

California State University, Chico  
Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities

RELS 310 – 01: Religions of South Asia      Fall 2021



**Instructor:** Dr. Daniel Veidlinger  
**Office location:** ARTS 393  
**E-mail:** Please use Blackboard messages, or you can email me directly at [dveidlinger@csuchico.edu](mailto:dveidlinger@csuchico.edu) but include RELS 310 in the subject.  
**Phone** 898-4637  
**Course Time** Tues / Thurs 5:00 – 6:15 PM  
**Course Location** ONLINE  
**Office Hours** Wed Noon-1:00 PM and Thurs 2:00-4:00 or by appointment  
Office will be on Zoom. Use the link in Blackboard

## Course Description and Goals

This course is a complement to RELS 300 (Religions of East Asia). This course will provide an introduction to the religions and cultures of India and the surrounding region known as South Asia, and will also introduce elementary concepts of comparative religion such as Ritual, Soteriology, Theodicy, Sanctity and Scripture. It looks at the various ways that South Asians have answered the key ethical, philosophical and religious questions that all humans face and places these in historical and social context. We will also look at the literature and art of the region, and the figures who were responsible for it, in an attempt to see how it is connected to their religious ideas.

The main religions that we will examine in this course are **Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism**. We will also touch upon the forms of **Islam** found in South Asia. All of these religions have deeply influenced society at large and each other throughout their development in India. Students will be exposed to a rich chorus of ideas through films, lectures, and readings including primary texts written by important figures. For each religion, students will become acquainted with its doctrinal, philosophical, devotional, ritual and social aspects.

This course will be offered in the classroom as well as in a fully online version for distance students. Distance students are encouraged to join in the class live and watch via the web, an alternatively they may watch the lectures at a later time if they are unavailable during class times.

## Course Learning Objectives

This course will introduce students to SLO 1 ("Students can define and identify the history, beliefs, and practices of major world religious traditions") and SLO 2 ("Students understand major critical approaches to the study of religion and can explain how component elements of religion (myth, ritual, scripture, etc) function in diverse contexts").

These will be assessed using multiple choice questions in quizzes throughout the semester.

## Course Texts and Readings

Clothey, Fred. 2006. *Religion in India: A Historical Introduction*. New York: Routledge.  
Rahula, Walpola. 1974. *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press (or other editions).

There will be many online readings as well.

### Attendance:

This course is fully online. Attendance is required in this class for your success. Students must be logged in during class; students who are taking the class asynchronously must watch the lecture before the next class session.

### Office Hours:

I will have virtual office hours when you can chat with me online or email me and I will answer immediately. I will usually be in the office ARTS 393 during these times but not always, so if you need to see me in person instead of in the Zoom office, then let me know to make sure I will be there. If you can't consult with me during those times, you can email me through Blackboard; I will respond to questions within two business days, during regular business hours.

## Course Schedule

| <b>Date/<br/>Theme<br/>( themes in<br/>different<br/>colors)</b>        | <b>Topics for discussion in<br/>class</b>   | <b>Reading Assignment</b><br>Readings are Online unless<br>noted as printed. Readings<br>are to be completed <i>before</i><br>class |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Comparative<br/>Religion</b><br><br>Week one<br>Aug 24<br><br>Aug 26 | What is Religious Studies ?<br><br><br>What is South Asia?                            | <i>Ninian Smart: Dimensions of<br/>Religion</i><br><br><br><i>Clothey Chapter 1 "On Wearing<br/>Good Lenses" [print]</i>            |
| Week two<br>Aug 31  | Elementary Concepts of<br>Comparative Religion:<br>Sacred and Profane                 | <i>Eliade: The Sacred and the Profane</i><br><i>Esposito on Religious studies</i>   |
| <b>Sept 2</b>   | Religious Experience<br><b>Discussion Post One</b>                                    | <i>Oxtoby on Religious Studies</i><br><i>Harari "The Law of Religion"</i>   |
| <b>Early<br/>Hinduism</b><br><br>Week three<br>Sept 7                   | <b>TEST 1</b><br>Sacred Texts: The Vedas<br>What is the function of a sacred<br>text? | <i>What is a sacred text?</i><br><br><i>Clothey Chapter 2 "Sources of<br/>Indian Religion" [Print]</i>                              |
| Sept 9  | Sacrifices: Orthodoxy vs<br>Orthopraxy  | <i>Selections from the Vedas</i><br><i>Rig_Veda_Intro</i>   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Week four<br>Sept 14                                 | <b>Essay 1 Due</b><br>Cosmology and The Caste System.   | <i>Basham: "The Wonder that was India"</i><br><i>Purusha Sukta</i><br>Kendi "How to be an AntiRacist"   |
| Sept 16  | Theodicy  | <i>Karma and Theodicy</i>   |
| Week five<br>Sept 21                                 | Upanishads<br>What is transcendence and immanence? What are "wordly" vs "otherworldly" religions?<br><b>Discussion Post Two</b> | <i>Clothey Chapter 3 "The Early Urban Period" [Print]</i><br><i>Selections from the Upanishads</i><br><i>Weber "Asceticism, Mysticism, Salvation"</i> |
| Sept 23  | Yoga  | <i>Flood Chapter 4</i>  |
| <b>Buddhism</b><br><br>Week six<br>Sept 28           | <b>Test 2</b><br>The Life of the Buddha   | <i>Rahula Chap 1-2 [print]</i>  |
| Sept 30  | The Four Noble Truths<br>Soteriology  | <i>Rahula Chap 3-5</i>  |
| Week seven<br>Oct 5                                  | Buddhist Monasticism and Meditation<br><br><b>Discussion Post Three</b>   | <i>Rahula Chap 6- end. [print]</i><br><i>Foundations of Mindfulness in Rahula 109-119 [print]</i><br><i>Ordination of Women</i>                       |
| <b>Jainism</b><br>Oct 7                              | Jainism   | <i>BBC Jainism Links</i>  |
| <b>Later Buddhism</b><br><br>Week eight<br>Oct 12    | Mahayana Buddhism<br><br><b>Discussion Post Four</b>  | <i>Introduction to Mahayana</i><br><i>Mahayana Buddhism Readings</i><br><i>Mahayana Wisdom Literature and the Heart Sutra</i>                         |
| <b>Oct 14</b>  | Madhyamaka and Yogacara   | <i>Madhyamaka Readings</i><br><i>Yogacara Readings</i>  |
| <b>Classical Hinduism</b><br><br>Week nine<br>Oct 19 | <b>Test 3</b><br>Ramayana, Mahabharata and Myth   | <i>Clothey Chapter 4 "The Urban Period" [Print]</i>   |
| Oct 21   | Bhakti and Religious Ritual<br>Monotheism, Polytheism, Henotheism   | <i>Clothey pp. 87-106 [Print]</i><br><i>Myth and Ritual</i><br><i>Selections from the Epics</i><br><i>Overview of Bhakti</i>                          |
| Week ten<br>Oct 26                                   | <b>Essay 2 Due</b><br>Tantra and Sacred space<br><br>Psychology of Religion   | <i>Clothey pp. 107-121 [Print]</i><br><i>Feurstein</i><br><i>White</i><br><i>Psychology of Religion</i>   |
| <b>Oct 28</b><br><b>Islam</b>                        | Islam   | <i>BBC Islam Links</i>  |
| Week eleven<br>Nov 2                                 | Sufism<br><br><b>Discussion Post Five</b>   | <i>Clothey Chapter 6 "The Coming of Islam" [Print]</i><br><i>Sufism Links</i>   |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Nov 4<br/>Sikhism</b>                           | Sikhism and Religious Syncretism   | <i>Clothey Chapter 7 "Developments in the Late Medieval Period" [Print]</i><br><br><i>BBC Sikhism Links</i> |
| <b>Modern Hinduism</b><br><br>Week twelve<br>Nov 9 | <b>Test 4</b><br>Effects of Colonialism on Religion in South Asia. Religious Appropriation | <i>Clothey pp. 171-192 [Print]</i>  |
| <i>Nov 11 (holiday)</i>                            | Online Session: Watch Movie "Gandhi"   | <i>Gandhi Readings</i>  |
| <i>Week thirteen<br/>Nov 16</i>                    | Partition of India and Pakistan<br>Gandhi, Ambedkar, Khan<br><b>Discussion Post Six</b>    | <i>Gandhi<br/>Abdul Ghaffar Khan<br/>B.R. Ambedkar</i>  |
| Nov 18   | Neo-Hinduism, Vedanta, Gurus   | <i>Modern Hinduism<br/>Vivekananda</i>  |
| <b>Women</b><br><br>Week fourteen<br>Nov 30        | Women in India<br><br><b>Discussion Post Seven</b>   | <i>Women in India</i>   |
| Dec 2  | Women in Pakistan  | <i>Shaheed_Women in Pakistan<br/>Is Islam Misogynistic?</i>   |
| <b>Current Issues</b><br><br>Week fifteen<br>Dec 7 | <b>Essay 3 Due</b><br>Religions of South Asia Today  | <i>Clothey Chapter 9 "Religion in Contemporary India" [Print]</i>   |
| <b>Dec 9</b>                                       | Religious Nationalism<br><br><b>Events Report Due</b>                                      | <i>Van Der Veer: Religious Nationalism</i><br><br><i>News about Ayodhya Today</i>                           |
| Finals week  |  |   |

## Course Requirements

### Student grades will be determined by the following points:

- 120 Attendance and Participation: If you don't attend a class live you will need to write a short summary of the recording for 10 points each
- 100 Essay 1: Topics will be posted online. **Due September 14**
- 120 Essay 2: Topics will be posted online. **Due October 26**
- 120 Essay 3: Topics will be posted online. **Due December 7**
- 84 7 Discussion Posts of 250 words responding to a prompt and comments on other students posts ( 10 pts each plus 2 for a response to student)
- 60 Short Test 1:
- 60 Short Test 2:
- 60 Short Test 3:
- 60 Short Test 4:
- 180 Final Exam:
- 36 Cultural Event: Each student will attend 1 event outside the class connected in some way to the course material. This may include talks or presentations, events related to the religions we are studying, and many other possibilities. A more complete list can be found online. You should submit a 200-word report on each event online. **Due December 9**

Late papers may be penalized for each day they are late unless prior permission has been granted. You are required to keep a back-up copy of each essay you submit, either in a computer disk or in hard-copy, to be printed out and resubmitted upon my request. Any paper not resubmitted on request will be considered as not having been completed.

### The following scale will be used to calculate your final grade:

| Points  | Letter Grade |
|---------|--------------|
| 920-100 | A            |
| 900-919 | A-           |

|         |    |
|---------|----|
| 870-899 | B+ |
| 840-869 | B  |
| 800-839 | B- |
| 770-799 | C+ |
| 740-769 | C  |
| 700-739 | C- |
| 670-699 | D+ |
| 600-669 | D  |
| 0-599   | F  |

Failing grades are given to students who cheat, plagiarize, or otherwise engage in improper acknowledgment of sources in the preparation of papers or exams.

### **Using Blackboard Learn (BbL)**

Copies of the course syllabus and a full schedule of major assignments (readings, discussion points, quizzes, exams, final, paper assignments, recommended lectures and films) may be found in Blackboard Learn (BbL). You are responsible for regularly checking the online resources, which are accessed through the portal at <http://portal.csuchico.edu>. Course announcements will be sent on Blackboard email or appear as Blackboard announcements. Check this resource daily.

### **Students with Certified Disabilities:**

Please notify me of any special needs relating to your disability within the first two days of the course. I will make every effort possible to facilitate your success in this course. Please note that you may be required to show documentation of your disability. For more information on services available, please contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The ARC phone number is 898-5959. Visit the ARC website at <http://www.csuchico.edu/arc/>.

### **Academic Dishonesty:**

If there is evidence that you have been involved in any form of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism or cheating on exams), you will receive an "F" grade for the course, and a report will be provided to [Student Conduct, Rights, and Responsibilities](#) for further action. Be careful in all of your work (classroom presentations as well as written assignments) to properly cite your sources (including online materials). If you borrow the ideas of others in composing your written work, they must be cited; if you borrow the words of others, they must be enclosed in quotation marks and cited. If you have any doubts as to whether or not something needs to be cited, play it safe and cite it—or ask me about it. Any standard citation format (MLA, APA, etc.)

is fine. Ignorance of proper citation methods is not a legitimate excuse for violation of these policies. Please see the University's Academic Integrity Policy at <https://www.csuchico.edu/pres/em/2018/18-011.shtml> . The policy of the Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities is that anyone found to have blatantly cheated or plagiarized on an assignment will automatically fail the course and be referred to Student Conduct, Rights, and Responsibilities for further disciplinary action.

## University Policies and Campus Resources

### **Covid**

The CSU requires students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by September 30, 2021, unless you have an approved exemption. Currently, Chico State is requiring everyone on campus to wear an approved face covering in all indoor campus spaces. Since this is an Online Course, you do not need to wear a mask while participating, but please remember that if you go to campus to use the library, Student Union building or other resources, you will need to wear a mask. Policies and requirements regarding COVID-19 are subject to change pursuant to campus, local, state and/or federal guidelines.

### **Rigor at CSUC**

I seek to meet the requirements of a rigorous course as laid out in the document released by the Committee On Rigor at CSUC.

### **Dropping and Adding**

You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. found <http://www.csuchico.edu/catalog/>. You should be aware of the new deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes. Consult the CSU Chico website.

### **Academic integrity**

Students are expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at California State University, Chico, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to Student Conduct, Rights, and Responsibilities. The policy on academic integrity and other resources related to student conduct can be found at: <https://www.csuchico.edu/scrr/integrity.shtml>.

### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)**

Please notify me of any special need relating to your disability within the first two weeks of the semester. I will make every reasonable effort to facilitate your success in this course. Please note that you may be required to show documentation for your disability. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, call me, or email me. Please also contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) as this is the designated department responsible for approving and

coordinating reasonable accommodations and services for students with disabilities. ARC will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations.

## **Accessibility Resource Center**

[www.csuchico.edu/arc](http://www.csuchico.edu/arc)

530-898-5959

Student Services Center 170

## **Student Computing**

Computer labs for student use are located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Meriam Library 116, Meriam Library 450, and Tehama 131 and other places around campus

## **Student Services**

Student services are designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. Students can find support for services such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. Student services information can be found at:

<http://www.csuchico.edu/current-students/>.

## **Student Learning Center**

The mission of the Student Learning Center (SLC) is to provide services that will assist CSU, Chico students to become independent learners. The SLC prepares and supports students in their college course work by offering a variety of programs and resources to meet student needs. The SLC facilitates the academic transition and retention of students from high schools and community colleges by providing study strategy information, content subject tutoring, and supplemental instruction. The SLC is online at <http://www.csuchico.edu/slc/>. For some very informative videos (on topics such as: organizing and outlining your essay, writing made easy, mastering study skills, time management, efficient reading strategies, preventing test anxiety, avoiding procrastination, public speaking), see <http://rce.csuchico.edu/online/workshops/student-learning>.

## **The Writing Center**

**You may make an appointment with a writing tutor at the Student Learning Center (SSC 340, see website for hours, or by calling 530-898-6839).** The Writing Center information can be found online at <https://www.csuchico.edu/slc/writing-center/index.shtml> . **The Writing Center now offers online services for all students; submit your paper at least 3 days in advance.**