



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

Practicing Integrative Worldviews in the Technology Era

Course Code	G_BATRSAL093
Credits	6
Period	P3
Course Level	100
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	dr. P.K. Bindlish
Examiner	dr. P.K. Bindlish
Teaching Staff	dr. P.K. Bindlish, prof. dr. S.S. Nandram, dr. G. Joshi
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Fieldwork, Seminar

Course Objective

General Description

The course provides an overview of the Hindu worldview, including key beliefs and practices that have shaped its religious and cultural traditions. It explores the emergence, nature, and contemporary state of Hinduism, as well as how its worldview has led to diverse Hindu philosophies, practices, rituals, festivals, spirituality, and soteriology at individual and societal levels. The course is designed to provide students with a foundation for understanding Hindu studies with a focus on the Hindu worldview, integrativeness, and society. The course will explore the relevance of Hindu concepts and practices to contemporary global narratives on societal challenges such as the UN-SDGs in the backdrop of multireligious, multicultural, and multipolar contexts. The course also examines how Hindu concepts are relevant to issues of present interest and debates involving Hindu contexts.

Introduction

Hinduism is a complex and diverse religion that encompasses a vast range of beliefs and practices. It has evolved over thousands of years, and its worldview has shaped many aspects of Indian culture and society. The course is designed for students who are interested in pursuing spirituality for society and deepening their knowledge and insight into Hinduism. The course aims to provide students with a basic understanding of Hinduism's central concepts, practices, and history. It examines the key beliefs and practices of Hinduism, such as dharma, karma, and advaita, and provides a foundation to understand the balance of Hindu practices between public coherence and private devotion or renunciation as part of a quest for ultimate truth.

The course will provide students with an integrative lens towards Hinduism, i.e. at the intersection of suspicion (rejecting), faith (believing), and contemplation (seeking). The course will also explore the diversity expressed in Hindu religious cultures and spiritual traditions that maintain the dynamic relationship between Orthopraxy (practices) and Orthodoxy (beliefs) in Hinduism.

General aim

The general aim of this course is to provide students with an overview of Hinduism's main concepts and practices. Students will gain an understanding of Hinduism's worldview, its emergence, nature, and contemporary state, and how it led to diverse Hindu philosophies, practices including its rituals, festivals, spirituality, and soteriology at individual and society levels. The course will provide a foundation to understand the contemporary debates involving Hindu context and how Hindu concepts are relevant in issues of present interest.

Learning goals

The course aims to achieve the following learning goals:

To develop a basic understanding of the Hindu worldview, its nature, emergence and contemporary state.

To understand the diversity expressed in Hindu religious cultures and spiritual traditions that maintain the dynamic relationship between Orthopraxy and Orthodoxy in Hinduism.

To understand the key beliefs and practices of Hinduism, including dharma, karma, and advaita.

To understand Hindu ethics and values (karma)

To gain knowledge about Hindu living (rituals, festivals, private and public forms of devotion)

To gain knowledge about Hindu soteriology, renunciation, and spirituality

To analyze and evaluate the relevance of Hindu concepts in contemporary issues such as the UN-SDGs and societal challenges.

To critically reflect on the role of Hinduism in contemporary global narratives on multireligious, multicultural, and political ideologies.

To nurture integrative thinking and critical reflexivity among participants to connect Hindu studies with contemporary global narratives on societal challenges.

To be able to communicate the newly acquired knowledge, insight and applications in the form of academically adequate writing and presentation.

Course Content

Course topics

In this course we will therefore focus on the following themes:

Unit 1: Introduction to the Hindu Worldview

Historical and cultural background of Hinduism

The Hindu worldview and its major components

Hinduism and other religions

Unit 2: Hindu View of Existence

The self, universe, divinity, and their interconnection

Dharma, Advaita, and other Hindu philosophical concepts

Unit 3: Hindu View of Origins and Future

Cycles of birth and death

Karma and rebirth

Hindu cosmology and mythology

Unit 4: Hindu Epistemology and Ethics

Importance of texts and associated living traditions

Hindu ethics and values

The role of knowledge and learning in Hinduism

Unit 5: Hindu Living

Rituals and festivals in Hinduism

Private and public forms of devotion

Hindu spirituality and renunciation

Unit 6: Hindu Soteriology

The quest for ultimate truth

Hindu soteriology and liberation

The dynamic relationship between Orthopraxy and Orthodoxy in Hinduism

Additional Information Teaching Methods

Methodology

The course will use a blended approach to learning, consisting of synchronous and asynchronous elements. It will include a combination of lectures, discussions, group activities, debates, reading texts, interpretation of text, case studies, reflective writing assignments and experiential practices. Participants will be encouraged to engage in critical thinking, analysis, and reflection in order to develop a deeper understanding of Hindu worldviews. They are expected to do self-study, participate actively in class discussions, contribute to group activities, demonstrate their understanding of concepts through presentations and a term paper.

Method of Assessment

Assessment

Flip learning Classroom presentations by the participant (20%). - In these flip learning presentations the participant reveals their reflective insight to various specific aspects of Hindu beliefs and practices. The participant can also opt for a write-up of about 600 words giving personal reflections on a particular topic related to the content of this module.

The paper (80%). The paper is supposed to discuss a subject of personal interest to the participant and should include some independent research in libraries and / or online. In the paper the participant shows academic writing skills and the ability to make a deeper investigation independently of a particular aspect of Hindu beliefs and practices. The size of the paper should be within 3000 words.

Additional Information Target Audience

This module is part of the Minor Hindu Spirituality, Religion and Society.

In addition to the students who have opted for the minor(s) in which this course is included, students from following discipline may find this course useful:

- Religious studies & Theology
- Psychology
- Business
- Students who have followed the previous modules of the Minor on Buddhism, Yoga and Spirituality or related minor(s)

Explanation Canvas

- Some reading material which is free from copyrights will be made available through Canvas.
- The students are encouraged to use the discussion forum of Canvas for posing questions and for interaction with the teacher and with each other.
- Presentations must be uploaded on the Canvas before presenting in the class.

Recommended background knowledge

It may help to study some introduction to Hinduism.