

# Hinduism through the Lens of Lived Religion

**HDS 3330, Wednesday 3 PM - 4.59 PM EST**

**Room: Rockefeller 117**

**Professor**

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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays by appointment either before or after class.

**COURSE CONCERNING CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS:**

**MDiv Curriculum Distribution Categories:** Hinduism, East Asian Religions, South Asia Religions

**Art of Ministry:** Religious Education and Spiritual Development

**MTS and ThM Curriculum Distribution Categories:** Hindu Studies, South Asian Religious Traditions

**Course Overview**

Courses on Hinduism have predominantly been approached via literary and textual avenues, through which its ancient, philosophical, abstract, and transcendent features are highlighted. Even ethnographic accounts of Hinduism have been dominated by attention to the Sanskritic and Brahmanic elements derived from such a scriptural, elitist grounding. Such foci are limited because of the neglect of oral traditions and attention to Hindu practices, particularly at the local, regional levels, and the role of specific household and cult deities, rituals, and festivals in sustaining a religious worldview.

In this course, we will begin by addressing how the study of religion from the lens of lived religion is essential to understand and appreciate the nuances of what many believe to be the world's oldest and newest religion, which is Hinduism.

We will approach the class by looking into some of the current debates and then we will turn our gaze at the past and end with turning to the present.

## SYLLABUS

Please Note: This is a proposed syllabus. We will collectively adjust as we come together as a class and as we go through the semester.

### Requirements

- Regular class attendance and participation are assumed.
- Weekly reflections to be submitted on the Discussion Board (DB). Due Saturday EOD.
- Mid-Term paper (c. 10 pp), due on October 22, EOD.
- End Term Paper (12 pp), due on December 14, EOD. Papers must be related to one or more of the topics discussed in class, drawing on a course reading or readings. The topic chosen by the student in consultation with the professor is encouraged.

<b>September 1</b>	<b>Introductions, Syllabus, and Expectations</b>
<b>SETTING THE STAGE</b>	
<b>September 8</b>	<b>Studying Lived Religions</b>  Theorizing lived religion: Introduction Kim Knibbe & Helena Kupari (2020)  Podcast: Sravana Borkataky Varma on studying and practicing <i>Śākta</i> Tantra <a href="https://podcast.yogicstudies.com/1046752/4519004-8-sravana-borkataky-varma-sakta-tantra-female-practitioners-and-misperceptions-of-tantra">https://podcast.yogicstudies.com/1046752/4519004-8-sravana-borkataky-varma-sakta-tantra-female-practitioners-and-misperceptions-of-tantra</a>  Watch: West meets East <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhSL4cFYcaA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhSL4cFYcaA</a>
<b>September 15</b>	<b>Fundamentals of Hinduism</b>  <i>Hinduism</i> . Vasudha Narayanan. New York, NY: Rosen Publishing Group, 2009. ISBN: 9781435856202
<b>September 22</b>	<b>History: Early Indian Subcontinent</b>  <i>Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300</i> , Romila Thapar (2002). <b>Read Pp. xvii-62, 69-97, and 137-173</b>

<b>September 29</b>	<p><b>Re-writing of History and Hindu Identity</b></p> <p>“Contemporary Political Hinduism,” C. Ram Prasad in <i>The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism</i> (2003). <b>Read Pp 526-550</b></p> <p><i>The Indo-Aryan Controversy</i>, Edwin Bryant, &amp; Laurie Patton (2004). <b>Read Pp 50-74 and 434-467</b></p> <p>Academic Censorship:  <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Penguin-pulls-out-Wendy-Donigers-book-The-Hindus-from-India/articleshow/30240558.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Penguin-pulls-out-Wendy-Donigers-book-The-Hindus-from-India/articleshow/30240558.cms</a>  <a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-26184819">https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-26184819</a></p> <p>Wendy’s response:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gl_0raZ9FFU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gl_0raZ9FFU</a></p>
<b>October 6</b>	<p><b>Social Hierarchy</b></p> <p><i>Homo Hierarchicus</i>, Louis Dumont (1974). <b>Read Pp 1-20 and 65-91</b></p> <p><i>Annihilation of Caste</i>, B.R. Ambedkar (1990). <b>Read Pp 321-356</b></p> <p>Watch Movie: The Last Colour or Article 15</p>
<b>SCRIPTURE: TEXTS AND LIVED TRANSMISSIONS</b>	
<b>October 13</b>	<p><b>Vedas</b></p> <p>“Vedic Hinduism,” S. W. Jamison and M. Witzel (1992)</p> <p>"Veda and Upaniṣad," Laurie L. Patton in Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby, eds., <i>The Hindu World</i> (2004). <b>Read Pp. 37-51</b></p> <p>Watch: Altar of Fire <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYvkYk7GvJ0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYvkYk7GvJ0</a> and Vedic Chanting <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPcasmn0cRU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPcasmn0cRU</a></p>
<b>October 20</b>	<b>Studying Mythology</b>

	<p>“Viṣṇu as a Fish: The Growth of a Story from the Brāhmaṇas to the Purāṇas,” Luis Gonzalez-Reimann (2006). <i>Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies</i> 15, no.1. <b>Read Pp 221-237</b></p> <p><i>Hindu Myths</i>. Anna L. Dallapiccola. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003. ISBN: 0292702337. <b>Read Pp. 54-78</b></p> <p><i>Indian Mythology: Tales, Symbols, and Rituals from the Heart of the Subcontinent</i>. Devdutt Pattanaik. Rochester: Inner Traditions International, Limited, 2003. ISBN: 9780892818709. <b>Read: Pp.139-152, Pp.161-173</b></p> <p>Watch Ted Talk by Devdutt Pattanaik  <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt_pattanaik_east_vs_west_the_myths_that_mystify">https://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt_pattanaik_east_vs_west_the_myths_that_mystify</a></p> <p><b>Mid-term paper due October 22</b></p>
<b>October 27</b>	<p><b><i>Upaniṣads</i></b></p> <p><i>Upaniṣads</i>, Patrick Olivelle (2008). <b>Read Pp xxiii-lvi</b></p> <p>“Narrating the Upaniṣads,” Steven E. Lindquist (2016)</p> <p>“Gender at Janaka’s Court: Women in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Reconsidered,” Steven E. Lindquist, <i>Journal of Indian Philosophy</i>, (2008). <b>Read Pp 405-426</b></p>
<b>November 3</b>	<p><b>Verbal Epics</b></p> <p><i>Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia</i>. Paula Richman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. ISBN: 0520075897. <b>Read Pp 3-49</b></p> <p>“Epics as cultural commodities: Comics books of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata,” Varsha Singh, <i>The Journal of Commonwealth Literature</i>. 2019. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989419881231">https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989419881231</a></p> <p>Amar Chitra Katha:  <a href="https://archive.org/details/RamayanaAmarChitraKatha/page/n1/mode/1up">https://archive.org/details/RamayanaAmarChitraKatha/page/n1/mode/1up</a></p> <p>Watch: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vgGkWGcnQk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vgGkWGcnQk</a></p>
<b>November 10</b>	<b>Gods</b>

	<p>“The <i>Śaiva</i> Age — The Rise and Dominance of <i>Śaivism</i> during the Early Medieval Period,” Alexis Sanderson (2009). <b>Read Pp 41-69 and Pp 252-303</b></p> <p><b><i>Viṣṇu</i></b></p> <p><i>Singing the Body of God: The Hymns of Vedāntadeśika in Their South Indian Tradition</i>, Steven Hopkins (2002). <b>Read Pp 1-24</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/17/arts/dance/sattriya-the-dancing-monks-of-assam.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/17/arts/dance/sattriya-the-dancing-monks-of-assam.html</a></p> <p>Watch:</p> <p><a href="https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=wm&amp;ogbl#inbox/FMfcgxwJWrjVvgBgVLjmHPmZIKXhJpst?projector=1">https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=wm&amp;ogbl#inbox/FMfcgxwJWrjVvgBgVLjmHPmZIKXhJpst?projector=1</a></p>
<b>November 17</b>	<p><b>Goddesses and Tantra</b></p> <p>The Hindu Tantric World: An Overview, Andre Padoux (2017). <b>Read Pp 3-72 and Pp 153-176</b></p> <p><i>Nine Nights of the Goddess: The Navaratri Festival in South Asia</i>, Simmons, C., Sen, M., &amp; Rodrigues, H. (2018). <b>Read Pp 39-62 and Pp 237-256</b></p> <p>Watch:</p> <p><a href="#">Domains of Dasara: Navaratri in Mysore (ಮೈಸೂರಿನ ದಸರ) - YouTube</a></p>
<b>November 24</b>	<p><b>Hinduism and Video Games</b></p> <p>“Coding comments on gaming videos: YouTube Let’s Plays, Asian games, and Buddhist and Hindu religions”, Xenia Zeiler, in <i>Methods for Studying Video Games and Religion</i>. Routledge Studies in Religion and Digital Culture. Taylor and Francis, 2017. ISBN: 9781138698710</p> <p>Play Durga Puja Mystery Video Game</p> <p>*No in-person class</p>
<b>December 1</b>	<p><b>Wrap-up and Final Paper discussion</b></p> <p><b>Final Paper due December 14</b></p>

**Grading (Weighted Average):**

Participation (30%): Includes attendance, class participation weekly submissions of weekly response on Discussion Board (DB). Each submission is worth 10 points.

Mid-term paper (35%)

Final Paper (35%)

**Academic Integrity:**

The course follows Harvard College's policies on plagiarism and collaboration. Specifically, any material submitted to meet course requirements—homework assignments, papers, projects, posted comments—is expected to be a student's own work. All students are asked to bookmark and consult regularly the Harvard Guide to Using Sources website at <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu>. You are urged to take great care in distinguishing your own ideas and thoughts from information and analysis derived from printed and electronic sources, and you are responsible for knowing and following the College's policy on proper use of sources. These policies are stated clearly at the Harvard Guide to Using Sources website.

**Flexibility policies:**

We are all experiencing a time of unparalleled upheavals and challenges. Thus, throughout the semester [great] flexibility will be extended to all students in reference to the assignments detailed above. A crucial element for the success of the course overall, and of this policy specifically, is communication. Unforeseen circumstances will certainly arise for every one of us. This makes it all the more important to communicate promptly about such circumstances with the instructor, the head-TF, and/or your section leader. "Attendance and full participation" should be understood as being present on Zoom with video for the entire duration of our class meetings. It is understood that sometimes being present with video may not be possible, but in those cases students are required to alert the instructor and TF in advance.

**Disabilities:**

If you have a disability that may interfere with regular class attendance or your completion of assignments on time, see the instructors at the start of the term so that necessary arrangements can be made in conjunction with the Accessible Education Office (AEO).

<https://aef.fas.harvard.edu/>

**Student Mental Health & Wellbeing:**

Learning should be a pleasure, but sometimes stress makes coping with classes difficult. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and in need of support, please consider contacting Harvard University Health Counseling and Mental Health Services.

<https://camhs.huhs.harvard.edu/>

## Bibliography

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