

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE
Department of Religious Studies

RS 385

Hinduism

Dr. Herman Santa Susana 230

Office Hours: MW 12:30-2:00

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class will cover the period from the earliest civilization on the Indian subcontinent through the Classical Age and survey the developments in Hinduism in the Medieval and Modern tradition. A special emphasis will be placed on the reading and understanding of primary texts. The course lectures and discussions will trace certain basic concepts and ideas in Hinduism and note the historic influences contributing to religious practice in India and the diaspora today.

Note: E-mail should be used for the following:

- * to alert me that you are confused about a concept and would like me to discuss it at the next class session
- * to communicate a personal concern.

E-mail should **not** be used to ask me:

- * to write you a summary of a class session you missed
- * to re-teach a concept online

RS 385 Hinduism Student Learning Objectives:

1. To gain an understanding of the prehistory of South Asia
2. To learn about the major scriptures and historical practices
3. To trace the history of Hinduism as a cultural amalgamation
4. To understand both the later texts and practices that emerge in modern-day Hinduism
5. To acquire an appreciation for Hindu culture and its various forms.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes: Upper Division Courses

Students will:

1. Explain and reflect critically upon the human search for meaning, values, discourse and expression in one or more eras/stylistic periods or cultures;
2. Analyze, interpret, and reflect critically upon ideas of value, meaning, discourse and expression from a variety of perspectives from the arts and/or humanities;
3. Produce work/works of art that communicate to a diverse audience through a demonstrated understanding and fluency of expressive forms;
4. Demonstrate ability to engage and reflect upon their intellectual and creative development within the arts and humanities;
5. Use appropriate critical vocabulary to describe and analyze works of artistic expression, literature, philosophy, or religion and a comprehension of the

- historical context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged;
6. Describe and explain the historical and/or cultural context within which a body of work was created or a tradition emerged.

This is a Writing-Intensive course. Students will develop their abilities to express themselves and the knowledge they have obtained through practicing various forms of writing within different disciplinary contexts. Writing intensive courses will build upon the skills gained in the Analytical Reading and Expository Writing section of Basic Skills. In each WI course students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2500 words.

Writing-Intensive Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- I. Develop and clearly define their ideas through writing;
- II. Ethically integrate sources of various kinds into their writing;
- III. Compose texts through drafting, revising, and completing a finished product;
- IV. Express themselves through their writing by posing questions, making original claims, and coherently structuring complex ideas;
- V. Revise their writing for greater cogency and clarity;
- VI. Utilize adopted communication modes and documentation styles of specific disciplines (MLA, APA, Chicago, CBE, etc) where appropriate.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Hinduism, (Norton Anthology of World Religions), Doniger

A Very Short Introduction to Hinduism, Knott

The Bhagavad Gita, Patton

The Ramayana: A Tale of Gods and Demons, Prime

Darshan, Eck

WEEKLY COURSE OUTLINE:

I. The Indus Valley Culture and the Indo-Europeans

Access <<http://www.harappa.com/>>; read introduction, essay, and watch slideshow;
Doniger, pp.45-49

II. The Sacred Knowledge: *The Vedas*

Reading: Doniger, pp.49-58; 67-92; Knott, Chapter one, pp.10-19

III. The Gods and People of the Vedas

IV. Descriptions of the Sacrifice: *The Brahmanas*

Reading: Doniger, pp. 93-104

V. Inner Meanings and Cosmic Speculation: *The Upanishads*
Reading: Doniger, pp.105-121; Knott, pp. 23-25

MIDTERM

VI. The Movement Toward Devotion: Vishnu, Shiva and the Great Goddess

VII. *The Mahabharata*: Ways to Interpret the Text
Reading: Doniger, 130-165

VII. *The Bhagavad Gita*: The Revelations of the Lord
Patton, *The Bhagavad Gita*, Ch.1-12; Knott, pp.32-37

IX. *The Ramayana*: The Ideals of Ramarajya
Prime, *The Ramayana*, read all; Knott, Ch. four

MIDTERM

X. The Synthesis of Hinduism: *The Puranas*; Shiva, Vishnu and Devi
Doniger, pp. 221-234

XI. Devotion to Shiva
Doniger, pp.234-242; 341-350

XII. Devotion to the Vishnu
Doniger, pp.242-252; pp.430-446

XIII. Devotion to the Goddess
Doniger, pp.252-257

XIV. Later Developments in Hinduism: Darshan
Darshan, all; Knott, Chapter five, six, seven

MIDTERM/FINAL

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: There will be three exams in this class: all of the exams are essay-style and require a Green Book.

A short paper, 4-6 pages will also be required.

This essay should be in MLA format and use the primary texts provided in the course readings. The grading system will use plus/minus for tests and final grades.

Each midterm accounts for 30% of your grade, while the paper is 10%.

Remember—10% can mean a lot! There might also be chances for extra credit during the semester.

Academic honesty is a core value at CSUN. As such, students are expected to perform their own work. When practiced, academic honesty ensures that all students are fairly graded. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. Cheaters and all who assist them will be subject to disciplinary action which could result in suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary actions.