

**An Introduction to Hinduism
Religion 840:322
Winter Session Study Abroad
December 23, 2011-January 13 2012**

Instructor: Professor Satyanarayana Dasa.
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Time and Place:

Course Description:

The course will attempt an initial introduction to the plethora of traditions and cultural expressions grouped under the heuristic label of 'Hinduism,' with a subsequent more in depth focus on the Krishna devotional tradition as expressed in two texts central to that tradition, one philosophical, and one Epic, and as manifest on the present-day religious landscape of Vrindavan. In class, emphasis will be directed both to examining the philosophy and theology of these texts, and to considering their presentations of sacred history, ultimate reality, and self-transformation through their own terms and categories through a phenomenological lens. Attention will also be directed to considering the socio-cultural world which inform these texts, and which they in turn inform. The course will include tours to Vrindavan devotional sites, and exposure to a variety of Vrindavan cultural forms such as music, drama, pilgrimage, architecture, ritual and meditative practices.

Course Prerequisites:

None.

Course Requirements:

Students will be required to read the entirety of Flood's 'Introduction to Hinduism' before arriving in Vrindavan, as familiarity with the main contours of this text will be assumed for the two exams. There will be two cumulative exams on the three readings, and a final paper (8-10 pgs) due the last day of class. The exams will consist of short answer questions testing the students' mastery over the information covered in the course, as well as mini-essay questions testing their insights and more in-depth understanding of the material. The final paper gives students an opportunity to probe and research in more detail any particular aspect of the Krishna tradition that has captured their interest, to be determined in conjunction with the professor.

Grading:

The two exams will comprise 25% of the total grade each, the final paper 40%, and class attendance and participation 10%. Students will be called upon in class to answer questions pertaining to the week's reading. **No** make-ups for missed exams will be given other than in the event of an emergency.

A = 100-90 B+ = 89-87; B = 86-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-70; D = 69-65; F = 64 and below.

Please note that outstanding class participation can make all the difference between grades.

Required Course Books

IMPORTANT: Students are responsible for obtaining their own books before arrival. ***Course books are not available in India.***

Flood, Galvin An Introduction to Hinduism Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996

Das, Sukavak The Bhagavad Gita Los Angeles: Sri Publications, 2004

Bryant, Edwin Krishna: the Beautiful Legend of God: Srimad Bhagavata Purana Book X
London, Penguin 2003.

Preparatory Reading (to be performed before arrival).

Reading: Flood, entire.

December 23 4:00-6:00pm.

Frelinghuysen Hall Room B6.

611 George St.

New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Week One

Reading: The Bhagavad Gita (entire)

Exam I January 6, 2012.

Week Two

Reading: The Srimad Bhagavata Purana Book X (entire)

Exam II January 12, 2012.

Jan13 Final papers due.