Wisdoms of Liberation: Dharma, Yoga, and Tantra
Course Number: PHPT-4500
3 Units
Starr King School for the Ministry – Graduate Theological Union
Spring 2016

Instructor Information:
Rev. Jeremiah Kalendae, M.Div., M.S.S.A.
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Availability: Available by appointment

Meeting Dates and Times:
Thursday 2:10-5:00pm at SKSM (Fireside Room)

Course Description:
Through philosophical reflection, study of sacred texts, and application of spiritual technologies, this course will introduce pathways of spiritual liberation found in dharmic, yogic, and tantric wisdom traditions. Students will investigate the thea/ologies, cosmologies, soteriologies, cultures, and consciousnesses of these diverse traditions. Special analysis will be given to marginalized heterodox traditions of spiritual emancipation--such as the tantric path of the Mahavidyas or Great Wisdoms. Scriptures explored will include the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Tantras, and devotional writings of the bhakti poet-saints. Coursework will include embodied ritual, religious exercise, scriptural study, spiritual lecture, pilgrimage, group processes, classroom presentations, and scholarly research. Prerequisite readings will be announced. A field trip to at least one ceremony will be required. Please see the syllabus for more information.

Learning Objectives:
During this course, students will:

• Explore dharmic, yogic, and tantric philosophical systems and their thea/ologies, cosmologies, soteriologies, and cultural contexts. Principal schools investigated through primary texts and secondary readings will be Vedanta, Yoga, Samkhya, and Tantra.

• Study primary sacred texts, engaging in interpretive comparisons and exercises, including the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Tantras, and devotional writings of the bhakti poet-saints.

• Engage with the application of holistic, integrative, and embodied spiritual technologies that advance spiritual liberation, including yogic practices, kirtan, mantra, yantra, tantric rituals, sacred rites, and ceremonies.
• Gain familiarity with heterodox movements within and beyond the Hindu tradition and discuss their relevance to contemporary counter-oppressive philosophies of spiritual liberation.

• Attend at least one Hindu ceremony of the Vedic or Tantric traditions.

**Learning Outcomes:**

At the conclusion of this course, students will...

• Philosophically reflect upon the systems studied and articulate clear philosophical positions on the themes explored (e.g., the nature of self/Self, liberation/salvation, death, the cosmos, deities, teleology, etc.). Be able to apply these philosophical reflections to one’s thea/ological process and spiritual leadership.

• Interpret sacred texts explored through personal experience, reason, scholastic commentaries, and grounded in the philosophical and broader cultural landscapes in which the texts emerged and evolved.

• Utilize spiritual technologies to advance spiritual growth and be able to adapt many of those technologies to appropriate traditions, cultural context, and identities.

• Critically analyze dynamics oppression and privilege of the philosophical systems, their cultural contexts, and contemporary realities with special attention given to race, sex, gender, sexual/affectional orientation, caste, and religious identity.

• Gain familiarity with the language, terminology, ethics, etiquette, aesthetics, and cultural contexts in which these philosophical systems are present to encourage multireligious engagement.

**Course Policies:**

• Regular class attendance and participation is expected.

• Students are expected to arrive on time and remain for the duration of the class. Students may request to be absent for up to two class sessions. Any other attendance accommodations must be approved in advance by the instructor.

• All assignments are expected to be completed on time. Any special arrangements must be made in advance with the instructor by email.

• If you have special needs, please discuss these with the instructor in advance of the beginning of the course by email.

**Course Assignments:**

• Weekly written reflections of 1-2 pages in length on the week's reading materials, experiential learning, and/or proposed questions for reflection.

• Attendance at one pilgrimage to a Temple for experiential immersion.

• Midterm of 5-7 pages exploring either 1) one of the major philosophical themes or systems in greater depth or 2) analyzing that dynamics of ceremonial/ritual process experienced in the experiential immersion in light of the material covered in class.

• Final 7-10 page reflection paper reflecting on the major philosophical themes, sacred texts, and religious practices, as they relate to one’s personal the()ology or philosophical system.
Grading:

- Students default graded as Pass/Fail
- Letter grades can be requested from Instructor and the Registrar before the course commences.
- Evaluation Value Distribution:
  - Course Attendance & Participation 40%
  - Weekly Written Reflections 25%
  - Midterm Paper 15%
  - Final Paper 20%

Required Texts:


- 27 Used from $14.29 54 New from $14.30
- ISBN-10: 0865477361


- Used from $9.16 New from $21.10
- ISBN-10: 0231112653


- Used $12.71
- ISBN-10: 1440071233


- 12 New from $29.37 42 Used from $0.76
- ISBN-10: 0300079834


- 20 Used from $10.48 12 New from $25.00
- ISBN-10: 0520204999


- 22 New from $24.90 29 Used from $5.88
- ISBN-10: 0195134346


**Course Schedule:**
*The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule and assigned readings to achieve course objectives.

**Week 1: Introduction to the Course**
- History of Indian Philosophical Traditions
- Cultural Landscape of Religious Systems
- Language and Vocabulary
- Introducing the Vedic Tradition
- Student Introductions

Readings (To be read for this week):
- *Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion* (Pages 1-63)
- *Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Pages 1-92)
- *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (Read 1-72, 73-176)
- Rig Vega Selection

**Week 2: Vedic Tradition and the Upanishads**

Readings (To be read for this week):
- *Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion* (Pages 64-156)
- *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (Read 177-274; 362-365; 366-377; 394-411)

**Week 3: Vedic Tradition and the Upanishads**
- *Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion* (Pages 64-156)
- *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (Read 177-274; 362-365; 366-377; 394-411)

**Week 4: Vedic Tradition and the Upanishads**
- *Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion* (Pages TBD)
- *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (Pages TBD)
Week 5: Vaishnavism, Saivism, & The Bhakti Movement

Readings (To be read for this week):

- The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War (Pages TBD)
- Speaking of Śiva (Pages TBD)

Week 6: Vaishnavism, Saivism, & The Bhakti Movement

Readings (To be read for this week):

- The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War (Pages TBD)
- Speaking of Śiva (Pages TBD)

Week 7: Vaishnavism, Saivism, & The Bhakti Movement

Readings (To be read for this week):

- The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War (Pages TBD)
- Speaking of Śiva (Pages TBD)

Week 8: The Yogic Philosophy of The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

- History of Yoga
- Yoga Sutras Chapter 1 & Commentary: Meditative Absorption

Readings (To be read for this week):

- The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali (Pages i-Iix; 3-168)

Week 9: The Yogic Philosophy of The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

- Yoga Sutras Chapter 2 & Commentary: Practice

Readings (To be read for this week):

- The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali (Pages 169-301)

Week 10: The Yogic Philosophy of The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

- Yoga Sutras Chapter 3-4 & Commentary: Mystic Powers and Absolute Independence

Readings (To be read for this week):

- The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali (Pages 301-476)

Week 11: Shaktism, Tantra, and the Mahavidyas

Readings (To be read for this week):

- Tantra in Practice (Pages TBD)
- Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine (Pages TBD)
- Singing to the Goddess: Poems to Kālī and Umā from Bengal (Pages TBD)
Week 12: Shaktism, Tantra, and the Mahavidyas

Readings (To be read for this week):

- *Tantra in Practice (Pages TBD)*
- *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine (Pages TBD)*
- *Singing to the Goddess: Poems to Kālī and Umā from Bengal (Pages TBD)*

Week 13: Shaktism, Tantra, and the Mahavidyas

Readings (To be read for this week):

- *Tantra in Practice (Pages TBD)*
- *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine (Pages TBD)*
- *Singing to the Goddess: Poems to Kālī and Umā from Bengal (Pages TBD)*

Suggested Reading:


20 Used from $9.49 27 New from $25.57
ISBN-10: 0873957296


11 Used from $19.03 10 New from $27.31
ISBN-10: 0791438163