



REL 202: Understanding Indian Religions

Spring 2023, CRN 64404

Online Asynchronous, Writing Intensive

Professor: Sarah Hadmack
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Office Hours: by appointment over Zoom
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About This Course-

Namaste and Jai Jinendra! This course is a historical and philosophical survey of the teachings and practices of the major religious traditions of India.

WCC: DH and WI, 3 credits

Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify the myths, histories, doctrines, and practices of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.
2. Identify each religion's understanding of the human condition, ethics, knowledge, death, the afterlife, and conceptions of the divine.
3. Identify common themes within the religions studied.

4. Interpret primary sources (such as epics, devotional poetry, mystical instruction, myths, and hymns)
5. Examine the relationship between religion and culture/society.

Writing Intensive Hallmarks (WI)

This course fulfills a WI requirement. The hallmarks of WI courses are:

1. W1. The class uses writing to promote the learning of course materials.
2. W2. The class provides interaction between the instructor and students while students do assigned writing.
3. W3. Written assignments contribute significantly to each student's course grade.
4. W4. The class requires students to do a substantial amount of writing—a minimum of 4,000 words, or about 16 pages.
5. W5. To allow for meaningful professor-student interaction on each student's writing, the class is restricted to 20 students.

One conference with the professor is required during the course.

Course Format

I'm so excited you're here! I can't wait to "travel" to India with you to explore the religious traditions there in depth! Each week you can expect to do the following:

1. Read my lecture notes and/or assigned articles (occasionally you will have a video to view as well)
2. Take a quiz to demonstrate your understanding of the weekly reading(s). Two attempts are allowed per quiz.
3. Answer discussion questions through Lulima polls, Forums, Padlet, and/or Google Jamboards and comment on your classmates' posts.
4. Make progress on your writing assignments.



Most tasks will be due on Fridays, except for your papers which are due on Sundays. I look forward to working with you!

Required Materials

All required resources are freely available. Textbook readings, my notes, and videos are all embedded in the weekly lessons in [Lulima](#). Please ensure that you have all of the following before Week 1:

Hardware/software

- Daily access to a desktop or laptop computer (**Using a smartphone or tablet is insufficient.**) You may rent a laptop for the entire semester from the WCC library. To reserve one go to this [library webpage](#).
- Reliable high-speed Internet connection
- A recent version of the [Chrome](#) or [Firefox](#) browsers (free) Please use either of these browsers when using Lulima.
- A word-processing program, such as web-based [Google Docs](#) (free with UH username and most recommended), [Word](#) (free student version), or [Pages](#) (free with Apple hardware).
- Presentation program, such as [Powerpoint](#) (free student version), [Keynote](#) (free with Apple hardware), or web-based [Google Slides](#) (free with UH username).
- [Zoom](#) video conferencing tool (free)
- [Padlet](#) account (free)
- [Adobe \(Acrobat\) Reader](#) (free)

Course Policies

Communication

Participating in our Course

While most of your coursework will be completed independent of your classmates, you will have ample opportunities to communicate together through our discussion platforms. We learn more when exposed to diverse viewpoints, we challenge ourselves when we have to articulate and sometimes defend our knowledge, and group activities develop a sense of community and responsibility for one another. Thus, this course prizes collaborative learning. Feel free to bounce ideas off of one another when working on an assignment or answering questions, just be sure that your answers are not written identically!

Contacting the Instructor

You can contact me via email or through the Discussions tool on Lulima. Common courtesy is greatly appreciated!- please review this syllabus to see if your question has already been answered. For other questions and communication, I will do my best to reply to you within 48 hours Monday-Friday. Please note: I do not regularly check my email on the weekends.

Attendance & Grading

Attendance/Participation

Participating in our Lulima course is very important. Plan to login to Lulima at least three times per week to read the materials, complete assignments, and discuss the materials with your classmates. Please be sure to read all of my emails since it will be my main form of communication with you. You can read past emails by clicking on the "email archive" tab on the left menu bar in Lulima.

Late Work/ Make-up Policy

Students are provided with three virtual 'No Questions Asked' (NQA) coupons that enable them to make up an assignment or quiz up to one week past the due date. Anytime that you submit an assignment late or take a quiz late, then I will automatically apply one of your NQA coupons to it. If you use all three of your NQA coupons, future late work will result in an automatic zero. Coupons may not be shared or replicated. Unused coupons will be counted toward extra credit if the student submitted all assignments and quizzes on time.

While I talk quite a bit about god, gods, and goddesses, I certainly don't want to play one! I am not the judge of your priorities. Thus, you do not need to provide me with a doctor's note or an explanation of your personal emergency. YOU decide when you need to use a NQA coupon. However, use them wisely since no further late work will be accepted, regardless of reason, once you have used the three NQA coupons.

Grading

Assessments and Weighting:

Weekly Quizzes.....	20%
Discussion Forums (both posting and commenting on classmates' posts).....	15%
First Paper	15%
Second Paper.....	15%
Research Project: Topic, First Draft, & Conference	10%
Research Project Second Draft & Presentation (final draft shared with classmates).....	15%
Other Lulima Participation: Peer editing, occasional surveys, etc.....	10%
TOTAL.....	100%

Letter Grades and Percentage Ranges

You will receive a letter grade based on the following scale:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-69%

D = 60-69%

F = 0-59%

N= The 'N' grade indicates that the student has worked conscientiously, attended regularly, finished all work, fulfilled course responsibilities, and has made measurable progress. However, either the student has not achieved the minimal student learning outcomes and is not prepared to succeed at the next level, or the student has made consistent progress in class but is unable to complete the class due to extenuating circumstances, such as major health, personal, or family emergencies.

Descriptions of Course Tasks and Assessments

Readings, Viewings, and Notetaking

Each week you will read my notes and an article on the weekly topic. Some weeks you will have additional articles to read. Most people's retention of the material greatly diminishes in only a day if they didn't take notes or share what they read. Note taking improves your ability to learn, understand, and remember the material. Smart note taking ensures that you are an active participant in your learning, requires you to think about what you are reading, helps you to form connections between topics, and serves as an organized, concise review for studying. There are several note taking strategies! I recommend using either the [Cornell method](#), [Mapping method](#), or the [Outlining method](#). If you Google these note-taking methods, you can find plenty of examples online. I have provided you with one guide for each.

Quizzes

Most weeks you will take a quiz on the weekly materials. The answers to the quiz questions come from my notes and the textbook readings. Merely 'googling' for the answers is unacceptable because:

1. it will either provide you with an oversimplified answer that misses the greater context (and thereby understanding!) that the notes and textbook provide you with. Or
2. it will provide you with too much information and it will be difficult to ascertain the most essential part. Therefore, use my notes and the weekly articles to answer the quiz questions.

After that, feel free to conduct further research in any manner you like!

The quizzes can consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, true/false, and/or short-essay questions. Once started, the quiz cannot be paused so please be sure that you have a reliable internet connection before you begin. All questions will appear on one webpage; feel free to save whenever you like but do not click 'submit' until you have finished. Quizzes are timed except for the Syllabus Quiz. You are allowed to take each quiz two times and your highest score will be recorded.

Discussion Forums

Most weeks I will provide you with discussion questions in Lulima on the assigned readings and viewings. Students must write at least one personal post and one response to a classmate's post in the discussion forum. Essentially, the discussion forum is the space in which you demonstrate that you are thinking about the weekly course content. In your posts and replies to student posts you are encouraged to raise questions, quote from the readings and notes, react to what you are learning, make comparisons, etc. You will post your answers to the questions in various apps such as Forums, Polls, Padlets, and Jamboards (no prior experience with these apps is necessary).

Writing Assignments

1. First Paper: Due during Week 5. Choose **one** of the following options:

- Reflection option: "Everything is contained in every thing," ~Pagal Baba. Discuss this quote in relationship to the following:
 - Brahman
 - Om
 - A lotus flower
- Research option: Research reverence of Ganesha, Hanuman, a form of Devi, the goddess, (other than Kali), or one of Vishnu's incarnations (other than Krishna). Answer the following questions:
 - How is the god/dess represented?
 - Who worships him/her? Why? What major stories are associated with him/her?
 - What festivals are dedicated to him/her?
 - What are the stories of their consorts or incarnations or closest friends?
- Experiential option: Interview people you know on how they define karma. Compare and contrast American and Indian descriptions of karma. Reflect on whether or not you believe in the existence of karma.

2. Second Paper: Due during Week 12. Choose **one** of the following options:

- Creative Writing option: Create a modern retelling of the Ramayana or the Bhagavad Gita. Possible ideas: change the characters but maintain the major lessons (showing how those lessons might play out in America, for example) or maintain the characters and have them encounter contemporary events and people (demonstrating to me that you understand the characters by how they react to contemporary events).
- Research option: Describe the major beliefs and practices of Shakti Tantra.
- Experiential option: Attend two yoga classes. Write about your experiences in the classes. How did your yoga classes compare with the four traditional yogic paths discussed in class?

Additional information about these papers will be provided on the Laulima weekly lesson pages.

3. Research Project: Each student will select a topic he/she finds interesting in Indian religions and begin researching it early in the semester. Research projects include submitting a topic, developing a thesis, submitting a first draft, responding to peer editing, conferencing one-on-one with the professor, and sharing your final work with your classmates. Additional guidelines on project length, helpful resources in mapping out your research, a research project rubric, and more will be provided in the weekly Laulima lesson pages. The title for this assignment is intentional; this doesn't have to be a standard *research paper*, creative options for presenting your research are encouraged.
- Due dates to be aware of:
 - Week 4: research project topic due
 - Week 7: first draft due
 - Weeks 8 & 9: feedback provided- peer editing and conferences
 - Week 13: second draft due
 - Week 16: final project due

A note on plagiarism: This is a WI course and plagiarism is treated seriously. You need to cite all of your sources in proper [MLA format](#). If you don't know how to cite a source in MLA format, then Google it, ask me, or go to the Writing Center for help! Ignorance is no excuse. If I find that you quoted someone

else's work verbatim without using quotation marks or giving the author credit then you will receive an automatic F grade on the assignment.

Course Schedule

Please review the course schedule below where you will find the dates, course topics, and assessments to be completed each week.

Specific topics to be covered each week, requirements and expectations for each assignment, and additional details for each week are available in the weekly lesson pages on Laulima. The following schedule is subject to change. Should changes occur, you will be notified by email.

Most tasks will be due on Fridays by 11:55pm, except for your papers which are due on Sundays by 11:55pm.

Week 1, Jan. 9-13: Introduction to the Course and Getting to Know One Another

Topics: Introducing the course and one another

Tasks:

- Read the materials introducing you to this course
- Introduce yourself in the Nā Mo'olelo and respond to two of your classmates' posts.

Week 2, Jan. 16-20: Introducing Major Religious Traditions and Cultural Symbols

Topics: Introducing religions that originated in India- Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism; India's geography; languages; Sanskrit pronunciations; cultural symbols

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - the Prof. Notes- Welcome- Sanskrit Pronunciations
 - Cultural Symbols and Introduction, Rodrigues
- Watch the film- Story of India episode 1 (a BBC documentary) available on youtube
- Take the quiz on the readings
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts

Week 3, Jan. 23-27: Introducing Hinduism

Topics: There isn't one Hinduism- Hinduism as polytheism and monotheism; major Hindu teachings; Vedas and Upanishads

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - Prof. Notes- Vedas And Upanishads
 - The Upanishads, Heehs
 - Karma and Cosmology, Rodrigues
- Take the quiz on the readings
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts

Week 4, Jan. 30- Feb. 3: Hindu Gods and Goddesses

Topics: Hindu deities; trimurti; city and family gods and goddesses; Shiva; Kali

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - Prof. Notes- Gods and Goddesses with an Emphasis on Shiva

- Prof. Notes- Kali
 - Worship Kali Temple, Harding
 - Navaratri
 - "The Dancer of Kannur" in *Nine Lives*, Dalrymple
- Take the quiz on the readings
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts
- Submit your research project topic

Week 5, Feb. 6-10: Vishnu and his incarnations

Topics: Hindu deities; Vishnu's forms; Ramayana; Ayodhya

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - Prof. Notes- Vishnu and Ramayana
 - Hindu Deities and Puranic Mythology, Rodrigues
 - "The Singer of Epics" in *Nine Lives*, Dalrymple
- Take the quiz on the readings
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts
- First paper due
- Extra credit: watch Sita Sings the Blues (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oC2ZlQVIP4>) and write a one page reflection paper on the film.

Week 6, Feb. 13-17: Bhagavad Gita

Topics: Krishna's counsel in the Gita

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - Prof. Notes- Ethics of the *Bhagavad Gita*
 - Krishna Jayanti
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts
- Work on your research project draft

Week 7, Feb. 20-24: Yoga and Samkhya

Topics: yogic paths; Samkhya

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - Prof. Notes- Samkhya and Yoga
 - Samkhya and Yoga, Heehs
- Take the quiz on the readings
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts
- Watch Four Yogic Paths film clip
- Submit your research project draft one with bibliography (due Sunday)

Week 8, Feb. 27- March 3: Tantra

Topics: tantric teachings; Mira Bai; Mahadeviyakka

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - Prof. Notes- Tantra
 - This is the Other World, Feuerstein and Shaiva and Shakta Tantras, Heehs (two articles in one PDF)

- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts
- Complete peer editing for the classmate you were assigned to

Week 9, March 6-10: Conferences and Hindu beliefs regarding death and the afterlife

Topics: cremation near the Ganga; funeral practices

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - Prof. Notes- Death and the Afterlife in Hindu Varanasi
- Watch the film Ganges- River to Heaven https://youtu.be/B8F_QaU6SCQ
- Complete a peer edit for one of your classmates Research Project drafts
- Complete the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts
- Sign up for your conference date and come to the conference on time prepared to discuss your research project draft

Week 10, March 13-17: Spring Break

Tasks: Make any changes to your research project according to suggestions given during peer editing and your conference with the professor.

Week 11, March 20-24: Jainism

Topics: introducing Jainism; tirthankaras; ahimsa; aparigraha

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - Prof. Notes- Parshva and Mahavira
 - Jainism, Berry
 - Mahavira, Anekantavada and the World Today, Charitrapragya
- Take the quiz on the readings
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts

Week 12, March 27-31: Buddhism

Topics: introducing Buddhism; the Buddha; Four Noble Truths; dhyana; Vajrayana

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:
 - Prof. Notes- Buddhism
 - Early Buddhism, Brannigan
 - Prof. Notes- Nagarjuna
- Take the quiz on the readings
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts
- Submit your second paper (due Sunday)
- Extra credit- watch the film on Buddhist pilgrimage and write a reflection paper

Week 13, April 3-7: Sikhism

Topics: The Sikh Gurus; major Sikh teachings

Tasks:

- Read and take notes on:

- the chapter you're assigned to in *Sikhism : a very short introduction* by Eleanor Nesbitt (available as an ebook to download and through Ebsco through the WCC library)
- Sikhs in America: A religious community long misunderstood is mourning deaths in Indianapolis mass shooting
<https://theconversation.com/sikhs-in-america-a-religious-community-long-misunderstood-is-mourning-deaths-in-indianapolis-mass-shooting-159196>
- (The Sikh Gurus, Heehs)
- Provide a summary of key ideas in the chapter to which you were assigned
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts
- Submit the second draft of your research project (due Sunday)

Week 14, April 10-14: Gandhi

Topics: Gandhi's life; Satyagraha

Tasks:

- Take the Sikhism Quiz
- Read the brief article on Mahatma Gandhi
- Watch the documentary on Mahatma Gandhi
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts
- Extra credit: research the partition of India and Pakistan and/or the independence movement from British colonialism to Indian self-rule using credible sources. Write a paper about what you learned.

Week 15, April 17-21: Hindu Weddings and Marriage

Topics: astrology; Hindu wedding rituals; marriage

Tasks:

- Read the articles
- Watch the film clips
- Answer one of the discussion questions and reply to one of your classmates' posts

Week 16, April 24-28: Research Project Presentations

Topics: sharing what we created for the research project

Tasks:

- Provide a link to your research project in the Discussion Forum
- Comment on two of your classmates' research projects

Week 17, May 1-5: Wrapping Up

Topics: reflecting on what we learned; concluding remarks

Tasks:

- Reflect on what you learned and share it in the Discussion Forum
- Conclusions and questions for future investigation

Congratulations! You have completed the course.

Additional Information

College Policies

Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to act with personal integrity, to respect other students' opinions and property, and to help create an academic environment in which discussion is encouraged. Students are expected not to engage or tolerate acts of plagiarism: cheating, copying, fabrication of citations, or other acts of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is treated seriously in this course. If you are quoting someone verbatim, then you must use quotation marks and cite the source immediately after the quotation in parenthetical form, (author's last name, page number). If you are unsure whether or not you are citing sources correctly, please ask me. Ignorance is no excuse. Students charged with academic dishonesty face serious consequences that range from an F grade for the assignment to an F grade for the course.

Disabilities Accommodation:

If you have a physical, sensory, health, cognitive, or mental health disability that could limit your ability to fully participate in this class, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Specialist Counselor to discuss reasonable accommodations that will help you succeed in this class. Roy Inouye can be reached at 808-235-7453, royinouye@hawaii.edu, or you may stop by Hale Kako'o 106 for more information.

Title IX:

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination; sexual harassment and gender-based harassment, including harassment based on actual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; sexual assault; sexual exploitation; domestic violence; dating violence; and stalking. Windward Community College is committed to the pursuit of equal education. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination or gender-based violence, WCC has resources to support you. To speak with someone confidentially, please go to: [Title IX | Windward Community](#) to find the appropriate contact person.

Alternate Contact Information:

If you are unable to contact the instructor, have questions that your instructor cannot answer, or for any other issues, please contact the Academic Affairs Office in Alakai 121, 808-235-7422, wccaa@hawaii.edu

Services:

Windward is one of the most supportive colleges! Please don't be shy! Utilize all of the wonderful services that are available to help you succeed. For information on counseling/advising, careers and student employment, tutoring (including services such as the Writing Center, Math Lab, Speech Lab, test proctoring, Trio, etc.), HINET, peer mentors, childcare, and more please see: [Services For Students | Windward Community](#)

Extra Credit

There are a few extra credit assignments sprinkled into the Laulima Lesson plans. Extra credit can also be earned by writing additional writing assignments. If you're interested, please inquire by email. All extra credit must be received by May 5, 2023.

Syllabus Change Policy:

Information contained in the course syllabus may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor. Updates to the syllabus will be communicated via email.

Mission Statement:

'O keia ka wā kūpono e ho'onui ai ka 'ike me ka ho'omaopopo i kō Hawai'i mau ho'oilina waiwai. Aia nō ho'i ma ke Kulanui Kaiāulu o ke Ko'olau nā papahana hou o nā 'ike 'akeakamai a me nā hana no'eau. Me ke kuleana ko'iko'i e ho'ohiki ke Kulanui e kāko'o a e ho'okumu i ala e hiki kē kōkua i ka ho'onui 'ike a nā kānaka maoli. Na mākou nō e ho'olako, kāko'o a paipai i nā Ko'olau a kō O'ahu a'e me nā hana no'eau

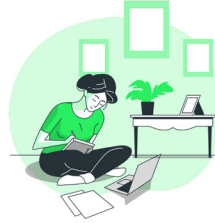
Kulia I Ka Nu'u - Strive for Excellence! 10

ākea, ka ho'ona'auao 'oihana a me ka ho'onui 'ike ma ke kaiāulu — hō'a'ano a e ho'oulu i nā haumāna i ka po'okela.

Windward Community College offers innovative programs in the arts and sciences and opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of Hawai'i and its unique heritage. With a special commitment to support the access and educational needs of Native Hawaiians, we provide the Ko'olau region of O'ahu and beyond with liberal arts, career and lifelong learning in a supportive and challenging environment — inspiring students to excellence.

Secrets of Success

1. Keep up with the readings, viewings, and note taking. Since the course is set up to discuss the readings and viewings, if you do not read or complete the viewings you will feel completely lost during our discussions and not have an enriching educational experience. Additionally, by completing the readings and viewings, you will be well prepared for the writing assignments, and quizzes.
2. Schedule our course into your week. Schedule in specific blocks of time in which you always plan to log in to Lualima and complete our course work. In this manner you will create consistency and routine, both of which lead to habit formation. If it's not scheduled in, then the course becomes an afterthought and you will end up rushed and overwhelmed.
3. Only check social media and your other favorite websites at set times each day. You're working on your computer for this course. Instagram, TikTok, Reddit, and more are only a click away. Classwork is hard! Reading streams and looking at photos is fun and easy! Oh, and that great feeling we get every time someone acknowledges something we posted... I get it. Distraction is everywhere. Here are some things you can do to avoid temptation. Choose which ones can work for you given your family's needs and your specific distractions:
 - a. do not leave any distracting websites open on your computer when you're completing class work.
 - b. leave your phone in the next room. I assume that if there's an emergency then someone will call me, not text. Thus, I do not go to my phone while I'm working unless it rings.
 - c. if you have a smartwatch that vibrates every time you get a notification, take it off during your work time.
 - d. designate specific times in which you allow yourself to go to your favorite websites. Whatever you tend to check out or click on incessantly, try scheduling in certain blocks of time for that activity and do not check them out at other times.
4. Stay organized. Use a planner! Put important deadlines for assignments from all of your courses' syllabi into the planner. Create a weekly schedule with your school and work hours.
5. I will communicate with you via your UH Mail. Thus, you'll need to check that account on a regular basis. If there is another email account you most often use (such as Gmail), you can forward your UH Mail to that account.
6. Contact me if you have any questions. Never think that your question is "too stupid" to ask. We are all on a life-long journey in which we learn and synthesize information everyday, act according to that knowledge, trust what has become reliable wisdom, and reassess other knowledge with newfound information. I'm not out to trick you; I want you to succeed! I am here to help you. Let me know how I can make this the best educational experience for you.



Let's get started!

