

Bhagavad Gita
Religion 840: 358 Spring 2017
Wed 4th period (1.10-2.30)
Rutgers Academic Bldg # 2225, College Ave Campus
Instructor: Edwin Bryant.

Tel: x 23289. E-mail: <edbryant@rci.rutgers.edu>

Office Hours: Tue 11.30-12.30, Loree 108, Douglass Campus

The primary purpose of this course is to carefully study the Gita in its entirety. Additional readings on the Gita will discuss its reception in the Western world, and examine the background and orientations of some of its principal modern Hindu commentators. Consequently, we should gain some sense of the liberties taken by exegetes in the utilization of this very important text for the promotion of their various philosophical or social, etc, points of view.

Course requirements: All assigned reading. Students are expected to read the entire chapter assigned for each particular week, and be prepared to discuss this in class. A mid-term exam (20% of the total grade), final exam (30%), and term paper (8-10 pgs, 40%) due the last day of class. In addition to this, students will be assigned class presentations on the secondary reading, and their attendance record and overall performance in class will factor into the remaining 10% of the grade. **No make-ups for missed exams will be given without valid medical proof or a signed letter from a student dean.**

The written exams will consist of short answer questions testing the students' mastery over the information covered in the course, as well as mini-essay questions testing their insights and more in-depth understanding of the material. Essential Sanskrit terms will also be on the exams. The final paper gives students an opportunity to probe and research in more detail any particular aspect of 'Hinduism' connected or connectable to the Gita that has captured their interest.

Grading:

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 Course Books:

Smith, John.D. *The Mahabharata*. London: Penguin, 2009.

Sharpe, Eric. *The Universal Gita*. La Salle: Open Court Publishing, 1985.

Davis, Richard *The Bhagavad Gita: a Bibliography* Princeton, 2014

Hridayananda Dasa Gosvami, *A Comprehensive Guide to Bhagavad Gita*
Krishna West
Inc, 2016.

Tue Jan 17th: Introduction

Thur Jan 19th: Mahabharata

Readings: Mahabharata, 1-2

Tue Jan 24th: Mahabharata

Readings: Mahabharata, 3-4.

Thur Jan 26th: Mahabharata

Readings: Mahabharata, 5-6.

Tue Jan 31st Mahabharata

Readings: Mahabharata, 7-8

Thur Feb 2nd : Mahabharata

Readings: Mahabharata, 9-12.

Tue Feb 7th: Mahabharata

Readings: Mahabharata, 13-18.

Thur Feb 9th Bhagavad Gita.

Readings: Sharpe, Introduction and Chap I: "The First Translation." pp ix - 15.

Comprehensive Guide Part I: Introduction 3; Historical Context 4; The Origins of the
Gītā 6

Tue Feb 14th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Sharpe, Chap II: "Romantics and Transcendentalists." 15-31.

Comprehensive Guide Part II: Individual Eternal Persons (Puruṣa) 9

Thur Feb 16th: Bhagavad Gita.

Readings: Sharpe, Chap III: "Missionaries and Mystics." pp. 32-46.

Comprehensive Guide Part III: Nature's Three Modes (Guṇa) 12

Tue Feb 21st: Bhagavad Gita.

Readings: Sharpe, Chap IV: "Theories of Origins." pp. 47-63.

Comprehensive Guide: Part IV: Action, Reaction, Bondage (Karma) 17

Thur Feb 23rd: Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Sharpe, Chap V: "Renaissance, Radicalism and Theosophy." pp. 67-102

Comprehensive Guide: Part V: Sacrifice or Offering (Yajña) 21

Tues Feb 28th: Bhagavad Gita.

Readings: Sharpe, Chap VI: "Gandhi's Gita." pp. 103-123.

Comprehensive Guide: Part VI: God (Kṛṣṇa) 33; Features of God 33;

God's Expansive

Being (Vibhuti) 37; The Supreme Person (Parama-Puruṣa) 45;
Terms Reserved for Souls; (Bhūta, Jīva, Dehī) 48; Kṛṣṇa's Original
Form (Rūpa) 52

Thur March 2nd: Bhagavad Gita.

Readings: Sharpe, Chap VII: " Rudolf Otto, J.W. Hauer and T.S. Eliot." pp. 123-135.

Comprehensive Guide Part VII: Yoga 59; The Power of Reason (Buddhi) 59

Spiritual Practice (Yoga) 64; Equality (Samatvam) 65; Renunciation (Sannyāsa) 70

Tues March 7th: Bhagavad Gita.

Readings: Sharpe, Chap VIII: " The Gita and the Counter-Culture." pp. 136-147.

Comprehensive Guide: Part VIII: Karma-yoga (Action-Yoga) 75; Arjuna's Problem 75

The Need for Action 76; Action as Yoga and Yajña 76; Career as Yoga 78; Inaction in Action 80

Thur March 9th: Mid-Term Exam.

Tue March 14th & Thur March 16th: Spring Break

Tue March 21st: Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Sharpe, Chap IX: "Ethical Monotheism and Social Caste." pp. 148-175.

Comprehensive Guide: Part IX: Jñāna-yoga (Knowledge-Yoga) 84;
Knowledge as a

Spiritual Path 84; True Principles of Life (Tattva) 85; Scripture

(Veda, Çästra, Gétä) 89; Spiritual Teachers 93; Sincere Students 97; Seeing the Truth (DârQan) 98; Knowledge that Liberates 101; The Knowledge-Offering (Jiäna-yajïa) 102

Thur March 23rd: Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Davis, Chap 1: “The Bhagavad Gita in the Time of its Composition.”

Comprehensive Guide: Part X: Dhyäna-yoga (Meditation-Yoga) 105; Meditation as

Spiritual Practice 105; Meditation as Spiritual Offering 108

Tues March 28th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Davis, Chap 2 “Krishna and His Gita in Medieval India.”

Comprehensive Guide: Part XI: Bhakti-yoga (The Yoga of Devotion) 109; Hierarchy of

Yogas and Yogîs 109; Knowledge of K@ßña 110; How to Attain K@ßña 114

Thur March 30th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Davis, Chap 3 “Passages from India.”

Comprehensive Guide: Part XII: Mukti (Liberation) 126; Negative Liberation

(Freedom from) 126; Positive Liberation (Freedom to) 128;

Brahman, the Supreme Imperishable 133; Reaching K@ßña 137

Tues April 4th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Davis, Chap 4 “ Krishna, The Gita and the Indian Nation.”

Comprehensive Guide: Part XIII: Conclusion 145,

Thur April 6th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Davis, Chap 5 “Modern Gita Translations.”

Tues April 11th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings: Davis, Chap 6 “ The Bhagavad Gita in Great Time.”

Thur April 13th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings:

Tues April 18th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings:

Thur April 20th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings:

Tues April 25th: Bhagavad Gita

Readings:

Thur April 27th: Bhagavad Gita All Papers Due;

Readings:

Reflections; Student Paper Presentations.

Final exam, May 5, 8:00-11:00 a.m.