

University of Calgary
Faculty of Arts
Department of Classics and Religion

RELS 451.11 L01 / SAST.03 L01 499
The Many *Ramāyaṇas* of Asia

Fall 2015
Mondays 2-4:45

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Course Description:

Perhaps no work of literature carries the prestige or receives the sheer adoration enjoyed by the *Ramāyaṇa*. While it is often described as one of the two great epics of Hinduism, it is in fact classified as literature and is revered as the *adi-kāvya*, or “first poem,” of the Sanskrit language. While the Sanskrit *Ramāyaṇa* of Valmiki dates to the beginning of the Christian era, the story has been re-told countless times over the centuries in languages that span all of Asia. In the 21st century, the *Ramāyaṇa* is still being adapted in novels, comics, and film. This course will examine the *Ramāyaṇa* in its many forms, and explore the role the *Ramāyaṇa* has played in cultures across Asia. The course will be roughly divided into thirds, dealing with three themes: the Sanskrit *Rāmāyāna* of Valmiki and its adaptation into other classical languages of South and Southeast Asia (e.g., Hindi and Tamil); the creation of both oral and written *Ramāyaṇas* for specific communities defined by religion, region, caste, or gender; and the role of the *Ramāyaṇa* in contemporary social and political movements.

Course Goals:

The content-driven goals of this class are twofold: to learn a great deal about the many *Ramāyaṇa* traditions of Asia and to develop a nuanced understanding of the role of literature in articulating and creating religious culture.

In addition, there are three skills-driven goals for students in this class. All students in the course will work towards improving their abilities to:

- 1) Read both primary literary texts and secondary scholarship critically, and to express one’s thoughts effectively. (See “Participation” under Course Requirements.)
- 2) Analyze religious narrative (whether written, oral, or visual) and to express one’s analysis through good writing. (See “Papers” under Course Requirements.)
- 3) Research a chosen topic and present the findings of one’s research in a well-developed research paper. (See “Research Project” under Course Requirements.)

Required Textbooks:

There are no required textbooks for this class. Readings will be made available through D2L, the TFDL (where electronic texts are available), and the TFDL reserves desk. The location of each reading assignment will be listed on the syllabus. Students should plan sufficient time to access the reading assignments based on their location.

Course Requirements:

Participation: 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 contributions to regular class discussions.

In addition, each student will sign up for two dates on which they will help to lead the seminar discussion. Further details on leading seminar discussion will be distributed in class.

Papers: Students will write short papers analyzing a version of the *Ramāyaṇa*. The papers will be four pages, double-spaced. The papers will not require research, but may require some reading outside of the reading assignments discussed in seminar. Further details about the assignments will be distributed in class.

Paper 1 is due **Friday, October 9** by midnight (deposited in the D2L dropbox)

Paper 2 is due **Friday, November 6** by midnight (deposited in the D2L dropbox)

Research Project: Students will submit a 12 page research paper at the end of the term. Students may choose any topic related to the *Ramāyaṇa*. The research paper is a project in which students will engage throughout the semester. To this end, there will be several components of the research project with deadlines throughout the semester. Full details of the requirements of each component will be distributed in class. Here is the schedule of deadlines:

Monday, October 19: Preliminary Research Proposal due *in class.* (10 points.)

Monday, November 16: Annotated Bibliography and Revised Research Proposal due *in class.* (15 points)

Monday, December 7: 10-minute Oral Presentation of Research Paper *in class.* (15 points)

Friday, December 11: 12-page Research Paper due by midnight in the D2L dropbox (60 points)

The points listed next to each component add up to 100% for the entire research project.

Extra Credit:

The CLARE department has invited Dr. Mandakranta Bose, professor emerita of India Studies at UBC and an eminent scholar of the *Ramāyaṇa*, to speak in the department's lecture series. The lecture will be held on Friday, October 16 at 2pm.

Students in this course are *strongly* encouraged to attend this lecture, as it was scheduled specifically to coordinate with this course. Any student who attends and turns in a one-page, single-spaced reflection paper on Dr. Bose's lecture will receive up to 15 points (equivalent to a full letter grade) added to their lowest paper grade.

Grading:

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Participation: | 20% |
| Papers: | 20% each (40% combined) |
| Research Project: | 40% |

A final letter grade will be assigned based on the following department-approved scale:

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

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

Students must complete all written assignments in order to pass this course. A “zero” on any written assignment or component will result in a grade of “F” for the course.

Academic Honesty:

Students should familiarize themselves with University policy regarding “Intellectual Honesty” and “Integrity in Scholarly Activity.”

Syllabus:

A complete syllabus, including a provisional schedule of readings, will be distributed on the first day of class.

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/.

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.

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.

Gnosis:

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: gnosis@ucalgary.ca or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

Classics Student Society:

Classics Student Society is the Greek and Roman Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: classsoc@ucalgary.ca or visit <http://grst.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/classics-students-society>.

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. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> 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 Library Block.

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

www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at arts1@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. 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.