

World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

Teacher Name: Jeffrey Dodge

Humanities Discipline: Philosophy

Date: November 1, 2016

World Religion: Hinduism

Teaching Module Title: American Hindu Thought & Ethics

The Philosophy of Religion: Hinduism (PHIL 220)

Introduction to the Ethics of Hinduism (PHIL 102)

General Philosophy: Basic Hindu Thought (PHIL 101)

Teaching Module Goals:

1. (PHIL 220) Introduce students to Hindu thoughts on the religious Ideas and experiences, and how their immigration to America has affected them.
2. (PHIL 102) Introduce students to Hindu moral thinking in America.
3. (PHIL 101) Introduce students to Hindu philosophy, especially on religion, and an American expression of their belief systems.

Assigned Readings and/or Websites:

1. Bowker, *World Religions: The Great Faiths Explored and Explained, Hinduism*, pages 20-43.
2. Singh, Numrich, and Williams, *Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs in America*, pages 43-95.

Study Questions and/or Discussions Prompts for Students:

1. What has shaped Hindu thoughts and practices in America, and give brief explanation of how they have changed or adapted?
2. As Hindu peoples have immigrated to America, what events, beliefs, & practices shaped their identity? How have those beliefs and practices changed in coming to America?
3. What are the major works of Hindu sacred texts? Explain a major Hindu belief from each of those sections, and which groups/sects view a particular sacred text as the most important for them.
4. Which major deities do Hindus worship in America? How have worship practices changed for immigrants who practice Hinduism?
5. How has Hindu philosophy affected Americans' understandings of truth, the universe, and the meaning of life (PHIL 101, PHIL 220)?
6. Explain the difference between the popular American understanding of Hindu beliefs and actual Hindu beliefs, like *moksha* (release) and *karma* in moral law - ethics (PHIL 102, 220).
7. Are there parallels between Hindu practices in America and other religious communities? Explain similarities or differences.
8. List some of the major moral values of Hinduism, and explain their similarity or differences with American moral values (PHIL 102).
9. Sects (Groups – Vedic, Mother Goddess, Shiva, Vishnu) and castes (social status – priests, warriors, traders & farmers, menials & servants, outcasts, untouchables) have had an important impact on Hindu society in India. How has the experience of life in America changed Hindu understanding of caste/class structure? (PHIL 102, 220).
10. Explain missionary Hinduism. When did it begin in America? What are the basic beliefs that were taught? What is the connection with American Transcendentalism and how did it impact American society through writers such as Emerson, Thoreau, and other?
11. What is the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)? What is its origin and basic beliefs? Why were Americans attracted to it? How does it differ from later India immigrant Hinduism?

12. How has the purpose of worship and pilgrimages to shrines and temples changed for American Hinduism? What is the circuit of American temples?
13. How have the building of Hindu Temples, and celebrating Hindu festivals effected South Asian communities in America, and what has been the interaction with the surrounding American communities.

Written Assignments and/or other Assessment Instruments:

1. (PHIL 220) Black Board Journal entries (essay minimum 500 words each).
2. (PHIL 102) Black Board Discussion Board (minimum 500 words).
3. (PHIL 101) Black Board Discussion Board (minimum 500 words).

Additional Resource information:

1. Bhagavad Gita, Second, Third and Fourth Teaching (provide copies)
2. Upanishads, The Thirteenth Principle (provide copies)
3. Bina Gupta, "Bhagavad Gita as Duty and Virtue Ethics: Some Reflections", *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 2006 , JRE 34.3:373–395.
4. Lise Vail, "Unlike a Fool, He is not Defiled: Ascetic Purity and Ethics in the Samnyasa Upanisads. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 2002, JRE 30.3:373–397.
5. Arti Dhand, "The Dharma of Ethics, The Ethics of Dharma: Quizzing the Ideals of Hinduism," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 2002, JRE 30.3:347–372.
6. *Hinduism Today* (Newspaper in English) <http://www.hinduismtoday.com/>
7. *The Hindu* (India Newspaper in English) <http://www.thehindu.com/>
8. Will Sweetman, "HINDUISM" AND THE HISTORY OF "RELIGION": PROTESTANT PRESUPPOSITIONS IN THE CRITIQUE OF THE CONCEPT OF HINDUISM, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.