

Department Of Philosophy and Religion Studies
University of North Texas

Great Religions PHIL 2070-Honors

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Office Hours: M/W/F 9.30 – 11am and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Religion is the one of the most pervasive yet one of the least understood topics in global life. From the caves of the Afghan-Pakistan border to the cul-de-sacs of the American Sunbelt, faith shapes and suffuses the way billions of people-Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist think and act, vote and fight, love and, tragically, hate. It is the most ancient of forces. In this course, we will study several “great” religions from a comparative perspective.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mittal, Sushil and Gene R. Thursby. *The Hindu World*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

AND

Jain, Pankaj. *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities*. 1st edition, 2011, Ashgate Publishing. Buy it from <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409405917> and use this discount code to get 35% discount: PJDEUS35. Alternatively, place your order by calling Ms. Suzanne Sprague at: 802-276-3162 ext. 302.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The students can expect to

- Learn the basic history and forms of religious thought and practice in the classical and modern age by focusing on textual materials and field work reports;
- Learn the mythology and ritual structure of religious practice;
- Develop the analytic skills necessary to interpret basic religious modes of discourse, including symbols, myths, rituals, and sacred texts;
- See the mediation and adaptation of classical ways of thought and action into the contemporary world.

Course Meetings

Lecture

Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Time: 3.00 - 4:20pm

253 Chemistry Building

Blackboard Website (<http://learn.unt.edu>)

You are expected to check the course website periodically because occasional readings in PDF format or other information germane to the class will be conveyed through this medium. All assignments are also to be submitted online.

Grading

Grade Components

Component	Weight	Details
Participation in class and on the Blackboard discussion board	25%	<p>Students are expected to come to class having completed all written, readings, and viewing assignments and should be prepared to actively participate in meaningful discussion about readings in question and/or complete a short fact-quiz (these will be occasional, but usually unannounced). Active participation may include sharing your questions and comments about the readings with the class, engaging your classmates in relevant and meaningful dialogue based on the topics/readings, and/or participating in other class activities (e.g., small group discussions, worksheets, and so forth) online on Blackboard Vista.</p> <p>Class preparation and participation is evaluated using the following criteria:</p> <p>A+ (100%) Outstanding class preparation and class participation. Student meets and exceeds all criteria for "A" (described below).</p> <p>A (95%) Student comes to class prepared, having read and thought about the assigned films and texts and having completed all written assignments. Student often comes with written notes, and participates actively in class. Student arrives on time, stays the full length of the class, is attentive, responds when called upon, and volunteers frequently with pertinent questions and comments.</p> <p>B (85%) Student is usually prepared, sometimes with written notes, and responds when called upon. Student is attentive, participates in all activities, and volunteers with questions and comments on occasion.</p>

Component	Weight	Details
		<p>C (75%) Student shows evidence of being unprepared from time to time. Due to lack of preparation, student may have some trouble responding to instructor's questions or participating in class discussion/activities. Student does not volunteer often and sometimes comes to class late/leaves early.</p> <p>D (65%) Student is unprepared and/or inattentive. Student never volunteers and regularly comes to class late/leaves early.</p> <p>F (0%) Student exhibits a lack of concern for the class, sleeps in class, or distracts his/her classmates. Student's behavior has a negative effect on the class.</p>
Mid Term Exams/papers	30%	Exams in-class can be essay, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, etc. The instructor reserves the right to provide take-home essay questions in advance that are prepared outside of class.
Class Presentation	20%	Present your work-in-progress for your final paper and provide feedback to other students' similar work.
Final paper	25%	The final paper of about eight to ten pages must be based on your visit to the temple in the Dallas area. More details will be announced well in advance.

Late Assignments

Late submissions will be marked down one letter grade per day, except in the case of excused absences. Extensions will be granted only in extenuating circumstances, at the discretion of the instructor, in line with university policy on attendance. In the case of an excused absence, students should submit any missed assignments on the next class day that he/she is in attendance.

Attendance Policy

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory. Some absences may be excused in accordance with the university attendance regulation. Refer to UNT Policy for further information, including the university definition of excused absences.

Absences

For every unexcused absence in excess of 2 (two), your semester grade will be reduced by one percentage point per additional absence. If you accumulate 6 (six) or more unexcused absences, your semester grade will be an F. If you miss more than 10 minutes of a class period (unless pre-approved by me), it will count as absence; however, you are still encouraged to attend so as not to miss the material covered in class.

Makeup Work

If you miss class for any reason, whether excused or unexcused, you are still expected to be prepared for the next class. Students should contact a classmate for information on missed material and assignments prior to the next class.

Academic Integrity

Students are required to comply with the university policy on academic integrity found in the Code of Student Conduct. Assignments are intended to assess *individual* knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, student must register with the Disability Services Office. For more information on UNT's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation.

Policy on Discrimination

UNT provides equality of opportunity in education and employment for all students and employees. Accordingly, UNT affirms its commitment to maintain a work environment for all employees and an academic environment for all students that is free from all forms of discrimination. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation is a violation of state and federal law and/or UNT policy and will not be tolerated. Harassment of any person (either in the form of quid pro quo or creation of a hostile environment) based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation also is a violation of state and federal law and/or UNT policy and will not be tolerated. Retaliation against any person who complains about discrimination is also prohibited. Any person who feels that he or she has been the subject of prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should contact the Office for Equal Opportunity.

SCHEDULE:

Week 1: Introduction and Foundations

Introduction to South Asia and the academic study of religion

Academic Study of Religion – Stewart (PDF)

“On Hinduism and Hinduisms: the way of the banyan” - Julius Lipner

Languages of India: <http://languages.iloveindia.com>

Survey of languages: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_languages_of_India

Statistics: <http://www.friesian.com/upan.htm>

- Film: *Essentials of Faith: Hinduism* <http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b3402681~S12>

Week 2: The Oral and Textual Traditions I

Veda and Upaniṣad – Laurie Patton, Purāṇa – V. N. Rao

Week 3: The Oral and Textual Traditions II

Mahābhārata – James Fitzgerald, Rāmāyaṇa – Goldman and Goldman

Week 4: Theistic and Devotional Traditions

Śaiva – Gavin Flood, Vaiṣṇava – Clooney and Stewart

Week 5: Jainism

Week 6: Buddhism

Week 7: Islam

Week 8: Daoism

Week 9: Confucianism

Week 10: Shintoism

Week 11: Judaism

Week 12: Christianity

Week 13: Religion and Ecology.

Chapters from *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities*.