RELS 212/312
Love and Heroism
Religions of South India

Semester 2
2016

Department of Theology and Religion
University of Otago
Course Outline

Introduction

This paper will examine five major religious traditions in South Indian history. Some of the most important currents of both popular, passionate devotion to the deities and philosophical reflection in the Hindu tradition have their roots in South India. In earlier centuries, both Buddhism and Jainism also flourished here in an often combative relationship with Hinduism, and both have left their mark on southern culture in the form of literature and architecture. Since at least the fourth century Christianity has been present in the region, which has been the site of extensive encounter between missionaries and followers of other religions in the modern period. The paper also examines how Islam has accommodated itself to the religious landscape of South India over the several centuries of its presence there. The bulk of our time will be devoted to Hinduism, but you will also be required to consider either Buddhism or Jainism, and either Christianity or Islam, in their South Indian context.

We teach this paper on campus and by distance learning. Distance students should make sure to look at the section on “Distance Learning” below.

Aims and Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete the paper will have gained:

- a sound factual knowledge of the historical development in South India of three Indic religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism) and the enculturation of two other religions (Christianity and Islam) in South India,
- an understanding of the cultural context of South India, in particular the caṇkam literature and its enduring influence upon religion in South India, and
- an awareness of the primary themes of love and heroism in these religious traditions and the caṇkam literary conventions which have shaped them.
Resources

A comprehensive list of advice about the Religion programme is available and regularly updated on our website at: http://www.otago.ac.nz/religion/courses/resources.html. This includes information on how to use Blackboard and Zoom, how to format and submit assignments, and where to find help. It is important that you review this information!

Course Materials

Readings are assigned for each lecture—and most are included in this coursebook (see below for details). Please ensure that wherever possible you have read the assigned material before the lecture. Lectures will assume knowledge of the material covered in the readings, and there will be scope during lectures for discussion and questions relating to the reading. Lectures will be recorded and uploaded to Blackboard within an hour or two of the lecture taking place. There are substantial additional resources available through Blackboard for this paper.

Read to succeed!

The readings specified for each lecture represent the bare minimum reading required for successful completion of the paper. You should also read extensively in the works listed on the lecture handouts, and on the bibliography on Blackboard. These are intended to provide a starting point for your research when writing an essay and in preparing for the exam.

Course Structure

The paper is divided into five modules, each lasting between two and three weeks. The first two modules introduce the major Hindu traditions of the south. The first focusses on practice, the second on literary and philosophical traditions. The next module introduces Jainism and Buddhism, and their literary remains. The fourth module considers how Christianity and Islam have developed in the predominantly Hindu context of South India. A concluding module examines aspects of the ritual life of the different religions alongside one another. For each lecture in the first four modules there is one reading (except 3.1 & 3.2). For the last you have alternative readings for either Christianity or Islam—you may choose which set of readings to follow in this module. These readings are not in the coursebook—you will find them in the eReserve section on Blackboard.
Lecture Schedule

1. South Indian Hinduism

12 July 1.1 Love and Heroism: The South Indian Region

14 July 1.2 Fierce Gods

19 July 1.3 The Goddess of the Village

21 July 1.4 Murukan and Minākṣi

26 July 1.5 Temple Culture

28 July 1.6 Caste

2. Tamil Religious Literature and Thought

2 Aug 2.1 Čārikam Literature

4 Aug 2.2 The Nāyaṉmārs: Masters of Devotion
9 Aug  2.3  The Álvârs: Drowning in God

11 Aug  2.4  Religious Systems: Śaiva Siddhânta and Śrî Vaiṣṇavism

3. Jain and Buddhist Traditions

16 Aug  3.1  Conquest of the Self: An Introduction to Jainism

18 Aug  3.2  Buddhism in the Tamil Country

23 Aug  3.3  Cîlappatikâram: The Tale of an Anklet

25 Aug  3.4  Manimêkalai: A Courtesan and her Bowl

29 Aug – 2 Sep  Mid-semester break

4. Christianity and Islam

6 Sept  4.1  Ancient and Catholic Christianity

6 Sept  5pm  Deadline for submission of essay outline

8 Sept  4.2  Protestant Beginnings
**LECTURE SCHEDULE**

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<tr>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Options</th>
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### 5. Shared Spaces: Christians, Muslims, and Hindus

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<tr>
<td>29 Sept–6 Oct</td>
<td>5pm</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Oct</td>
<td>5pm</td>
<td>No lectures</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Oct</td>
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<td>Conclusions, Summary and Exam Preparation</td>
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Course Coordinator

Will Sweetman is Associate Professor of Asian Religions. He studied Religious Studies and Philosophy at Lancaster University, and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Cambridge. He has taught at universities in London and Newcastle, and held research fellowships at the University of Halle (Germany) and the University of Cambridge. His primary field of research is the encounter between Asian religions and the West in the modern period, and in particular the study of Hinduism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The primary locale of this research is the Tamil region of South India. As well as this paper, he also teaches papers on Hinduism and Buddhism, the Body in Asian Religions, Asian Religions and the West, World Christianity, and Method & Theory in the Study of Religion.

Contact details

   Room 105, 97 Albany St, Dunedin
   ☎ 03 479 8793
   ✉ will.sweetman@otago.ac.nz
   Office hours: Wednesday 12 noon, Friday 11am (other times by appointment)

Assessment

There are three components in the assessment for this paper:
   - an essay outline (5%)
   - a 2,500-word essay (35%)
   - a three-hour examination (60%)

1. Essay Outline (5%)

For the first assignment you should choose one of the questions below as the title for an essay. The outline should be no longer than two pages (max. 500 words) and include:
   - headings and subheadings, to show what topics you will cover
   - a brief indication of the anticipated conclusion
   - at least three of the works you intend to consult.

The outline is intended to assist you in the process of writing a good essay. Your final essay need not be identical with what you present on your outline, if I suggest (or you choose) another approach to the topic. The deadline for the essay outline is 5pm on Tuesday the 6th of September. No extensions will be granted for this assignment.
2. Essay (35%)

For the second assignment you should choose one of the questions below as the title for a 2,500-word essay. You are not expected to adapt or replace the title of the essay (as is usual in some universities). Any alteration to the title of the essay must be negotiated with me. Guidelines for presentation of essays are available from the Religious Studies office, or through Blackboard, where you will also find further advice on study skills, including the University’s policies on plagiarism and advice on how to avoid it. The deadline for the essay is 5pm on Friday the 7th of October. No requests for extensions will be entertained after Friday the 30th of September.

Choose one of the following as the title for your essay:

1. Tamil temples are critical sites for displaying and constituting dominant social hierarchies. Yet... the power of gods does more than merely echo the power of human beings.
   
   Discuss the role of temples in displaying and constituting social hierarchies.

2. Discuss the connection between heat and sexuality in the goddess traditions of south India.

3. Early bhakti movements, whether devoted to Śiva or to Viṣṇu, used whatever they found at hand, and changed whatever they used. Vedic and Upāniṣadic notions, Buddhist and Jaina concepts, conventions of Tamil and Sanskrit poetry, early Tamil conceptions of love, service, women, and kings, mythology or folk religion and folksong, the play of contrasts between Sanskrit and the mother tongue: all these elements were reworked and transformed in bhakti.

   How do the Nāyaṇmārs and Āḻvārs make use of, and change, what they found in earlier Tamil religion and culture?

4. What do the stories of Nandaṉār and Tiruppāṉ Āḻvār allow us to conclude about the social message of the poetry of the Nāyaṇmārs and Āḻvārs?

5. To what extent is Maṉimēkalai best understood as a specifically Tamil Buddhist work, rather than simply a Buddhist work which happens to be written in Tamil?

6. How do the authors of Jain works in Tamil such as Cilappatikāram and Cīvakacintā-manī make use of the conventions of caṅkam literature?

7. To what extent have popular Hindu ideas shaped the religious beliefs and practices of
   either: a) Christian communities of South India?
   or: b) Muslim communities of South India?
3. Examination (60%)

In the examination you will be required to answer three questions, one from each of three sections. The first section is on Hinduism, the second on Buddhism and Jainism, and the last on Christianity and Islam. The date for the examination will be sent to you as soon as it has been set by the Registry. All arrangements for examinations are handled by the Registry as outlined in the Student Handbook. Past exam papers for this course are available from the library.

Plagiarism

Students should make sure that all submitted work is their own. Plagiarism is a form of dishonest practice. Plagiarism is defined by the University as

- copying or paraphrasing another person’s work and presenting it as one’s own – whether intentionally, or through failure to take proper care. Being party to someone else’s plagiarism (by allowing them to copy your work or by otherwise helping them plagiarise work for an assessment) is also dishonest practice.

University of Otago Plagiarism and Examination Conduct Regulations

In practice this means plagiarism includes *any* attempt in any piece of submitted work (e.g. an assignment or test) to present as one’s own work the work of another (whether of another student or a published authority), including work from the internet. Any student found responsible for plagiarism in any piece of work submitted for assessment shall be subject to the University’s dishonest practice regulations which may result in various penalties, including forfeiture of marks for the piece of work submitted, a zero grade for the paper, or in extreme cases exclusion from the University. For more advice on this policy see [http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/plagiarism/](http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/plagiarism/) and the ‘Study skills’ section in Blackboard.

Referencing

If you are in any doubt about how to reference your work, please consult the Department’s *Study and Style Guide*, which is available through Blackboard, or the Religion website. The style guide recommends the widely-used Chicago style (which is also used in the bibliography for this paper) but if you are already familiar with another recognized style of referencing, you may use that instead. Whatever style you use, use it consistently and provide full references wherever you rely on the work of others.
Distance Learning

This paper is taught concurrently on campus and by distance. While distance students cannot come to the weekly lectures, we make sure that they stay on target by recording lectures and sharing them on Blackboard. These recordings can be used alongside uploaded pdfs of the lecture slides used for each class. If, however, you are enrolled by distance but living in or visiting Dunedin, you are more than welcome to come to lectures.

Opportunities for discussion of the lectures and readings are more limited for distance students, but please feel free to contact me by phone or email if you have questions arising from the lectures and readings.