REL3300, Religions of India
Vasudha Narayanan, Distinguished Professor, Religion
vasu@ufl.edu (Please use email through CANVAS for all communications)
office hours: Thursdays, 2:00 pm to 3:45 pm and by appointment

Class Meeting Time
Tuesday 8-9 MAT 103;
Thursday 9 AND 134

Credits: 3 credit hours
Course Term: Fall 2019

This course focusses on the religious traditions and cultural diversity seen in the Indian subcontinent. The lectures and discussions will span the following areas:

(a) a historical introduction to the Hindu tradition;
(b) thematic studies including domestic and temple rituals, discussions on the status of women, and Hinduism in the diaspora; and
(c) a study of the "minority" traditions in India.

Our approach to the materials will be historical and thematic. There will be a focus on specific sacraments, rituals, and other issues and activities which have been significant for millions of Hindus. This will include discussion of issues that may not be found in traditional texts, and I will be supplementing the readings with short journal and magazine articles, videos, and slides. We will raise many questions concerning the practice of Hinduism, and pay particular attention to the experience of women. Why do the Hindus (especially women) wear a mark on their foreheads? What are the food restrictions and preferences of Hindus around the world? How do Hindus worship at the home shrine and at the temple? How do they celebrate their festivals? What do they say during their weddings? Why has “yoga” (as it is known in the west now) not been very important for the larger Hindu population but become important in urban areas in the last fifty years? What do the Hindus mean by auspicious times and sacred places? How does the caste system function when marriages are arranged?

The larger questions we will work with in the course will include the following: Are the Indian concepts of "Hinduism" and western concepts of "religion" congruent? How has colonial scholarship and assumptions shaped our understanding of south Asian Hindus and the "minority traditions" as distinct religious and social groups, blurring regional differences? How are gender issues made manifest in rituals? To what extent does language identity overshadow religious identity? How does religious identity influence political and social behavior? How do Hindus in South Asia differentiate among themselves and what criteria do they use?

In the third part of the course we will discuss "minority" religions of India. This will include discussions on Jainism, Sikhism, and Islam, as well as the relationship between Hinduism and these religious traditions.

Course Goals
When you complete this course, you will be able to:
1. Explain worldviews, rituals, and beliefs of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.
2. Problematize the category of religion and identify some working definitions, along with their limitations.
3. Identify the social, political, and cultural factors that come into play in the formation and understanding of a given religion.
4. Recognize the significance of performance in the practice and transmission of these religions.

Course Readings, Required Texts, and Videos

*South Asian Religions*, edited by Pechilis and Raj

I will be supplementing this with readings from Willard Gurdon Oxtoby, Amore, Roy C., and Amir Hussain. 2014. *World religions: Eastern traditions*. FOURTH EDITION. ALL PAGE NUMBERS GIVEN FOR THE FOURTH EDITION. Cited below as “Oxtoby.”

** Other supplemental materials, such as videos will be provided on this course website or through the class list serve.

Instructional Methods: Class room teaching and videos made by the instructor. I will be communicating with you through the class list serve regularly to send assigned readings. Term papers and the final exam are to be submitted through turnitin in Canvas.

Course Requirements and Policies

1. Regular attendance and completion of required reading on time. Students are responsible for all the material covered in the class. Lectures will complement the reading and will not repeat them.

   Attendance will be taken regularly. You are allowed two absences; after that each unexcused absence will cost a half grade reduction in your final grade. Coming late to class regularly may also affect your attendance record and cause your grade to be lowered.

2. Quizzes

   Regular quizzes will be administered in class. Quizzes are non-cumulative and are worth 50% of your overall grade. You will have ten minutes to do the quiz IN CLASS.

   Quizzes will be a combination of (a) choosing from multiple answers and (b) short answers to describe a concept or a ritual. Quizzes will be based on the classroom lectures, videos assigned, and the assigned readings.

   No makeups are allowed, except for DOCUMENTED medical or family emergencies.

3. Class Term Paper

   Possible topics for the term papers will be discussed in class. You are free to choose any topic that interests you and submit it through turnitin/Canvas. I will be happy to discuss your interests and suggest an initial biblio. to get you started. The term paper should be about 8 double spaced pages (about 300 words per page) + endnotes/citations, bibliography and all the academic niceties. **It is due on October 29th 6:00 pm.** Papers submitted late (within 48 hours
of the due date) will be accepted, but the grade for the paper will be lowered by one letter. No paper will be accepted after October 31, 6:00 pm.

4. Final Exam

You will have a final exam (take home) that will be submitted through turnitin. This will involve two essay type questions. More details will be given during the semester.

Course Technology
Frequent access to a computer with a good broadband connection is required to view videos.

University Policies

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities
Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (Links to an external site.). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct
Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code (Links to an external site.).

University Rules on Attendance policies/ absences from classes are posted on http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html
Students are expected to come to class on time and not use electronic devices for any other purpose except for taking notes. Attendance will be taken regularly with sign in sheets. Missing class more than twice will result in the lowering of final grade by one notch.

Grading Breakdown

Quizzes: 50%
Term Paper: 25%
Final Exam: 25%

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/PASS</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/FAIL</td>
<td>64 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For more information about UF's minus grade system
visit: http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html

Extra-curricular activities:

Sept. 7 Classical Indian Dance at the Hipp (see below)
Class at the Samuel Harn Museum of Art (to be arranged).

Week 1
August 20 Tuesday.
Introduction to the course.
Indus Valley Civilization and the Vedas
Assignment: watch this video. Intro to the Hindu Tradition: Forehead Marks
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/93169297dd3646ccbf1dc6ce82c3d641d
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/f3b25f15d5ea437fb19e0b8ef5d5cb681d

August 22 Thursday
The Vedas
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/82183b9beff240209b83aede13713d341d
Upanishads
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/b918debf92c46e6bfc39e52466cc7051d
Reading for the week:
Oxtoby, pp. 28-40

Week 2
August 27 Tuesday Ramayana
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/bec39dd31233441d0ac88b0b42255f92f1d
August 29 Thursday Mahabharata
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/b5540f42fcb3420b86850f4a18f0971d
Reading for the week: Oxtoby, pp. 41-44
Quiz 1 (on Indus Valley Civ. The Vedas and The Upanishads)

Week 3
September 3 Tuesday The Bhagavad Gita
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/ceb720a6e6724817b8d9803f8505b11d

September 5 Thursday Hindu Deities
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/b1aa1be27a044015aa6df7d5ce6656fe1d
Reading for the week: Oxtoby, pp. 44-53; 74-75
Chapter on Hindu Deities in CANVAS (this will be in the file “A Hundred Autumns to Live.”)
Quiz 2 (on the Ramayana, Mahabharata)

September 7, Saturday, 3:00-4:00 pm, at the Hipp Cinema, The Hippodrome, 25 Southeast 2nd Place, Gainesville, FL 32601: Classical Indian Dance, South Indian Bharata Natyam Style
by Shyam and Viraja, (from Kalakshetra school in Chennai, India). Write a 300 word observation report and submit through turnitin by Sept. 9th 12 noon for extra credit 5 points added to the weekly quiz count.

Week 4
September 10 Tuesday Hindu Philosophies
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/e1b022c8e9dd463387c382ff35754b401d
September 12 Thursday Yoga
No in-class instruction. Watch
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/46704bad934544009f88dd348bde3ee51d

Reading for the week: Oxtoby, pp. 53-57

Week 5
September 17, Tuesday: Devotion (Bhakti)
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/46704bad934544009f88dd348bde3ee51d
September 19 Thursday: Sacred Landscapes
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/f23a3a597e81417abe64162d3151c3741d

Reading for the week:
Oxtoby, pp. 59-to first paragraph of 66
Chapter on Bhakti in Canvas
Chapter in Canvas for Sacred Landscapes (these will be in the file “A Hundred Autumns to Live.”)

Quiz 3 on The Bhagavad Gita and Hindu Deities

Week 6
September 24 Tuesday: Hinduism in Southeast Asia
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/afddad2fdd2341d48d06001e80fca3cb1d
September 26 Thursday: Transition to modernity
Watch Bhakti Mamtora
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/fbad05faed024c908bca8548c999ad101d

Reading for the week: Oxtoby, pp. for SE Asia 57-59
Reading for transition to modernity: Oxtoby, pp. 66-69

Quiz 4 on Devotion/ Bhakti

Week 7
October 1 Tuesday: Rites of passage/ weddings
October 3 Thursday: Hindu festivals

Reading for the week: Oxtoby, pp. 81-85 Oxtoby pp. 79-81;
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/d3d5514246904b8798c01ad8b5c044631d

Quiz 5 on Southeast Asia

Week 8
October 8 Tuesday: Hindu festivals contd.
October 10 Thursday: Temple Worship  
**Reading for the week** chapter in canvas on Temples  
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/f23a3a597e81417abe64162d3151c3741d  
**Quiz 6 on Rites of Passage**

**Week 9**  
October 15 Tuesday: Performing arts  
Watch the video by Jodi Shaw; Read chapter in Canvas  
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/70fbfaa88c774cc3b8dc3545eed14db1d  
October 17 Thursday: Diaspora  
**Reading for the week:** Oxtoby pp. 88-90; 91-94  
**Quiz 7 Festivals and Temple Worship**

**Week 10**  
October 22 Tuesday and October 24 Thursday: Buddhism and start discussions on Jainism  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEe8hI6G0GY  
produced by the National Buddhist Authority, Srilanka  
**Reading for the week** Buddhism Chapter in South Asian Religions  
No quiz

**Week 11**  
October 29 Tuesday: Jainism  
October 31 Thursday: Sikhism  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qrn6YucQ-wY (Video made by and for the police in Chicago to enhance understanding of the community).  
**Reading for the week:** Chapters on Jainism and Sikhism from South Asian Religions  
**Quiz 8 Buddhism**

**Week 12**  
November 5 Tuesday: Islam in India 1: History  
November 7 Thursday: Islam in India 2 Sufi traditions, Dargahs, architecture  
For an introduction, see Professor Simmons’ lecture at  
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/65f698e13a3843f59c550f3d84a6514b1d  
OR  
Professor Ostebo’s lecture at  
https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/18c82ad062bf4763b6a0e49b93f7ae771d  
This video should be seen prior to the November 5 class  
**Quiz 9 Sikhism and Jainism**

**Week 13**
November 12 Tuesday: Islam 3: Islam in Modern India; Partition, pains and political tensions.

November 14 Thursday: Christianity in India 1
Readings tba on the partition.

**Quiz 10 on Islam**

**Week 14**

November 19 Tuesday: Christianity 2  Readings by Selva Raj and Corinne Dempsey tba.


November 21 Thursday: Either Judaism in India or Classroom presentations.
If we do Judaism, the reading will be Nathan Katz, Judaism in India, in Karen Pechilis and Selva J. Raj. 2013. South Asian religions: tradition and today, 143 -156

**Week 15**

November 26, Tuesday: No classroom instruction
November 28 Thursday: Thanksgiving Holiday

December 3 Tuesday: Student presentations, wrap up discussion on religion