

Modern Hinduism

Religious Studies 370A
DePauw University - Spring 2009
MW 2:20-3:50 – Emison 211

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Course Description:

In this course we will examine the rise of Hindu modernity from the colonial period to the present day. Our main objective will be to come to an understanding of the embedded nature of modern Hinduism within the historical matrices of culture, society, politics, and economics in India. Through the close reading of primary and secondary interpretive texts dealing with the transformation of religion in modern South Asia we will learn how to apply the critical hermeneutical techniques specific to the discipline of the history of religions. At the same time we will learn about the challenges which Hindus have faced and negotiated in the modern period and we will gain a better understanding of contemporary Hinduism; by doing so we will be in a position to understand more thoroughly the situation of religious belief and practice across the globe in the modern and post-modern periods.

Requirements:

This is a seminar course offered for “S” credit. As such, students will be expected to drive the discussion. In order to do this all students must keep up with the readings each week. There will be a good deal of reading in the course (around 100 pages per week). We meet only twice a week so there will be little excuse for coming to class unprepared. There will be semi-weekly quizzes given at the beginning of class in order to ‘encourage’ adherence to the reading schedule.

In order to facilitate discussions, leaders and discussants will be appointed for each class period. Leaders will be responsible for summarizing the readings and leading the class discussion for the day. Discussants will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material. Occasionally the instructor may give a mini-lecture but by and large the students will be expected to drive the discussion and move the class through the material. “S” credit will be given to those who earn “B” or above in class participation.

Grading will be based upon 1. class participation - including presentations as well as day to day participation in the discussions (20%), 2. semi-weekly quizzes (20%), 3. two take-home essays (20% - i.e. 2x10%), 4. a final 15-page research paper (40%).

Grading Rubrics:

Class Participation:

'C' range: The student meets the basic requirements of participation. This student is usually prepared and participates once in a while but not regularly. This student's contributions relate to the texts and the lectures and offer a few insightful ideas, but do not facilitate a discussion. Failure to fulfill satisfactorily any of these criteria will result in a grade *below* a 'C'.

'B' range: This student participates consistently in discussion and leads effectively when serving as the moderator. This student comes to class well prepared and contributes quite regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show insight and a familiarity with the material. This student refers to the materials discussed in lecture and shows interest in other students' contributions.

'A' range: This student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is well prepared, having read the assigned texts, and has thought carefully about the texts' relation to issues raised in class. This student's ideas and questions are substantive (either constructive or critical); they stimulate class discussions. This student listens and responds to the contributions of other students and excels in all roles as a classroom participant.

Papers:

'C' range: This paper meets the basic requirements of the assignment: it offers a thesis of some kind, it refers to some evidence to support its thesis, and it presents a few points in service of its argument. Any paper will fall *below* a 'C' if it lacks one or more of these features.

'B' range: This paper's thesis is clear; the argument is unified and coherent, with appropriate evidence in support of its points. The argument shows comprehension of the material and manifests critical thinking about the issues raised in the course. The paper is well written and carefully proofread.

'A' range: This paper is outstanding in form and content. The thesis is clear and insightful; it is original, or it expands in a new way on ideas presented in the course. The evidence presented in support of the argument is carefully chosen and deftly handled. The argument is not only unified and coherent, but also complex and nuanced.

Required Books:

Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture and Political Economy*

David Smith, *Hinduism and Modernity*

Stephen Hay (ed.), *Sources of Indian Tradition (Volume Two: Modern India and Pakistan)*

Arvind Sharma, *Modern Hindu Thought: The Essential Texts*

Krishna Dutta, *Calcutta: A Cultural History*

Brian Hatcher, *Bourgeois Hinduism, Or the Faith of the Modern Vedantists*

Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*

E-Reserve Articles:

Chatterjee, Partha. "The Nationalist Elite," in *The Nation and Its Fragments*, pp. 35-75

Chatterjee, Partha. "The Nation and Its Women" and "Women and the Nation" in *The Nation and Its Fragments*, pp. 116-157.

Halbfass, Wilhelm. *India and Europe*, pp. 172-216

Kejariwal, O.P. *The Asiatic Society of Bengal*, pp. 1-29

King, Richard. "Orientalism and Indian Religions" and "The Modern Myth of Hinduism," in *Orientalism and Religion*, pp. 82-117

Sarkar, Sumit. "The City Imagined: Calcutta in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Writing Social History*, pp. 159-185

Sarkar, Sumit. "Kaliyuga, Chakri and Bhakti: Ramakrishna and His Times," in *Writing Social History*, pp. 282-358.

Class Schedule

Week 1

January 26: **Orientation to the Class**

January 28: **Historical Antecedents and the Modern Period in India**

Reading: *Modern South Asia*, pp. 1-52

Week 2

February 2: **John Company Raj and the Coming of the Victorians**

Reading: "The City Imagined: Calcutta in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in Sumit Sarkar's *Writing Social History*, pp. 159-185

Calcutta: A Cultural History, pp. 1-57

Modern South Asia, pp. 53-101

February 4: **Hinduism and Modernity Explained**

Reading: *Hinduism and Modernity*, pp. 1-46

Calcutta: A Cultural History, pp. 58-112

Week 3

February 9: **Hinduism for Others**

Reading: *Hinduism and Modernity*, pp. 47-101

Calcutta: A Cultural History, pp. 113-168

February 11: **Orientalism and the Asiatic Society of Bengal**

Reading: *The Asiatic Society of Bengal*, pp. 1-29

"Orientalism and Indian Religions" and "The Modern Myth of Hinduism," in Richard King's *Orientalism and Religion*, pp. 82-117

Week 4

February 16: **Raja Rammohun Roy and The Opening of India to the West**

Reading: *Modern Hindu Thought*, pp. 1-58
Sources of Indian Tradition, pp. 1-35

February 18: **Traditional Indian Xenology and the Hermeneutical Situation of Rammohun Roy**

Reading: Halbfass, Wilhelm. *India and Europe*, pp. 172-216

Week 5

February 23: **Leaders of Reform and Revival: Debendranath Tagore, Keshub Chunder Sen and Dayananda Saraswati**

Reading: *Modern Hindu Thought*, pp. 59-89 and 121-134
Sources of Indian Tradition, pp. 36-61

February 25: **The Popularity of Neo-Vedanta: Ramakrishna and Vivekananda**

Reading: *Modern Hindu Thought*, pp. 90-120
Sources of Indian Tradition, pp. 62-83

Week 6

March 2: **Ramakrishna and the Middle Class**

Reading: "The Nationalist Elite," in Partha Chatterjee's *The Nation and Its Fragments*, pp. 35-75
"Kaliyuga, Chakri and Bhakti: Ramakrishna and His Times," in Sumit Sarkar's
Writing Social History, pp. 282-357

March 4: **Nationalism Takes Root: The Moderates**

Reading: *Sources of Indian Tradition*, pp. 84-127
Modern Hindu Thought, pp. 154-191

Week 7

March 9: **The Marriage of Politics and Religion: The Extremists**

Reading: *Modern Hindu Thought*, pp. 182-214 and 312-336
Sources of Indian Tradition, pp. 128-172

March 11: **Rabindranath Tagore and *Charulata***

Reading: *Modern Hindu Thought*, pp. 230-248
Sources of Indian Tradition, pp. 275-288

Week 8

March 16: **Gandhi's Discovery of Hinduism**

Reading: *Sources of Indian Tradition*, pp. 243-274
Modern Hindu Thought, pp. 249-311

March 18: **Hinduism Contrasted with Modernity**

Reading: *Hinduism and Modernity*, pp. 103-164
Modern South Asia, pp. 102-127

Week 9

March 23 and 25: Spring Break

Week 10

March 30: **The Rise of the Brahmo Samaj**

Reading: *Bourgeois Hinduism*, pp. 3-64

April 1: **Bourgeois Vedanta for the *Bhadralok***

Reading: *Bourgeois Hinduism*, pp. 65-102

Week 11

April 6: ***The Sabhyadiger Vaktrta***

Reading: *Bourgeois Hinduism*, pp. 103-174

April 8: ***Gender and the Nation***

Reading: "The Nation and Its Women" and "Women and the Nation" in Partha Chatterjee's *The Nation and Its Fragments*, pp. 116-157.

Week 12

April 13: **The Decades Before Independence**

Reading: *Sources of Indian Tradition*, pp. 289-333
Modern South Asia, pp. 128-206

April 15: Independence and Beyond

Reading: *Sources of Indian Tradition*, pp. 334-378
Calcutta: A Cultural History, pp. 169-194

Week 13

April 20: Religious Nationalism

Reading: *Religious Nationalism*, pp. 1-105

April 22: Religious Nationalism

Reading: *Religious Nationalism*, pp. 106-202

Week 14

April 27: Hinduism Today

Reading: *Hinduism and Modernity*, pp. 165-203

April 29: Student Presentations

Week 15

May 4: Student Presentations

May 6: Student Presentations