



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION  
COURSE OUTLINE  
Winter 2023**

**COURSE NUMBER:** RELS 709

**COURSE NAME:** Critical Discourses in the Study of Religion: Narrative Hindu Literature

**CLASSROOM LOCATION:** SS 527

**CLASS DAYS & TIMES:** Mondays 2-4:45pm

**INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT INCLUDING UCALGARY EMAIL & PHONE:**

Dr. Elizabeth Rohlman

[elizabeth.rohlman@ucalgary.ca](mailto:elizabeth.rohlman@ucalgary.ca)

**OFFICE HOURS:**

By appointment

**INSTRUCTOR EMAIL POLICY:**

Students should email the instructor and from their ucalgary email accounts.

Students can expect email replies on week days within 72 hours of receipt of the initial email. Email replies may come from either the instructor or the teaching assistant.

**COURSE CALENDAR STATEMENT:**

Selected topics on critical discourses in the study of religion.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This is an upper-level survey theories of narrative and their employment in the discipline of Religious Studies. As our case study, we will focus on the classical narrative literature of the Hindu tradition as preserved in Sanskrit (we will read these texts in English translation). Focusing on the genres of *katha* (fable), *itihasa* (epic), and *purana* (myth), we will examine the ways in which narrative conveys religious and moral value. The interpretation of narrative through the lenses of both classical Indian and contemporary western literary theories will be a central concern of the class. By the end of this course, students will develop a familiarity with the literary corpus of classical Hindu narrative and a detailed understanding of a few seminal narrative texts. In addition, students will be well-versed in the critical questions and issues pertaining to the role of narrative literature in religious culture. At the graduate level, we will also consider a variety of narrative theories and how they may relate to our course subject and to each students' research interests.

**\*COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students will have a strong familiarity with classical texts of the Hindu narrative genres, particularly those texts associated with the god Krishna. They will also have an advanced understanding of some theoretical frames used to interpret these texts in religious studies.

**\*LEARNING RESOURCES**

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

1. Umberto Eco, *"Six Walks in the Fictional Woods"* (Harvard University Press, 1992)
2. J.D. Smith, translator, *"Mahabharata."* (Penguin, 2009)
3. Simon Brodbeck, translator, *"Krishna's Lineage: The Harivamsa of Vyasa's Mahaharata."* (Oxford University Press, 2019).
4. Edwin Bryant, translator, *"Krishna: The Beautiful Legend of God."* (Penguin, 2004)
5. *"On Narrative."* (University of Chicago Press, 1981)\*

\*Note: this book is optional for undergrads but required for grad students. It was initially a special edition of the journal *Critical Inquiry* in 1980, so you can also access the chapters for free through the TFDL if you don't want a physical copy of the book.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

A syllabus with a schedule of classes will be distributed on the first day of class.

**\*EXAMINATIONS**

There is no registrar-scheduled exam for this course.

**\*ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS**

1. **Participation (30%):** Regular class attendance and thorough, thoughtful reading of assigned texts are essential to a successful seminar. Participation grades will be determined by the quality of each student's daily preparedness and contributions to regular class discussions.
2. **Presentations (15% x 2):** Each student will sign up for two classes to give oral presentations on the week's readings and lead discussion. Students may work individually or with a partner on their presentations. Guidelines on expectations for presentations will be distributed in class.
3. **Final Paper (40%):** Students will submit a research paper of 20-25 pages on a topic of their choice (related to the course content, of course). Further details on the requirements for the final paper will be distributed and discussed in class. The research paper is a project in which students will engage throughout the semester. To this end, students will be asked to submit a term-paper research proposal on Monday, February 27 \*and\* to schedule an appointment to discuss their research proposal with the instructor during the week of February 27-March 3. Failure to submit the research proposal or schedule an appointment with the instructor will result in a 15-point reduction in the student's final paper grade. The final paper is due April 18 by 11:59 PM and should be submitted to the D2L drop box.

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)	Required pass/fail
Varying	Class Presentations (2)	15% x 2 (30% total)	No
Ongoing	Participation	30%	No
April 17	Final Paper	40%	No

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**MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS\***

As per the University Calendar, students must contact the instructor within 48 hours of a missed assignment. It is always preferable to make arrangements for extensions or missed assignments in advance, however.

**\*GRADING**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1.html>.

A letter grade will be assigned to each component of the course according to the University's Graduate Studies Calendar 2019-2020:

A+	4.0	Outstanding
A	4.0	Excellent – superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.7	Very good performance
B+	3.3	Good performance
B	3.0	Satisfactory performance Note: The grade point value (3.0) associated with this grade is the minimum acceptable average that a graduate student must maintain throughout the program as computed at the end of each registration anniversary year of the program.
B-	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Note: A student who receives a B- or lower in two or more courses will be required to withdraw regardless of their grade point average unless the program recommends otherwise. Individual programs may require a higher minimum passing grade.
C+	2.3	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. A student who receives a grade of F will normally be required to withdraw unless the program recommends otherwise.
C	2.0	
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1.0	
F	0.0	

**EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING**

All written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Learning Commons. For further information, please refer to the official online University of Calgary

Calendar, Academic Regulations, E. Course Information, E.2: Writing Across the Curriculum:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

### **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure please visit:

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-procedure.pdf>

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity Website at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>.

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMODATION**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The Student Accommodations policy is available at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/access/prospective-students/academic-accommodations>.

Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf>). Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than Disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

### **INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY**

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

### **COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION**

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

### **MEDIA RECORDING (if applicable)**

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: [https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf)

#### Media recording for lesson capture

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Although the recording device will be fixed on the Instructor, in the event that incidental student participation is recorded, the instructor will ensure that any identifiable content (video or audio) is masked, or will seek consent to include the identifiable student content to making the content available on University approved platforms.

#### Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices

The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in the course may be inadvertently captured. These recordings will be used for instructor self-assessment only and will not be used for any other purpose.

#### Media recording for the assessment of student learning

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

### **SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY**

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>