

Hinduism, Syllabus, 2014

AS 278L

Instructor:

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The instructor strongly prefers all work and other communication to be conducted by Email (phone calls are also welcome.)

PURPOSE: An introductory study of Hinduism philosophy, with a focus on basic teachings, mythology and the role and relevance of sacred text (Bhagavad Gita).

CORE AREAS: Humanities, International.

Readings:

Jeaneane Fowler, *Hinduism, Beliefs and Practices*.
Stephen Mitchell, *Bhagavad Gita, A New Translation*
AmalBhakta, *The Supreme Mystic, A Biographical Novel About the Early Years of Lord Krishna*

Requirements:

The student must write 2-6 page essays responding to each of the questions listed below. Students are encouraged to write each essay sequentially. To submit them at regular intervals, and, if they wish, to rewrite any or every essay for a higher grade. Essays will be graded on the quality of theme and thematic development, originality of ideas, supporting evidence, proper citations, good grammar and correct spelling. Any paper with a grade of B- or less **MUST** be revised and resubmitted no later than one week after initial return to student. Students with grades higher than B- **MAY** also submit a revised draft to their paper. There are no due dates for essays per se. It is strongly suggested that the student submit each essay at intervals of 10-14 days throughout the semester. All work must be received by the last date of the semester and any missing work after that date will be considered a failure. Students must observe all facets of the College Honor System.

ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS:

SECTION A) Based on Fowler's *Hinduism*.

Each question should be a separate essay.

1. Give an overview of the history and tradition of Hinduism. This is the last part of Fowler's book. Give reference to the importance of the God's, and nature of both the Vedic and Vedanta periods.
2. Describe some of the important fundamental beliefs and importance of scripture.
3. Describe the importance of the class system and its reference to Hinduism along with the various stages of Asramadharm.
4. Describe in more detail the Gods and Goddesses, festivals and symbols associated with Hinduism.
5. How does one worship and stay devotional within the practice of Hinduism?

SECTION B) Based on Mitchell's translation.

1. Give an overview of the *Gita* using Mitchell's introduction and translation section.
2. Describe the importance and the practice of yoga.
3. According to the *Gita* how does one find wisdom and freedom?
4. What is the *Ultimate Person* and how does one arrive at this place?

SECTION C) Based on Bhakta's book.

1. Write an overview of Krishna's life, his trials, gifts and teachings.

SECTION D) Based on all you have read.

1. Write a short one to two page essay describing what you have learned during this course.