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**RELIGION 30773**  
**ENGLISH 30773**  
**India: Texts and Traditions**

Office Hours  
M-F 11-12  
or by appt.  
personal.tcu.edu/~afort

In this course, we shall look at selected texts in translation which reveal the literary and religious imagination of the Indian people, and illustrate a variety of themes and issues in Indian civilization. We shall focus on Hindu texts, particularly versions and interpretations of the two best-known Indian epics, the *Rām̐yaᅇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. We shall also consider the religious background for the epics, examine plays and poetics in the classical Sanskrit tradition, and read some modern Hindu thinkers. You will be introduced to some concepts and ways of understanding from both literary theory and religious studies. Our study will illumine continuity and change in the Hindu tradition, and Indian culture more generally, from the ancient and classical to the modern periods. By introducing another worldview in some depth, this course offers the opportunity for us to reflect on our own. This course will increase your ability to read critically, think analytically, and write effectively through the description, analysis and evaluation of an array of ideas, themes and issues in Indian civilization.

You are expected to attend all classes (come on time, but come even if late), and to read (and think about) the assignments before class. If you miss four or more classes, your grade can be lowered automatically unless you have a legitimate and documented excuse. Bring the relevant books to class; we will go over the readings. During the semester, each student will at some point be responsible for bringing thoughts and questions on the day's class reading. Be ready to listen, think, question, and speak. All topics are open, but civil and respectful discourse is required.

There will be a mid-term exam (25%), two short (c. 4 page) papers (each 20%), and a longer (7-8 page) final course review and reflection due during exam period (30%). Each of these should demonstrate your knowledge of the material, and will also provide an opportunity to share more personal responses. Unless you contact me beforehand, late papers or exam absence will be permitted only for officially excused absences. You are also required to make a weekly entry into a computer journal; it is mandatory but ungraded. The journal, attendance and class participation are worth 5% of your grade. Grades are in ten point increments; TCU does not allow pluses or minuses.

If you have a problem affecting your course participation, or must miss class, let me know. Also, if you have a disability which may affect your class performance, please inform me during the first week of class. Feel free to see me after class or during office hours.

Required books, available in the bookstore, include:

Mahabharata. William Buck, trans. London: Penguin (Meridian), 1973.

The Bhagavad Gita. Barbara Stoler Miller, trans. N. Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1986.

Ramayana. R. K. Narayan, trans. London: Penguin, 1977.

Many Ramayanas. Paula Richman, ed. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991.

Poems from the Sanskrit. John Brough, trans. London: Penguin, 1968.

Other texts, available from the department office, will include The Literatures of India. E. Dimock et al. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978, "Ramayan: The Video" by Phil Lutgendorf in The Drama Review 34: 2 (summer, 1990), the Amar Chitra Katha comic book version of Bhagavad Gita, Shakuntala from Barbara S. Miller's Theatre of Memory (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), and selections from An Autobiography, or The Story of My Experiments with Truth by Mohandas Gandhi. We will also view some videos, including Peter Brook's film version of the Mahabharata. We will need to schedule a two hour viewing September 24th and/or 25th.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **INTRODUCING RELIGION AND LITERATURE IN INDIAN CIVILIZATION**

Aug. 29 Introduction to course

Review of Indian literary history

Sept. 3 Background of Indian civilization

Video: Legacy Dimock: 1-28, 33-46

Sept. 5 "Hinduism" and Vedic literature

Embree: 9-27

Sept. 10 Hinduism: Vedanta, karma and rebirth Embree: 48-65

Sept. 12 Varṅj≈rama-dharma (caste and lifestage) Embree: 74-93

Sept. 17 The Hindu epics slides of gods

Dimock: 47-59, 62-80 Buck: xiii-xx

### **THE MAH/BHRATA AS EPIC ADVENTURE**

Sept. 19 Mahjbhjrata

Buck: 3-5, 12-61

Sept. 24 Mahjbhjrata Brook video in class

Buck: 62-87, 102-7, 112-42

**PAPER DUE:** Respond to the "otherness" of the Indian worldview. What has been particularly striking, positive or negative? What has it taught you about your culture and yourself?

Sept. 26 Mahābhārata Brook video  
Buck: 143-53, 157-98

Oct. 1 Mahābhārata Brook video Buck: 201-22, 227-44

### **RELIGION IN THE MAHABHARATA**

Oct. 3 Bhagavad Gītā Miller: 5-13, 21-55, 63-75, 83-87

Oct. 8 Bhagavad Gītā, Purāṇas and pāñji  
Miller: 97-109 and comic book version

Oct. 10 **EXAMINATION**

### **THE RĀMĀYAṆA AS EPIC AND RELIGIOUS NARRATIVE**

Oct. 15 Rāmāyaṇa Narayan to p. 95 (Sita abducted)

Oct. 17 Rāmāyaṇa Narayan, 97-171

Oct. 22 Rāmāyaṇa discussion

Oct. 24 Many Rāmāyaṇas Richman: 3-49

Oct. 29 " " Richman: 67-88, 114-36

Oct. 31 " " Richman: 175-201, 217-25, 231, 235-51

Nov. 5 "Ramayan: The Video" Lutgendorf (all)

### **THE SANSKRIT DRAMA**

Nov. 7 The Sanskrit Drama Dimock: 81-106, 128-36

**PAPER DUE:** Respond to the many manifestations of the Rāmāyaṇa. What has been most striking to you? What did you like and dislike most? What was the hardest to understand?

Nov. 12 Shakuntala Miller: 85-132

Nov. 14 Shakuntala Miller: 133-76

### **POETRY IN MEDIEVAL INDIA**

Nov. 19 Sanskrit Poetry

Dimock: 115-28, 144-48, 152-56  
Brough: 11-23, 30-49, 95-110

Nov. 21 Sanskrit Poetry, Bengali Vaisnavism  
Dimock: 136-43, 149-52, 157-65  
Brough: 53-94, 111-39

Nov. 26 film

## **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

## **CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN MODERN INDIA**

Dec. 3 Religion in Modern India  
Embree: 273-88, 299-309, 317-22, 343-48

Dec. 5 Gandhi's Autobiography  
Gandhi: selections through p. 223

Dec. 10 Gandhi and concluding reflections  
Gandhi: selections to end

## **FINAL PAPER DUE TUESDAY DECEMBER 14 at 3 pm**

Review your notes, papers, and readings. What has been your most significant learning experience in the course? What have you learned about your own literature and religion by studying another culture's literature and religion? What has the Indian worldview taught you about your own?