Major topics covered in this online course: This course will focus on the main religions of South Asia (primarily India and Sri Lanka) and on the relationship between religion and nationalism and religion and violence in both India and Sri Lanka. We shall also consider Mahatma Gandhi’s view on nonviolence and the role he played in India’s nationalist movement. The course will pay particular attention to how these topics are sometimes portrayed in very different ways by different filmmakers. In watching the films in the course, always ask how well the filmmaker has succeeded in presenting the insider’s point of view.

You will need a Blackboard account to take this course. Access Blackboard by clicking on the icon when on the University of Maine Launch Pad site. The gives you access to the University Technical Support Center, with phone numbers to call for technical assistance. (See more on this subject below.) This course will NOT have a First Class conference folder, but I will send you emails on First Class using Blackboard. Make sure that the university has your correct email address, or you will not receive important email messages. You will need a high-speed (broad-band) internet connection. If you do not have a broad-band connection at home, you may need to view the lectures at a university, school, or library. Broad-band connection is available at computer labs at UC Centers throughout Maine. For help locating a UC Center nearest you, please dial UC Tele-service at 1-800-868-7000. Answers to questions frequently asked about Blackboard can be found at: http://support.courses.maine.edu/student-support/student-faqs.

For technical problems, contact cedtechhelp@umit.maine.edu (581-4591) or techsupport@maine.edu, 1-800-696-4357. (This is now known as UTSC.) You can also get help at fdeit@umit.maine.edu (or just write “Faculty Development Center” on First Class), (581-1925). This site is in principle just for faculty, but the tech help people here also help students.

You will need Quicktime on your computers to see lectures and videos. You can download it from http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/ if you don't already have it.

Lectures and required or recommended videos and websites are on the Course Content page unless other sites are indicated. The course website includes resources we will not be using this semester, but which you can use on your own if you want.

Grade: Five online quizzes, with 10 questions on each one. Students can also write up to two short essays (2-3 pages) for extra credit if they want. The grades on these papers will be given the same weight as a quiz grade. Topics must be approved by the instructor in advance. Grades are on the +/- system, that is 93+ is an A, 90-92 is an A-, 87-89 is a B+, and so on.

Quizzes: The five online quizzes will be located under “Assessments” on the course website on Blackboard. If, for some reason, you cannot take a quiz during the specified dates, you must make arrangements with the instructor in advance. I will email you reminders about quiz dates, but it is your responsibility to keep track of these dates. Only documented excuses, i.e., doctor's
note, obituary, etc., will be accepted as reasons for extensions. The quizzes are not open-book and should be done **individually**, not in pairs or as a group. **You will have 20 minutes in which to take each quiz—in one sitting. Only students with documented disabilities will be allowed to take more than 20 minutes on quizzes. Students who fail to follow these rules will receive a 0 for the quiz in question. (However, students without documented disabilities can exceed the 20-minute limit by 5 minutes without receiving a 0 on their quiz.) Quizzes cover the material assigned during the week in which you take them. Quizzes will only cover required material, not that which is simply recommended.**

To take quizzes, click on [https://www.courses.maine.edu](https://www.courses.maine.edu), log on, then click on assessments, then click on the title of the quiz.

**Disabilities**
Students with disabilities needing special accommodation should contact Ann Smith (581-2319) as early as possible in the semester.

**Cheating**
Documented cases of cheating will result in an F in the course.

**Sexual Misconduct and Gender Discrimination**
To report sexual misconduct or gender discrimination by students, contact the Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention, 207-581-1406. For sexual misconduct or gender discrimination by non-students, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, 207-581-1226.

**Learning Outcomes Assessment**
This course satisfies Department of Anthropology Learning Outcomes Criterion 1: Understand the intricacies and implications of cultural diversity in the past and present.

**Texts:**

Doniger, Wendy, and Martha Craven Nussbaum, eds. *Pluralism and Democracy in India: Debating the Hindu Right*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. This will be available as of Jan. 23rd according to Oxford University Press, which means the bookstore should have it a few days after this date.


**Films:** Although most of the films are on the Course Content page of the course website on Blackboard, some films are on Films on Demand, which can be accessed through the library’s URSUS website ([http://library.umaine.edu/](http://library.umaine.edu/)). Click on Databases, then on Films on Demand, then on the film or segment title you are looking for. Films on Demand are broken down into useful
segments and transcripts. When a film image disappears, just tap your keypad and it will usually return.

**Schedule:** Keep up with the readings, lectures, and films, most of which of which are on the Course Content page of the course website. Readings and films are required unless listed as recommended. Readings should be finished by the dates indicated. Some readings are online with URLs indicated.

**Week 1.** 1/12-18. Lecture: Introduction and Hinduism. *South Asian Religions: Tribal Religions in India, Hinduism.* Films: *Sacred Cows in Hindu India* (02:39) and *Ganesh: Hinduism's Elephant God* (02:08) (Films on Demand), *Puja and Spiritual India: A Guide to Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism.* The images in the latter film (and most of the films you will see in this course) are beautiful, as is the music. But ask yourself if the film tends to gloss over differences in religious beliefs and tensions between religious communities, especially between Hindus and Muslims.

**Week 2.** 1/19-25. (1/19 is Martin Luther King Day. No classes.) Films: *Ganges: River to Heaven, The Fate of Ganga, Boatmen of the Dead, Death and Dying in Varanasi,* and *India: Love and Devotion.* All these films focus on the holy city of Varanasi (Benares) and the holy river of the Ganges. How do they differ?

**Week 3.** 1/26-2/1. *South Asian Religions: Islam in South Asia, Jain Traditions. South Asian Christianity, Sikhism.* Films: *The Jains: A Religious Community of India* (Course Content page) and *Sikhism: The Guru’s Wisdom—Let’s Look at World Religions* (Films on Demand). Recommended films: *Being Muslim in India* (on Course Content page) and *Jainism: Ascetics and Warriors* (Films on Demand). **Quiz 1.**

**Week 4:** 2/2-8. Partition lecture. Yasmine Khan’s *The Great Partition.* Films: *Indian Refugees Flee Violence Following the Division of India and Pakistan* ca. 1947 (Films on Demand) and Deepa Mehta’s film *Earth* (Course Content page). Which film provides greater insight into how Hindus and Muslims experienced partition? Why? How?

**Week 5.** 2/9-15. Gandhi lecture. Films: Series of three documentary films: *The Early Years: Gandhi* (49 minutes); *The Rise to Fame: Gandhi* (53 minutes), *The Road to Freedom: Gandhi* (51:58) (these three films can also be accessed through URSUS, as one would access an ebook).

**Week 6.** 2/16-22. Films: *A Death for Peace: Mahatma Gandhi and the Quest for Peace, Mahatma Gandhi,* and Richard Attenborough’s film *Gandhi.* Which of the films you have seen about Gandhi provide the most insight into the man, his notion of nonviolence, and his impact on India? Why? **Quiz 2.**


Week 10. 3/30-4/5. Caste lecture. Films: *Wages of Action: Religion in a Hindu Village* (1979). This film sheds light on how the caste system functions in traditional villages. *The Indian Miracle?* "UK news journalist, Krishnan Guru-Murthy reveals the dark side of modern India - discrimination against Muslims, a rise in Hindu nationalism, farmers driven to suicide by debt and a caste system which prevents those at the bottom from securing any but the most menial and humiliating jobs. As the gap between rich and poor turns to a chasm, Guru-Murthy questions the social stability of a country that will soon enter the top five of the economic giants" (2007). *Monsoon Wedding* (2002). “Love, lust and hope envelop an upper middle-class Indian family and their world-wide guests as they celebrate for four days the arranged marriage of their daughter to an East Indian man from Texas.” These three films portray very different aspects of modern India. The first two describe the continuing impact of caste discrimination, especially against the “Untouchables” or Dalits. The second two films describe how the lives of wealthy Indians differ radically from the lives of the poor. *Monsoon Wedding* is a comedy rather than a documentary, but it reveals a great deal about modern Indian society.

A town in Sri Lanka is taken over by elephants each year during an important religious festival which has been celebrated for nearly 2,000 years. The Festival of the Tooth honors the memory of Buddha. These short films, like the films about the Kataragama shrine to be seen next week, demonstrate how different Buddhism as actually lived often is from Buddhism as it is portrayed in most textbooks.


Week 13. 4/20-26. Weiss, *The Cage*, 152-233 and Glossary on pp. 234-37. Films: *The Tamil Tigers* documentary by Nicolas Wright and Jonathan Martin," accessible at http://ursus.maine.edu/record=b5956948. *My Daughter the Terrorist* (2007). Made by the first foreign film crew to be given access to the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) of Sri Lanka. Dharsika and Puhalchudar have been living and fighting side-by-side for seven years as part of LTTE's elite force, the Black Tigers. Their story is told through cinema verité footage, newsreel footage, and interviews with the women and Dharsika's mother. The two women describe heartbreaking traumas they both experienced at the hands of the Sri Lankan army, which led them to join the Tamil Tigers. Among the most interesting aspects of this film is that one of these women suicide bombers is a Christian. It is possible that both of them are. A minority of Sri Lanka’s Tamils are Christian. Most are Hindus.


5/1-7. Quiz 5.

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