

# Religious Studies 507: Religion in India

Instructor: Dr. Robert N. Minor

Office: 202 Smith; Hours: T, 10:00-11:00, 5:00-6:00; R, 2:15-3:00; or by appointment

This course is an upper-level introduction to religious thought and practice in India from the Vedic period to the present, with emphasis upon non-Buddhist thought and the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. The final grade will be determined by scores on a mid-term examination (25%), a final examination (35%), a short book report *for undergraduates* (20%), and class participation (20%). **An additional discussion section is required of graduate students** and thus their participation grade is (40%) The examinations will be mixed “objective” and essay in type and the final will cover material from the entire semester with heavy emphasis upon material covered after the mid-term examination. The study assignments are given in the schedule below according to the period for which they are to be completed. Students will need to master the material as the course progresses and not wait until immediately before the examinations. In all cases the assigned material will be assumed as the basis for class discussions and lectures.

The following required texts are available at the Kansas Union, Jayhawk, and University Bookstores:

Coursepack, which includes Baird, Robert D., and Bloom, Alfred, *Indian and Far Eastern Religious Traditions* (Harper and Row, 1971); Hereafter B&B

Baird, Robert D. (ed.) *Religion in Modern India*, 4th. rev. ed. (Manohar, 1995); Hereafter RMI.

Radhakrishnan, S. and Moore, Charles (eds.) *A Sourcebook of Indian Philosophy* (Princeton, 1957); Hereafter R&M.

Fuller, C.J., *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India* (Princeton, 1992). Hereafter Fuller.

**For graduate students only:** Robert N. Minor, *The Religious, the Spiritual and the Secular: Auroville and Secular India* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999)

**Attendance is required and assumed at all sessions, but it does not in itself constitute “participation.”** Students are expected to be prepared to discuss and to question the instructor. They are not always expected to understand the material just by reading it; so they are encouraged to attempt answers and pursue questions. Any primary readings assigned for a session should be brought to class (the *Sourcebook*). The participation grade is based on evidence of interest and interaction with the material, not on having the “right” answers. A **bonus** of a half-letter will be added to the total semester grade for students who do not miss any sessions for any reason during the semester. This is a bonus, over and above the 20% class participation consideration and not a part of the regular earned grade. It is given because the student has been conscientious enough to attend all sessions. Only debilitating illnesses, documented with doctor’s excuses, which will be verified by the instructor by phone, will count, but no more than two excused absences are allowed to receive this bonus.

The undergraduate book review is a ten-page, typed analysis, not a summary, of one of the following books. It is due in class April 9 **with no late papers accepted**.

Archer, W. G. *The Loves of Krishna in Painting and Poetry* (New York: Grove Press, nd)

Bhasin, Kamla and Menon, Rita (ed.) *Against All Odds: Essays on Women, Religion and Development in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1994)

Brumiller, Elizabeth, *May You Be the Mother of a Hundred Sons* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1991)

Cole, W. Owen and Sambhi, Piara Singh, *The Sikhs: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978)

Courtright, Paul B. *Ganesa: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Coward, Harold, *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987)

Dumont, Louis, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1982)

Eck, Diana L. *Banaras: City of Light* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982)

Hawley, John Stratton and Wulff, Donna Marie (ed.) *The Divine Consort: Radha and the Goddesses of India* (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1982)

- French, Harold W., *The Swan's Wide Waters: Ramakrishna and Western Culture* (London: Kennikat Press, 1974)
- Goswami, Satsvarupa dasa, *A Lifetime in Preparation: India, 1896-1965* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1980)
- Hawley, John Stratton, (ed.) *Sati: The Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)
- Hiltebeitel, Alf and Erndl, Kathleen M. (ed.) *Is the Goddess a Feminist? The Politics of South Asian Goddesses* (New York: New York University Press, 2000)
- Justice, Christopher, *Dying the Good Death: The Pilgrimage to Die in India's Holy City* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997)
- Kinsley, David, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976)
- Kinsley, David R., *The Sword and the Flute: Kali and Krishna, Dark Visions of the Terrible and the Sublime in Hindu Mythology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975)
- Latif, Shahida, *Muslim Women in India: Political and Private Realities, 1890s-1980s* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1990)
- Larson, Gerald James, *India's Agony over Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).
- Miller, David M and Wertz, Dorothy C. *Hindu Monastic Life: The Monks and Monasteries of Bhubaneshwar* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queens University Press, 1976)
- Minor, Robert N. *The Religious, The Spiritual and the Secular: Auroville and Secular India* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999)

Evidence of plagiarism or other academic misconduct as defined by the University of Kansas will result, at a minimum, in failure of the course. Any student who has a disability that will not allow the full expression of the student's abilities should see the instructor as soon as possible.

### **Schedule of Assignments and Discussions:**

January 14: Introduction of materials and methods

#### **Religion in Vedic India**

January 19 - B&B, 3-23, R&M, 3-36

January 21 - R&M, 37-96

#### **Post-Vedic Developments**

January 26 - The Pali Tradition, B&B, 24-41, R&M, 272-328

January 28 - The Jains, B&B, 41-47; R&M, 250-271; RMI, 335-372

#### **Bhakti Movements**

February 2 - "Popular Hinduism and Indian Society, Fuller 3-28

February 4 - "Gods and Goddesses," Fuller, 29-56; graduate Students read: B&B, 48-67

February 9 - "Worship," and "Sacrifice," Fuller, 57-105

February 11 - "Rituals of the Village," Fuller, 128-154

February 16 - "Devotionalist Movements and Women," Fuller, 155-203

February 18 - Religion and the Women's Movement," RMI, 298-334

February 23 - "Pilgrimage" and "Misfortune," Fuller, 204-252

February 25 - The Bhagavadgita, R&M, 99-134

March 2 - The Bhagavadgita, R&M, 135-163

### **Non-Buddhist Religious Systems**

March 4 - Vedanta, I: Advaita Vedanta: B&B, 76-80; R&M, 509-543

March 9 - Vedanta I continued.

March 11 - Vedanta, II; Visistadvaita Vedanta, B&B, 80-82; R&M 543-555

March 23 - **Mid-term examination**

March 25 - Vedanta, III: Dvaita Vedanta, B&B, 82-83; R&M, 555-572

March 30 - Yoga, B&B, 84-86; R&M, 453-485

April 1 - Carvaka, B&B 86-88; R&M, 227-249

### **The Sikhs**

April 9 - The Sikhs, B&B, 96-105; RMI, 192-223

### **The Modern Period**

April 11 -The Brahmo (Brahma) Samaj, RMI, 1-25, 373-387

April 13 -The Arya Samaj, RMI, 26-54, 388-409

April 15 -The Ramakrishna Movement, RMI, 55-85, 410-437

April 20 -Rabindranath Tagore, RMI, 460-489

April 22 -M. K. Gandhi, RMI, 440-459

April 27 -Sri Aurobindo, RMI, 490-517; R&M, 575-609

April 29 - Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan - RMI, 518-552, R&M, 610-637

May 4 - “The Problem of “Hinduism” - Undergraduates, read one of the following for today; graduates read both of the following:

Robert E. Frykenberg, “The Construction of Hinduism as a ‘Public’ Religion: Looking Again at the Religious Roots of Company Raj in South India,” *Religion and Public Culture: Encounters and Identities in Modern South India*, ed. by Keith E. Yandell and John J. Paul (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 3-26.

Robert D. Baird, “On Defining ‘Hinduism’ as a Religious and Legal Category,” *Religion and Law in Independent India*, ed. by Robert D. Baird (Delhi: Manohar, 1993), Pp. 41-58.

May 6 - “The Problem of the Secular State” – Everyone read both of the following:

“Secular State” and the Indian Constitution,” in Robert D. Baird, *Essays in the History of Religions*, pp. 95-118, 141-169.

“Secular State” and the Sacred Cow, Coursepack: “India’s Sacred Cow: the Symbol Behind the Metaphor”

May 14 - 1:30-4:00, **Final Examination**