

Religion
The Western Encounter with Hinduism

Location:

Period:

Instructor: Edwin Bryant.

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Office Hours: Tue 12.30-1.30; Loree 108, Douglass Campus.

Course Description and Objectives: This course will attempt an overview of representations of India on the Western Religious Landscape stemming from: the earliest interactions between West and East, the subsequent cultural and intellectual exchanges, the eventual colonialization of the subcontinent, and the post-colonial aftermath. The course will focus on the Colonial era, with attention especially paid to the Orientalist construction of Hinduism during this period. The course will survey a range of representations and stereotypes of Hinduism transmitted back to West, examine a sampling of the subsequent images portrayed about this religion in mainstream western culture, highlight some examples of Hindu apologetic responses to this encounter, and consider some post-colonial reflections.

Course Prerequisites: None.

Course Requirement: Course requirements: All assigned reading. Students are expected to read whatever material is assigned for each particular week, and be prepared to discuss this in class. A mid-term exam (20% of the total grade), final exam (30%), and term paper (8-10 pgs, 40%) due the last day of class. In addition to this, each student will be assigned weekly class presentations on the reading. Students' attendance record and overall performance in class will factor into the remaining 10% of the grade. **No make-ups for missed exams will be given without valid medical proof or a signed letter from a student dean.**

Required Reading

Available at the College Ave Bookstore:

Schwab, Raymond, The Oriental Renaissance. (Columbia University Press, 1984).

Wilhelm Halbfass, India and Europe (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988).

Ronald Inden, Imagining India (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

Clarke, J.J. Oriental Enlightenment. (New York: Routledge, 1997).

Related Reading:

- Don Baker, "World Religions and National States: Competing Claims in East Asia," in Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori, eds., *Transnational Religion & Fading States* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).
- Breckenridge, Carol & Van der Veer, Peter. *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*. Philadelphia: University of Penn Press, 1993.
- David Chidester, *Savage Systems* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996), Introduction and first chapter.
- David Chidester, "Colonialism," in Willi Braun and Russell McCutcheon, eds., *Guide to the Study of Religion* (New York: Continuum, 2000).
- Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960).
- Nicholas B. Dirks, "Coda: The Burden of the Past: On Colonialism and the Writing of History" in *Castes of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- John S. Hawley, "Naming Hinduism," *Wilson Quarterly* 15, No. 3 (Summer 1991), 20.
- Marshall Hodgson, "The Great Western Transmutation," in *The Venture of Islam*, Vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).
- Martha Kaplan, *Neither Cargo Nor Cult* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).
- Jack Llewellyn, *Defining Hinduism: A Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).
- Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India, and "the Mystic East"* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*.
- Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby, eds., *"Studying Hinduism : Key Concepts and Methods"* (London and New York : Routledge, 2008).
- Brian K. Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- Gauri Viswanathan, "Colonialism and the Construction of Hinduism," in Gavin Flood, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003)

Week I

Focus: Introduction to the course; Overview of Hinduism.

Week II:

Focus: Definitions: The Phenomenon; Europe Learns Sanskrit, the Era of Decipherings and the Expansion of the known World; The Progress of Oriental Studies

Readings: Schwab, Parts I & II; pps 1-128.

Week III:

Focus: The Doctrinal Stages; The Birth of Linguistics; Repercussions in Literature.

Readings: Schwab, Part III; pps 131-221.

Class IV:

Focus: Well-Prepared Ground; The Moving Spirits; Founders and Intermediaries; Chroniclers and Novelists.

Readings: Schwab, Part IV; pps 225-352

Class V:

Focus: Lamartine, Hugo, Vigny, and Michelet; Poetic History and Exoticism;
Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner and others.

Readings: Schwab Parts V & VI; pps 353-486

Class VI:

Focus: The Philosophical View of India in Classical Antiquity; Islamic Encounters With
Indian Philosophy; The Missionary Approach to Indian Thought; India and the
Romantic Critique of the Present; Hegel

Readings: Halbfass, chapters 1-6; pps 1-99

Class VII:

Focus: Schelling and Schopenhauer; Developments in the Interpretation of India
Following Hegel and Schopenhauer; On the Exclusion of India from the History
of Philosophy; Preliminary Postscript: The Hermeneutic Situation in the
Twentieth Century; Traditional Indian Xenology; Rammohan Roy and His
Hermeneutic Situation

Readings: Halbfass chapters 7-12; pps 100-216

Class VIII:

Focus: Neo-Hinduism, Modern Indian Traditionalism, and the Presence of Europe;
Supplementary Observations on Modern Indian Thought; Darsana, Anviksiki,
Philosophy; The Adoption of the Concept of Philosophy in Modern Hinduism;
Dharma in the Self-Understanding of Traditional Hinduism; Reinterpretations of
Dharma in Modern Hinduism.

Readings: Halbfass, chapters 13-18; pps 217-348

Class IX:

Focus: The Sanskrit Doxographies and the Structure of Hindu Traditionalism; The
Concept of Experience in the Encounter Between India and the West;
"Inclusivism" and "Tolerance" in the Encounter Between India and the West;
India and the Comparative Method; In Lieu of a Summary and Conclusion:
Europe, India, and the "Europeanization of the Earth."

Readings: Halbfass, chapters 19-24; pps 349-442

Class X:

Focus: Knowledge of India and Human Agency; India in Asia: the Caste; Hinduism: The
Mind of India

Readings: Inden, chapters 1-3; pps 1-130

Class XI:

Focus: Village India: Living Essences of the Ancient; Divine Kingship: the Hindu Type
of Government; Reconstructions

Readings: Inden, chapters 4-6; pps 131-270

Class XII:

Focus: Orientalism: the issues; The Making of the Orient, China, India and Buddhism.

Readings: Clarke, parts I & II; pps.1-94

Class XIII:

Focus: Orientalism in the 20th century; Conclusions

Readings: Clarke, Parts III & IV; pps. 95-225