

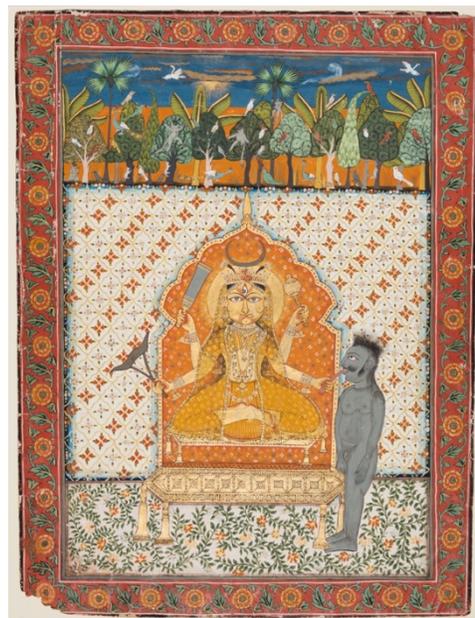
**REL3333**  
**CLASSICAL HINDUISM**  
**Spring 2024**  
**Tuesday-Thursday 2:00-3:15**

Instructor: Sasha Restifo  
Office hours (in person/on Zoom): by appointment

### Course Description

What is Hinduism and who is a Hindu? What are the criteria for including certain beliefs, rituals, and behaviors within Hinduism? What are the main objects of worship in Hinduism and how is devotion expressed? What constitutes early yoga and other philosophical traditions? What is the role of renunciation in Hindu traditions? How are sin and virtue defined in Hindu ethics? What is the relationship between religion and the state, historically and at present?

The course will involve students in a discussion of these and other questions in order to familiarize them with the major principles, beliefs, and practices of Hindu traditions. Our framework will be chronological; we will begin with the Vedic Period, moving to the Hindu epics, the Tantric Age and Bhakti movement, and finishing with contemporary Hindu traditions.



(Devi holding the tongue of a demon, c. 1725. Cleveland Museum of Art.)

### Objectives of the Course

- Acquire knowledge about a variety of Hindu traditions
- Develop an understanding of key Hindu philosophical and literary texts
- Demonstrate an awareness of the complexity of Hinduism
- Cultivate analytical writing and research skills through film responses, blogs, and essays

### On Reading Material

This course will involve reading both primary sources in translation and academic works. Primary sources include sacred texts, narrative literature, and devotional poetry. Academic works include critical and theoretical material by scholars of religion. You are expected to come to class having read all of the assigned readings.

## Grading

Attendance & participation	10%
2 film responses (500 words)	15%
5 blogs (500 words)	25%
Hindu temple visit essay (1200 words)	25%
Final project (1500 words)	25%

## Requirements

### *Film responses* (500 words)

You will watch two films and write a response to each of them. The goal of this exercise is to reflect on the artistic representation of Hindu culture.

### *Blogs* (500 words)

You will post five blogs to questions pertaining to the topics of the course. The goal of this writing exercise is to urge you to reflect on questions under discussion.

### *Hindu site visit essay* (1200 words)

This is your midterm essay. You will perform field research by attending a Hindu temple. The goal is to provide you with an opportunity to learn more about Hindu ritual, temple worship, and material culture.

### *Final project* (1500 words)

For a final paper, you will pick a text we will have studied in class, perform in-depth research, and write a reflection on it.

## Statement of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential for both teaching and learning. All students must conform to the highest standards of academic honesty. You are required to be aware of proper citation practices and present only your original work. Be sure to read about the citing regulations here <https://library.fiu.edu/infolit/citations>, and consult me, should you have any doubts or hesitations about the ways of referencing or employing other sources (books, articles, conversations, discussions, pictures, etc.). Any form of cheating will be taken seriously.

## Required Texts

- Flood, Gavin. *An Introduction to Hinduism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Burkhalter Flueckiger, Joyce. *Everyday Hinduism*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.

**All other readings will be made available on Canvas.**

**COURSE SCHEDULE**  
(subject to change)

- Tue, Jan. 9: Course Introduction. What is Hinduism?
- Thurs, Jan. 11: The Indus Valley civilization and the Vedic Period
- Tue, Jan. 16: Vedic Hymns
- Thurs, Jan. 18: Maintaining the Cosmic Order
- Tue, Jan. 23: Beginnings of Asceticism and Renunciation
- Thurs, Jan. 25: Dharma: Morality and Law
- Tue, Jan. 30: Hindu Philosophy
- Thurs, Febr. 1: Yoga
- Tue, Febr. 6: Epic and Purāṇic Literature
- Thurs, Febr. 8: Bhagavad Gītā
- Tue, Febr. 13: Bhagavad Gītā, Part 2
- Thurs, Febr. 15: Great Indian Epics
- Tue, Febr. 20: Great Indian Epics in Performance
- Thurs, Febr. 22: Hindu Goddess and Women's Auspiciousness
- Febr. 27 & 29: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS**
- Tue, March 5: The Tantric Religion
- Thurs, March 7: Key Traditions
- Tue, March 12: Bhakti
- Thurs, March 14: Bhakti, Part 2
- Tue, March 19: Hindu Festivals
- Thurs, March 21: Rites of Passage
- Tue, March 26: Ritual Healing and Spirit Possession

Thurs, March 28: Temple Rites and Pilgrimage

Tue, Apr. 2: Temples and Images

Thurs, Apr. 4: Hinduism in Contemporary Society and Diaspora

Tue, Apr. 9: Gandhi & MLK

Thurs, Apr. 11: Colonialism and Movement for Independence

Tue, April 16: Hinduism Today

Thurs, April 18: Review and Conclusions

**April 23 & April 25: Finals Week**