

PHIL/REL 3710 A
HINDUISM
Valdosta State University
Spring 2010
TR 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m., West Hall 147

INSTRUCTOR: Cristóbal Serrán-Pagán y Fuentes, Ph.D.

OFFICE: Ashley Hall 111

OFFICE HOURS: MTWRF 10-10:50 a.m., or by appointment

PHONE: (229) 333-5975

E-mail: cserranpagan@valdosta.edu

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to study the major Hindu philosophical and religious schools of thought. We will weigh on the cultural impact that the Hindu tradition has in America and abroad. We will address such important issues as: the one and the many gods/goddesses; religious diversity and interfaith dialog; gender, sex and the language of God; life after death; religious and mystical experiences; religion and modernity; ecology, spirituality, and the arts; morality and ethics; religion and politics; social caste system; love and the meaning of life (the quest after happiness). [See the course description in the Undergraduate Catalog (p. 406)].

II. COURSE OUTCOMES: Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate first-hand knowledge of great Hindu philosophical and religious thinkers, classic texts, rich history, shared and unshared beliefs, and their cultural impact in our societies. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (1, 2, 6, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Philosophy Track 1, 3; Religious Studies Track 1--See pp. 155-156 in the Catalog)**
2. Explain and discuss major religious beliefs in the rich history of Hindu philosophical traditions. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (2, 6); Department Educational Outcomes (Philosophy Track 1, 3; Religious Studies Track 1, 2, 3)**
3. Cite good examples of similarities and differences between Hinduism and the West, especially Christianity. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (2, 3, 6, 7, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Philosophy Track 1, 3, 4; Religious Studies Track 1, 2, 3, 4)**
4. Critically address the major philosophical problems encountered in the academic study of religion, especially by taking greater responsibility for own learning through the demonstration of curiosity, motivation, and risk-taking characteristics. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (1, 2, 6, 7, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Philosophy Track 2, 3; Religious Studies Track 1, 2, 3)**
5. Utilize information technology to do research, specifically the Internet, and express themselves clearly, logically, and precisely in writing and in speaking. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (3, 4, 7); Department Educational Outcomes (Philosophy Track 2, 4; Religious Studies Track 2, 4)**

6. Analyze and synthesize a broad range of material (including ability to make meaningful connections between various academic disciplines). **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (2, 7, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Philosophy Track 1, 4; Religious Studies Track 2, 3)**

7. Produce an original work based on their ability to formulate a problem, develop a plan of action, and prove or disprove a hypothesis. **VSU Gen. Ed. Outcomes (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8); Department Educational Outcomes (Philosophy Track 1, 2, 3, 4; Religious Studies Track 1, 2, 3, 4)**

III. REQUIRED TEXTS

The Bhagavad Gita. Trans. Eknath Easwaran. 9th Ed. Tomales, California: Nilgiri Press, 1998.

Print.

Gandhi, Mohandas K. *A SourceBook of His Life and Writings: The Gandhi Reader*. Ed. Homer

A. Jack. 2nd ed. New York: Grove Press, 1994. Print.

Kinsley, David R. *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey:

1993. Print.

Klostermaier, Klaus K. *A Short Introduction to Hinduism*. 3rd ed. Boston: Oneworld, 1998. Print.

IV. RECOMMENDED READINGS

Bellinger, Charles K. "Internet Guide." 2 Jan. 2008. Web. 12 Jan. 2010.

[Http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/front.htm](http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/front.htm).

Carmody, Denise L., and John T. *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*. New York: Oxford

University Press, 1996. Print.

Haglof, Anthony. "Buddhism and the *Nada* of St. John of the Cross." *Carmelite Studies* 1

(1980):183-203. Print.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Active class participation and attendance are mandatory (1)	20%
One oral presentation (20% individual p. and 10% team p.) (2)	30%
Final reflection paper (20%) (3)*See <u>Proposal Guidelines at the end</u> (10%)	30%
Journals (20%) (4)	20%

(1) **Total attendance** grade will automatically drop **twenty** points if you miss more than one week of classes. Afterwards the grade will drop **ten** points for each additional absence. VSU policy of attendance states, **“A student who misses more than 20% of the scheduled classes of a course will be subject to receiving a failing grade in the course”** (See in the Undergraduate Catalog pp. 84-85). I will admit excused absences only when athletes bring ahead of time a written notice from their coach; when a student is ill he or she will have to provide doctor’s name, phone number, and a signed receipt from the doctor; or when a student brings a justification note from a supervisor explaining why he or she was absent from my class. **You will lose 1 point for each tardiness.** You are responsible for all the material covered in class during your absence. **You will get an “F” grade (0) on any course material not submitted in time.** I highly recommend you complete and turn any academic task before the deadline if you are planning to miss a class. **I will not accept late papers under any circumstances.** You will submit your paper at the beginning of class.

(2) **Individual (20%) and Team (10%) oral presentations** will be graded according to the following:

creativity (use visuals like posters and/or power-point presentations, and play different character roles);

accuracy (“be clear and concise”--state the facts and comment on them);

oral skills (keep eye contact with the whole class, avoid reading off notes, do not use verbal expressions like “um”);

well-cited sources (pass one Works Cited page per person--use MLA style);

and **time limit** (5 minutes per presenter and 5 extra minutes for a team performance).

Once you are done with your presentations, invite the audience to ask you questions and to share their thoughts or comments with the whole class. Each student will evaluate the performance of his or her classmates. You will give presenters an overall grade and will provide a short list of comments explaining why you like or dislike their presentations and will assign a final grade (from F to A) based on the criteria listed above.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS: It is mandatory that each student meets with the professor in Ashley Hall 111 for getting the topic approved (write your topic in a paper and get a signature from me). The meeting should take place at least one week prior to their oral presentations. Be prepared. Do your research before coming to my office. Send me an electronic copy of your presentation to BlazeView and I will check it in my computer. I will not correct it but will give you suggestions on how to improve it. Make sure you rehearse before coming to class. Gather ideas together and put them into practice before the date of your presentation. Manage time wisely. Be well prepared and dress appropriately (you can use costumes). Avoid chewing gum. Bring objects (paintings, books, articles from journals) or anything that aids you to create the right atmosphere for your overall presentation. Check the equipment in class before your presentations. Make sure your power-point presentations are compatible with the computer’s program. **Remember the purpose of this oral presentation is not to give a chapter summary from the book but rather to focus on one specific topic that you are interested in doing research and go deeper into it. Be creative, informative, and entertaining. Share your passion with us. Be enthusiastic! Check with me if you need further help in finding out an**

interesting topic.

(3) (*)**Reflection Paper Proposal:** 10% of the overall grade (papers due at the beginning of class--late papers will not be accepted).

Write in one page on both sides (maximum 2 pages) a suggested **title**, a **thesis statement**, and **one** selected quotation from your reflection paper using the proper citation in parenthesis. For instance, “. . .” (Klostermaier 111). Or if you have more than one book by the same author then change the format to: “. . .” (Klostermaier, *A Short Introduction: Hinduism* 33). You should cite at least four **sources** (three from book sources--including one from our semester readings--and one from a website) in the Works Cited. Follow the format below!

- 1) **Title**-For example, A Gandhian Look at Non-Violence.
- 2) **Thesis Statement**-Write in one or more paragraphs the purpose of your reflection paper. What are you trying to prove in your paper? Which is the major problem associated with your researched topic? What is the major contribution? How does the West look at it? Which is the topic that you are planning to write on? Why? Narrow down the topic. Be specific!
- 3) **Sources**-AVOID PLAGIARISM!!! Make sure that you give proper credit to all your sources if you are quoting directly or paraphrasing from any text. Open parenthesis, name the author's last name (if there is no author's name cite the website, www.hinduism.com), and write the page number. Ex. “. . .” (Klostermaier 130). If you are quoting more than one page, use the following format: “. . .” (Klostermaier 130-131). Then include all your sources in the last page of your reflection paper as Works Cited. Check the samples using the MLA Handbook Manual Style in **Section IV!**

Final Reflection Paper: 20% of the overall grade (hard copy of papers due at the beginning of class--late papers will not be accepted). Also send an electronic copy of your paper to BlazeView before our last class meeting.

- A) Write a thesis statement **at the beginning** of your paper explaining why you chose this topic and what you found interesting about it. One good paragraph will do it. Have a good conclusion **at the end** explaining what you have learned after doing research on your topic.
- B) Students will select **one** major philosophical and/or religious topic in the academic study of Hinduism (for instance, the problem of one God versus many different deities).
 - a) Find out **one** major strength and **one** weakness in your researched topic.
 - b) How is it viewed your topic in the West? In other words, how does Judaism, Christianity or Islam look at the Hindu interpretation of your researched topic in question? Cite good examples and rational arguments to back up your opinions with scholarly sources throughout your paper. Avoid plagiarism. Document all your sources. Plagiarized assignments will receive a failing grade and will be reported to the Dean of Students. Check the link below this text for further information on academic dishonesty. (Please also see pp. 93-94 in the Undergraduate Catalog.)

<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>

You will lose **one** point for each mechanical error (grammar, spelling, and format).

All answers must be in print. Use MLA style. The maximum of pages allowed in the final paper is **four**. Use pagination numbers (ex. Serrán-Pagán 1). Use double-spacing. You are required to use the pronoun ‘I’ (such as “I think,” “I agree,” “I disagree”) in all your papers. Combine facts, personal input and scholarly sources throughout your reflection paper. Select at least **four** quotes and cite the sources in parenthesis throughout your paper. For instance, “.....” (Klostermaier 112). Then cite at least **four** complete sources (one from our textbook, two from scholarly books and/or journals, and one from the internet) in the Works Cited (on the back of each reflection paper).

(4) **Journals** (20%): Write **one** page journal for each assigned chapter/s. I will pick them up at the end of each week (use handwriting only for journals—check Course Calendar). Answer the following questions:

A) Which part of the readings did you find the most problematic? Explain it in your own words. Use one quote and one source in parenthesis. For instance, “...” (Kinsley 111).

B) Which part of the readings did you find the most enlightened and/or inspiring? Explain it in your own words. Use one quote and one source in parenthesis. For instance, “...” (Kinsley 99).

GRADING SCALE: A (100 to 90); B (89 to 80); C (79 to 70); D (69 to 60); and F (59 to 0)

SUGGESTED SYLLABUS INFORMATION FOR DEPARTMENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT PROJECT:

This course is part of a pilot project this semester, testing a new online Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) form. Student evaluations are extremely important in helping faculty members plan and revise their courses. Rather than completing these evaluations during class time, students will need to access evaluation forms via BANNER and complete them in a period prior to the last day of classes. You will only complete evaluations online for the classes that are part of this pilot project; other classes may still require you to complete a Scranton form in class. Please take the time to complete this important evaluation (or opt out of providing an evaluation) during the designated period. If you do not do so, you will not be able to access the grade for this class.

SPECIAL NEEDS STATEMENT

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the sex, race, religion, color, national origin or handicap of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent executive orders as well as Title XI in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in Room 1115 Nevins Hall. The phone numbers are (229) 245-2498 (voice) and (229) 219-1348 (tty).

VI. COURSE CALENDAR

Jan. 12--Introduction and Read syllabus

Jan. 14--Read Kinsley's *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective* (HCP)--Preface (xiii-xiv) and Chapter 1--Introduction: Varanasi (pp. 2-10)--Watch Video: *Hinduism*

Jan. 19--Read HCP--Chapter 2--History (pp. 11-54)

Jan. 21--Read HCP--Chapter 3--Dissent within the Hindu Religious Tradition (pp. 55-66) and Chapter 4--Hinduism and the Arts (pp. 67-82)

Jan. 26--Read HCP --Chapter 5--Central Hindu Beliefs (pp. 84-110)--Shankara and Gandhi

Jan. 28--Read HCP --Chapter 6--Worship in the Hindu Tradition (pp. 111-128)

Feb. 2--Read HCP --Chapter 7--Sacred Female Imagery and Women's Experience (pp. 129-151)

Feb. 4--Read HCP --Chapter 8--Hindu Social Structure (pp. 152-175) and Chapter 9--Symbols and Structures: A Concluding Analysis (pp. 176-186)

Feb. 9--**Team Presentations**--Choose topics from Chapters 1-9 in Kinsley's HCP

Feb. 11--Read Klostermaier's *A Short Introduction: Hinduism* (SIH)--Introduction (1-6), Chapter 1--Origins of Hinduism (pp. 7-14), Chapter 2--The Scripture of Hinduism (pp. 15-26)

Feb. 16--Read SIH--Chapter 3--The Vedas (pp. 27-35) and Chapter 4--Vedic Ritual (36-43)

Feb. 18--Read SIH--Chapter 5--The Heart of Hinduism (pp. 45-56), Chapter 6--Lord Vishnu and His Devotees (57-66), Chapter 7--Shiva Means Grace (pp. 67-75), and Chapter 8--The Goddess and Her Worshippers (pp. 77-84)--**Reflection Paper Proposal DUE**

Feb. 23--Read SIH-- Chapter 9--The Wisdom of the Upanishads (pp. 85-95) and Chapter 10--The Philosophy of Yoga (pp. 96-103)

Feb. 25--Read SIH-- Chapter 11--Shankara and His Advaita Vedanta (pp. 105-112) and Chapter 12--Vaishnava Theistic Vedanta (pp. 113-121)

Mar. 2--Read SIH--Chapter 13--Hinduism Welcomes Modern Western Ideas (pp. 123-138) and Chapter 14--Hinduism Rejects the Modern West (pp. 139-147)

Mar. 4--Read SIH-- Chapter 15--New Faces of Hinduism (pp. 149-161) and Chapter 16--Hinduism and the Challenges of Today (pp. 163-170)

Mar. 9--**Team Presentations**--Choose topics from Chapters 1-16 in Klostermaier's SIH

Mar. 11--Read Easwaran's translation of *The Bhagavad Gita* (BG)--Chapters 1-4 (pp. 3-28)

Mar. 23--Read BG--Chapters 5-8 (pp. 29-46)

Mar. 25--Read BG--Chapters 9-13 (pp. 47-73)

Mar. 30--Read BG--Chapters 14-18 (pp. 74-98)

Apr. 1--**Team Presentations**--Choose topics from *The Bhagavad Gita*

Apr. 6-- Read *The Gandhi Reader* (GR)--Chapter 1 (pp. 3-28)--Watch Video: *Gandhi*

Apr. 8--Read GR--Chapter 2--On the Way to Pretoria (pp. 29-33), Chapter 3 (pp. 59-79), and Chapter 4 (pp. 85-103)

Apr. 13-- Read GR--Chapter 5--"Indian Home Rule" (pp. 104-124), Chapter 6 (pp. 136-148), and Chapter 7 (pp. 162-172)

Apr. 15--Read GR--Chapter 8--The Great Trial (pp. 197-216) and Chapter 9 (pp. 217-234)

Apr. 20--Read GR--Chapter 10--The Salt March (pp. 235-253) and Chapter 11 (pp. 254-278)

Apr. 22--Read GR--Chapter 13--Personal, National, and World Problems (pp. 297-331), Chapter 14 (pp. 332-350), and Chapter 15 (356-358)--Letter to F. D. Roosevelt

Apr. 27--Read GR--Chapter 17--Home and Family (pp. 410-416), Chapter 19 (pp. 451-475), and Chapter 20 (pp. 480-498)

Apr. 29--**Team Presentations**--Choose topics from Gandhi--**Final Reflection Paper DUE**