

World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

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Humanities Discipline: Introduction to Ethics (PHIL 102)

Date: November 3, 2016

World Religion: Hinduism

Teaching Module Title: Hindu Ethics

- Note: This module is intended as one lesson in a multi-lesson, auto-instructional unit on Religion & Ethics. (The unit is one of several Term Assignment options; others include Term Paper, Presentation, and Ethics at the Movies.) All of the content is accessed and completed on Blackboard.

Teaching Module Goals:

1. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the many different kinds of ethics generated by Hinduism's long and complicated history.
2. The student will explore the ethical implications of the caste system and a belief in reincarnation.

Assigned Readings and/or Websites:

PHIL 102 Introduction to Ethics required textbooks:

- Louis Pojman, *How Should We Live? An Introduction to Ethics*
 - pp 89-105 ("Religion and Ethics")

Other Books / Websites:

- John Bowker, *World Religions: The Great Faiths Explored & Explained*
 - pp 20-43 ("Hinduism")
- Peter Kreeft, *Ethics: A History of Moral Thought – Course Guide*
 - pp 81-83 – Lecture 13
- *Encyclopedia of Ethics*: [Hindu ethics](#)
- *Encyclopedia of Ethics*: [karma](#)
- *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*: [The Caste System](#)

Reading Quiz Questions:

1. **Fill-in-the-blank:** According to Bowker (p 21), "Hinduism is really a map of [ANSWER: *dharma*], of appropriate behavior, and thus of a path to a good rebirth and to *moksha*" [release].
2. **Multiple choice:** When comparing [Hindu ethics](#) with Western ethical systems, with which ethical system does *dharma* most closely align?
 - a. Divine Command Theory
 - b. Deontology [CORRECT ANSWER]
 - c. Consequentialism
 - d. Eudaimonism
3. **True/False:** The ethical content of the four major Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism) is really quite similar to that of ethics in Western religions. [ANSWER: True]
4. **Matching:** In Hinduism there are four *yogas* (deeds, or works, or ways of life), each of which has its own moral code, and each code is similar—purification from all kinds of evil and impurity and selfishness—but the psychological emphases differ. Match each yoga with its description. [CORRECT ANSWERS are shown]
 - a. Jnana yoga – Mental, intellectual path by which you learn to understand yourself differently and learn to detach your thoughts from your body and your ego and its desires.
 - b. Karma yoga – Path to Brahman through ordinary daily work and fulfilling your duties with a new motive, sheer obedience to your Karma or fate.
 - c. Bhatki yoga – Personal, emotional path of love and attachment to Brahman instead of yourself.
 - d. Raja yoga – A careful, difficult, experimental and detailed path that combines elements of all the others.

5. **Short answer:** What essential goal do all of the yoga paths have in common? [ANSWER: Detachment from ordinary selfishness and self-consciousness and attainment of unselfishness and un-self-consciousness]
6. **Multiple choice:** To which Christian biblical concept does karma best compare?
 - a. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart ..."
 - b. "By grace you are saved ..."
 - c. "Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." [CORRECT ANSWER]
 - d. "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment ..."
7. **Essay:** What are the primary differences between the Christian idea of the Incarnation and the Hindu idea of Reincarnation?
8. **Essay:** What is the caste system? How does Hinduism justify it? How has India's government tried to improve the condition of outcastes and untouchables? Explore some of the articles on the *Opposing Viewpoints in Context* website, and comment on your impressions of this issue.