

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
Department of Religious Studies  
Religions of India: Journey to the Real  
REL 3330 / RLG 5331  
Spring 2017

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Instructor:	Dr. Steven M. Vose	Class Hours:	TR 2:00-3:15
Office:	DM 359-A	Graduate Session:	T 3:30-4:45
Office Hours:	TR 12:30-1:45, or by appointment	Classroom:	PCA 150
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*'The self that is free from evils, free from old age and death, free from sorrow,  
free from hunger and thirst; the self whose desires and intentions are the Real—  
that is the self that you should try to discover.'*  
~Chāndogya Upaniṣad, 8.7.1

**Course Description:**

This course is a historical survey of the development of religious concepts, practices and traditions in the cultural region classically known as India and today referred to as South Asia. Beginning with a consideration of the Indus Valley Civilization and the formation of Vedic religion, the course traces the development of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, and Sikhism. The course will compare concepts of the self, salvation, ethics, devotion, ritual practice and visual culture across traditions from the earliest writings and material objects to contemporary times. The course will also explore religious issues facing modern India, beginning with colonialism and Indian “reformers,” Gandhi and the independence movement, Partition, and culminating with a consideration of Hindu nationalism and the status of minority groups in India today. The course examines both continuity and change over time, demonstrating how contact and debates among traditions have given them their current shape. The graduate session will examine key readings shaping the study of religion in South Asia.

**Course Grading and Requirements:**

1. Attendance and Participation (10%)
2. Nonviolence Exercise (due Fri., Feb. 17 at 11:59 PM) (15%)
3. Ramayana Project (due Fri., Mar. 31 at 11:59 PM) (30%)
4. Devotional Poems (due Wed., Apr. 26 at 11:59 PM) (15%)
5. Research Paper, 2,000 words, on topic of student choice (30%)  
(Final Draft Due Fri., Apr. 21 at 11:59 PM)

Graduate students' grades will be calculated based on:

1. Attendance and Participation (25%)
2. Discussion Leader (25%)
3. Research Paper, 4,000-5,000 words (Due Apr. 28 at 11:59 PM) (50%)

*-Class Attendance and Participation* is crucial to a successful class. Your questions will help both you and your classmates to understand the concepts and to develop your research questions. Come to class with the readings completed, bring questions and make connections with other readings. Students must attend all class meetings; one absence will be excused without penalty; others will only be excused in case of illness, emergency, or school-sanctioned event **with**

**appropriate documentation.** Late entry to class is disruptive to the instructor and to fellow students. Repeated tardiness will result in the reduction of one's grade at instructor discretion.

-For the *Nonviolence Mindfulness Exercise* assignment, students will spend one entire day trying to avoid (or account for) all forms of violence (as defined by the Jain tradition) they may commit, and then create a blog entry to detail the challenges faced throughout the day and to reflect on the experience. Students are encouraged to use videos and photos to supplement text. The assignment is **due on Blackboard by Friday, Feb. 10 at 11:59 PM**. Detailed directions are posted on Blackboard under the "Nonviolence Project" tab.

-In the *Ramayana Project*, students will work in groups to make a video telling the story of the Ramayana, then respond with a video re-telling of another group's original, and finally reflect on the re-telling of their own original. The project will take several weeks to be completed. **Groups will be assigned Tuesday, March 7**; the final group project will be **due Friday, March 24 at 11:59 PM**. Detailed directions are posted on Blackboard under the "Ramayana Project" tab.

-The *Devotional Poems* assignment will give each student a chance to compose and share their own versions of devotional lyrics in the styles of the poets of India. Poems will be **due on Wednesday, April 26 at 11:59 PM** on Blackboard (67% of assignment grade). They will also be **performed during the final exam period, Thursday, April 27, 12:00-2:00 in PCA 150**, in the classical Indian style of the poetic gathering (33% of assignment grade). Detailed directions are posted on Blackboard under the "Devotional Poems" tab.

-The *Research Paper* is **due on Friday, April 21 at 11:59 PM, posted to Blackboard**. Students must write a research paper of at least 2,000 words on a topic of their choice. The paper must be properly referenced using scholarly resources (books, journal articles, etc.). Detailed directions are posted on Blackboard under the "Research Paper" tab. Students must consult with the instructor on their topic in office hours **by Mar. 9**. A site visit project is encouraged.

### **Policies:**

1. All student work must conform to FIU policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment or course, and may also lead to disciplinary measures.
2. Late papers will lose a full letter grade for each day they are late, and will in no case be accepted after four days beyond the due date. Extensions will only be granted in cases of emergency or school-sanctioned event *with proper documentation*.

### **Grading scale:**

A 93-100	A- 90-92	B+ 87-89	B 83-86	
B- 80-82	C+ 77-79	C 73-76	D 60-72	F 0-59

### **Required Texts (Also on Course Reserve in Green Library [GL]):**

-*The Bhagavad Gita*. Translated by Laurie L. Patton. Penguin Classics, 2008.

ISBN: 9780140447903.

-All other readings are on Blackboard (**Bb**) or are **e-books** available through the library website.

### **Recommended Textbooks:**

-Joyce Flueckiger. *Everyday Hinduism*. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015. ISBN: 9781405160216.

-Lawrence A. Babb. *Understanding Jainism*. Edinburgh: Dunedin, 2015. ISBN: 9781780460321.

-John Strong. *Buddhisms: An Introduction*. London: OneWorld, 2015. ISBN: 9781780745053.

**Schedule of Readings and Class Meetings:***Of Beginnings and Origins*

Week 1 (Jan 10, 12): Course Overview, Indus Valley Civilization

Tuesday: Introductions, Overview of course

Thursday: The Indus Valley Civilization

Read for Thu: Websites: Harappa.com (see directions on Bb);  
Fran Pritchett, Columbia University, website (Bb).

Graduate Session: Discussion of research interests (no reading)

Week 2 (Jan 17, 19): The Vedas and Vedic Civilization

Tuesday: The Ritual Order of the Universe; video: *Altar of Fire*

Read for Tue: Flood, Ch. 2 “Ancient Origins” (from *An Introduction to Hinduism*) (Bb)

Thursday: The Vedas and the Vedic World

Read for Thu: Selections from the *Rig Veda* (Bb) (See Reading Guide first!)

Grad. Session: Heesterman, “India and the Inner Conflict of Tradition”;  
Inden, Intro, Chs. 1 and 3, and Conclusion from *Imagining India* (Bb)

*The Cosmic-Social Order, Renunciation, and the Problem of Action (Karma)*

Week 3 (Jan 24, 26): The New World Order: *Dharma* and Renunciation

Tuesday: The *Upaniṣads* and Renunciation

Read for Tue: Flood, Ch. 4 “Yoga and Renunciation” (Bb)

Thursday: The *Upaniṣads* and Early Vedānta

Read for Thu: Selections from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Kaṭha Upaniṣads* (See Reading Guide first!) (Bb)

Grad. Session: Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*, Part I.

Week 4 (Jan 31, Feb 2): The *Śramaṇa* Traditions: Early Jainism

Tuesday: Who Were the *Śramaṇas*? The Life of Mahāvīra

Read for Tue: Selections from the *Ācārāṅga*, *Uttarādhyāyana* and *Sūtrakṛtāṅga Sūtras*,  
and Mahāvīra’s Conception Story from the *Kalpa Sūtra* (Bb).

Thursday: Karma and Cosmology

Read for Thu: J. Long, Ch. IV: The Jain Path (from *Jainism: An Introduction*);  
“Harikeśa,” and “Jayaghoṣa vs. Vijayaghoṣa” (from *Uttarādhyāyana Sūtra*) (Bb)

Grad. Session: Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*, Part II and excerpts of Pts. III, IV, V (Bb)

Week 5 (Feb 7, 9): Jain Doctrine and Ethics

Tuesday: Karma and Ethics

Read for Tue: “The Story of Yashodhara” (Bb)

Thursday: Jain Renunciation (GUEST LECTURE: Samani Rohini Pragya)

Read for Thu: Dalrymple, “The Nun’s Tale” (from *Nine Lives*), 25 pp. (Bb)

Grad. Session: Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism*.

Week 6 (Feb 14, 16): The Life and Teachings of the Buddha

**Nonviolence Mindfulness Exercise due Friday, Feb. 17 at 11:59 PM**

Tuesday: The Life of the Buddha; video: clips from *Little Buddha*

Read for Tue: Begin reading the *Dhammapada* (Chapters [vaggas] 1-8);  
Excerpt from the *Buddhacarita* (Buddha’s Enlightenment) (Bb).

Thursday: Buddha’s *Dhamma*

Read for Thu: Finish reading the *Dhammapada* (Chapters 14, 20, 22-26) (Bb).  
 Grad Session: Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, Pt. I.

Week 7 (Feb 21, 23): Buddhist Teachings, Monasticism, and Empire

Tuesday: The Buddhist *Sangha*; Transforming the Sacrifice

Read for Tue: *Kutadanta Sutta*;  
 Buddhaghosha, The Five Precepts (Bb)

Thursday: Aśoka's Buddhist Empire; The Birth of the Great Vehicle

Read for Thu: The Aśokan Edicts;  
 Excerpts from the Heart Sutra and Lotus Sutra (Bb).

Grad. Session: Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, Pt. II (Bb)

*"Classical" Hinduism*

Week 8 (Feb 28, Mar 2): The *Purāṇas* and The Rise of the Gods: Śiva and Viṣṇu

Tuesday: Śiva: The "Erotic Ascetic"

Read for Tue: Flood, "Śiva";  
 Selections from the *Śiva Purāṇa* (Bb)

Thursday: Viṣṇu and His *Avatāras*

Read for Thu: Flood, "Narrative Traditions and Early Vaiṣṇavism;"  
 Selections from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (Bb)

Grad. Session: Nicholson, *Unifying Hinduism*, selected chapters (Bb)

*Dharma and Devotion in the Epics*

Week 9 (Mar 7, 9): The *Ramayana*: Ethical Reflection, Princely Conduct and Devotion

Tuesday: The *Ramayana*: Dharma and Devotion

**Groups Assigned for Ramayana Project**

Read for Tue: Goldman, Summary of the *Ramayana*

Thursday: The *Ramayana* Traditions in India

Read for Thu: Ramanujan, "Three Hundred Ramayanas" (Bb)

Watch for Thu: Doordharshan *Ramayan* (clips); *Sita Sings the Blues*

Grad. Session: Balcerowicz, *Early Asceticism in India*, selected chapters (Bb)

(*Video of Original Telling of Ramayana should be completed by Friday and sent to next group*)

Week 10 (Mar 14, 16): NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK!!! (Work on Ramayana Project)

Week 11 (Mar 21, 23): The *Bhagavad-Gita*: Dharma Meets Devotion (*Bhakti*)

Tuesday: The *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the *Mahābhārata*

Read for Tue: *The Bhagavad Gita*, Discourses 1-8

Thursday: Krishna's Revelation and the Birth of Devotion

Read for Thu: *The Bhagavad Gita*, Discourses 9-13, 18

Grad. Session: R. Davis, *The Bhagavad Gita: A Biography* (Bb)

Week 12 (Mar 28, 30): The Goddess, and Devotional Life: The Hindu Image and Temple

**Ramayana Group Project due Friday, March 31 at 11:59 PM**

Tuesday: *Śakti*: The Goddess in India

Read for Tue: Flood, "The Goddess and Śākta Traditions;"  
 Excerpts from Ramprasad Sen, *Grace and Mercy in Her Wild Hair* (Bb)

Thursday: The Religious Image and Temple in Hinduism

Read for Thu: Excerpts from Eck, *Darśan*;

Excerpts from Michell, *The Hindu Temple* (Bb)

Grad. Session: Readings on Tantra from Wedemeyer, Sanderson, and White (Bb)

Week 13 (Apr 4, 6): Islam in South Asia

Tuesday: Early Islam in India and the Sufi Orders

Read for Tue: Doniger, "Fusion and Rivalry under the Sultanate" (Bb)

Thursday: The Mughal Empire: Cosmopolitan Encounters

Read for Thu: Reading on *din-e ilahi*; Sufi poets of Mughal Court (TBA)

Grad. Session: Eaton, "Approaches to the Study of the Conversion to Islam in India";  
Flood, "Pillars, Palimpsests and Princely Practices";  
Truschke, "Brahmin and Jain Sanskrit Intellectuals at the Mughal Court"  
(Bb).

Week 14 (Apr 11, 13): The *Bhakti* Movement and Sikhism

Tuesday: The *Sagun* Poets

Read for Tue: Surdas and Mirabai from *Songs of the Saints of India* (Bb)

Thursday: Sikhism and *Nirgun* Devotion

Read for Thu: Guru Nanak and Kabir from *Songs of the Saints of India* (Bb)

Grad. Session: Hawley, Chapters on Mirabai and Kabir from *Three Bhakti Voices* (Bb)

Week 15 (Apr 18, 20): Gandhi and the Hindu Nation

**Final Research Paper due Friday, April 21 at 11:59 PM on Blackboard**

Tuesday: Gandhi's Non-Violence

Read for Tue: Gandhi, excerpts from *Hind Swaraj* (Bb)

Thursday: Hindu Nationalism: The Babri Masjid/Rām Janmabhoomi Controversy  
Video: *Raam ke Naam (In the Name of God)*

Grad. Session: Presentation of Research Papers

**Devotional Poems due Wednesday, April 26 at 11:59 PM on Blackboard**

**Devotional Poetry Performance: Thursday, April 27, 12:00-2:00, PCA 150 (Exam Period)**