

# RELI 225 INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM

Department of Religions and Cultures  
Concordia University\*, Fall 2019  
Tuesday, Thursday: 14:45-16:00

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by appointment

## Course Description

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There are two main parts to this course. The first part surveys Hinduism's fundamental subjects including its early history, philosophies, sects, texts, art, gods and goddesses, and gender and rituals within South Asia. The purpose of this part is to provide students with a foundation and background to understand the history, development and practices of what today is generally termed as "Hinduism." In the second part of the course, we will begin by exploring the spread of Hinduism to Southeast Asia during the early medieval period. We will examine the role of the maritime trade route or the Southern Silk Road in facilitating the transmission of Hinduism to Southeast Asia. Then, we will focus on how Hinduism was adopted, developed, and practiced in countries such as Indonesia, Cambodia, and Vietnam (Champa) through an investigation of extant inscriptions, archeological evidence, temple architecture and art iconography. The course concludes with a presentation on contemporary religious practice of a Hindu Cham Ahier community in Southern Vietnam. In short, the goal of this course is to familiarize students with the history, doctrines, and religious practices of Hinduism in South Asia and how it was adopted, developed, and represented in Southeast Asia.

## Course Readings

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1. Gavin Flood 1996. *An Introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Additional readings and hand-out materials will be posted on E-reserves and Moodle.

## Assignments and Evaluation

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Assignments of various types will be given for assessment so that each student will have a chance to use their own strengths to shine. Essay assignments will help students foster their abilities to think, read and write critically.

### 1. Two In-Class Quizzes: (10 % each) Sept. 26 & Nov. 5

Two quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class (approx. 20 minutes) on the days assigned. The quizzes will be multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank type, and short-answer questions and are based on readings and class lectures. A handout of terms and concepts will be given to you one week in advance to prepare for each quiz.

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\* I would like to acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands, particularly those of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation, who are recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we are situated.

### **2. In-Class Midterm: (30%) Oct. 15**

The midterm will be in class and will consist of 6 essay questions from which you will pick 4 to answer. You will have the full class period for the exam.

### **3. Temple Visit Report Due: (20%) Nov. 19**

Students will visit a Hindu temple ideally on Sunday morning to observe how Hindus worship and perform rituals to their gods and goddesses. This will give you a chance to witness how Hinduism is practiced in certain communities nowadays. You can visit a Hindu temple on your own or with me on Oct 20. You will write a report of 1000 words (minimum) on your experience. Guidelines along with a list of temples that can be visited will be provided to the students on Moodle.

### **4. Final Take-Home Exam: (30%) Dec. 12**

The take-home exam will be an essay-style exam (about 10-12 pages, double space). The questions for this exam will be distributed on Nov. 28. You must only draw on the materials from the book, E-Reserves, handouts, class lectures, and Moodle posts.

### **Academic Integrity and Policies on Absences & Late Assignments**

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1. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported. Plagiarism is using other people's ideas, images, graphs or words without giving acknowledgement or citing your sources. For details please visit Concordia University's website for the code of academic conduct (see <https://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity.html>).
2. Excuses for the absence from in-class quizzes and the midterm will not be accepted. No make-up quizzes will be possible; however, a limited exception will be made in the case of (documented) illness or emergency.
3. Late assignments will be accepted without penalty only in the case of (documented) illness or emergency. Otherwise, assignments will be accepted for one week after the deadline, with a penalty of one letter grade. In the case of the final take-home exam, no late submissions will be accepted beyond Dec. 12.
4. Papers must be dropped off ONLY in my mailbox on the main floor of annexe FA (2060 Mackay)
5. In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

### **Grading Criteria**

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A range: Superior grasp of material, exams well written, clear explanation, original insights.

B range: Good understanding, clear and orderly presentation.

C range: Adequate grasp of material, reasonably clear.

D range: Evidence of having done the reading but inadequate comprehension.

F range: Failure; absence of evidence that the requirements were met.

## Course Schedule

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### WEEK 1

**Sept 3, 5:** INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

### WEEK 2

**Sept 10, 12:** ANCIENT INDIA, THE VEDAS, and THE ROOTS OF HINDUISM

Flood, Gavin 1996. Chapter 1 - 2 (pp. 5-50)

### WEEK 3

**Sept 17, 19:** DHARMA, VARNA, KARMA

Flood, Gavin 1996. Chapter 3 (pp. 51-74).

Zelliot, Eleanor 2004. "Caste in Contemporary India," (pp. 243-268) in *Contemporary Hinduism*. ABC-CLIO.

### WEEK 4

**Sept 24, 26:** THE UPANISADS, ASCETICISM, YOGA AND RENUNCIATION

Flood, Gavin 1996. Chapter 4 (pp. 75-102).

Olivelle, Patrick 2003. "The Renouncer Tradition," (pp. 271-285) in *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Quiz 1: Sept 26

### WEEK 5

**Oct 1, 3:** THE GREAT EPICS and THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

Flood, Gavin 1996. Chapter 5 (pp. 103-127).

Heehs, Peter 2002. "The Bhagavad Gita," (pp. 147-165) in *Indian Religions: A Historical Reader of Spiritual Expression and Experience*. NY: New York University Press.

### WEEK 6

**Oct 8, 10:** BHAKTI: KRISHNA AND LOVING DEVOTION

Flood, Gavin 1996. Chapter 6 (pp. 128-147).

Bryant, Edwin F. 2007. "Krishna in the Tenth Book of the Bhagavata Purana," (pp. 111-133) in *Krishna*. Oxford University Press.

## WEEK 7

### Oct 15, 17: SIVA AND SAIVISM

In-Class Midterm: Oct 15

Flood, Gavin 1996. Chapter 7 (pp. 148-173).

## WEEK 8

### Oct 22, 24: GENDER and THE GODDESS

Flood, Gavin 1996. Chapter 8 (pp. 174-197).

Orr, Leslie 2007. "Domesticity and Difference/Women and Men: Religious Life in Medieval Tamilnadu," (pp.109-129) in *Women's Lives, Women's Rituals in the Hindu Tradition*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Robinson, S. 1985. "Hindu Paradigms of Women: Images and Values," (pp. 181-211) in *Women, Religion and Social Change*. Albany: SUNY.

## WEEK 9

### Oct 29, 31: RITUAL AND TEMPLES

Flood, Gavin 1996. Chapter 9 (pp. 198-223).

Orr, Leslie 2010. "Temple: Form and Function," (pp. 495-509) in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Leiden: Brill.

Huyler, Stephen P. 2007. "The Experience: Approaching God," (pp. 33-41) in *The Life of Hinduism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

## WEEK 10

### Nov 5, 7: MARITIME SILK ROAD and THE TRANSMISSION OF HINDUISM FROM INDIA to SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE CASE OF INDONESIA

Quiz 2: Nov 5

Guy, John 2014. "Introducing Early Southeast Asia" and "Principal Kingdoms of Early Southeast

Asia,” (pp. 3-21) in *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia*. NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Jordaan, Roy E. 1996. “Candi Prambanan: An updated introduction,” (pp. 3-12) in *Praise of Prambanan*. Brill.

Holt, Claire 1967. “The Emergence of New Styles: East Java and Bali Tenth Century to Fifteenth Century,” (pp. 66-92) in *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Changes*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

## **WEEK 11**

### **Nov 12, 14: HINDUISM IN CAMBODIA**

Groslier, B. and Arthaud, J. 1966. “The Origins of Khmer Civilization,” (pp. 16-35) in *Angkor: Art and Civilization*. NY: Praeger.

Narayanan, Vasudha. 2002. “Vaishnava Traditions in Cambodia,” (pp. 153-185). *Journal of Vaishnava Studies*, 11/1.

## **WEEK 12**

### **Nov 19, 21: HINDUISM IN VIETNAM (CHAMPA)**

Temple Visit Report Due: Nov 19

Po Dharma 2001. “The History of Champa,” (pp. 14-27) in *Cham Art of Vietnam: Treasures From the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam*. Thailand: River Books.

Golzio, Karl-Heinz 2006. “L’Hindouisme au Champa d’après les Sources Epigraphiques,” (pp. 59-63) in *Tresors d’art du Vietnam: la Sculpture du Champa Ve-XVe siecles*. Paris: Musee des Arts Asiatiques Guimet.

## **WEEK 13**

### **Nov 26, 28: HINDUISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY HINDU CHAM AHIER OF VIETNAM CONCLUSION OF THE COURSE**

Final Take-Home Exam Due: Dec 12