

RELG 4183 Special Topics for the Study of Religion and Culture
Department Of Religious Studies
St. Thomas University
INDIAN RELIGIONS: SELF-DISCIPLINE AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM
WINTER 2006

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Lectures: WINTER T, Th, 10-11:20
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the concepts of self, body, mind discipline and the beliefs and concepts associated with individual in the religions of India. Since it is impossible to study the various religions of India in one semester course, I have chosen the subject, self, mind and body in Indian religions to introduce the variety and complexity of Indian religions. Historical and religious background of each religion studied is introduced in the class in addition to the special subject chosen.

The course is further divided into three major parts.

Part 1, introduces the religious background and the concepts of self, mind and body in each of the selected religions of India.

Part 2, studies the gender in relation to self, mind and body.

Part 3, studies the self, mind and body concepts adopted by modern social thinkers of India, including Gandhi, and the interaction of science and concepts of self, mind and body.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Inspect the Philosophy and Practice of self, mind and body in Indian religions.
2. Identify and analyze the evolution of concepts of self, mind and body in Indian Religions from early historic period to the modern age.
3. Study the major schools of mind and body discipline and gender interaction.
4. Investigate the mind, body discipline and social activism.
5. Examine the mind, body discipline and science.

COURSE EVALUATION

Review of readings 30%
Presentation 20%
Research Paper 40%
Participation 10%

COURSE READINGS

Copies of the course material are placed on the library reserve at Harriet Irving Library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Review of Readings:** Students are required to bring one page review of the assigned reading to the class (see attached schedule). The review is due at the beginning of the class. Failure to submit the reviews on time incurs penalty @ 5% per day. Students are required to submit their assignments on WebCT.
2. Each student should select a topic for research and present orally to the class and submit a written research paper based on primary research.
3. Active participation in class discussions is required.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part 1 Introduction to religious concepts of self, body and mind.

WEEK 1

5. Jan. 2006. Introduction: Topics, evaluation and course methods.

WEEK 2

10. Jan. 2006. Introduction to Hinduism

12. Jan. 2006. Mircea Eliade, "The Doctrines of Yoga," in *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 1-46.

WEEK 3

17. Jan. 2006. Introduction to Buddhism

19. Jan. 2006. Steven Collins, "The Body in Theravada Buddhist Monasticism," 185-205, In Sarah Coakely, *Religion*

WEEK 4

24. Jan. 2006. Introduction to Sikhism

26. Jan. 2006. Eleanor Nesbitt, "The Body in Sikh Tradition," 289-306, Sarah Coakley, *Religion*

WEEK 5

31. Jan. 2006. Introduction to Zoroastrianism

2. Feb. 2006. Alan Williams, "Zoroastrianism and the Body," 155-167, Sarah Coakley, *Religion*

WEEK 6

7. Feb. 2006. Introduction to Indian Sufi Tradition

9. Feb. 2006. Annemarie Schimmel, "I Take off the Dress of the Body': Eros in Sufi Literature and Life," Sarah Coakley, *Religion*

Part 2 Introduction to Gender and self, mind and body.

WEEK 7

14. Feb. 2006. Introduction to Jainism

16. Feb. 2006. Padmanabh S. Jaini, "Introduction," *Gender and Salvation: Jaina Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 1-30.

WEEK 8

21. Feb. 2006. Lynn Teskey Denton, "Varieties of Hindu Female Asceticism," 211-231, in Julia Leslie, ed., *Roles and Rituals for Hindu Women*, Rutherford, N.J: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991.

23. Feb. 2006. Choosing Research Subjects.

WEEK 9

28. Feb. 2006. Janice D. Willis, "Nuns and Benefactresses: The Role of Women in the Development of Buddhism," in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Ellison Banks Findley, ed., *Women, Religion and Social Change*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985, pp. 59-86.

2. Mar. 2006. Discussion of research subjects and presentation schedule.

WEEK 10

Midterm break: No Classes

Part 3 Self, mind and body: Society and science

WEEK 11

14. Mar. 2006.

Wendy Doniger "Medical and Mythical Constructions of the Body in Hindu Texts," 167-185, in Sarah Coakley, ed., *Religion and the Body*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

16. Mar. 2006. Class Presentation

WEEK 12

21. Mar. 2006.

"Mahatma Gandhi: Nationalist India's Great Soul," 243-274, Stephen Hay, Ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition Vol. 2*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988,

"Arabindo," Stephen Hay, *Sources of Indian Tradition Vol.2*, pp.173-178.

23. Mar. 2006. Class Presentation

WEEK 13

28. Mar. 2006. Elizabeth de Michelis, "The Roots of Modern Yoga," *Modern Yoga*, London: Continuum Press, 2004, pp. 1-26.

30. Mar. 2006. Class Presentation

WEEK 14

4. April. 2006. McIver, S, O'Halloran, P., McGartland (2004), "The Impact of Hathayoga on Smoking Behavior," *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine* 10 (2):22-23.

Thoresen, C.E, Harris A.H (2002), "Spirituality and Health: What's the evidence and What's needed," *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* 24 (1): 3-13.

Research Paper Due

6. April. 2006.