

INTRODUCING HINDU DOCTRINES: ART, RITUAL, SEMIOTICS, DRAMATURGY, AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE- HRST-2101



(PDT) (Online, synchronous on Zoom)

THURSDAY, 2.10PM–5PM

SYLLABUS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce Hinduism, the world's third largest faith, and a five-thousand year history through a multi-disciplinary lens focusing on Hindu theological doctrines in diverse aspects of sacred art, ritual, semiotics, dramaturgy, and contemplative practice. As such, it will examine both the theory and practice of Hindu theological themes in the context of art, ethics, and aesthetics. These themes will be examined through readings, audio-visual presentations. This course will use a lecture and discussion format. Requirements include reflections on readings, one short essay, and a final paper. The course is appropriate for students in MA, M.Div., MASC and MTS programs. Due to COVID, the class will not attend liturgical music events and visit a contemplative center, or a Hindu house of worship but participate in an online worship organized especially for this class.



REQUIRED TEXTS

1) Author: Gavin Flood
Title: *An Introduction to Hinduism*
Publisher: Cambridge University Press
ISBN: 0-521-43304-5

2) Author: Sushil Mittal & Gene Thursby
Title: *The Hindu World*
Publisher: Routledge
13 Digit ISBN: 978-0-4157-7227-3

3) *Articles on Moodle*

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

| Outcome | Assessment |
|--|---|
| 1. Outcome 1 Develop a sound understanding of what makes a person “Hindu.” | 1. Assessment 1 / SLO 1 PARTICIPATION ONLINE PŪJĀ |
| 2. Outcome 2 Demonstrate understanding of ideas and concepts by organization and classification. | 2. Assessment 2 /SLO 2 READING ASSIGNMENT SUMMATIONS |
| 3. Outcome 3 Analyze major themes, principles, priorities, assumptions, and expectations of the Hindu tradition. | 3. Assessment 3 /SLO 3 CLASS PARTICIPATION & DISCUSSION FACILITATION |
| 4. Outcome 4 Display capacity for critical-constructive-creative thought on the challenges that face contemporary Hindus. | 4. Assessment 4/ SLO 4 READING ASSIGNMENT REFLECTIONS |
| 4. Outcome 4 Apply acquired knowledge, ideas, insights, and principles to contemporary concerns—moral, ethical, and relational. | 5. Assessment 4 /SLO 4 FINAL TERM PAPER |

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Events: Symposium & Visit to a Temple (15%)

It is not possible to experience the Hindu world without some degree of familiarity with praxis in a house of worship and scholarly discussions by Hindu scholar-practitioners. We will have two events, with personal reflections.

- i. Online Pūjā participation. Details will be discussed in Class.

2. Reading Assignment: Reflections AND one short essay (30%)

- i. Based on the readings, reflections will be in the format of QCC.
Q: Question.
C: Comment
C: Concern
- ii. An essay of 600 words to be shared with other students for discussion.

3. Class Attendance, Discussion, and Participation in Events (20%)

Missed classes (unless the cause is a critical reason) will affect student understanding and participation and will impact the grade for SLO 3.

4. Term Paper (25%)

Write a well-researched paper (5,000—6,000 Words, approx. 15-20 pages, 12-pt. font, Times Roman, doubled spaced, with footnotes and an annotated bibliography) on a topic or theme that pertains to the Hindu world.

- Be sure to document the philosophical and literary sources.
- You may use either sources that speak from within or outside the tradition, but be critically aware of, and document the authors' perspective and standpoint.
- Your grade for the Term Paper will be based on whether and to what extent you have fulfilled the following requirements:
- Topic and sources must be first approved by the instructor.

1. Focused choice of theme
2. Careful and comprehensive understanding of the readings being used
3. Clarity of thesis
4. Critical and Constructive approach to the subject
5. Effective responses to the inquiries you have put forth
6. Sufficient textual or other evidence to support your thesis
7. Consistent Style & Research Paper Format (Style Sheet will be given) – Turabian Style
8. Proper use of citations - Turabian
9. Breadth of research (multiple sources beyond class readings)
10. Consistency in recording citations (same style, not multiple styles)

READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: September 10

Lecture – Introduction to the Hindu World

Overview of Course

- Symbolism of Ganesh icon
- Gavin Flood: “Points of Departure & Ancient Origins ” | pp. 1-50
- *Article on Moodle:*
 - ✓ *Arvind Sharma: What is Hinduism?*

Week 2: September 17

Lecture – The Upaniṣad-s “The Whispered Wisdom of the Early Upaniṣad-s”

- *Videos & Translations on Moodle: The Suktams from the Vedas*
- *The Hindu World:*
 - ✓ Chapter 2. Veda and Upaniṣad
 - ✓ Rita D. Sherma, *Hinduism and the Divine: A New Introduction to Hindu Theology*, IB Tauris, 2018.
God, gods, or Godhead? The Architecture of Hindu Theology

Week 3: September 24

Lecture – Major Doctrinal Themes

- *The Hindu World*
 - ✓ *Chapter 10. Dharma*
 - ✓ *Chapter 11. Artha*
 - ✓ *Chapter 12. Kāma*
 - ✓ *Chapter 13. Moksha*

Week 4: October 1

Contemplative Practice

Lecture – Yoga and the Quest for the True Self

- Gavin Flood: “Yoga and Renunciation” | 75-102
- Georg Feuerstein | *The Yoga Tradition* | Introduction: The Impulse Toward Transcendence | xxv
- 10 Sanskrit Definitions of Yoga

**Week 5: October 8
Contemplative Practice**

Lecture – Yoga and the Quest for the True Self

- Article on Moodle:
 - ✓ Georg Feuerstein | *The Yoga Tradition* | Building Blocks | 3
 - ✓ David Gordon White | *Yoga, Brief History of an idea*

Week 6: October 15

Lecture – The Great Epics

- *The Hindu World*:
 - ✓ Chapter 3. Mahābhārata
 - ✓ Chapter 4. Rāmāyaṇa

Week 7: October 22

Lecture – The Vaiṣṇava Vision of God: The Importance of Narrative Theology

- Symbolism in Viṣṇu iconography
- Gavin Flood: “Narrative Traditions and Early Vaishnavism”
- *The Hindu World*:
 - ✓ Chapter 8. Vaiṣṇava (*Theistic and Devotional Movements*)

**Week 8: October 29
READING WEEK**

Week 9: November 5

Lecture – The Vaiṣṇava Vision of God II: Loving God / Surrendering Self

- Gavin Flood: “The Love of Viṣṇu”
- *Article on Moodle:*
 - ✓ Rita D. Sherma: “Sri Ramakrishna and the flavors of Bhakti”

Week 10: November 12

Lecture – The Śaiva Vision of God

- Symbolism in Śivā iconography
- *The Hindu World:*
 - ✓ Chapter 6. Śaiva (*Theistic and Devotional Movements*)

Articles:

- Gavin Flood: “Śaiva and Tantric Religion” | pp. 148 – 173

Week 11: November 19

Lecture – The Śakta Vision of God

- Symbolism in Devī iconography
- *The Hindu World:*
 - ✓ Chapter 7. Śakta (*Theistic and Devotional Movements*)

Articles:

- “Sa Ham: I am She” (Rita D. Sherma)

Week 12: November 26

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Week 13: December 3

Lecture – Singing, Dancing, Reading, & Reciting the Sacred Texts

- *Article on Moodle:*

Ravi M. Gupta & Kenneth R. Valpey, *The Bhāgavata Purāṇa: Sacred Text and Living Tradition*.

- ✓ 9. *Dance: Krishna Come Soon: Bhārata Nāṭyam and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa on Stage*
- ✓ 10. *Song: Two Braj Bhāshā Versions of the Rāsa Līlā Pañcādhyāyī and Their Musical Performance in Vaiṣṇava Worship*
- ✓ 11. *Recitation: Bhāgavata Recitation in Changing Times*

Week 14: December 10

**Experiential / Observation: Online Pūjā
(Ritual of Offering: Food, Flowers, Music)**

**LAST DAY OF CLASS
SUMMATION/STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

POLICIES

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the presentation of another's ideas, methods, research, or words without proper acknowledgement. It runs the gamut from failing to cite a reference (sloppy scholarship), to passing off another's work as one's own. It includes close paraphrasing as well as lifting of entire lines nearly verbatim without acknowledgement. As the effects of the plagiarism will be the same regardless of intent, intent will not be construed as essential to the act, although it may be considered in determining whether the charge of plagiarism should be pursued or what the penalty may be. For general requirements for proper acknowledgement in written work, see the most current edition of Kate Turabian, *Manual for the Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Arrangements in Cases of Documented Disability:

If you will need special arrangements for meeting course requirements for reasons of documented disability, please speak to one of the instructors very early in the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. A description of the GTU policy regarding accommodation for differently abled students is online at: <http://gtu.edu/admissions/life-at-gtu/students-with-disabilities>.

Honor Code:

Students in all courses and phases of the Doctoral Program are subject to the GTU Honor Code, described on p. 15 of the *Doctoral Program Handbook*. Please note: “Documented evidence that a student has violated the honor code may result in immediate expulsion from the program.”

Other GTU Policies:

Students and faculty in required Doctoral Seminars are also subject to GTU Institutional Policies, detailed on pp. 54 ff. in the *Doctoral Program Handbook*, including: Non-discrimination, AIDS non-discrimination, and Drug Free Environment (52), Inclusive Language (54), Plagiarism (55 ff.), Exceptions and Accommodations (63 ff.), and Sexual Misconduct (65 ff.).

