

Religion GU4304: KRISHNA

Fall, 2017. Tuesdays, 6:10-8:00

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General description

In this course we study a single deity in the Hindu pantheon: Krishna--hero, teacher, king, child, lover. Textual sources will include the Great Indian Epic (*Mahabharata*), the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Bhagavata Purana*, the *Gitagovinda*—all great Sanskrit texts—and in addition poetry attributed to Annamaya, Surdas, and Mirabai, all of whom composed in the regional, spoken languages of India. We will also give attention to non-textual media, focusing especially on sculpture and painting. Music will often hover overhead. We will explore theologies from both north and south India.

Enrollment is with the instructor's permission. The course has no prerequisite, but some background is expected, academic or otherwise. This can be in the academic study of religion per se, or in the study of Indian history and culture. It is hoped that students from other fields than Religion will also want to enroll. In such cases an equivalent level of preparation is normally expected--a course in anthropology, mythology, art history, history, or some other field that has a significant India component.

Format and requirements

- (1) Weekly postings and class discussion.

This is a seminar, so the basic requirement is active class participation, based on a careful consideration of common readings. These form the subject for the first ten sessions in the course; the remaining classes are devoted to museum visits and individual student presentations.

To prepare for the discussion sessions, students are required to submit short papers (maximum: 500 words) reacting to the readings assigned for any given week of the course and framing one or two issues that should be treated in discussion. These short papers should be posted by Monday at 6:00 prior to the seminar in question. You can skip two of these responses and still be in good standing. In writing these, please exhibit good style, spelling, and grammar.

(2) Seminar paper and oral presentation in class.

A major objective of the course is to encourage students to do work requiring independent research and thought, and present it in convincing ways. The ultimate products are two: a paper of some 20 pages in length and a seminar presentation of 10 minutes' duration (to which there will be response from others in the seminar). Stages along the way:

(a) By Tuesday, October 3 each student must have had a conversation with me about the subject of her or his paper. If conflicts prevent our talking in office hours, we'll make appointments in addition.

Then please write a brief prospectus for the paper you envision (no more than 2 pages double-spaced) together with a bibliography (ditto), due Tuesday, October 10. Please post it to the box in "Class Files" that has been marked to receive it. That way we'll all have a chance to see what the rest of us are up to.

(b) On Wednesday, November 22, a draft of your seminar paper is due as an MSWord attachment.

(c) It is often very helpful for students to read each others' work. If you would like to arrange this tit-for-tat response with another member of the class, please plan ahead.

(d) Students will present their work orally to the rest of the class in the last session of the course. It will not be possible in ten minutes to say everything you would like, so you will have to choose what you want to emphasize. Be coherent and interesting. Explain what you have found, and what you regard to be the greatest challenges of your subject.

(3) Beyond the Barnard/Columbia campus

One required trip is a part of the class plan—to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see the Irving galleries for South and Southeast Asia and to view Krishna resources that are not on public display (10/6, 3:00-5:00). Note also that there are also many temples in the New York area where Krishna is worshipped. You are very much encouraged to make visits.

Grading

Weekly postings	20%
Participation in class discussion	30%
Seminar paper and its oral presentation	50%

Books for purchase, available at BookCulture

Robert Bly and Jane Hirschfield, *Mirabai: Ecstatic Poems* (2004)

Edwin F. Bryant, ed., *Krishna: A Sourcebook* (2007)

Edwin Bryant, tr., *Krishna: The Beautiful Legend of God* (2003)

David Haberman, *Journey Through the Twelve Forests* (1994)

J. S. Hawley, *The Memory of Love: Surdas Sings for Krishna* (2010)

Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Bhagavad Gita* (1986)

Barbara Stoler Miller, *Lord Song of the Dark Lord* (1977)

Velcheru Narayana Rao and David Shulman, *God on the Hill: Temple Poems from Tirupati [by Annamayya]* (2005)

A. K. Ramanujan, Velcheru Narayana Rao, and David Shulman, *When God Is a Customer* (1994)

Academic Integrity

Approved by the student body in 1912, the Barnard College Honor Code states:

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by refraining from every form of dishonesty in our academic life. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any papers or books not authorized by the instructor in examinations, or to present oral work or written work which is not entirely our own, unless otherwise approved by the instructor. We consider it dishonest to remove without authorization, alter, or deface library and other academic materials. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

The complexities of technology and of our cognition sometimes make it difficult to determine what constitutes plagiarism (e.g., Did I come up with that idea myself or did I read it somewhere? Was that sentence something I cut and pasted from the internet and intended to reformulate later but never got around to?). Please feel free to consult me if you encounter ambiguous situations in the course of your work.

I gratefully acknowledge that I have plagiarized the paragraphs appearing immediately above from my colleague Beth Berkowitz, who composed them as a part of the syllabus for her course *Introduction to Talmud Text Study* (Spring, 2014).

KRISHNA

Course Outline and Readings

Key: Required readings from books available for purchase are listed without any special insignia. Course readings can be found on library reserve (at Barnard) and in Canvas. Those required are indicated with a single asterisk (*) on the syllabus below. Optional or collateral readings appear with a double asterisk (**); many are also available on Canvas, and unfailingly in the Columbia and Barnard libraries.

Primary sources are given in bold letters.

I. **Introductory (9/5)**

Krishna against the background of the Hindu pantheon, and in Indian religion today. Introduction to the course.

** Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), especially chapters 5-6.

** Diana L. Eck, *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima, 1981 and subsequent printings), entire.

** Veronica Ions, *Indian Mythology* (New York: Peter Bedrick, 1983).

** J. S. Hawley, "Krsna," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8, ed. Mircea Eliade et al. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 384-387.

II. **Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (9/12)**

Readings:

Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War* (New York: Bantam, 1986), entire.

*** J. A. B. van Buitenen, *The Bhagavadgita in the Mahabharata* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 1-29.**

** Richard H. Davis, *The Bhagavad Gita—A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

** D. Dennis Hudson, "Krishna's Mandala and the *Bhagavad Gita*, in J. S. Hawley, guest editor, *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 11:1 (2002), pp. 81-130.

III. Epic Contrasts: Krishna in the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata Purana* (9/19)

Readings:

Alf Hiltebeitel, "Krishna in the *Mahabharata*: The Death of Karna," in Edwin F. Bryant, ed., *Krishna: A Sourcebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 23-76.

Edwin Bryant, tr., *Krishna: The Beautiful Legend of God (Srimad Bhagavata Purana Book X)* (London: Penguin, 2003), introduction and chapters 1-6, 16, 22, 29-33, 40-44.

* Daniel H. H. Ingalls, "The *Harivamsa* as a *Mahakavya*," in *Melanges d'Indianisme à la memoire de Louis Renou* (Paris: Editions E. de Boccard, 1968), pp. 381-394.

** Ravi M. Gupta and Kenneth R. Valpey, *The Bhāgavata Purāṇa: Selected Readings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

** Ravi M. Gupta and Kenneth R. Valpey, *The Bhāgavata Purāṇa: Sacred Text and Living Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

** Ekkehard Lorenz, "The *Harivamsa*: The Dynasty of Krishna," in Bryant, ed., *Krishna: A Sourcebook*, pp. 95-110.

** M. N. Dutt, tr., *A Prose English Translation of Harivamsha* (Calcutta: Elysium Press, 1897), pp. 244-285 (birth of Krishna through the defeat of Kaliya), 314-319 (the *ras lila*, according to Dutt's chapter heading), and 338-377 (from the arrival of Akrur in Braj through the death of Kamsa).

** Francis G. Hutchins, *Young Krishna* (West Franklin, NH: Amarta Press, 1980), introduction.

** Noel Sheth, S. J., *The Divinity of Krsna* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1984), pp. 3-24 ("Krishna in the *Harivamsa*").

** Alf Hiltebeitel, *The Ritual of Battle: Krishna in the Mahabharata* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).

** Otto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (New York: Vintage, 1964 [originally 1914]), pp. 3-96.

** Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha-Bhakti* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 526-547.

** Benjamin Preciado-Solis, *The Krsna Cycle in the Puranas* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1984).

** Graham M. Schweig, *Dance of Divine Love: The Rasa Lila of Krishna from the Bhagavata Purana, India's Classic Sacred Love Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

** McComas Taylor, *Seven Days of Nectar: Contemporary Oral Performance of the Bhagavatapurana*

IV. The *Gita Govinda*: a Bengali Krishna against a broader vernacular background (9/26)

Readings:

Barbara Stoler Miller, *Love Song of the Dark Lord: Jayadeva's Gitagovinda* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), entire.

Bryant, ed., *Krishna: A Sourcebook*, Part II, pp. 139-222, 255-306.

** Jesse Ros Knutson, *Into the Twilight of Sanskrit Court Poetry: The Sena Salon of Bengal and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), pp. 72-88.

** David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), Chapter 6, "Radha," pp. 81-94.

** Donna M. Wulff, "Radha," in J. S. Hawley and D. M. Wulff, eds., *Devi: Goddesses of India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 109-134.

** Edward C. Dimock, Jr., and Denise Levertov, *In Praise of Krishna* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1967, and subsequently Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

V. Krishna in art—and specifically at the Met (Friday October 6, 3:00-5:00 or an alternate time that will work for the entire class)

We will visit the Irving Galleries of South Asian Art and have a chance to see several a number of illustrated manuscripts featuring Krishna that are not currently on display. A number of these are posted to Canvas for your review.

Reading:

*** Selected images from the Met's website, posted on Canvas.**

*** Enrico Isacco, Anna L. Dallapiccola, et al., *Krishna, the Divine Lover* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1982), pp. 5-101.** (The plates are regarded as "primary sources.")

* Cynthia Packert, *The Art of Loving Krishna: Ornamentation and Devotion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. xv-73.

VI: Krishna/Vishnu in Andhra: at court and among courtesans (10/10)

Velcheru Narayana Rao and David Shulman, *God on the Hill: Temple Poems from Tirupati* [by Annamayya] (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), entire (138 pp.).

* A. K. Ramanujan, Velcheru Narayana Rao, and David Shulman, *When God Is a Customer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 1-40, 63-127 (Kṣetrayya).

** William J. Jackson, *Songs of Three Great South Indian Saints* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 36-68.

** Adapa Ramakrishna Rao, *Annamacharya* (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1989).

VII. The Theological Krishna (10/17): Rupa Gosvami and his rivals

Readings:

Bryant, ed., *Krishna: A Sourcebook*, Part III, pp. 309-474.

VIII. Krishna's Footsteps: The *Ban-yatra* of Braj (10/24)

Readings:

David Haberman, *Journey Through the Twelve Forests*, entire. (The book is regarded as a “primary source” as the record of a pilgrimage journey. Comment and analysis are interspersed, but the record is primary.)

* Owen M Lynch, “Pilgrimage with Krishna, Sovereign of the Emotions,” *Contributions to Indian Sociology* n.s. 22:2 (1988), pp. 171-194.

** Margaret H. Case, *Seeing Krishna: The Religious World of a Brahman Family in Vrindaban* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

** Shrivatsa Goswami, *Celebrating Krishna*, with photographs by Robyn Beeche (Vrindaban: Sri Caitanya Prema Samsthana, 2001).

** Christian Novetzke, “A Family Affair: Krishna Comes to Pandharpur and Makes Himself at Home,” in Beck, ed., *Alternative Krishnas*, pp. 113-138.

** Tracy Pintchman, “Domesticating Krishna: Friendship, Marriage, and Women’s Experience in a Hindu Women’s Ritual Tradition,” in Beck, ed., *Alternative Krishnas*, pp. 43-63.

** McKim Marriott, "The Feast of Love," in Milton Singer, ed., *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966), pp. 200-212, 229-231.

** J. S. Hawley, "Krishna's Cosmic Victories," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 47:2 (1979), pp. 201-221.

IX. Krishna's archetypal Braj poet, Surdas (10/31)

Readings:

J. S. Hawley, *The Memory of Love* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), entire.

** Kenneth E. Bryant and J. S. Hawley, *Sur's Ocean: Poems from the Early Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015). Here can be found all the Brajbhāṣā texts translated in *The Memory of Love*.

** J. S. Hawley, *Three Bhakti Voices: Mirabai, Surdas, and Kabir in Their Time and Ours* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 181-216.

Election Day Holiday (11/7)

X. In Love with Krishna: Mirabai (11/14)

Readings:

Robert Bly and Jane Hirshfield, *Mirabai: Ecstatic Poems* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), entire.

* J. S. Hawley, *Three Bhakti Voices*, pp. 89-138.

** Parita Mukta, *Upholding the Common Life* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 69-114.

** Sudhir Kakar and John M. Ross, *Tales of Love, Sex and Danger* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986) pp. 74-103 ("The Cloistered Passion of Radha and Krishna").

** Nancy M. Martin-Kershaw, "Mirabai: Inscribed in Text, Embodied in Practice," *Journal of Vaisnava Studies* 3:4 (1995), pp. 5-44.

** Nancy M. Martin, "Mirabai in the Academy and the Politics of Identity," in Mandakranta Bose, ed., *Faces of the Feminine from Ancient, Medieval, and Modern India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 162-182.

** J. S. Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 119-140 ("Mirabai").

** Philip Lutgendorf, "The 'Mira Trope' in Mainstream Hindi Cinema: Three Examples from Notable Films," paper delivered to the international conference on Mirabai held at the University of California at Los Angeles, 4 October 2002, and forthcoming in Nancy M. Martin, ed., *Mirabai: Hindu Saint for a Global World*.

** Frances Taft, "The Elusive Historical Mirabai: A Note," in Lawrence A. Babb, Varsha Joshi, and Michael Meister, eds., *Multiple Histories: Culture, and Society in the Study of Rajasthan* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications), pp. 313-335.

XI. No class November 21, owing to the annual meeting of the AAR. But here's the silver lining: It's a welcome chance to get your papers in working order. And speaking of that, **A draft of your seminar paper is due before midnight Friday, 11/25.**

XII. Krishna in Court: The Vallabha Sampraday and the Maharaja Libel Case (11/28)

Richard Barz, "Kumbhandas: The Devotee as Salt of the Earth," in Bryant, ed., *Krishna: A Sourcebook*, pp. 477-504.

Paul Arney, "The *Bade Sikshapatra*: A Vallabhite Guide to the Worship of Krishna's Divine Images," in Bryant, ed., *Krishna: A Sourcebook*, pp. 505-536.

* Karsandas Mulji, *History of the Sect of Maharajas, or Vallabhacharyas, in Western India* (London: Trubner, 1865), table of contents, pp. 125-182, and Appendix, pp. 1-12 (Evidence for the Prosecution)

* David L. Haberman, "On Trial: The Love of the Sixteen Thousand Gopees," *History of Religions* 33:1 (1993), pp. 44-70.

* E. M. Forster, *Passage to India* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952 [originally 1924]), chapter 33, pp. 283-291.

** Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya* (Faridabad: Thomson, 1976), pp. 3-93.

** James D. Redington, S.J., *Vallabhacarya on the Love-Games of Radha and Krsna* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), introduction, pp. 1-47.

** Amrita Shodhan, *A Question of Community: Religious Groups and Colonial Law* (Calcutta: Samya, 2001), pp. 117-200.

** Shandip Saha, "Creating a Community of Grace: A History of the Pusti Marga in Northern and Western India (1493-1905)," PhD. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 2004, pp. 280-307.

** Peter Bennett, *The Path of Grace: Social Organization and Temple Worship in a Vaishnava Sect* (Delhi: Hindustan, 1993).

** *Journal of Vaisnava Studies* 1:4, “Focus on: Vallabha Sampradaya” (1993).

** James D. Redington, S.J., *Vallabhacarya on the Love-Games of Radha and Krsna* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), introduction, pp. 1-47.

** Amit Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji: Rajasthani Paintings from Nathdwara* (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 1987). [Barnard Reserve or Avery.]

** Tryna Lyons, *The Artists of Nathdwara: The Practice of Painting in Rajasthan* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2004).

XIII & XIV. Paper presentations (12/5)—a two-part session at my apartment

380 Riverside Drive, 3H, entrance on 110th.

Readings: Other seminar papers than your own, available on Canvas.

XV. The final version of your seminar papers is due at midnight, Friday December 8.