

# Religious History of South Asia II (REL 271)

## SYLLABUS

### REQUIREMENTS

1. You are expected to attend class regularly, finish the assigned readings on time, and participate in class discussions actively (and, one hopes, enthusiastically).
2. To facilitate class discussion, 8 weekly reaction papers will be due during the semester. These reaction papers should be 1–2 pages in length, and should demonstrate a thoughtful and rigorous engagement with the material. Creativity is encouraged, rambling is not. Although you are welcome to focus on a particular article or passage within a week's assignment, you should try and contextualize that material within the rest of the week's readings. These reaction papers are due on the Friday of each week, and will be graded on a  $\sqrt{+}$ ,  $\sqrt{}$ ,  $\sqrt{-}$  system, corresponding roughly to an A/A-, B+/B, and B-/etc. In addition, twice during the semester you are permitted to double-up and write a double-length reaction paper to count as two reaction papers. At least 4 reaction papers should be turned in by midterm break. Please label each reaction paper accordingly—e.g., Reaction Paper no. 7, week 9; Reaction Papers nos. 8–9, week 11. And please save all of your returned and graded reaction papers so that you can resubmit the full corpus on the last day of classes.
3. A take-home exam, involving about 10 pages of writing, will be distributed on Wednesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, discussed in class on Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, and due in class on Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>.
4. You will also be expected to produce a final project. These projects are not meant to be involved works of research; instead, they should be creative efforts to engage with the materials from the semester. This may involve reading a few poems or a story that you've written and then discussing how you felt producing this writing, what you understand it to mean, or how you would like it to be understood. You may also choose to show the class some images that you've produced or procured and offer similar insights. Performance pieces are also encouraged. This is your chance to produce something in creative conversation with the religious world of South Asia—not just in intellectual conversation as you will do in your midterm—and you may do so through any of the senses.

In summary, your grade will be determined by the quality of your participation in class, your reaction papers, your midterm exam, and your final project.

### REQUIRED READING

Edward Dimock and Denise Levertov, trans. *In Praise of Krishna: Songs from the Bengali*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Donald S. Lopez, editor. *Religions of India in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995. (=RIP)

A. K. Ramanujan, Velcheru Narayana Rao, and David Shulman, trans. *When God is a Customer: Telugu Courtesan Songs by Ksetrayya and Others*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Subha Rao and Pratap Mulick. *Valmiki's Ramayana*. Amar Citra Katha. Bombay: India Bookhouse Limited, 1998.

*Source Book*. (=SB)

•texts are available at Grécourt Bookshop, 100 Green Street, 585–4140

•the source book is available at Paradise Copies, 30 Crafts Avenue, 585–0414

**WEEK 1** (1/26, 1/28, 1/30)

## i. INTRODUCTION

- various maps of South Asia (SB)
- additional maps of India at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/india.html>

## ii. RELIGIOUS IDENTITY: WHAT IS IT, WHERE IS IT, AND HOW DO WE DESCRIBE IT?

- Richard Davis, “A Brief History of Religions in India,” 3–7 (RIP)
- Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
  - “Introduction,” 1–30 (SB)
- In *Everyday Life in South Asia*. Edited by Diane P. Mines and Sarah Lamb. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002.
  - “Social Distinctions of Caste and Class,” 167–172 (SB)

## iii. BANARAS: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A CITY TO BE RELIGIOUS?

- Diana Eck. In *Religion in India*. Edited by T. N. Madan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
  - “Kashi: City of All India,” 138–155 (SB)
- Jonathan Parry, *Death in Banaras*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
  - “Through ‘Divine Eyes,’” 11–32 (SB)
- Lawrence Cohen, *No Aging in India: Alzheimer’s, the Bad Family, and Other Modern Things*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
  - “Dog Ladies and the Beriya Baba,” 263–268 (SB)

**WEEK 2** (2/2, 2/4, 2/6)

## i. JAINISM: RELIGION, CATECHISM, AND NARRATIVE

- Richard Davis, “A Brief History of Religions in India,” 16–18 (RIP)
- Kendall W. Folkert, *Scripture and Community: Collected Essays on the Jains*. Edited by John E. Cort. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993.
  - “Introduction to Jainism,” 1–19 (SB)
- John Cort, “Jain Questions and Answers: Who is God and How is He Worshipped?” 598–608 (RIP)
- Phyllis Granoff, “Jain Stories Inspiring Renunciation,” 412–417 (RIP)

## ii. A JAIN AUTOBIOGRAPHY: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A TEXT TO BE RELIGIOUS?

- Ardhakathanaka of Banarsidass. *Half a Tale: A Study in the Interrelationship between Autobiography and History*. Translated by Mukund Lath. Jaipur: Rajasthan Prakrit Bharati Sansthan, 1981.
  - 1–97 (SB)

iii. SCREENING: *The Frontiers of Peace: Jainism in India* (40 minutes), a BBC-TV production in association with Educational Communications-TVKC, 1986**WEEK 3** (2/9, 2/11, 2/13)

## i. MUSLIM INDIA, INDIAN MUSLIMS, AND THE MUSE

- Richard Davis, “A Brief History of Religions in India,” 31–37 (RIP)
- David Pinault, In *The Shiites: Ritual and Popular Piety in a Muslim Community*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992.
  - “Shiism: An Overview,” 3–10 (SB)
  - “Essentials of Islam Common to the Shiite and Sunni Traditions,” 11–26 (SB)
- Carl Ernst, “India as Sacred Islamic Land,” 556–563 (RIP)
- Vikram Seth, *A Suitable Boy*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.
  - excerpt, 2.3–2.5, 79–88 (SB)

ii. WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A TEACHING TO BE RELIGIOUS?

- Carl Ernst, “Conversations of Sufi Saints,” 513–517 (RIP)
- Nizam ad-din Awliya, *Morals for the Heart*. Translated by Bruce B. Lawrence. Introduction by Khaliq A. Nizami. New York: Paulist Press, 1992.  
3–15, 132–142, 173–184, 312–314 (SB)
- Mustansir Mir, “Teachings of Two Punjabi Sufi Poets,” 518–529 (RIP)

iii. SCREENING: *I am a Sufi, I am a Muslim* (52 minutes), written and directed by Dirk Dumon, 1996

**WEEK 4** (2/16, 2/18, 2/20)

i. DARŚAN: THOUGHTS ON SEEING AND BEING SEEN

- Diana Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. Columbia University Press, 1998.  
“Seeing the Sacred,” 3–31 (SB)
- Lawrence A. Babb, “Glancing: Visual Interaction in Hinduism.” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37 (1981): 387–401 (SB)
- Sylvain Pinard. In *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses*. Edited by David Howes. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.  
“A Taste of India: On the Role of Gustation in the Hindu Sensorium,” 221–230 (SB)

ii. no class

iii. PŪJA: WORSHIPPING THE DIVINE

- Lawrence Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy*. Columbia University Press, 1975.  
“The Food of the Gods: Pūja,” 31–68 (SB)
- C. J. Fuller, *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.  
“Worship,” 57–82

**WEEK 5** (2/23, 2/25, 2/27)

i. DEVĪ: MANIFESTATIONS OF THE GODDESS

- Ann Grodzins Gold, “Mother Ten’s Stories,” 434–448 (RIP)
- Rachel McDermott, “Bengali Songs to Kali,” 55–76 (RIP)
- Stanley N. Kurtz, *All the Mothers are One: Hindu India and the Cultural Reshaping of Psychoanalysis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.  
“Santoshi Ma Dissolved—the Goddess Constituted,” 12–28 (SB)

ii. IS THE GODDESS A FEMINIST?

- Usha Menon and Richard Schweder. In *Is the Goddess a Feminist? The Politics of South Asian Goddesses*. Edited by Alf Hiltebeitel and Kathleen M. Erndl. New York: New York University Press, 2000.  
“Power in its Place: Is the Great Goddess of Hinduism a Feminist?” 151–165 (SB)
- Frédérique Apfell Marglin. In *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*. Edited by Clarissa W. Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan, and Margaret R. Miles. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.  
“Female Sexuality in the Hindu World,” 39–59 (SB)

OPTIONAL:

- Kathleen M. Erndl. In *Is the Goddess a Feminist? The Politics of South Asian Goddesses*. Edited by Alf Hiltebeitel and Kathleen M. Erndl. New York: New York University Press, 2000.  
“Is Shakti Empowering for Women? Reflections on Feminism and the Hindu Goddess,” 91–103 (SB)

iii. SCREENING: *Devi* (89 minutes), adapted, produced, and directed by Satyajit Rai (first half)

**WEEK 6** (3/1, 3/3, 3/5)

i. KṚṢṢṢA: EROTICS AND DEVOTION

- Edward Dimock and Denise Levertov, *In Praise of Krishna: Songs from the Bengali*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.  
entire book
- McKim Marriot. In *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes*. Edited by Milton Singer. Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966.  
“The Feast of Love,” 200–212 (SB)

ii. WOMEN AND THEISM: EROTICS AND DEVOTION RECONSIDERED

- A. K. Ramanujan, Velcheru Narayana Rao, and David Shulman, *When God is a Customer: Telugu Courtesan Songs by Ksetrayya and Others*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.  
9–40, selections between 63–126

iii. SCREENING: *Devi* (89 minutes), adapted, produced, and directed by Satyajit Rai (second half)

- Geeta Kapur. In *When was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India*. New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2000.  
Excerpt from “Revelation and Doubt: Sant Tukaram and Devi,” 252–264 (SB)

**WEEK 7** (3/8, 3/10, 3/12)

i. ŚIVA: VĪRAŚAIVISM IN MEDIEVAL SOUTH INDIA

- Wendy Doniger, *Hindu Myths: A Sourcebook Translated from the Sanskrit*. Penguin Books.  
“The Purāṇic myths of *liṅga*-worship,” 137–154 (SB)
- Velcheru Narayana Rao, *Siva’s Warriors: The Basava Purāṇa of Pāḷkuriki Somanātha*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.  
2–13, 32–38 (skim), 231–266 (SB)

ii. RENUNCIANTS: THE VENERABLE AND THE NOT SO VENERABLE

- Kirin Narayan, *Storytellers, Saints, and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teaching*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.  
“Sādhus,” 63–73 (SB)
- Patrick Olivelle, *Samnyasa Upanisads: Hindu Scriptures on Asceticism and Renunciation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.  
“The Behavior and Customs of Renouncers,” 101–112 (SB)
- Rahul Bonner, *Mattavilāsa*, 1–15 (SB)
- Lee Siegel, *Laughing Matters: Comic Tradition in India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989.  
“Beyond the Hallowed Ashes: Yogic Yahoos,” 220–241 (SB)

iii. SCREENING: *Lotan Baba, The Rolling Saint* (52 minutes), directed by Naresh Bedi

**WEEK 8** (3/15, 3/17, 3/19)

RELAX . . . SPRING BREAK

**WEEK 9** (3/22, 3/24, 3/26)

## i. RĀM: RELIGION AND THE CULTURAL IMAGINATION

•Subha Rao and Pratap Mulick. *Valmiki's Ramayana*. Amar Citra Katha. Bombay: India Bookhouse Limited, 1998.  
entire book

•Purnima Mankekar. In *Everyday Life in South Asia*, edited by Diane P. Mines and Sarah Lamb. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

“Epic Contests: Television and Religious Identity in India,” 134–151 (SB)

## ii. THE REGIME OF RĀM: RELIGION AND THE POLITICAL IMAGINATION

•Peter Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

“Religious Nationalism,” 1–12 (12–24 is optional) (SB)

•Richard Davis. In *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India*. Edited by David Ludden. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996

“The Iconography of Rama’s Chariot,” 27–54 (SB)

iii. SCREENING: *Father, Son, and Holy War* (part 2), directed by Anand Padwardhan (60 minutes)

**WEEK 10** (3/29, 3/31, 4/2)

## i. SATI: RELIGION, POLITICS, AND VIOLENCE

•John Stratton Hawley. In *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India*. Edited by John Stratton Hawley. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

“Introduction,” 3–14 (SB)

•Lindsey Harlan. In *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India*. Edited by John Stratton Hawley. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

“Perfection and Devotion: Sati Tradition in Rajasthan,” 79–91 (SB)

•Veena Talwar Oldenburg. In *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India*. Edited by John Stratton Hawley. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

“The Roop Kanwar Case: Feminist Responses,” 101–130 (SB)

## OPTIONAL:

•Ashish Nandy. 1994. In *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India*. Edited by John Stratton Hawley. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

“Sati as Profit Versus Sati as a Spectacle:

The Public Debate on Roop Kanwar’s Death,” 131–149 (SB)

## ii. SIKHISM: RELIGION, POLITICS, AND VIOLENCE

•Richard Davis, “A Brief History of Religions in India,” 43–44 (RIP)

•Mark Juergensmeyer. In *Religion in India*. Edited by T. N. Madan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

“The Logic of Religious Violence,” 382–393 (SB)

•Celia Dugger, “Hostages Recall Times of Terror Amid Boredom.” *New York Times*, 2 January 2000, 5–6 (SB)

•Ashis Nandy. In *The Savage Freud and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves*. Princeton University Press, 1995.

“The Discreet Charms of Indian Terrorism,” 1–31 (SB)

iii. SCREENING: *Father, Son, and Holy War* (part 1), directed by Anand Padwardhan (60 minutes)

**WEEK 11** (4/5, 4/7, 4/9)

## i. CHRISTIANITY AND CONVERSION—COERCION?

- Pandita Ramabai. In *Women Writing in India: 600 BC to the Early Twentieth Century*. Edited by Susie Tharu and K. Lalita. London: Pandora Press, 1993.  
“The High Caste Hindu Woman” and “Letter to Dorothea Beale,” 243–255 (SB)
- Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing*. London: Verso, 1993.  
“Pandita Ramabai,” 26 (SB)
- Meera Kosambi, “Indian Response to Christianity, Church, and Colonialism: Case of Pandita Ramabai.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 24–31, 1992: 61–71 (SB)
- miscellaneous newspaper articles concerning Christians in India (SB)

## ii. RETHINKING RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES: CHRISTIANITY, HINDUISM, AND JUDAISM

- Rudyard Kipling. In *Kim: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Criticism*. Edited by Zohreh T. Sullivan. New York: W. W. Norton, 2002.  
“Lispeth,” 247–251 (SB)
- Paul Griffiths, *Christianity through Non-Christian Eyes*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990.  
“Extracts from the Light of Truth of Dayananda Sarasvati,” 197–203
- Joanne Punzo Waghorne. In *Popular Christianity in India: Riting Between the Lines*. Edited by Selva J. Raj and Corinne G. Dempsey. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.  
“Chariots of the God/s: Riding the Line between Hindu and Christian,” 11–37
- Ruby Daniel and Barbara C. Johnson. 1995. *Ruby of Cochin: An Indian Jewish Woman Remembers*. Philadelphia and Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society.  
“Stories from the Past, Told to Me by My Elders,” 3–22 (SB)
- Nathan Katz and Ellen S. Goldberg, *The Last Jews of Cochin: Jewish Identity in Hindu India*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993.  
“Conclusions: Caste, Jewish Survival, and Hindu Tolerance,” 247–249 (SB)

## iii. SCREENING: (to be announced)

**WEEK 12** (4/12, 4/14, 4/16)

## i. DR. AMBEDKAR AND THE ONUS OF UNTOUCHABILITY

- Eleanor Zelliot. In *The Encyclopedia of Asian History*, vol. 4. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988.  
“Untouchability,” 169–171 (SB)
- Christopher S. Queen. In *Engaged Buddhism*. Edited by Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King. State University of New York Press, 1996.  
“Dr. Ambedkar and the Hermeneutics of Buddhist Liberation,” 45–71 (SB)
- Shakarrao Kharat. In *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature*. Edited by Arjun Dangle. Hyderabad: Orient Longman Ltd., 1992.  
“A Corpse in the Well,” 73–78 (SB)
- Kumud Pawde. In *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature*. Edited by Arjun Dangle. Hyderabad: Orient Longman Ltd., 1992.  
“The Story of My Sanskrit,” 96–106 (SB)
- Baburao Bagul. In *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature*. Edited by Arjun Dangle. Hyderabad: Orient Longman Ltd., 1992.  
“Mother,” 183–190 (SB)

ii. ENGAGED BUDDHISM: DALIT BUDDHISTS SPEAK OUT

•Barbara R. Joshi, ed. *Untouchable! Voices of the Dalit Liberation Movement*. Delhi: Selectbook Service Syndicate, 1986.

“The Enemy Within,” 77–98 (SB)

•Eleanor Zelliot. In *From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement*. Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1992.

“India’s Ex-Untouchables: New Past, New Future and the New Poetry,” 293–316 (SB)

•D.R. Nagaraj, “From Political Rage to Cultural Affirmation: Notes on the Kannada Dalit Poet-Activist Siddalingaiah.” *India International Centre Quarterly* (New Delhi) 21/4 (Winter 1994): 15–26 (SB)

•NOTE:

take-home exam distributed

iii. DISCUSSION OF TAKE-HOME EXAM

**WEEK 13** (4/19, 4/21, 4/23)

i. no class

ii. SCREENING: *My Son the Fanatic* (87 minutes), written by Hanif Kureishi, directed by Udayan Prasad, 1997 (first half)

•NOTE:

take-home exam due in class

iii. THE POLITICS OF SECULARISM I

*My Son the Fanatic* (87 minutes), written by Hanif Kureishi, directed by Udayan Prasad, 1997 (second half)

•Ashish Nandy. In *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia*. Edited by Veena Das. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990.

“The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance,” 69–93 (SB)

•SEE REVIEWS:

-<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/MySontheFanatic-1087925/>

**WEEK 14** (4/26, 4/28, 4/30)

i. THE POLITICS OF SECULARISM II

•Partha Chatterjee. In *Secularism and its Critics*. Edited by Rajiv Bhargava. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

“Secularism and Tolerance,” 345–380 (SB)

or

•Ashish Nandy. In *Tradition and Pluralism and Identity: In Honour of T. N. Madan*. Edited by Veena Das, Dipankar Gupta, and Patricia Uberoi. Contributions to Indian Sociology, Occasional Studies 8. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999.

“The Twilight of Certitudes: Secularism, Hindu Nationalism and Other Masks of Deculturation,” 401–418 (SB)

ii. PRESENTATIONS

•David Knipe, *Hinduism: Experiments in the Sacred*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.  
“Epilogue,” 152

iii. PRESENTATIONS