WAY OF ACTION**

December 01  Religion, Truth and Ethics
Read: Gandhi, pp.51-76

December 03  Ahimsa, Non-Violence
Read: Gandhi, pp.77-97

December 05  Self-Discipline, Poverty and Plenty
Read: Gandhi, pp.97-112; 118-125

December 08  Democracy and Women
Read: Gandhi, pp.126-137; 146-152

December 10  Review
T.B.A.  FINAL EXAM

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### October 01
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Required Texts

Bhagavad Gita
VI. 32

Sanskrit

atmaupamyena sarvatra
samam pasyati yo ‘rjuna
sukham va yadi va duhkham
sa yogi paramo matah.

Radhakrishnan’s Translation
Easwaran’s Trans

He, O Arjuna, who sees with equality everything, When a person responds
to the joys and sorrows of others
in the image of his own self, as if they were his own,
whether in pleasure or in pain, he has attained the highest state
he is considered a perfect yogin. of spiritual union.

VI. 46

tapasvibhyo ‘dhiko yogi
jnaniḥbhyo ‘pi mato ‘dhikah
karmīyas ca ‘dhiko yogi
tasmad yogi bhava ‘rjuna

Radhakrishnan Transl. Easwaran Transl.
The yogin is greater than the ascetic; Meditation is superior to severe
he is considered to be greater asceticism and the path of
than the man of knowledge, knowledge. It is also superior
greater than the man of ritual works, to selfless service. May you at-
therefore do thou become a yogin, tain the goal of meditation,
o Arjuna.

O Arjuna.