

**Rutgers Department of Religion
Spring 2017**

**Topics in the Study of Religion: Introduction to Sikhism
Tue/Thur, 7th period (6:10-7:30), Scott-104, College Avenue Campus**

Instructor: Dr. Ami P. Shah

Office Hours: Tuesday 5-6 pm and by appointment

Course Rationale:

Having emerged in full light of history, the Sikh tradition offers an interesting case study in the history of religious traditions. Sikhism is one of the world's newest monotheistic traditions. Founded in the sixteenth century by Guru Nanak (1469-1539) in the Punjab, the Sikh community now comprises 25 million people spread across the globe.

The course is divided into three parts. First, we will examine the history of the Sikh community from its founding in the sixteenth-century to the turn of the twenty-first century. After establishing a broad historical framework, we will focus on examining primary sources in the Sikh scriptural and literary corpus; studying a wide array of social dynamics within Sikh communities over time; and learning about Sikh sacred spaces, liturgical hymns, and religious celebrations. Finally, we will trace the movement of Sikh communities as they moved out of their traditional homeland and established themselves in communities and countries around the globe.

Course Requirements:

1. Class attendance (10%)
2. Three reading quizzes (30%)
3. Midterm exam in class (30%)
4. A research paper (8-10 pages) due on day of our scheduled final exam (30%)

*All assignments will be marked down incrementally for each day they are late. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade.

Reading:

ALL required reading will be available on Sakai

Schedule of Classes and Readings:

Week 1

I. Introduction: Introduction to the class and religions of the Indian Subcontinent

II. Guru Nanak: His life

G.S. Mann, *Sikhism*, 14-28

J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 28-41

Week 2

I. Guru Nanak: His legacy

G.S. Mann, "Baba Nanak and the Founding of the Sikh Panth" (forthcoming)

J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 28-41

II. The succession of Guru Angad and the expansion of the community (1539-1606)

Pashaura Singh, "From Guru Angad to Guru Arjan" (forthcoming)

J. S. Grewal, "Evolution of the Sikh Panth (1539-1606), *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 42-61

Week 3

I. The elevation of the Khalsa Panth (1606-1708)

J. S. Grewal, "From Guru Hargobind to Guru Gobind Singh" (forthcoming)

G.S. Mann, "The Khalsa Panth" (forthcoming)

II. The post-Guru period and the political rise of the Sikhs

B.S. Dhillon, "Banda Singh Bahadur" (forthcoming)

P. Dhavan, "Early Sikh Darbars" (forthcoming)

G.S. Mann, *Sikhism*, 45-54

J.S. Grewal, "Rise to Political Power (1707-1799), *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 82-98

Week 4

I. The Kingdom of Lahore: Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Indu Banga, "Ranjit Singh and his Times" (forthcoming)

J.S. Grewal, "The Sikh Empire: 1799-1849), *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 99-127

Nadhra Shahbaz Naeem, "Life at the Lahore Darbar: 1799-1839" in *South Asian Studies* vol 25, No. 2, 2010: 283-301

II. The annexation of the Punjab

Film: "The Black Prince," a Hollywood rendering of the life of Prince Dalip Singh, the last living heir of the Khalsa Raj (unreleased)

Week 5

I. The Punjab under British colonial rule

G.S. Mann, *Sikhism*, 55-66

J.S. Grewal, "Recession and Resurgence" *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 128-156

II. The Nationalist movement and Sikh responses to the modern world

J.S. Grewal, "The Sikhs in the 20th century" (forthcoming)
G.S. Mann, "The Sikh Panth in Modern Times" (forthcoming)

Week 6

I. The Partition of the Punjab

Indu Banga, "Partition of the Punjab" (forthcoming)
"The Chief Sufferers: Abduction of Women during the partition of the Punjab,"
in *Partition and Post-Colonial South Asia*, ed. Tan Tai Yong and Gyanesh Kudaisya,
London: Routledge, 2008, 32-44
"Toba Tek Singh" in *Bitter Fruit: The Very Best of Saadat Hasan Manto*, ed. and
trans., Khalid Hasan, Delhi: Penguin, 2009, pp. 9-15

Film: *Khamosh Pani* ("Silent Waters" [2003])

II. Punjab in Independent India and Operation Bluestar

G.S. Mann, *Sikhism*, 66-71; 106-07, 112-117
J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, 181-227
P. Wallace, "Militancy in Punjab & Closure in a Comparative Context,"
Journal of Punjab Studies (22:1, 2015)
Film Selections: *Maachis*, *Amu*, BBC documentaries on 1984

Week 7

I. Review Session

II. IN CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

Week 8

I. Sikh religious literature

G.S. Mann, "The Janam-Sakhis" (forthcoming)
N.S. Chann, "The Rahit Literature" (forthcoming)

II. Sikh biographical and commentarial tradition

R.S. Gill, "Writings of Bhai Gurdas" (forthcoming)
A.P. Shah, "Sri Gur Sobha" (forthcoming)

Week 9

I. Scriptural Text: The Guru Granth

G.S. Mann, "Guru Granth: Scripture of the Sikhs" (forthcoming)
K. Myrvold, "Guru Granth: Ceremonial Treatment" (forthcoming)

II. Sacred space and pilgrimage

G.S. Mann, "Deg Tegh Fateh," <at <http://giss.org/degtegfateh.html>>
G.S. Mann, *Sikhism*, 108-111

"Visiting Darbar Sahib," a photo essay at <<http://giss.org/land.html>>

Week 10

I. Doctrinal variations and dissent in the Sikh tradition

G.S. Mann, *Sikhism*, 93-102

W. H. McLeod, *Sikhism*, 134-162

II. The composition of Sikh society

J.S. Grewal, "The Issue of Caste in Sikhism" (2009)

Week 11

I. Gender and the status of women

D. Jakobsh, "Gender in Sikhism" (forthcoming)

G.S. Mann, *Sikhism*, 102-106

II. The artistic traditions and legacies of the Sikhs

B.N. Goswamy, "Faith, Vision, Adornment: Embellishment and Meaning," in file for the Darbar Sahib's inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List

J. S. Deyell, "Banda Bahadur and the First Sikh Coinage," *Numismatic Digest* (Bombay, June 1980), 59-67

F. Cassio, "Female Voices in Gurbani Sangit," *Sikh Formations* (2014)

Week 12

I. Sikh emigration outside of the Punjab

S. S. Thandi, "History of Sikh Migration" (forthcoming)

Ronald Takaki, "The Tide of Turbans" in *Strangers From a Distant Shore*, New York: Penguin, 1989, pp. 294-314

R.L. Hardgrave, "An Early Portrayal of the Sikhs," *Int. Journal of Punjab Studies* (1996)

II. Farmer and Soldier: From the Imperial Valley to the World Wars

E. Weigler, "Sikhs and the World Wars" (forthcoming)

V. A. Dusenbery, "A Century of Sikhs beyond Punjab," in N. G. Barrier ed., *The Sikh Diaspora* (South Asia Books, 1989), 1-28

Week 13

I. Sikh Communities in America

J. Singh, "The Sikhs of America" (forthcoming)

G.S. Mann, "Making Home Abroad: Sikhs in the United States," *Nation of Religions* (2006)

II. Happy, Healthy, and Holy: Counter Culture and Sikh Dharam in the West
C.W. Elsberg, "Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere" (forthcoming)

Week 14

I. 9/11 and its impacts on the Sikh community

J.K. Singh, "The Racialization of Sikhs in the U.S." (2009)

"Religious Police Officers in New York will be able to wear beards and turbans"
New York Times, December 28, 2016

Guest Speaker (TBA)

II. Concluding Reflections and Future Directions

Mark Juergensmeyer, "Globalization of the Panth" (forthcoming)