

Andrew O. Fort  
TBH 313  
257-6448  
a.fort@tcu.edu

**RELIGION 30773**  
**India: Texts and Traditions**  
**Fall 2014**

Office Hours  
M-F 11-11:45  
or by appt.  
personal.tcu.edu/afort

In this course, we shall look at selected texts in translation which reveal the religious and literary imagination of the Indian people, and illustrate a variety of themes and issues in Indian civilization. We shall focus on Hindu texts and other artistic presentations, particularly versions and interpretations of the two best-known Indian epics, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa. We shall also consider the religious background for the epics and examine plays and poetics in the classical Sanskrit tradition. **Credit cannot be given for both RELI 30773 and 30753.**

**Outcomes:** Through a midterm exam, short papers, Learning Studio/College journal entries, and a final course review and reflection, as well as class participation, you will be assessed on your ability:

To comprehend concepts and ways of understanding from both religious studies and Indian aesthetic theory.

To investigate and analyze continuity and change in the Hindu tradition, and Indian culture more generally, through the study of the epics and other literature.

To identify and articulate the value of understanding another worldview (“mental migration”), and by so doing, take the opportunity to reflect on your own.

To read critically, think analytically, speak persuasively, and write effectively through the description, analysis and evaluation of an array of ideas, themes and issues in Indian civilization.

**Expectations:** You are expected to attend all classes (come on time, but come even if late), and to read (and think about) the assignments before class. If you miss four or more classes, your grade can be lowered automatically unless you have a legitimate and documented excuse. Bring the relevant books to class; we will go over the readings. During the semester, each student will at some point be responsible for bringing thoughts and questions on the day's class reading. Be ready to listen, think, question, and speak. All topics are open, but civil and respectful discourse is required.

**Assignments:** There will be a mid-term exam (20% of course grade), two short (c. 4 page or 1000 word) papers (each 20%), and a longer (7-8 page) final course review and reflection due during final exam period (30%). Each of these should demonstrate your knowledge of the material, and will also provide an opportunity to share more personal responses. Unless you contact me beforehand, late papers or exam absence will be permitted only for officially excused absences.

You are also required to make an (approximately) weekly entry into a computer journal on eCollege/Learning Studio; it is mandatory but individual entries are ungraded. The entries are informal reflections, meant to encourage thoughts on course readings

and lectures. At course end, the journal, attendance and class participation together are worth 10% of your grade. I will assess both the quantity and quality of these course elements.

A=always present, contributed often (in class and journal) thoughtfully and intelligently; consistently assumed responsibility for keeping discussion going; B= almost always present, contributed mostly thoughtfully and intelligently; aided in keeping discussion moving but did not always assume responsibility; C= usually present, contributed sporadically without taking much responsibility; D=missed a number of classes, contributed occasionally; did not take ownership of class discussion.

You are also expected to visit at least one of the nearby Hindu temples **by October 6**. You may go alone or with a group. Please write a 2 page reaction paper about your experience. Here is some basic information about two temples: Kalachandji's Palace, 5430 Gurley Ave., Dallas 75223. Phone: 214-827-6330. Both a full fledged temple (to Krishna) and a restaurant <http://www.radhakalachandji.com>, or Ekta Mandir, <http://www.dfwhindutemple.org/> 1605 N. Britain Rd., Irving. 75061 Info at (972) 445-3111. There is a Hindu temple in Fort Worth, but it is not fully constructed yet. We may try to visit it later in the semester. <http://fortworthhindutemple.org/>

**Grades: A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=below 60. I use +/-, and use the following grade scale: .0-.3=grade minus, .31-.7=grade, .71-.99=grade plus**  
**You may check in with me about your course standing at any time.**

If you have a problem affecting your course participation, or must miss class, let me know. Also, if you have a disability which may affect your class performance, please inform me during the first week of class. Here are some policy statements:

*Disability Statement approved Fall 2007 by the Undergraduate Council / Revised Summer 2011:* Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 1010. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-6567.

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator. Guidelines for documentation may be found at [http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability\\_documentation.asp](http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability_documentation.asp).

Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

## **Academic Misconduct**

Academic Misconduct (Sec. 3.4 from the Student Handbook) –Any act, such as cheating or plagiarism, that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life and are listed in detail in the Undergraduate Catalog (Student Policies>Academic Conduct Policy Details; [http://www.catalog.tcu.edu/current\\_year/undergraduate/](http://www.catalog.tcu.edu/current_year/undergraduate/)).

Finally, feel free to see me after class or in my office.

### RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Campus Life (257-7926, Sadler Hall 2006); TCU Library (257-7117); Center for Academic Services (257-7486, Sadler Hall 1022); Writing Center (257-7221, Reed 419); Student Development Services (257-7855, BLUU 2003); Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (257-7830, Jarvis Hall), and Counseling, Testing, and Mental Health Center (257-7863, Brown Lupton Health Center).

Required books, available in the bookstore, include:

*Mahabharata*. William Buck, trans. London: Penguin (Meridian), 1973.  
*The Bhagavad Gita*. George Thompson, trans. N. Y.: North Point Press, 2008.  
*Ramayana*. R. K. Narayan, trans. London: Penguin, 1977.  
*Many Ramayanas*. Paula Richman, ed. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991.  
*The Recognition of Sakuntala by Kalidasa*. W. J. Johnson, trans. New York; Oxford University Press, 2001.

Other texts, which will be in Doc Sharing, include selections from *The Literatures of India*. E. Dimock et al. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978), *The Hindu Tradition*, Ainslee Embree, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), "Ramayan: The Video" by Phil Lutgendorf in *The Drama Review* 34: 2 (summer, 1990), and *Poems from the Sanskrit*. John Brough, trans. (London: Penguin, 1968). We will also view some videos, including Peter Brook's film version of the *Mahabharata*. You will need to schedule time for a two hour viewing the evening of September 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### INTRODUCING RELIGION AND LITERATURE IN INDIAN CIVILIZATION

- Aug. 25 Introduction to course  
Review of Indian literary history
- Aug. 27 Background of Indian civilization  
Dimock: 1-28, 33-46
- Sept. 3 "Hinduism" and Vedic literature  
Embree: 9-27
- Sept. 8 Hinduism: Vedanta, karma and rebirth Embree: 48-65
- Sept. 10 Varṇāśrama-dharma (caste and lifestage) Embree: 74-93
- Sept. 15 The Hindu epics  
Dimock: 47-59, 62-80 Buck: xiii-xxiii, 5-9

### THE MAHĀBHĀRATA AS EPIC ADVENTURE

- Sept. 17 Mahābhārata Buck: 21-112
- Sept. 22 Mahābhārata Brook video in class  
Buck: 167-75, 193-261
- PAPER DUE:** Respond to the "otherness" of the Indian worldview. What has been particularly striking, positive or negative? What has it taught you about your culture and yourself?
- Sept. 22 or 23 evening: viewing of Mahābhārata video
- Sept. 24 Mahābhārata Brook video Buck: 265-328
- Sept. 29 Mahābhārata Brook video Buck: 333-69, 389-411
- Oct. 1 Mahābhārata discussion

### RELIGION IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

Oct. 6 Bhagavad Gītā Thompson: xxiii-xlvii, 3-25, 30-39  
**Temple visit report due**

Oct. 8 Bhagavad Gītā and discussion Thompson: 44-47, 53-59

**FALL BREAK (starting Rāmāyaṇa recommended)**

Oct. 15 **EXAMINATION**

**THE RĀMĀYAṆA AS EPIC AND RELIGIOUS NARRATIVE**

Oct. 20 Purāṇas and pūjā Gita comic book version, slides of gods

Oct. 22 Rāmāyaṇa Narayan to p. 95 (Sita abducted)

Oct. 27 Rāmāyaṇa Narayan, 97-171

Oct. 29 Rāmāyaṇa discussion (bring idea and question)

Nov. 3 Many Rāmāyaṇas Richman: 3-49

Nov. 5 " " Richman: 67-88, 114-36

Nov. 10 " " Richman: 175-201, 217-25, 231, 235-51

Nov. 12 "Ramayan: The Video" Lutgendorf (all)

**THE SANSKRIT DRAMA**

Nov. 17 The Sanskrit Drama Dimock: 81-106, 128-36

**PAPER DUE:** Respond to the many manifestations of the Rāmāyaṇa. What has been most striking to you? What did you like and dislike most? What was the hardest to understand?

Nov. 19 Shakuntala Johnson, ix-xxvii, 109-137, 3-31

Nov. 24 film (Asian Art Tales) professor at conference

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Dec. 3 Shakuntala Johnson, 32-105

## **POETRY IN MEDIEVAL INDIA**

Dec. 8 Sanskrit Poetry

Dimock: 115-28, 144-49, 152-56

Brough: 11-23, 30-49

Dec. 10 Sanskrit Poetry, Bengali Vaisnavism

Dimock: 136-43, 149-52, 157-65

Brough: 53-94, 111-37

## **FINAL PAPER DUE TUESDAY DECEMBER 16 at 3 pm**

Review your notes, papers, and readings. What has been your most significant learning experience in the course? What did you like and dislike most? What was the hardest to understand? What have you learned about your own literature and religion by studying another culture's literature and religion? What else has the Indian worldview taught you about your own?