Modern Hinduism

Religious Studies 357A
DePauw University - Spring 2017
T 7:00 9:50 – Harrison Hall, Room 315

Instructor: Jason Fuller
Office Hours: T 5:00-7:00 p.m. or By Appointment
Office location: 304 Harrison Hall
E-mail: jfuller@depauw.edu

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 you will learn how to apply the critical hermeneutical techniques specific to the discipline of the history of religions. At the same time you will learn about the challenges which Hindus have faced and negotiated in the modern period; by doing so you will be in a position to better understand the vexed history of religious belief and practice across the globe in the modern and post-modern periods.

Requirements:

This is a seminar course. 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 once 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.

Grading will be based upon 1. class participation - including presentations and 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:

David Smith, Hinduism and Modernity
Hatcher, Brian, Bourgeois Hinduism
Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhi Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth

E-Reserve Articles:

Chatterjee, Partha. “The Nationalist Elite,” in The Nation and Its Fragments, pp. 35-75
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
Class Schedule

Week 1
January 31: Orientation to the Class & Historical Antecedents to the Modern Period in India

Week 2
February 7: 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

Hinduism and Modernity Explained

Reading: Hinduism and Modernity, pp. 1-46

Week 3
February 14: Hinduism for Others

Reading: Hinduism and Modernity, pp. 47-101

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 21: Raja Rammohun Roy and the Opening of India to the West

Reading: Modern Hindu Thought, pp. 1-58

Vedanta According to Rammohun Roy

Reading: Bourgeois Hinduism, pp. 3-32
Week 5

February 28:  **Leaders of Reform and Revival: Debendranath Tagore, Keshub Chunder Sen, Dayananda Saraswati, et. al.**

Reading: *Bourgeois Hinduism*, pp. 33-84  
*Modern Hindu Thought*, pp. 59-89 and 121-134

Week 6

March 7:  **Middle Class Hinduism in a New Key**

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

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

Reading: *Modern Hindu Thought*, pp. 90-120

Week 7

March 14:  **The Marriage of Politics and Religion, Rabindranath Tagore and Charulata**

*Calcutta: A Cultural History*, pp. 195-240

Week 8

March 21:  **Hinduism Contrasted with Modernity**

Reading: *Hinduism and Modernity*, pp. 103-164

**Nationalism Takes Root: The Moderates**

Reading: *Modern Hindu Thought*, pp. 154-191

Week 9

March 28:  **Spring Break**
**Week 10**

April 4: **Gandhi**

Reading: *Gandhi Autobiography*, pp. 3-254

**Week 11**

April 11: **Gandhi - Continued**

Reading: *Gandhi Autobiography*, pp. 255-505

**Week 12**

April 18: “*Spiritual Recognition and the Radhasoami Faith*” and “*Sathya Sai Baba and the Lesson of Trust*”

Reading: Lawrence Babb, *Redemptive Encounters*, pp. 15-92 and 159-204 (PDF)

**Week 13**

April 25: **Student Presentations – Contemporary Movements**

**Week 14**

May 2: **Student Presentations – Contemporary Movements**

**Week 15**

May 9: **Student Presentations – Contemporary Movements**