

# Hinduism

PHIL 3620 • Fall 2025 • T–Th 11:00 to 12:20 • WH 317

Professor Kalmanson (here's [how to pronounce it](#)) • leah.kalmanson@unt.edu • Office hours and location provided in Canvas.

What is true? And what is illusion? Who is the "real" you? And what is just an act? *If* there is something true and real beyond life as we experience it now, then can we experience it, understand it, or reach it?

The philosophical, religious, spiritual, and scholarly traditions of the Indian subcontinent address themselves to such basic questions about life, the meaning of life, and the meaning of living well. In this class, we focus on the Vedic or Brahminic traditions known collectively as Hinduism today, alongside important contributions from the related traditions including Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism.

## Required Texts

- [Bhagavad Gita](#) (online source)
- Fleuckiger, *Everyday Hinduism*
- Jain, *Selling Yoga*
- Additional handouts provided via Canvas

## Goals

- Learn about the diverse cultural and linguistic sources that comprise Hindu lineages.
- Study in depth formative philosophical conversations among early Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Sikh thinkers.
- Become informed about contemporary Hindu beliefs and practices.

## Outcomes

- Familiarity with key primary sources in historical, philosophical, and cultural context.
- Increased religious fluency, including a facility with some terms in the primary source languages.
- Preparedness to engage intelligently on issues of religious diversity outside the classroom.

*All class goals, assignments, and policies are designed to enhance your learning experience in this course. You are expected to engage the class material with active interest, thoughtful attention, and critical reflectiveness. If you are having trouble engaging in this course, you should meet with me.*

## Grades

Letter grades are assigned as follows: F = 54.99% or below, D = 55–69.99%, C = 70–79.99%, B = 80–89.99%, A = 90–100%. All assignments are worth 100 points. They are distributed into weighted categories in the gradebook as follows:

**Reading Quizzes / 40%** The homework readings are the backbone of the course—they are the foundation for everything else that we learn. Frequent reading quizzes help to ensure that you complete the readings *before* class. **All quizzes are posted at least a week before the due date and are due in Canvas before class starts.**

(Quizzes are open book and open note, you can work on them together, and you can redo them repeatedly until you get 100%. Think of them more like reading guides—the point is just to learn the material.)

**Participation and Attendance / 20%** I will give you occasional in-class and/or post-class review, reflection, and engagement activities. These may include discussion boards, journaling assignments, short presentations, and other creative forms of engagement (like drawing). Your attendance grade is included in the participation category.

**Exams / 30%** You will take two **in-class essay exams** that addresses your capacity to summarize, explain, analyze, compare and contrast, or otherwise engage the terms, themes, questions, and arguments we encounter in the readings. **Note: If you have at least a 90% attendance grade at the end of the semester, you may skip the final exam.**

**Final Project / 10%** You will complete a final project that will involve **creating a short film, video essay, or otherwise creatively produced recorded presentation.**

### Attendance Policies

Your presence is valued and your absence is noted. Missing class may hinder your ability to receive full credit for quizzes and participation activities. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what we covered and to stay informed about upcoming assignments.

- **Your attendance grade is recorded as a percentage of classes attended and averaged into your participation score, along with other participation activities.**
- **There are no excused absences. However, you may make up absences by attending other events in the Philosophy and Religion Department, when available.**
- **If you have at least a 90% attendance grade at the end of the semester, you may skip the final exam.**

(Note, there are no excused absences, because you can miss three classes and still have a 90% attendance grade at the end of the semester, and this counts for only a portion of your participation score. You would need to miss a lot of class before this policy would affect your course grade.)

### Preparation Policies

You are responsible for attending all class sessions and coming to class prepared, having read (or watched) the assigned material, taken time to reflect on it, completed assigned study questions (if any), and in general having gathered your thoughts for class discussion. You are responsible for being an active, not a passive, reader. This means paying attention to what you are reading, looking up vocabulary that you don't know, and taking notes as you read, especially when you have questions. You are asked to invest your time in this class—not because I am making you, or because I am giving you a grade, but because you are here in college to do valuable and meaningful things.

### **Participation Policies**

Together, we foster a culture of openness and understanding in the classroom. It is our responsibility, together, to make sure that everyone feels comfortable speaking in class, raising questions, and having conversations. All students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings and having reflected on topics for class discussion. Your participation will be assessed by short in-class or post-class review and reflection activities assigned on a regular basis. Your participation will be also assessed by the attention that you pay to your peers. When your peers are speaking, you are expected to listen, be engaged, and respond where relevant. I reserve the right to lower your course grade by up to one full letter grade, if your lack of participation in class becomes a persistent problem.

### **Late Assignment Policies**

**Quizzes, discussions, and other assignments:** Even if you need to miss class, you can still plan ahead to complete your reading quizzes and other assignments on time. Canvas automatically deducts 5% per day for each day an assignment is late until the deductions equal 70% of the assignment's point value. You can continue to make up late assignments for 70% credit thereafter. **There are no exceptions to this policy.**

(Note, there are no exceptions to this policy, because you can *routinely* be *one* or *two* days late and still be making 95% and 90% on your assignments and maintaining an A-average for the course. You would have to be three+ days late on numerous occasions before this policy would affect your course grade.)

**Exams:** If you need to reschedule an exam, let me know in advance. I will work with you to ahead of time to accommodate your schedule, but I will not hold a make-up exam if you miss the test without warning.

### **Extra Credit Policies**

There is no guarantee of extra credit in this class. You may make up absences by attending other events in the Philosophy and Religion Department, when available. This can help improve your participation score and/or maintain your eligibility to skip the final exam.

### **Integrity Policies**

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic zero. Students who plagiarize or otherwise violate UNT's policies on academic integrity may also, at my discretion, be referred to the administration for disciplinary action. Students are responsible for reading, understanding, and knowing UNT's Academic Integrity Policy that can be found at: <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>. As stated there: "According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University."

## **Technology Policies**

Do not EVER use your computer, cell phone, or tablet in class for social media, texting, or any other communications not relevant to class activities. You may use these to take notes, or view class readings, or to utilize software or technologies that meet your learning needs.

**I reserve the right to lower your course grade by one full letter grade, if you persistently violate the classroom technology policy.**

There are no approved uses of any AI, such as ChatGPT, or any other software or tool used to generate written content on your behalf or to check or revise content you have written.

**Any assignment completed with the help of AI will be treated as a case of plagiarism and be subject to the integrity policies above.**

## **Accommodations**

I am committed to making it possible for all student in this class to achieve their learning goals, whatever these may be. Please share with me any information that will help me do this, including any circumstances for which you may need specific accommodations. Per the UNT Office of Disability Access: "The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323."

## **Emergency Notification & Procedures**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

In the event of an emergency, the UNT Office of Emergency Management and Safety Services has a [table for a variety of situations](#), including active shooter, inclement weather, medical emergencies, etc. You may wish to bookmark above site, as well as the [Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness webpage](#) with a list of contacts for a variety of emergency situations.

## Schedule

The schedule below is subject to change. Please listen in class regarding schedule changes.

### Course schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Readings & Quizzes
Week 1	8/19	Welcome to class!	
	8/21	Basic overview	Everyday Hinduism, Intro & Ch. 1
Week 2	8/26	Bhagavad Gītā	Gītā 1–6
	8/28	Sāṃkhya philosophy	Gītā 7–12
Week 3	9/2		Gītā 13–18
	9/4	Vedic philosophy	Maitreyi Dialogue
Week 4	9/9	Oral and visual narratives	Everyday Hinduism, Ch. 2
	9/11	Rāmāyaṇa	
Week 5	9/16	Advaita Vedanta	Experiential Dimensions of Advaita Vedanta Chs. 1, 2, and 4 (handout)
	9/18		Experiential Dimensions of Advaita Vedanta Chs. 7 and 8 (handout)
Week 6	9/23	Contemporary Sāṃkhya, Vedanta, and Bhakti	
	9/25		Everyday Hinduism Ch. 3–4
Week 7	9/30		Pai, "Re-enchantment" (handout)

	10/2		Everyday Hinduism Ch. 5–6
Week 8	10/7		Everyday Hinduism Ch. 7–8
	10/9	Review & discussion	
Week 9	10/14	Midterm exam	
	10/16	Dialogue with Buddhism	Holder, Ch. 7 and 10 (handouts)
Week 10	10/21	Dialogue with Buddhism	Holder, Ch. 4 (handouts)
	10/23	Class guest!	
Week 11	10/28	Dialogue with Jainism	TBA (online)
	10/30	Dialogue with Jainism	TBA (online)
Week 12	11/4	Dialogue with Sikhism	TBA
	11/6	Dialogue with Sikhism	TBA
Week 13	11/11	Inter-religious dialogue	Kopf, Introduction (handout)
	11/13	Class guest!	Kopf, assigned chapter (handout)
Week 14	11/18		Selling Yoga, Preface and 1
	11/20		Selling Yoga 2-3
Week 15	Break		
Week 16	12/2		Selling Yoga, 4-5
	12/4		Selling Yoga 6 + Conclusion
Week 17	12/9	Final Exam 10:30-12:30	