

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY HINDUISM



RELS-265

Spring Semester 2007

Department of Religious Studies
The College of the Holy Cross

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Description: This course presents a thematic survey of the Hindu tradition in its modern and contemporary forms. The course will rely extensively on audio-visual materials and encourage active student participation in class discussions.

Goals: This class has four (4) overall objectives:

- 1) to provide an overview of crucial themes in modern and contemporary Hindu religiosity.
- 2) to examine issues in Hinduism's relationship to Indian society and culture.
- 3) to examine issues relating to Hindu understandings of gender relations.
- 4) to provide students with multiple ways of engaging the diversity of the Hindu tradition.

Format: Lecture and Discussion.

Evaluation: There are six (6) graded exercises: Three essays of 5-7 pages, a midterm and a final. Class participation is also graded. All graded exercises are weighted equally.

All assignments will be given a letter grade. When your final grade is calculated, the individual letter grades you have received will be converted into a GPA figure: 4.0 (A); 3.7 (A-); 3.3 (B+); 3.0 (B); 2.7 (B-); 2.3 (C+); 2.0 (C); 1.7 (C-); 1.3 (D+); 1 (D); 0 (F). Numerical examination grades will have these equivalents: 93-100 (A); 90-92 (A-); 88-89 (B+); 83-87 (B); 80-82 (B-); 78-79 (C+); 73-77 (C); 70-72 (C-); 69-68 (D+); 63-67 (D); 60-62 (F). Please note that you must reach the full level of a grade to earn it. Thus a 3.25 is still a "B" even though it is closer to a B+.

In grading papers, I also use “split grades” such as A/A-, A-/B+, etc. The numerical value of these grades is the average of the two grades, so an A-/B+ would be 3.5, for example. Examinations do not receive split grades.

Paper Format: Papers must be submitted as an email attachment in a word processing program that can be read by Microsoft Word. The font size should either be 10 or 12 point. Each paper must have a centered title with the student’s name and class on the lines below. Thus:

APOCALYPSE WHEN? PROPHECY AND JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

Jane Doe
Class of 2009

All papers will be archived to deter collusion.

Class Policies:

Students are required to complete the assigned readings before the class period in which they are discussed. Attendance is also required and I will have a sign in sheet available before each class. Students are allowed three unexcused absences per semester—an unexcused absence is any absence that is not excused by a written statement from the appropriate Class Dean. Unexcused absences beyond the limit will adversely affect your final grade by one-half letter grade (i.e. from a B to a B-). This is a “one-time” only penalty, i.e. additional absences beyond the limit will not further reduce your grade. Since the syllabus is subject to modification and change, students are also responsible for these changes even if they were not able to attend the class in which the changes were announced. Late work will be penalized one full letter grade per day.

Honesty:

I advise all students to be aware of the College’s policies pertaining to intellectual honesty. All students will be required to testify to the integrity of their work in a written statement. In order to complete the assignments for this class, students will not need to consult any other source beyond the required texts. If a student does rely upon an outside source for an assignment, he or she should simply cite that work in a parenthetical note (see “Citation Rules” below). **Not citing an outside source that you draw upon will constitute a violation of The College’s Academic Honesty Policy. I reserve the right to submit all papers to an online source that will check for plagiarism.** Work that violates the College’s Academic Honesty Policy will receive the grade of F (0). The student will also then be subject to administrative sanctions ranging from academic probation to expulsion.

To be sure to avoid the possibility of collusion, I would strongly advise all students not to share written work before it is handed in. If you do talk to your fellow students about a particular assignment, be sure to give appropriate acknowledgment to your peers in the final drafts of your written assignments if their help has been particularly useful to you in your writing. Please follow instructions in “Citation Rules” below. If such acknowledgements are not made, it could constitute a case of intellectual dishonesty. **Students are absolutely forbidden from sharing a graded paper with a student who has yet to complete the assignment (i.e. with a student who has an extension). Students who violate this standard will be charged with collusion.**

Citation Rules:

- 1) For interpretative points that come directly from one of the course textbooks, a parenthetical citation such as (Divakaruni, 42) will be acceptable. You do not need to cite “facts” such as when Gandhi was born or how many varnas there are in Hinduism.
- 2) For interpretative points that are not your own and instead come from a lecture, a parenthetical citation such as (Schmalz 10/12/06) will be acceptable. Again you do not need to cite “facts.”
- 3) For interpretative points that are not your own and instead come from another student, a parenthetical citation such as (Jane Doe 10/12/06) will be acceptable.
- 4) For all internet sources you must use footnotes and, in the footnote, include the entire address and the date accessed. **You are strongly discouraged from using internet sources including for examinations. If you use an internet source for an examination you must check with me first and cite it in your answer.**
- 5) For all other print sources (such as books or journal articles), you must use footnotes that include the author’s full name, article or book title, journal title if applicable, publisher, date and page number. **You are strongly discouraged from using other print sources not identified in the syllabus.**

Examples:

Book: Darius Cooper, *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray: Between Tradition and Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25.

Article: Mathew N. Schmalz, “Images of the Body in the Life and Death of a North Indian Catholic Catechist,” *History of Religions* 39 (November): 177.

ERes:

Documents for the course will be available on ERes accessed through the library’s homepage. **The course password is “gandhi.”** Document names are included in the relevant section of the syllabus.

Extensions:

All students are given the opportunity take advantage of a single extension of forty-eight hours (48) for any paper (this does not include the midterm, final exam or final paper). **You must however e-mail or call me before the paper is due** in order to receive the extension (you do not need to provide reasons for the extension). This extension covers everything from personal emergencies to computer failure. No other extension will be granted without the explicit written permission of the appropriate class Dean.

E-Mail:

Class announcements, outlines and assignments will usually be distributed by electronic mail. Please be sure to check your e-mail regularly.

Texts:

Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable*
L.A. Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*
L.A. Babb, *Redemptive Encounters*.
Diana Eck, *Darsan*.
Mohandas Gandhi, *The Essential Gandhi*.
Sudhir Kakar, *Shamans, Mystics and Doctors*.
Kamala Markandaya, *Nectar in a Sieve*.

U. R. Anantha Murthy, *Samskara*.
Rabindranath Tagore, *Home and the World*.
Margaret Trawick, *Notes on Love in a Tamil Family*.

Readings Available on ERES:

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, "Gandhism: The Doom of Untouchables;"
Gerald Berreman, "Caste in India and the United States"
Vinoba Bhave, "The Path of Love."
Louis Dumont, "Caste and Stratification"
J. T. F. Jordens, "Hindu Religious and Social Reform in British India."
Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion* (selections).
Pauline Kolenda, "The Changing Caste System in India"
Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, "Morality and Politics."
Lala Lajpat Rai, "The Remedy for Revolution."
Sudhir Kakar, *Intimate Relations*.

PLAN OF THE COURSE

I. INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1: PRELIMINARIES

January 17: *Introduction to Hinduism and the Course*

January 19: *Historical Overview*

READING: J. T. F. Jordens, "Hindu Religious and Social Reform in British India."

Available via ERES: Jordens.

WEEK 2: NOVEL AND SHORT STORY

January 22: *Tagore*

READING: Rabindranath Tagore, *Home and the World*, 17-103.

January 24: *Tagore*

READING: Rabindranath Tagore, *Home and the World*, 104-203.

January 26: *Premchand*

READING: Premchand, "Widow with Sons," "Wife into Husband," "The Funeral Feast," "Desire."

Available via ERES: Prem

II. HINDU RELIGIOSITY

WEEK 3: DEFINING HINDUISM

January 29: *The Polytheistic Imagination*

READING: Diana Eck, *Darsan*, 1-31.

January 31: *The Virtual Village*

Reading: <http://virtualvillage.wesleyan.edu/>

GUEST LECTURE: Peter Gottschalk, Wesleyan University.

February 2: *Image and Pilgrimage*

READING: Diana Eck, *Darshan*, 32-76.

First Paper Due via Email at 10 pm

WEEK 4: VILLAGE HINDUISM

February 5: *Defining Hinduism*

READING: Wendy Doniger "Hinduism," Arvind Sharma, "Hinduism;" Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion* (selections).

Available via ERES: Sharma, King.

February 7: *Village Hinduism: Puja and Ritual*

READING: L. A. Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*, 31-68.

February 9: *Rites of the Life Cycle and Festivals*

READING: L. A. Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*, 69-102; 123-176.

WEEK 5: HEALTH AND HEALING

February 12: *Thinking About Hinduism*

READING: L. A. Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*, 177-246.

February 14: *Demonic Possession*

READING: Sudhir Kakar, *Shamans, Mystics and Doctors*, 15-87.

February 16: *Tantra*

READING: Sudhir Kakar, *Shamans, Mystics and Doctors*, 151-218.

WEEK 6: CONTEMPORARY HINDU MOVEMENTS

February 19: *Hindu Biology*

READING: Sudhir Kakar, *Shamans, Mystics and Doctors*, 219-278.

Second Paper Due via Email by 10 pm

February 21: *Radhasoami*

READING: L. A. Babb, *Redemptive Encounters*, 15-61

February 23: *Identity and Recognition*

READING: L. A. Babb, *Redemptive Encounters*, 62-92.

WEEK 7: CONTEMPORARY HINDU MOVEMENTS

February 26: *Brahma Kumaris*

READING: L. A. Babb, *Redemptive Encounters*, 93-158.

February 28: *Satya Sai Baba*

READING: L. A. Babb, *Redemptive Encounters*, 159-204.

March 2: **Examination**

WEEK 8: SPRING VACATION

III. HINDU SOCIAL THOUGHT

WEEK 9: CONSIDERING GANDHI

March: 12: *The Man*

READING: Gandhi, *The Essential Gandhi*, Part One (entirety except “Victory in South Africa).

March: 14: *Gandhi’s Reflections*

READING: Gandhi, *The Essential Gandhi*, Part Two (“Facing the British,” “Segregation,” “Non-Violence,” “Gandhi’s Message to All Men,” “Gandhi’s Political Principles.”)

March: 16: *Gandhi and Social Issues*

READING: Gandhi, *The Essential Gandhi*, Part Two (“Sex, Sanitation, and Segregation,” “Blueprint for a Better Life,” “Gandhi on Socialism,” “Gandhi About Himself,” “Gandhi’s Advice to Negroes,” “Love Versus War,” “Quit India.”)

WEEK 10: POLITICS AND CASTE

March 19: *Ambedkar’s Critique of Gandhi*

READING: Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, “Gandhism: The Doom of Untouchables.”

Available Via ERES: Ambedkar

March 21: *Hindu Political Visions*

READING: Lala Lajpat Rai, “The Remedy for Revolution;” Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, “Morality and Politics;” Vinoba Bhave, “The Path of Love.”

Available via ERES: Rai, Radha, Bhave.

March 23: *Introduction to Caste*

READING: Pauline Kolenda, “The Changing Caste System in India,” Louis Dumont, “Caste, Stratification, and Racism,” Gerald Berreman, “Caste in India and the United States”

Available Via ERes: Kolenda, Dumont, Berreman.

WEEK 11: UNTOUCHABILITY

March: 26: *Untouchability*

READING: Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable*, 9-86.

March 28: *Considering Untouchability*

READING: Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable*, 87-157.

March 30: *A Rite for a Deadman*

READING: U. R. Anantha Murthy, *Samskara*, 1-87.

WEEK 12: BRAHMANISM

April 2: *A Critique of Brahmanism*

READING: U. R. Anantha Murthy, *Samskara*, 87-147.

April 4: *Marriage and Love*

READING: Sudhir Kakar, *Intimate Relations* (selections)

Available via ERES: kakar1

April 6: No Class

IV. "HINDU" RELATIONSHIPS

WEEK 13: GENDER ISSUES

April 9: No Class

April 10: Optional Film: *Ek Chadar, Maili Si*, 7:00 pm, Smith 201.

April 11: *Sex Wars*

READING: Sudhir Kakar, *Intimate Relations* (selections)

Available via ERES: kakar2

Third Essay Due Via Email by 10 pm

April 13: *Gandhi and Women*

READING: Sudhir Kakar, *Intimate Relations* (selections)

Available via ERES: kakar3

WEEK 14: WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

April 16: *Rukhmani*

READING: Markandaya, *Nectar in a Sieve*, Part I.

April 18: *The Family*

READING: Markandaya, *Nectar in a Sieve*. Part II.

April 20: *Being Tamil*

READING: Margaret Trawick, *Notes on Love in a Tamil Family*, 1-88.

WEEK 15: A SOUTH INDIAN FAMILY

April 23: *Love and Desire*

READING: Margaret Trawick, *Notes on Love in a Tamil Family*, 89-116, 155-186.

Optional Film: *Dadi and Her Family*, 7 pm, Smith 201

April 25: *Siblings, Spouses, Men and Women*

READING: Margaret Trawick, *Notes on Love in a Tamil Family*, 187-214.

April 27: *Understanding Love in an Indian Family*

READING: Margaret Trawick, *Notes on Love in a Tamil Family*, 215-255.

WEEK 16: CONCLUSION

April: 30: *Review for Final Examination* (or snow day make-up)

May 5: Final Examination at 2:30.