

**Course Title** CURE 2225 Introduction to Indian Religions  
Spring Term: 2023  
Lecture and Tutorial: Tuesday – 10.30am – 1.15pm  
Venue: LDS 214  
Lecturer: Steven Matthews - chandra08@hotmail.com  
TA: TBC

### **Course Description**

This course gives a broad introduction to the religions that originate in India - Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. These traditions are sometimes collectively referred to as ‘Dharmic Religions’ due to the similarities found between them. As Hinduism is the major religious tradition in India, the course will focus upon Hinduism, whilst also exploring the other traditions and their relationship with Hinduism in the historical, philosophical, cultural, social and religious contexts.

Islam, although not originating in India, played an important role in its religious, cultural and political history and development, and will therefore be explored in that context. The arrival of the British and their bringing of Christianity to India will also be discussed, as it too had a profound impact upon India and its cultural and religious development.

In addition to regular class ‘lectures’ the course includes learning through ‘fieldwork’ in Hong Kong. Students will have guided visits to Hindu, Jain and Sikh temples in Hong Kong, and where possible, visits to the homes of religious practitioners of these faith traditions. This will take place on 4 to 5 Saturdays during the term.

## **Learning Outcomes**

### Knowledge Outcomes

- (1) To be able to understand Indian religions in their historical settings and contemporary contexts.
- (2) To be able to understand the diversity and complexity of Indian religions.
- (3) To be able to engage in a critical analysis of these religions by the methods of the humanities and social sciences.
- (4) To have basic knowledge of the central themes and issues of the Indian subcontinent, especially with respect to the cultural and religious dimensions.

### Skills Outcomes

- (1) Communication and presentational (oral and written) skill.
- (2) Ability to gather, organize, deploy, synthesize and evaluate different types of evidence and information.
- (3) Language skill: proficiency in reading and writing with accurate referencing and clarity of expression.
- (4) Skills in cross-cultural understanding and intercultural literacy.

### Attitude Outcomes

- (1) Awareness of the plurality within religious traditions, the multi-faceted complexity of religions and of the issues of multiple and conflicting interpretations of symbols, texts and traditions.
- (2) Recognition of the contested and provisional nature of knowledge and understanding.
- (3) Tolerance of diverse positions and respect for other's views.
- (4) An ability to have a critical, yet sympathetic understanding and appreciation of religious traditions, particularly those to which one does not belong.

## Class Schedule

- (1) 5<sup>th</sup> Sept: Introduction to India and its Religions.
- (2) 12<sup>th</sup> Sept: An Overview of the Hindu/Vedic tradition
- (3) 19<sup>th</sup> Sept: The Hindu/Vedic tradition – Basic teachings
- (4) 26<sup>th</sup> Sept: Beginnings of Buddhism and Jainism
- (5) 10<sup>th</sup> Oct: Introduction to Jainism
- (6) 17<sup>th</sup> Oct: Sikhism, Origins, Development and Present
- (7) 24<sup>th</sup> Oct: Workshop – Good essay writing & referencing
- (8) 31<sup>st</sup> Oct: Arrival of Islam and the British/Christianity; Impact on India, its Culture and Religion
- (9) 7<sup>th</sup> Nov: Religions in India in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- (10 & 11) 14<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>th</sup> Nov: Classes replaced with visits to religious Sites. To take place on Saturdays
- (12) 28<sup>th</sup> Nov: Final Presentation

**Course requirement:** Those enrolling for the course must attend the 4-6 fieldtrips. Visits will take place on Saturdays that are convenient for the majority of students.

## Assessments

There will be three assignments

- 1) 1<sup>st</sup> essay - 1500-2000 words = 20%** - On a chosen topic from the course outline. (24<sup>th</sup> Oct)
- 2) Multiple choice questions = 35%** - Multiple choice questions from course content and book readings. Open book (6<sup>th</sup> Nov)
- 3) Final presentation = 45%** - Group report/presentation on a fieldtrip to one of the religious sites. This presentation should include three aspects, 1: observations from the field trip visit, 2: lecture content and 3: course readings. This is a group presentation, but students will be graded individually. (28<sup>th</sup> Nov)

## Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Attention is drawn to university policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed [declaration](#) that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For written assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

Students must submit their papers via VeriGuide <http://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/page/index.jsp> and hand in a print out of receipt and a signed Academic Honesty Declaration Statement.

### **Feedback for evaluation**

An end-of-term faculty wide course evaluation will be conducted in class. Students' comments and feedback on the course through the Discussion Forum within *Blackboard* or personal meeting with instructor and/ or research assistant are always welcomed.

### **Reading References:**

Choudhuri, Indra Nath & Choudhuri, Usha. *Hinduism: A Way of Life and Mode of Thought*. New Delhi: Niyogi Books. 2012.

Dundas, Paul. *The Jains*. London, New York: Routledge, 2002.

Glucklich, Ariel. *The Footsteps of Vishnu: A Historical Introduction to Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Hazra, Kanai Lal. *The Rise and Decline of Buddhism in India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1995.

Jakobsh, Doris R. *Sikhism*. Honolulu: Hawai'i University Press 2012.

Klostermaier, K.K. *A Survey of Hinduism*. State University of New York Press: Albany, 1994. (also as electronic resource)

Long, Jeffery D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. London: I.B.Tauris. 2009. (also as electronic resource)

Mittal, Sushil & Thursby, Gene. *The Hindu Worlds*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Mcleod, Hew. *Sikhism*. London: Penguin 1997.

Robb, Peter. *A History of India*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

SarDesai, S.R. *India: The Definitive History*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2008.