

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2019

<b>Course</b>	RELS 373 Spirit Rebels and Global Mavericks: An Introduction to Sikhism
<b>Time</b>	TR 12:30-13:45
<b>Instructor</b>	Harjeet Singh Grewal
<b>Office Hours</b>	Thursday 13:50-14:50 or By Appointment on Skype
<b>Office</b>	Social Sciences Rm. 542
<b>E-mail</b>	harjeet.grewal@ucalgary.ca

**Required Text(s):**

(1) *Sikhism: A Guide for the Perplexed*

Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair  
Bloomsbury Academic, 2013  
ISBN: 1441102310

(2) *The Sikhs of the Punjab.*

Grewal, J.S.  
Cambridge, 2003.  
ISBN: 0521637643

**Optional Text(s):**

Oberoi, Harjot Singh. *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Shackle, Christopher and Arvind-pal Singh Mandair. *Teachings of the Sikh Gurus: Selections from the Sikh Scriptures.* New York: Routledge, 2005.

Singh, Nikky-Guninder Kaur. *Sikhism: An Introduction.* London: I.B. Taurus, 2011.

**Course Description:**

This course introduces students to the Sikh tradition as a living undulating cultural system shaped by keystone texts and contingent historical events. Student learn about how these texts and events shape cultural and intellectual approaches to Sikhism but also how the community enfranchises itself through a network of texts and collective experience. The topic is approached in a global context wherein the Sikh tradition has functioned since the 1900s.

Sikhism is one of the world's youngest religions and many of its practitioners are highly visible. Sikhs have overcome successive forms of oppression and today are a vibrant and expanding community, transplanting themselves into global networks of democratic multiculturalism. *Gursikhī* is one of the latest systems of Philosophical Oneness that has implications for diversity, pluralism,

and individual experience of the world for all of humanity. In Canada, Sikhs use both these ideas since the beginning of their settlement history. In so doing, Sikhs have actively diversified Canadian society, culture, and politics. Migration, therefore, provides a context to learn about Sikhism from its beginnings in the Panjab region of South Asia to today.

The course begins with a survey of Sikh conceptual frameworks and understandings about religious phenomenon. Next, we consider practices, and rituals that help construct diverse forms of religious space. Student will also learn a brief history of the Sikh tradition from the lineage of Ten Sikh-Gurus to the contemporary global sphere that Sikh operate in. In doing so, we will connect contingent events to political, tribal, ethno-national, and religious trajectories that influence the construction of “Sikhism.” The course therefore allows students to critically consider how translation, pragmatic politics, and lived experience works to codify and systematize religious identity in modernity to liberate *and* debilitate religious minorities in secular democracies

**Online elements for this course:  
(if any)**

This course uses D2L and students should familiarize themselves with this portal.

Readings that are not from the required texts will be accessed through D2L.

Student will submit reflections on the assigned readings following class discussions using Drop-Box in D2L.

Students may occasionally be asked survey questions about the assigned readings (this will not be graded but used to facilitate discussion and learning).

**Core Competencies:**

This course introduces students to key conceptual frameworks and historical moments in the history of the Sikh tradition that continue to shape it everywhere in the world that Sikhs live.

Students will learn to critically and ethically assess religious phenomenon and texts from the Sikh tradition in the context of minority religious culture and experiences using a “Critical Religions” approach.

Students will develop analytical capacity by engaging and assessing scholarly readings during discussions on Sikh tradition (*Gursikhī*) by identifying key arguments, consider how they are supported, and think about the larger implications or effects of scholarly writing.

**Course Requirements:**

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)	Required pass/fail
<b>*There are no tests or assignments before the add/drop date</b>			

Once during semester, minimum	Facilitate Discussion & Participate in Discussion	10%	
Recurring with every discussion period	Participate in Discussion	15%	
Recurring with every discussion period	Individual Reflection following discussion	20%	
October 31	Mid-term Examination	25%	
Registrar Scheduled	Final Examination	30%	

### Grading

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme, usually used within the Department of Classics and Religion:

A+	100 - 96	A	95 - 90	A-	89 - 85
B+	84 - 80	B	79 - 75	B-	74 - 70
C+	69 - 65	C	64 - 60	C-	59 - 55
D+	54 - 53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

### Policy with regard to missed assignments/assessments:

- Late assignments will be docked one letter grade for each day they are late.
- Assignments will not be accepted three days after the due date without earlier notification and discussion about conflicts.
- Exams must be rescheduled two weeks prior to the schedule examination date.

### Expectations for student conduct in this course:

Timely regular attendance, participation in discussion, and completion of course assessments. Adherence to the Electronic Device Policy. Respectful attitude toward alternate perspectives. Ensuring safe, open, and hospitable classroom environment for fellow classmates to express opinions and ask questions during class.

#### *Facilitating & Participating in Discussion –*

As the readings forms a central aspect of this course, students will facilitate class discussion by introducing the reading and providing some commentary or questions related to the reading. Participation will assess the extent to which students who are not facilitator(s) participate and engage in discussion.

Discussion will provide an open, congenial, and safe space for critical reflection. In light of this, the students should familiarize themselves with the discussion guidelines.

**Discussion Guidelines:**

- Focus discussion on the reading. Support your statements with evidence or provide a rationale for your analysis. Feel free to refer to page numbers and quote the text.
- Discussion is meant to facilitate learning; it is not for debating. Comment to share information by bringing out relevant aspects of readings, fundamental concepts mentioned, or strategies used for analysis and reflection.
- Respect the right of fellow participants to disagree with perspective you might favor.
- Disagree with, challenge, or criticize the idea and not the person.
- Be courteous. Use attentive body language and acknowledge what peers are saying.
- Avoid being speculative and inflammatory.
- Pay attention and listen carefully to who is expressing a perspective.
- Do not interrupt speakers.
- Do not engage in private conversations when someone is speaking.
- Include one another in the discussion. Try to be mindful of the amount of time you are spending talking. If it is too much, hold back to let others speak. If it is too little, try to find an opportune moment to enter the discussion.
- Do not make assumptions about one another or generalize about social groups they may or may not belong to. Do not ask individuals to speak for a perceived social group.

**Electronic Device Policy:**

Students will be able to use their laptops to take notes and to access readings during discussion sessions.

Out of respect for classmates and to reduce distraction, it will be expected that students refrain from accessing websites or applications that are not necessary for lecture or discussion.

**Syllabus:**

A complete syllabus will be made available the first week of class.

**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar (section K, which can be found here: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>). If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor, or librarian staff.

**Student Accommodations**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; 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/).

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.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf).

## **Desire 2 Learn (D2L) Help**

Go to <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students> for Student Help and FAQ's about D2L. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are also available on this website.

## **Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources**

- For program planning and advice, students in the Faculty of Arts will contact The Arts Students' Centre (ASC). Drop in at SS102, call at 403-220-3580 or email at [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Block.

## **Freedom of Information and Privacy**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP): [https://www.ucalgary.ca/hr/freedom\\_of\\_information\\_and\\_protection\\_of\\_privacy](https://www.ucalgary.ca/hr/freedom_of_information_and_protection_of_privacy)

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act indicates that assignments given by you to your course instructor will remain confidential unless otherwise stated before submission. The assignment cannot be returned to anyone else without your express permission. Similarly, any information about yourself that you share with your course instructor will not be given to anyone else without your permission. As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number on each subsequent page.

## **Student Ombudsperson and Students' Union Representative**

The Student Ombuds Office provides independent, impartial and confidential support for students who require assistance and advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/> for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at [arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca).

## **Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point**

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at [www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints). Please check this website and not the nearest assembly point for this course.

## **Safewalk**

The Safewalk program provides volunteers to walk students safely to their destination anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). This service is free and available to students, staff and campus visitors 24 hrs/day, 365 days a year. Call 403-220-5333 or use one of the Help phones located throughout campus to request a walk.

**Health and Wellness**

There are services available to students to help with physical and mental health, including the SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>.

Learn more about the Campus Mental Health Strategy here: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.

**Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration**

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided and the student should provide the documentation they feel best supports their case. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>.

## Lecture Topics and Reading Schedule:

Week and Themes	Class Dates	Lecture Topic Covered	Readings for Discussion
1 General Scope of Course	Sept. 5	Introduction: Punjab and Popular Religion	No Readings
		Politics of Religion-Making: Brief History of an Idea of "Religion"	SGFP pp.1-7; Oberoi pp.1-19
2 Textuality, Language, Thought	Sept. 10	Religion-making & Sikhism	Oberoi pp. 19-35
	Sept. 12	Gursikhī: Central Texts and Textuality in Sikhism	TSG pp. xi – xxvi
3 The Gurū Lineage Part I	Sept. 17	Historicizing the Sikh Religion: Development and Community Formation	Grewal. <i>TSP</i> . "Introduction" pp. 1-8; and, "Turko-Afghan Rule" pp. 9-27
	Sept. 19	Gurū Nānak to Gurū Arjan	<i>SGFP</i> pp. 17-27 <i>TSP</i> 1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph of p. 42 and pp.47-57 Singh Pashaura (2006). <i>The Life and Work of Guru Arjan</i> . pp. 64-83
4 The Gurū Lineage Part II	Sept. 24	Gurū Hargobind to Guru Tegh Bahādur	<i>SGFP</i> pp.47-51 <i>TSP</i> pp. 62-69
	Sept. 26	Gurū Gobind Singh and Creating the Khālsā	<i>SGFP</i> pp. 51-59 <i>TSP</i> 69-73
5 The Khālsā & Predestined Rule?	Oct. 1	The Khāslā and the East India Company: A Connected History	<i>TSP</i> pp. 82-98 <i>SGFP</i> pp. 69-72
	Oct. 3	Ranjīt Singh: A Sikh Kingdom	Singh, Nikky (2005). Chp 1 "Pregnant text and the Conception of the Khalsa", <i>Birth of the Khalsa: A Feminist Re-memory of Sikh Identity</i> . pp. 1-34
6 Popular Practices, Rite, and Rituals	Oct. 8	Nām-simran, Recitative Text-Speech, and the Sangat	McLeod, W.H. (1980). <i>Early Sikh Tradition: A Study of the Janamsākhī</i> . pp. 237-239 & 248-267.
	Oct. 10	Light & Attribution: nām, sabd, jotī, and hukam in bānī	<i>SGFP</i> 107-130

7 Constructions of Space, Objects, and Relics	Oct. 15	Constructing Space: Institutions of Gursikhī	Murphy, Anne (2012). <i>The Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition</i> . pp.20-40
	Oct. 17	Texts and Language: Objects Subjecting Space	Murphy, Anne (2012). <i>The Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition</i> . pp. 69-94
8 Bodily Symbol-ogy: Gendering through Archetypes	Oct. 22	Figurative Relics: Body as Symbol	Richard D. Mann (2016). Media framing and the myth of religious violence: The othering of Sikhs in The Times of India, <i>Sikh Formations</i> , 12:2-3, 120-141
	Oct. 24	Embodied Symbols: Androgynous, Masculine, Feminine Names	Kristina Myrvold (2016) Sketches of Sikhs in the 1880s, <i>Sikh Formations</i> , 12:1, 1-27
9 Religious Violence: The Embrace of Martial Race Theory	Oct 29	Martial Race and Creating Colonial Armies	Gavin Rand & Kim A. Wagner (2012) Recruiting the ‘martial races’: identities and military service in colonial India, <i>Patterns of Prejudice</i> , 46:3-4, 232-254
	Oct. 31	Mid-term Examination	
10 Equality: Views on Caste, Class, and Communalism	Nov. 5	Caste, Class, and Communalism: Identities & Distance	Himadri Banerjee (2010) Sikh Dalits From North-East India: Experiences From Shillong and Guwahati, <i>Sikh Formations</i> , 6:1, 3-30
	Nov. 7	Equality and Oneness: Non-oppositional Identity	Gurnam Singh (2006) Sikhism’s Emancipatory Discourses: Some critical perspectives, <i>Sikh Formations</i> , 2:2, 135-151
11 Traditions of Learning & Intellection	Nov. 12	<b>Fall Reading Break – No Class</b>	
	Nov. 14	<b>Fall Reading Break – No Class</b>	

12 Domination by Translation	Nov. 19	Gursikhī as Method: Schools of Thought & Contentions	Janice Protopapas (2011) Kirtan Chaunki: Affect, Embodiment and Memory, Sikh Formations, 7:2, 339-364
	Nov. 21	Gursikhī and Recitative Text-speech: Performing Kīrtan and Kathā	Gurminder Kaur Bhogal (2017) Listening to female voices in Sikh kirtan, Sikh Formations, 13:1-2, 48-77
13 Ontological Language and Relational Thought in Gursikhī	Nov. 26	Colonizing Sikhism: Mind and Language	Balbinder Singh Bhogal (2015). The Facts of Colonial Modernity and the Story of Sikhism, Sikh Formations, 11:1-2, 243-265.
	Nov. 28	Translation and Salvation in Sikhism	Bhogal, Balbinder. Ghostly Disorientations: Translating the Adi Granth as the Guru Granth, Sikh Formations, 3:1, 13-31
Week 14	Dec. 3	Language in Gursikhī and Sikhism	<i>SGFP</i> pp. 159-172
	Dec. 5	Textuality: Living Texts and Live Language	<i>SGFP</i> pp. 172-187