Course Description and Objectives:

This course is focused on one expression of bhakti: that of a dominant form of Kṛṣṇa bhakti, as a template for bhakti in general. The primary readings are drawn from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, a very important classical text, and will feature the stories of great bhakti examplars, as well as episodes from the life of Kṛṣṇa. The course will also feature the 16th century Bhagavat Sandarbha, a theological treatise theologizing the tradition’s understanding of Kṛṣṇa as Supreme Godhead and Absolute Truth.

Our aim in this course is to provide students with a window into how bhakti is understood through the frame of reference of one community of theologians and practitioners in the pre-modern period prior to its encounter with modernity in the colonial period. As a result of our chosen focus, in addition to engaging selections from an important bhakti text, we will gain an exposure to a traditional mode of understanding, interpreting and reworking sacred scripture (hermeneutics).

Course Prerequisites: None.

Course Requirement: All assigned reading. Two quizzes (each 25% of the total grade), and term paper (10 pgs, 40%) due the last day of class. Students' attendance record and overall performance in class will factor into the remaining 10% of the grade (one point deducted for each unexcused absence; more than 10 such absences will result in a fail grade for the entire course). Students are expected to read whatever material is assigned for each particular week, and be prepared to discuss this in class. Any student called upon who has obviously not done the assigned reading will lose grade points. Computers are allowed for note taking, but any student using the computer for any other reason, such as surfing the web or going on Facebook, will lose grade points and no longer be allowed to bring the computer to class (and I will check up from time to time!). Any student wishing to bring the computer to class for note taking must sit in the front row of the class. Anyone using a cell phone in class will likewise lose points.

Please note: there are no make-ups for missed quizzes except in the case of an absence caused by an unexpected emergency and evidenced by a doctor’s or dean's note. In the event of such a documented emergency, the instructor must be informed of the impending absence immediately (i.e. on the day of the quiz), and the make-up must be taken within 24 hours of the quiz. There are no exceptions to these conditions.

Required Reading:


Dasa, Satyanarāyaṇa. Bhāgavata Sandarbha,

Note: The readings below are due by the date indicated.

Tue, Sept. 5th Introduction to the course.
Thur, Sept.  7th  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs 1-55.

Tue, Sept.  12th  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs 55-112.

Thur, Sept.  14th  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs 112-147.

Tue, Sept.  19th  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs 147- 219

Thur, Sept.  21st  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs 219-292

Tue, Sept.  26th  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs 292-361

Thur, Sept.  28th  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs 361-440

Tue, Oct.  3rd  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs 440-469

Thur, Oct.  5th  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs 469-529

Tue, Oct.  10th  **Readings:** Bhakti Yoga pgs Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 1041-1043.

Thur, Oct.  12th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 1-65.

Tue, Oct.  17th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 65-134.

Thur, Oct.  19th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 134-209.

Tue, Oct.  24th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 209-268.

Thur, Oct.  26th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 268-343.

Tue, Oct.  31st  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 343-405.

Thur, Nov.  2nd  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 405-488.

Tue, Nov.  7th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 488-554.

Thur, Nov.  9th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 554 -600.

Tue, Nov.  14th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 600-662.

Thur, Nov.  16th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 666-700.

Tue, Nov.  21st  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 700- 782.

Thur, Nov  23rd  **THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS**

Tue, Nov.  28th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 782-838.

Thur, Nov.  30th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 838-885.

Tue, Dec.  5th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 885-937. **QUIZ II**

Thur, Dec  7th  **Readings:** Bhågavata Sandarbha pgs 937-1041.
Tue, Dec. 12th  Last class Final Papers Due.