

**University of Calgary
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Religious Studies**

**Religious Studies 603.06/703.06 L01
Sanskrit Literary Culture**

**Winter 2010
TR 14:00-16:50**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-4:00pm and by appointment

Course Description:

This is a graduate level seminar in the study of Hinduism. Currently, the most hotly debated topic amongst Indologists of all stripes is the nature of the classical literary culture(s) of India and its relationship to the religious history of the subcontinent. We will engage in this debate through an examination of the works of Sheldon Pollock, the scholar at the center of this debate, and the works of those who respond to him. Through our study, students will become well-versed in (a) the current landscape of Hindu studies and (b) the larger issue of how, exactly, religious history might be reconstructed based on literary sources.

Required Textbooks:

Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Pre-modern India*
Sheldon Pollock, editor, *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*
Alf Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking the Mahabharata*

In addition to these books, articles and other readings will regularly be posted on Blackboard. As this is a small seminar course that will develop, in part, out of students' work and interests, reading assignments will be announced each week for the following week.

Suggested Background Reading and Reference:

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition
Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*
Gene Thursby and Sushil Mitthal, *Hindu Worlds*
George Cardona and Dhanesh Jain, editors, *The Indo-Aryan Languages*
Sures Chandra Banerji, *A Companion to Sanskrit Literature*
Romila Thapar, *A History of India I*
Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Post-colonial Theory, India and the "Mystic East"*
Douglas McGetchin *et al*, *Sanskrit and Orientalism: Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750-1958*
Ronald Inden, *Imagining India*

Ronald Inden *et al*, *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practices in South Asia*
 David Shulman, *The Wisdom of Poets: Studies in Tamil, Telugu, and Sanskrit*
 David Shulman and Velcheru Narayana Rao, *A Poem at the Right Moment: Remembered Verses from Pre-modern South India*
 The series, “A History of Indian Literature:” Published by Otto Harrassowitz, edited by Jan Gonda (see me for specific titles as needed)

Course Goals:

In the most basic sense, this course is designed to familiarize students with the current landscape of scholarship on Hinduism. By the end of the course, all students, regardless of their own research interests, should have a strong understanding of the “state of the field.” Students should note that, as with religious studies generally, the study of Hinduism is an interdisciplinary field. Understanding the state of the field will therefore require considerations of historiography, archaeology, ethnography, linguistics, and literary analysis, among other topics.

In addition to the content goals of this course, students should also approach this class as a course in academic professionalism. As graduate students, you are now aspiring scholars in your own right and should conduct yourself as such. All students should commit themselves to improving their abilities in writing, researching, critical reading and thinking, and speaking. Throughout the course, we will occasionally discuss these skills and their importance throughout one’s academic career.

Course Requirements:

Mid-term Papers: Students will write two mid-term papers. Mid-term papers are meant to be reflective analyses and arguments relating to the readings assigned in class. They will not require additional research. Mid-term papers should be 8-10 double-spaced pages. Mid-term papers are due on **February 26** and **April 2**.

Research Paper: Students will write a research paper (25 double-spaced pages) on a topic of their choice. Students are encouraged to consult with me about their topics. Research papers will be due in class on **Wednesday, April 14**. Class time on this day will be devoted to students’ presentations of their research. Do take the research presentations seriously—a poor presentation will be reflected in your grade for the research paper.

Participation: Obviously, careful and thorough reading of assigned texts and active participation in class are essential to a successful seminar. In addition to regular required participation, students will take turns starting things off with questions about the readings that they have prepared in class. In case of poor participation and/or failure to complete assigned readings, I reserve the right to institute weekly written reading critiques.

There will be no registrar-scheduled exam for this class

Grading:

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Mid-term Papers: 20% each (40% combined)
 Participation: 20%
 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%

Academic Honesty:

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