

The University of Texas at Austin

Department of Asian Studies

Spring 2013: Asian Studies Course (ANS 379)

Indian Poetry and Religions

Global Cultures and Writing Flag Course



Instructor: Afsar Mohammad, Ph.D

Class Meetings: Tue and Thu 11 to 12:30 at WCH 4:118

Office Hours: Tue and Thr 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. or by appointment

Office: Homer Rainey Hall 3:102

This course focuses on the intersections of religion and poetry in the history of Indian literature. The basic question that we explore is: Why religion and poetry are deeply connected in the making of Indian religions? From the Vedas to the recent post-modern/post-colonial manifestations of religious devotion and expressive forms, poetry continues to play its central role in the making of Indian religions. We focus on several

streams of poetry beginning with the Vedic to contemporary and study various intersections of religion and poetry. Most importantly, we try to capture the contours of the Indian religious poetry expressed in multiple settings and many variations that include hymns, chants, bhajans, and long poetic narratives along with the new poetic conventions that deal with caste and gender identities as well.

Required Texts:

1. Donald S.Lopez, Jr. Religions of India in Practice, Princeton University Press.
ISBN-13: 978-0691043258
2. Paula Richman, Extraordinary Child, University of Hawaii Press.
ISBN-13: 978-0824810634
3. Vinay Dharwadker (TR), Kabir: The Weaver's Songs, Penguin India.
ISBN-13: 978-0143029687
4. Syed Akbar Hyder, Reliving Karbala, Oxford University Press.
ISBN-13: 978-0195373028
5. A.K. Ramanujan (TR), Speaking of Siva, Penguin Classics,
ISBN-13: 978-0140442700
6. Narayana Rao, (TR), God on the Hill, Oxford University Press.
ISBN-13: 978-0195677096
7. Verses From the Center: A Buddhist vision of the Sublime

Grading Scale:

92-100 A

89-91 A-

86-88 B+

82-85 B

79-81 B-

76-78 C+

72-75 C

Class Attendance and Participation:

Regrettably, excessive unexcused absences and persistent failure to prepare the assignments on time have deleterious effects on final grades for the class. On the other hand, vigorous and informed participation in class discussions can help a grade. Other factors, such as student's progress or effort in the course, may also affect final grades for the class.

Assignments:

1. Informal and Formal Weekly responses to be posted on a blog. (500 Words): 10%
2. Book Review (800 Words): 15%
3. Mid-term paper (2500 Words):15%
4. Peer-review of the mid-term papers: 10%
5. Final paper (2500 Words): 25%
6. Class Presentation: 15 minutes (plus 10 minutes Q & A): 25%

Instructions:

1. Students have to sign for weekly responses and class presentations in the first week of the semester.
2. Students should be prepared to work in groups in and outside the class. Peer-review of the mid-term papers is just one form of this group work.
3. Students have to submit well-edited and proof-read writing assignments. Failure to meet the basic writing requirements is an automatic low grade. Please do not submit rough drafts or drafts in the progress and try to consult the Writing Center on the UT campus before submitting any writing assignment.
4. I'm very particular about the class presentations and you should submit the outline of your presentation one week before the class presentation. Be prepared to a formal question and answer session after every presentation.

A Note on Peer Review:

1. Students share the mid-term papers for the purpose of peer review. The class is divided into several groups and each group shares and discusses the papers. The instructor will ask each group to present their discussions to him and makes suggestions.
2. Students share and discuss presentation outlines and major arguments in the presentations.
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