

## RS203 Hinduism

### Course description

A study of the development of religious thought in India from the Vedic Period to the present. Like all religions, Hinduism has preserved elements of continuity while accommodating change. Our concern will be to identify orthodox forms and the challenges that confront them. The attempt will be to appreciate the breadth and diversity of this rich tradition, its resilience and its innovations.

The class will comprise lectures and discussion, as well as videos and online content. For some material, students will be divided into groups and will discuss questions provided by the instructor, as well as student-raised questions. These discussions will in some cases form the basis of the midterm quiz and final exam.

### Required Texts

Falk, Nancy Auer. 2006. *Living Hinduisms: An Explorer's Guide*. Belmont, CA:

Thomson/Wadsworth (will be available as a course package in January)

Easwaran, Eknath, translator (any edition) *The Bhagavad Gita*. New York: Vintage Spiritual Classics.

One or two additional chapters or articles may be provided.

### Assessment

Reading Reflections	20%
Participation	10%
Knowledge Fair Project (see breakdown, below)	30%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	20%

**Reading Reflections (20%):** Six times over ten weeks of the term, you will submit a brief written reflection on the reading from the Falk text for that week. Reading Reflections should be no more than one or two paragraphs in length, on a single page, in which you reflect critically on the chapter for that week. Be sure to discuss what the reading *does* and what it *means*, not just what it says.

Because reading reflections are very brief written assignments, it is best to choose one topic or section from the reading on which to write your reflection.

**Hard copies of the reflections (printed or handwritten) are to be submitted at the end of class.**

Reflections will be given grades as follows: 1 for **ALL** late or out-of-class submissions; 2 for reflections that are summaries or opinion without critical reflection; or 3 for reflections that ask or answer critical questions about the reading. Only the first six reflections submitted will be graded. The total grade will be out of 18, and will be calculated out of 20 for your final

grade. You are responsible for keeping track of the number of reflections you have submitted.

**Knowledge Fair: Research Report (15%); Group Project (10%); Fair Participation (5%)**

Early in the term, you will choose a topic that interests you within the study of Hinduism. You will join a small group of other students interested in the same topic. Each member of your group will then choose an interesting sub-topic that relates to the group's main topic. Each group member chooses a different sub-topic, and then will write a **research report** of 1000 to 1200 words on his or her sub topic. Your report will be a summary and analysis of a minimum of three scholarly texts (not websites) on your topic. You can use the course text (Falk) as one of these three sources.

For the **group project**, you will work with your group to produce a final project on the main topic. This project will draw on the individual reports, course readings, other in-class materials, and additional research. On the last day of the course, groups will share their projects with the class in a kind of "trade-show" format. Each group will set up an information hub in the classroom from which to share the group's research and findings.

The **fair participation** grade will be based on a brief questionnaire that each student will answer based on what they learned from the other groups' hubs.

**Details of this assignment will be worked out in class.**

**Midterm Quiz (20%) and Final Exam (20%):** will be based on lectures, assigned readings, videos and in-class discussions. Both will include vocabulary definitions and short essay answers. The final exam will cover topics from the lectures after the midterm.

**Participation (10%):** As this is partly a discussion and group-based class, students are **required to attend** and participate in small group and full-class discussions. Attendance will be taken to assess your participation grade. Participation grades are also based on your engagement in the class lectures (asking or answering questions) and discussion sessions.

**Textbook readings** will be the basis of in-class discussions, and should be read before the class for which they are assigned. Failure to do the readings in advance will negatively affect your participation grade. Readings from the *Bhagavad Gita* are spread out over the first few weeks of the term, but the Gita will be discussed in week 6. **Bring your textbook to class** with you every week, and bring your copy of the Gita to class in week 6.

**Instructor's policies:** Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day. If you are having difficulty getting an assignment in on time due to illness or another emergency, I am willing to offer extensions if requested IN ADVANCE. Similarly, if you are having difficulties completing assignments over the course of the term because of ongoing concerns, let me know as soon as possible.

**In-Class Etiquette:** From time to time, students have told me that they find it very distracting when other students are surfing non-course related websites or checking their email, etc. in class. I also find it distracting and *very* impolite. Please be courteous.

I am available before and after class and by email. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or you just want to chat, please feel free to drop by my office or get in touch by

email. For all email communication, please put the course number in the subject line.

**RS203 Class Schedule**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1	Jan. 9	Introduction, Overview, definitions Origins and Antecedents	
2	Jan. 16	The Veda and Brahmanism Reading Workshop.	Falk, Ch. 1 Gita, chapters 1-4
3	Jan. 23	Brahmanical traditions; Dharma: <b>Group Contract Assignment Due: done in class</b>	Falk, Ch. 8 Gita, chapters 5-8
4	Jan. 30	<i>Dharma</i> : Caste and class; life stages and gender roles	Falk, Ch. 9
5	Feb. 6	Yoga and renunciation; the Sadhus	Falk, Ch. 2 Gita, chapters 9-14
6	Feb. 13	Narrative traditions and the Hindu epics; Bhakti and Vaishṇavism <b>Research Reports due</b>	Falk, Ch. 3 Gita, Chapters 14-18
	Feb. 20	Reading Week	
7	Feb. 27	Vishnu and Krishna; Shaiva and Tantra	Falk, Ch. 7
8	Mar. 5	<b>Midterm Quiz</b>	
9	Mar. 12	Goddess Traditions; Hindu philosophy	Falk, Ch. 5
10	Mar. 19	Hindu ritual, festivals, and food; Worship at home and temple; temple architecture	Falk, Ch. 6
11	Mar. 26	Colonialism and Hindu reformers ( <i>samajists</i> ); Hindu nationalism; NRMs <b>Group Report Due</b>	Falk Ch. 4
12	Apr. 2	Hinduism and modernity Hindus in Canada Knowledge Fair	Falk Ch. 12

**Academic Integrity:**

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>.

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>.

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):**

[http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo):** <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

**Turnitin.com:** Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin in this course.

BEFORE SUBMITTING ANY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS, be sure to familiarize yourself with what constitutes plagiarism. Submissions of work that is not your own can lead to failure of the assignment and/or the course.