

Hindu Scriptures

Religion: 840:368-01 Spring 2015

T-Th 2:50-4:10

Murray Hall 301 (CAC)

Instructor: Paul H. Sherbow

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Office Hours: TBA

Course Description:

The course will offer a close reading of select chapters of the popular and significant *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, better known as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, focusing on issues arising from the text, and with reference to the 17th century commentary of Viśvanātha Cakravartī, prominent scholar-saint of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school. Supplementary passages from the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the *Brahma-sūtra*, the *Yoga-sūtra*, and other texts referred to in the commentary, will enrich our understanding of the philosophical and religious background of the work as well as important issues raised. Subjects of focus include: the nature of the Absolute Truth (*parama-satyam*); the highest means of practice (*sādhana*) to realize that Truth; the ultimate goal (*puruṣārtha*) of human life; comparative evaluation of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* & *bhakti*; the process of purification and realization; description of the primary *avatāras* of Nārāyaṇa; the process of yogic perfection (*siddhi*); the process of primary creation (*sarga*), the appearance of Kṛṣṇa, etc.

Course Prerequisites:

None.

Course Requirements:

Mid-term and final examinations and a final paper (8-10 pgs) due the last day of class. The final paper gives students an opportunity to probe and research in more detail aspects of material covered in the course.

Grading:

The mid-term will account for 30% of the total grade, the final examination 30%, the final paper 30%, and class attendance and participation 10%. Students will be called upon in class to answer questions pertaining to the week's reading. **No** make-ups for missed exams will be given without valid medical proof or a signed letter from a student dean.

A = 100-90 B+ = 89-87; B = 86-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-70; D = 69-65; F = 64 and below.

Please note that outstanding class participation can make all the difference between grades.

Required Readings:

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata translation by Bhanu Swami – posted on SAKAI

Occasional supplementary texts will be provided by the instructor.

Course Schedule

1 Tu / Jan 20

Introduction to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* - its place in the context of Brahmanical literature.

2 Th / Jan 22

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 1- Three introductory verses describing the principles of *sambandha* or relationship = the Absolute Truth; *abhidheya* or means = *bhakti*; and *prayojana* or end = love of God (*prema*).

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 1-52

3 Tu / Jan 27

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 1- The great sacrifice of the Sages at Naimiṣāraṇya; their Six Questions

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 53-70

4 Th / Jan 29

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 2 – the great sage Śukadeva; the highest *dharma & bhakti*; *bhakti* as the source of *jñāna & vairāgya*; *varṇāśrama & bhakti*; the three expressions of the Absolute: *Brahman, Paramātmā & Bhagavān*.

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 71-88

5 Tu / Feb 3

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 2 – the process of purification and realization

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 88-125

6 Th / Feb 5

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 3 – Description of the principal descents (*avatāra*) of Nārāyaṇa.

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 127-166

7 Tu / Feb 10

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 4 – Despondency of Vyāsa; Appearance of Nārada

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 167-183

8 Th / Feb 12

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 5 – Dialogue of Nārada & Vyāsa

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 185-230

9 Tu / Feb 17

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 6 – Nārada achieves perfection (*siddhi*)

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 231-257

10 Th / Feb 19

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 7 – the *samādhi* of Vyāsa and vision of the Absolute.

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 259-293

11 Tu / Feb 24

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto I, Chapter 8 – The prayers of Queen Kuntī

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 295-326

12 Th / Feb 26

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 1- Description of the Universal Form (*Virāḍ-rūpa*)

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 601-629

13 Tu / Mar 3

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 2 – Meditation on the Puruṣa in the Heart

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 631-659

14 Th / Mar 5

Mid-term Examination

15 Tu / Mar 10

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 3 – Worship of Devatās

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 663-684

Yoga-sūtras of Patañjali 2.28-30

16 Th / Mar 12

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 4 – Sukadeva’s praise of Bhagavān

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 685-702

17 Tu / Mar 24

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 5 – the Primary Creation (*sarga*)

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 703-726

18 Th / Mar 26

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 6 – 2nd Description of the Universal Form

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 727-759

19 Tu / Mar 31

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 7 – Conversation between Brahmā & Nārada

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 761-809

20 Th / April 2

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 8 – Parīkṣit’s Questions

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 811-828

21 Tu / April 7

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 9 – the Four-verse *Bhāgavata* (*Catuḥ-ślokī Bhāgavata*)

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 829-885

22 Th / April 9

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto II, Chapter 10 – Ten Characteristics of a *Purāṇa*; 3rd Description of the Universal Form (*Virāḍ-rūpa*)

Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 887-923

23 Tu / April 14

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto VII, Chapters 1-2 – Impartiality of the Lord; Story of Prahlāda
Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 387-438

24 Th / April 16

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto VII, Chapters 3-4 – the Enmity of Hiraṇyakaśipu
Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 439-468

25 Tu / April 21

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto VII, Chapters 5-7
Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 469-530

26 Th / April 23

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto VII, Chapters 8-9 – Nṛsimhadeva and Prahlāda
Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 531-592

27 Tu / April 28

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto VII, Chapter 10 – Prayers of Prahlāda
Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 593-617

28 Th / April 30

Śrīmad-Bhāgavata, Canto X, Chapters 1-2 – The appearance of Kṛṣṇa
Reading: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavata* (Bhanu Swami): pp. 1-31

30 Tu / May 4

Last Class – *Papers Due*