



REL 100: INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION:

JUDAISM AND HINDUISM

Emory University

Fall 1993 T,Th 1-2:30, Physics 209

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Content

Introduction to basic questions and categories with which to approach the study of religions through examination of two religious traditions: Judaism and Hinduism. We will first examine each tradition through major categories of understanding articulated within each tradition and then broaden our questioning to consider both similarities and differences between these indigenous categories and the potential usefulness for dialogue between the traditions. Finally, we will consider the question, "What characterizes the religious experience?"

Texts:

- M. Fishbane, *Judaism*.
- H. Wouk, *This is My God*.
- D. Eck, *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*.
- K. Erndl, *Victory to the Mother: the Hindu Goddess of Northwest India in Myth, Ritual, and Symbol*.
- D. Knipe, *Hinduism*.

Xeroxed Readings: (indicated with * in syllabus)

- A. Gold, "Purdah is as Purdah's Kept: A Storyteller's Story" (*Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in north India*),
- A. Gold, "Sweeping the Road Ahead: The Hindu Darshan Bus Tour" (*Fruitful Journeys: The Ways of Rajasthani Pilgrims*).
- A. K. Ramanujan, "Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?" (*India Through Hindu Categories*).
- S. Wadley, "Vrats: Transformers of Destiny" (*Karma: an Anthropological Enquiry*)

Requirements: Active class attendance and participation is expected. There will be two hour-long, short-answer examinations, one after each tradition, plus a final take-home exam, choice of essay, which will be due when the final is scheduled. In addition, site visits are required, and there will be miscellaneous assignments to be handed in.

Site Visits: Students are expected to visit a synagogue and a Hindu temple during the period that we are studying each respective tradition. A 2-3 page report on what one has seen, one's reactions, and brief analysis in terms of the concepts we have discussed in class will be required. Site visits may be made in groups. Suggestions for and directions to possible site visits will be given in class.

SYLLABUS

I. Introduction -- 8/26

Goals of the class; introduction of instructors; why are you taking this class?
Assn. What is the relationship between religion and culture?

II. Judaism -- 8/31 - 9/20; hour exam 10/5

Israel (Peoplehood) -- 8/31

community, even of non-believers
Assn. Fishbane, ch.4
Wouk, Part 4

Halakha (the Way) -- 9/2, 7

personally moving through time: law and rituals
Assn. Wouk, Parts Two and Three
Fishbane, ch.3

Torah (Study) -- 9/9

sacred text/tradition: questioning the text
Assn. Genesis, ch. 1 and 2

History and Culture -- 9/14

nationally moving through time
Assn. Fishbane, chronology and ch. 1
Wouk, Part One

(9/16 -- Rosh ha-Shana; no class)

Ha-Shem (God and Spirituality) -- 9/21

God is at the center
Assn. Selected Pslams
Fishbane, ch.2

Gender Issues -- 9/23, guest lecturer

Assn. TBA

Open Session -- 9/28

(9/30 -- Sukkot; no class; rleld trips)

(10/S -- hour exam on Judaism)

III. Hinduism -- 10/7 - 11/11 ; hour exam 11/16

Introduction to Hinduism -- 10/7

boundaries of tradition; history; authoritative voices
Assn. Knipe, ch. 1, 2, and 3
Erndl, Introduction

(10/12 -- Fall Break; no classes)

Dharma, Karma, Samsara, Moksha (Hindu Orientations to Meaning) -- 10/14, 19

right conduct; action/reaction; rebirth; ultimate release
Assn. Knipe, ch. 4
*Wadley
*Gold ("Purdah is as Purdah's Kept")

Darshan (Perceiving the Divine) -- 10/21

polytheistic imagination
Assn. Eck, ch. 1, 2 and 3A
Erndl, ch. 1 and 2 (pp. 37-48)

Puja (Worship) and Samskara (Life Cycle Ritual) -- 10/26, 28

film: *Wages of Action: Religion in a Hindu Village*
Assn. Knipe, ch. 5
Erndl, ch. 4

Yatra (Pilgrimage) -- 11/4

Assn. Eck, ch. 3B
Erndl, ch. 3
*Gold ("Sweeping the Road Ahead")

Bhakti (Devotion) -- 11/9

Assn. Erndl, ch. 5 and 6
Knipe, ch. 3 (pp. 60-68)

Open Session -- 11/11

Assn. Knipe, ch. 3 (pp. 68-74), and 6
*Ramanujan

(11/16 -- hour exam on Hinduism)

IV. "What is Religion?" -- 11/18 - 12/7

Comparisons -- 11/18, 23

What is the same? What is different? What patterns have emerged?
Assn. Think! ! !

(11/25 - Thanksgiving; no class)

Dialogue-- 11/30; 12/2

What can these two religions say to one another?
Assn. Think! ! !

"What is Religion?" -- 12/7

Can one generalize from the data we have examined?
Assn. Think! ! !

Final take-home exam due: Friday, Dec. 10, 3:00 p.m., Religion office (Physics 312)

[return to head of document](#)

FINAL ESSAY

Instructions:

This is a take-home, choice-of-topic essay, on one topic.

You may consult the readings, class notes, site visits, and any supplementary readings (we recommend *The Encyclopedia of Religion* and *The Encyclopedia Judaica*) ; you may not consult one another. The Emory Honor Code is in effect for this test.

The paper should be 8-10 pages, typed, double-spaced. Do not forget your name.

If you are doing this for writing credit, please indicate that clearly on the title page, and be sure to check all the English and organization carefully.

It is due in the Department of Religion office: Friday, December 10, at 3:00 p.m. Leeway is permitted until Monday, December 13th, at 5:00 p.m.

Form:

Introductory paragraph: tell us what you are going to tell us.

Part One: one tradition on your chosen topic: Fullness and accuracy count; so don't skimp on words, though there is no need to "pad" the paper. Show interrelations between ideas; relate ideas to actions; organize your presentation -- one item to a paragraph, paragraphs in sequence.

Part Two: the other tradition on your chosen topic: Same instructions. These two sections are primarily research and reporting.

Part Three: Dialogue: (a) What insights did you gain from studying these two traditions on this topic? (b) What could each of these traditions learn from the other? Be imaginative. Be reflective. This is not research;

it is thought. From our point of view, this is the core of the course -- to get you to know enough to compare intelligently two religious traditions in a way that does not just list similarities and differences but sets the two traditions talking to one another through you.

Concluding paragraph: tell us what you have told us in one paragraph.

Label the sections with headings.

Suggested topics:

Choose only one topic. Any of the following are good. If you have another topic, please clear it with one of the instructors:

- Food (the rules; how they function; why; etc.)
- Gender and Sexuality (the rules for relationship; how they function; why; etc.)
- The Role of Texts (written and nonwritten texts; how is new knowledge generated; why; etc.)
- Boundaries and Assimilation (what is "in," "out"; socially, personally, religiously; why; etc.)
- Creation Narratives (what are they; how influence the worldview; effect on ritual; etc.)
- Suffering (how deal with it; relationship to meaning; life after life; etc.)
- Ritual (how does it work; relationship to liturgy, to inner piety, to culture, to identity; etc.)
- Higher Beings (who; relationship to humanity, to ritual; as explanation of life; etc.)

The topic of death cannot be used since we used it in class.

Take your time. Think and organize.

[return to head of document](#)

[return to index of Selected Syllabi](#)

[David Blumenthal's HomePage](#) 🌱