

**RELI 2693 – Hinduism**  
**Religious Studies Program**  
**Fall 2020, second block**  
**Dr. Derek Maher**

**Class Meeting Times:**

**First class October 1:** 11:00 AM – 1:15 PM (scheduled synchronous time) [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 704-247-1158](#) United States, Charlotte (Toll) Conference ID: 498 222 266#

**Regular Tuesday class:** 11:00 AM – 1:15 PM (scheduled synchronous time) [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 704-247-1158](#) United States, Charlotte (Toll) Conference ID: 130 664 532#

**Additional activities will be asynchronous instead of the Thursday meetings after the first class**

**Final Exam: November 24:** 11:00 AM – 1:15 PM (scheduled synchronous time) [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 704-247-1158](#) United States, Charlotte (Toll) Conference ID: 833 199 558#

**Class location:** on Microsoft Teams

**Best contact method:** [maherd@ecu.edu](mailto:maherd@ecu.edu)

**Office:** Bate 2002B

**Office Telephone:** 328-5332

**Virtual office hours:** Monday 10:00 – 12:30 and Wednesday 10:00 – 12:30 on Teams [Join](#)

**Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 704-247-1158** United States, Charlotte (Toll) Conference ID: 677 450 947#

**East Carolina University General Education Program**

ECU's motto is *Servire - To Serve*. The university prepares students by engaging the broad range of human knowledge and developing the skills that promote self-discovery and informed, responsible citizenship.

The fundamental purpose served in requiring students to take general education courses is to help them develop an understanding of aspects of the human condition that are not the primary focus of their major field of study. The number of subjects that fit this description is larger than can be required of ECU's students. Hence, the university only requires courses in the broadest and most basic areas of study along with courses in especially valuable competency areas (written communication, mathematics, health promotion, health-related physical activity, and diversity). Most professional and interdisciplinary programs of study are grounded in the following broad, basic areas of study: the fine arts, the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences, and mathematics.

General education exposes students to the broad range of human knowledge, while enabling them to acquire key skills and gain critical competencies that prepare them to understand societal problems and seek solutions. On that foundation, students then build expertise in one or more academic areas, developing the capacities to establish themselves in the work world and contribute to society as engaged and well-informed citizens.

Students explore and inquire in the humanities, arts, natural sciences, mathematics, and social sciences, learn to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, develop quantitative literacy, become familiar with global concerns and the diversity of the human experience, and cultivate the broad knowledge and skills that inform the mature exploration of their own majors. This foundation and its integration with specialized learning in the students' majors enable them to live broadly informed, responsible, and meaningful lives; at the same time, this preparation is essential to good citizenship in an increasingly global and culturally diverse world.

Fully developing each student's communication, computational, and critical thinking skills can only be accomplished by the student's program of study in their academic major. General education courses advance students beyond the competencies acquired in PK-12 education, but these courses are too few

in number and too early in an undergraduate's career to fully prepare students in these skill areas. The full development of these skills is the responsibility of each student's major area of study.

**General Education in the Humanities:** Since this course satisfies three semester hours of the Humanities requirement that is part of the General Education Program, it is designed to help students develop competencies in the Humanities. Courses in the Humanities challenge students to critically examine their own and other people's beliefs, narratives, and practices in relation to what can broadly be called "human existence" or referred to as "what it is to exist as a human being." Humanities courses address a range of issues that have captured people's attention for over 3000 years. These problems include matters of value, and the courses that address them require students to critically assess diverse understandings of aesthetic, ethical, moral, and religious dimensions. Humanities courses require students to learn one or more methods of critical analysis and to understand the value of knowledge both for its own sake and for its application. The knowledge gained by taking courses in the Humanities contributes to each student's understanding of how to create a life worth living.

The following student learning outcomes (SLO) define the Humanities competencies. Students who have completed the General Education Humanities requirements can:

- SLO 1 - Distinguish artistic, literary, philosophical, or religious creations from other types of work and describe how they address enduring human concerns and the human condition.
- SLO 2 - Apply discipline-specific criteria and evaluate the significance of specific literary, artistic, philosophical, or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.
- SLO 3 - Apply discipline-specific knowledge to contrast their own understanding with others' views of the significance of specific artistic, literary, philosophical, or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.

**Course description and course-specific student learning outcomes:** Hinduism is the most significant unifying force in Indian tradition. In this course, we will explore the religion from its contested origins to its modern manifestations. We will examine the evidence that points to its preliterate period and the various strata of sacred texts that mark its evolution, including the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads*, the epics, the devotional sources, philosophical literature, and the tantras. We will also examine the various modes of religious expression embedded in these sources, such as those related to ritual life, soteriology, mysticism, gnosis, and social organization. Finally, we will explore the ways in which art and architecture intersect with the religion. By way of these inquiries, the student will be able to:

- Identify Hindu beliefs, practices, myths, rituals, traditions, and art,
- Discuss the historical evolution of the religions of India,
- Interpret sacred texts,
- Compare and contrast the assumptions, beliefs, and outlooks of different Hindu traditions and the practices that result from those assumptions,
- Become familiar with various methodologies employed in the academic study of religion,
- Cultivate critical thinking and reading comprehension skills, and
- Learn to communicate more effectively, verbally and in writing.

These objectives will be attained through lectures, classroom discussions, and assignments. Challenging readings from a variety of disciplines and perspectives will supplement these strategies.

**Grading:**

- Two exams with essays and short answers (15% each = 75 points each = 150 points total or 30%) **(October 19 and November 5)**
- Discussion (8 x 15 points or 3% each = 120 points or 24%)
- Map Quiz 30 points 6%

- Reading summaries (4 x 25 points = 100 points or 20%)
- Final exam (20% = 100 points) (**November 24: 11:00 AM – 1:15 PM**)

A (100-93%) 500-465; A- (down to 90%) 464-450; B+ (down to 87%) 449-435; B (down to 83%) 434-415; B- (down to 80%) 414-400; C+ (down to 77%) 399-385; C (down to 73%) 384-365; C- (down to 70%) 364-350; D+ (down to 67%) 349-335; D (down to 63%) 334-315; D- (down to 60%) 314-300; F (below 60%) 299-0.

### Required Readings:

- Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gavin Flood, editor, *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*. Oxford: Blackwell. Available as an eBook on Joyner Library's site and files are located in Canvas:
- <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/eastcarolina/detail.action?docID=242426>
- Stephen Mitchell, *Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Additional readings will be available on Canvas. Students are responsible for checking their email address linked to Canvas so that they are assured of remaining up-to-date with reading assignments, exam dates, and any other information relating to the course.

If ordinary university operations are further disrupted for any reason (adverse weather event, pandemic, etc.), the operation of this course will continue through the Canvas page as a fully online course.

**How to Learn in this Course:** The best way to learn about the complex and often unfamiliar topics I teach is by engaging the material in diverse ways. It is not possible to learn the content of this class if you do not read assignments, never communicate about the readings, and engage only in passive reception of the ideas of the course. In the online environment, particularly for the asynchronous parts of the course, the burden to engage is increased on the student. Thus, I have included:

- synchronous class meetings in which I hope you all show up prepared and ask a lot of questions
- asynchronous recordings with PowerPoints that you can use to explore and mull over complex ideas
- 5 hours of office hours a week when you can meet with me virtually so we can discuss any of your concerns and questions. These are set up as Teams meetings, but if you have access problems, please email me with your phone number and I can call you during office hours or at some other time
- assignments called discussions (see below) and summary and reaction papers (also see below) that will cause you to use the concepts actively
- great readings in primary and secondary sources, videos, some beautiful music, and many images.

Engage, be active, use the words and concepts with me, with each other, and in your written work so you can integrate and refine your understanding of how the terms are used. That is how you will find success in learning the content of this course (and almost everything else you study in your life).

**Attendance and Participation:** Normally, I teach in the face-to-face format, and in such courses, I really emphasize attendance, with significant penalties for missing class. My goal is to incentivize you to stay engaged and to gain every advantage leading to your successful learning. As you know, the world is upside. The facts that we are online, teaching and learning in a compressed format, and people are traversing overlapping challenges outside of their control means that we will all have to adapt. I will not take attendance, but please take my word that your continual participation is really the only way you are likely to be successful. Do not disappear and hope to catch up later. The pace is too quick for that. If you need my help, please ask. I earnestly want to help you learn.

**Exams:** Exams will consist of essays and short questions. Essay questions should prompt a couple of well-articulated paragraphs. Short questions will require that you write a couple of complete sentences explaining key terms. **The two mid-term exams are asynchronous, while the final is yet to be determined.**

**Proctoring:** Since we will not be together at least for the first two exams, we will use the [Respondus Monitor proctoring system](#) through Canvas. Please check the technical specifications at the linked website to be sure you have the technical ability to participate. If you need to borrow equipment from the library, you must plan long in advance, and see [here](#).

**Discussions:** In the schedule below, I have marked certain readings in light blue. They have dates when the discussions are due. Please go to the discussions tabs on Canvas and participate in the discussion. I will grade these based on your level of engagement with the readings and the depth of your comment. Please do not just say you liked xyz or found it interesting. Demonstrate that you have completed the reading, react to it, connect it to other parts of the course, and/or compare it to other things you know from religion or other parts of life. Separately, feel free to add comments to other people's contributions to the discussion. This is also the place to discuss how readings connect to the recorded lectures or the synchronous presentations. Don't be shy! Connect to me and to each other through the discussions; it will help you solidify your understanding of the material.

**Reading Summary and React Paper:** Four times during the semester, marked below in that olive color, students will submit a 300-400-word paper with a summary of the reading and a reaction to the reading. Consider this to be studying for your exams; these essays will help you learn how to write about these kinds of sources. Please put significant time into these four assignments. They should be edited, grammatical, and well-considered. Really think through what the reading is saying, why it is so important to the understanding of Hinduism, and what you think about the points being made.

**Academic Integrity and Classroom Decorum:** Academic integrity is a fundamental value of higher education and East Carolina University; therefore, we will not tolerate acts of cheating, plagiarism, falsification, or attempts to cheat, plagiarize, or falsify. All students are expected to comply with the principles of Academic Integrity embodied in the [ECU Honor Code](#). Since violations can result in expulsion from the University, suspension, or a grade of "XF" for the course, students should become familiar with what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, falsification, and other violations. Note also that according to ECU policy **mere attempts to plagiarize, cheat, or falsify qualify as violations**. Consult the ECU [Academic Integrity Policy](#) on the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities website.

All university classrooms ought to be environments in which the free exchange of information and viewpoints is undertaken in an open, respectful, and civil atmosphere. This is particularly important in classes that touch on religion, since discussions of religion can raise controversial issues or concern deeply held personal beliefs. It is natural and appropriate that people can disagree on topics of discussion, and it is fine to explore these differences in a civil tone. Disruptive students will be asked to leave class meetings, and appropriate disciplinary measures will be pursued.

**University Resources:** The [Writing Center](#) offers students in-person and on-line assistance in learning writing skills. Contact the Writing Center for hours and methods of connecting remotely (328-2820). <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/writing/writingcenter/index.cfm>

In addition to providing students with personal counseling, the [Counseling and Student Development Center](#) in Wright Building 316 (328-6661) offers various resources to assist students in their academic development. These include training in time management, test taking, overcoming test anxiety, and academic motivation. <http://www.ecu.edu/counselingcenter/>

**Statement of Reasonable Accommodation for Students with Learning Disabilities:** In accord with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act, East Carolina University recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional climate in which students with disabilities can succeed. Students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations and should have equal access to learning. Students requesting accommodations based on a covered disability must go to the Office of Disability Support Services, located in Slay 138, to verify the disability before any accommodations can occur. The telephone number is (252) 737-1016. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive, so it is best to register at your earliest convenience.

**Meeting with me:** I have 5 hours of scheduled office hours a week, listed on p. 1 of the syllabus. Aside from those hours, I can often be available online. If the times I have indicated are not practical, students are encouraged to ask me to meet at another time. If students have connectivity problems, we can speak by phone.

**Library:** All students at ECU should become proficient in using library resources. Joyner Library at ECU (accessible on-line at <http://www.lib.ecu.edu/>) has many valuable resources on Hinduism. There are hundreds of books on religion in the stacks of Joyner Library. See the following website for help in navigating your way around the Library. Books on Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion have call numbers beginning with the letter B. Books on Hinduism have call numbers beginning with BL1100-1225, but books on Hindu philosophy will be in the philosophy section, books on Hindu history will be in the history section, etc. Navigate your way around the library with the following source: <http://geography.miningco.com/library/congress/blb.htm>).

Additionally, you can find information on religious traditions in books in other sections of the library, including anthropology, art, geography, history, literature, philosophy, and psychology. You may also explore the film and music resources the library collects. One of the best resources available is the library's collection of journals. Not only does the library have numerous religion journals in paper and bound forms, but it is also possible to access a very large number of journals on-line (<http://media.lib.ecu.edu/erdfs/>). The library staff can be extremely helpful in learning to use these resources. Do not be shy about asking for their help. That is their job.

As a student of East Carolina University, you also have free use of the Library system at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill ([www.lib.unc.edu](http://www.lib.unc.edu)). Moreover, you can access just about any book, journal or other resource in the world through the Inter-Library Loan. Many resources can be obtained within a matter of days. Often, journal articles can be delivered electronically within a day or two. The Joyner Library has a special office for Inter-Library Loan services, located to the left of the front desk. You can access these resources online at: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-lib/interlibraryloan.cfm>.

The following collections are valuable for primary sources in Hinduism:

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/>

[http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/faqs\\_subscriber#Whatlimit](http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/faqs_subscriber#Whatlimit)

## OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Readings not in your texts will be found on Blackboard. Assigned readings are subject to change.

**October 1 – Liberal Arts, the Humanities, and the Introduction of the Course** (Teams meeting on October 1) (Discussion #1 due October 5)

**October 6 – What is “Hinduism”? Understanding Other People’s Narration of Identity** (Teams meeting on October 6)

- Flood, *Hinduism*, Preface through p. 22
- Flood, “Introduction: Establishing the Boundaries,” in Blackwell
- “Who Invented Hinduism?” in David Lorenzon, *Who Invented Hinduism? Essays on Religion in History*. New Delhi, Yoda Press, 2006. (Discussion #2 due October 12)

**Approximately October 8 – Orientation to the Indian Subcontinent: Representation of the Other (Asynchronous)**

- Flood, *Hinduism*, p. 23-35
- Smith, “Orientalism and Hinduism” in Blackwell
- Lecture on Canvas: 1. Getting Oriented PPT
- Mapping exercise – See the Module called “Mapping Hinduism”

**October 13 – Indo-European Mythology, Linguistics, and Archeology (Teams meeting on October 13) (Discussion #3 due October 16)**

- Dumézil, *Destiny of a King*, 1-27
- Lecture on Canvas: 2.a. Indo-Europeans PPT with voice
- Lecture on Canvas: 2.b. Comparative Indo-European Mythology PPT
- Colin Renfrew, “Indo-European Problem,” in *Archaeology & Language. The Puzzle of the Indo-European Origins*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1987.
- David Frawley, “The Myth of the Aryan Invasion of India”

**Approximately October 15 – Indus Valley Civilization: Sacred Literature in the Landscape (Asynchronous)**

- Flood, *Hinduism*, 127-174.
- Jane McIntosh, *A Peaceful Realm: The Rise and Fall of the Indus Civilization*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001.
- Lecture on Canvas: 3. Dravidians PPT

**October 19 – EXAM I (Asynchronous)**

**October 20 – The Vedic Vision of Reality: Interpreting Sacred Narratives (Teams meeting on October 20)**

- Flood, *Hinduism*, 35-50
- Michael Witzel, “Vedas and Upaniṣads,” in Blackwell (Summary due on October 24)
- O’Flaherty, *Rig Veda*, selections
- Living Hinduisms, “On Caste” Lecture on Canvas: 4. Vedas PPT (Asynchronous)
- (Discussion #4 on Vedas due October 23)

**October 27 – Upaniṣadic Religiosity: Philosophy and Mysticism in Sacred Literature**

- Flood, *Hinduism*, 51-102
- Olivelle, “The Renouncer Tradition,” in Blackwell.
- Introduction and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* in S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1953. (Summary due on October 30)
- Lecture on Canvas: 5. Asceticism PPT (Asynchronous)
- Lecture on Canvas: 6. Upaniṣads PPT (Asynchronous)
- (Discussion #5 on Upaniṣads due October 30)

**November 3 – Mythology and Philosophy (Teams)**

- Flood, *Hinduism*, 103-127
- Introduction in Swāmi Āraṇya, *Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York, 1983.

**November 3 – Bhagavad Gita: Devotionalism and the Divine**

- Flood, *Hinduism*, 128-147
- Stephen Mitchell, *Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation*. (Summary due on November 2)
- (Discussion #6 on George Harrison due November 4)

**November 5 – EXAM II (Asynchronous)**

**November 10 – Saivism, the Goddess, and Tantra (Teams)**

- Flood, *Hinduism*, 148-197.
- Flood, “The Śaiva Traditions,” in Blackwell
- Ramaswamy, “The Goddess and the Nation: Subterfuges of Antiquity, the Cunning of Modernity” in Blackwell
- **(Discussion #7 due November 12)**

**November 10 – Women in India (Asynchronous)**

- Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Narayan, “Gender in a Devotional Universe,” in Blackwell **(Summary due on November 11)**

**November 12 – Gandhi (Asynchronous)**

- **(Discussion #8 due November 16)**

**November 17 – Contemporary Expression of Hinduism (Teams)**

- Flood, *Hinduism*, 250-273
- David Smith, *Hinduism and Modernity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, 3-20 and 181-198.

**November 24: 11:00 AM – 1:15 PM FINAL EXAM (Teams)**