

**WIVES, LOVERS, MOTHERS, QUEENS:
GODDESSES IN WORLD RELIGIONS AND CULTURES**

ANS 340F/ANT 322J/R S 373G/WGS 340

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Fall 2020

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Office hours: Tuesdays 3:30-6:30 P.M. or by appointment (because of our unusual circumstances, I will be available in 15-minute segments on Zoom, FaceTime, or on the telephone. Please e-mail me with a request for an appointment at least 24 hours in advance)

AIM AND SCOPE OF COURSE

“Goddesses never die. They slip in and out of the world’s cities, in and out of our dreams, century after century, answering to different names, dressed differently, perhaps even disguised, perhaps idle and unemployed, their official altars abandoned, their temples feared or simply forgotten...”.

--Phyllis Chesler
Women and Madness

This course will provide a historical and cross-cultural overview of the relationship between feminine and religious cultural expressions through comparative examinations and analyses of various goddess figures in world religions. We will begin our study in Asia; specifically in India, where goddess worship is a vital part of contemporary Hinduism in all parts of the subcontinent. From the goddesses of the Hindu tradition (Kālī and Lakṣmī, for example), we will move on to female figures in the Jain and Buddhist *Mahāyāna* pantheons (such as Kuan-Yin, popular in China, Korea, and Japan), and then on to some of the goddesses of western antiquity (Inanna, Isis, Athena, and Aphrodite), including a brief consideration of Mary in her various goddess aspects. We will end the course with a brief study of “neo-pagan” goddess worship in America. Issues relating to gender, sexuality, power, and violence (domestic and political) will be emphasized as themes throughout the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Regular attendance. Please do not miss class! It's as simple as that. Mr. St. John and I will be taking attendance, but we are not going to count it towards your final grade because of our current circumstances. While our course is currently listed as a "hybrid/blended" class, out of an abundance of caution, we will begin on Zoom (you can access the class Zoom link via the Canvas course page). If and when we can begin to have face-to-face meetings, we will have to follow strict rules regarding masks and maintaining physical distance (please see below). I will be teaching the course synchronously while we are on Zoom, but I will be recording all of our sessions just in case you fall ill or need to revisit materials in lecture.

Safety and Class Participation/Masks: We will all need to make some adjustments in order to benefit from in-person classroom interactions in a safe and healthy manner. Our best protections against spreading COVID-19 on campus are masks (defined as cloth face coverings) and staying home if you are showing symptoms. Therefore, for the benefit of everyone, this means that you are all required to follow these important rules.

- **Every student must wear a cloth face-covering properly in class and in all campus buildings at all times.**
- **Students are encouraged to participate in documented daily symptom screening.** This means that each class day in which on-campus activities occur, students must upload certification from the symptom tracking app and confirm that they completed their symptom screening for that day to Canvas. Students should not upload the results of that screening, just the certificate that they completed it. If the symptom tracking app recommends that the student isolate rather than coming to class, then students must not return to class until cleared by a medical professional.
- Information regarding [safety protocols with and without symptoms](#) can be [found here](#).

If a student is not wearing a cloth face-covering properly in the classroom (or any UT building), that student must leave the classroom (and building). If the student refuses to wear a cloth face covering, class will be dismissed for the remainder of the period, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action as set forth in the university's Institutional Rules/General Conduct 11-404(a)(3). Students who have a condition that precludes the wearing of a cloth face covering must follow the procedures for [obtaining an accommodation](#) working with [Services for Students with Disabilities](#).

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited: No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It

is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Class Recordings: Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings. If you are for whatever reason uncomfortable with participating in Zoom sessions with your video on, that is just fine. You can leave the space black with your name, or you can put up a photo of yourself (or your pet). Please don't use Zoom backgrounds! Because we are a large class, too many backgrounds operating at once will cause the course to crash.

COVID Caveats: To help keep everyone at UT and in our community safe, it is critical that you report COVID-19 symptoms and testing, regardless of test results, to [University Health Services](#), and faculty and staff report to the [HealthPoint Occupational Health Program](#) (OHP) as soon as possible. Please see this [link](#) to understand what needs to be reported. In addition, to help understand what to do if a fellow student in the class (or the instructor or TA) tests positive for COVID, see this [University Health Services link](#).

2. Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities. Students who require special accommodations must get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students. This letter should be presented to the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made at that time.

4. Religious Holidays. If you find that you must miss a class due to the observance of a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the work you have missed provided that you give me at least one week's notice prior to your absence.

5. Readings. The main readings will be assigned from the texts listed below. Your textbooks are available for purchase at the University Co-op Bookstore, but if you are on a budget, feel free to patronize Amazon or other on-line sources. You'll be able to find many of your textbooks on line at a great price.

Required books:

Kinsley, David. *The Goddesses' Mirror: Visions of the Divine from East and West*.

Pintchman, Tracy. *The Rise of the Goddess in the Hindu Tradition*.

Hawley, John Stratton, ed. *Satī, the Blessing and the Curse: The Burning of Wives in India*.

Cabezón, Jose Ignacio, ed. *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*.

Shaw, Miranda. *Passionate Enlightenment: Women in Tantric Buddhism*.

Recommended book:

Warner, Marina. *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*.

4. Quizzes. There will be four in-class quizzes at regularly-spaced intervals throughout the semester.

5. Paper. You will be required to write one 7-10-page paper on the topic of your choice as long as it is within the scope of class content, though I will provide you with a list of topic “possibilities” in the sixth week of the semester. Although I encourage you to stay within the bounds of the topics list, you may choose your own topic as long as you clear it with me first. The paper will be due by 5 P.M. on the last official class day of the semester (which is **Monday, December 7th**). E-mail submission is just fine, of course.

GRADES

Your topics paper is very important, as it is worth 40% of your final grade. I am happy to read first drafts. Your quizzes are each worth 15% of your final grade. Please note that grades are entirely and absolutely non-negotiable – I will not tolerate any whining about grades. I do NOT give extra credit. I do NOT issue incompletes, unless you or a family member have fallen ill.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1:

August 27th: Orientation and introduction to the course. Read this timely essay by Tulasi Srinivas and watch the accompanying video. https://theconversation.com/indias-goddesses-of-contagion-provide-protection-in-the-pandemic-just-dont-make-them-angry-139745?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=bylinetwitterbutton

WEEK 2:

September 1st: “An Overview and Introduction to the Idea of Feminine Divinity in the Hindu Tradition.” Read Kinsley, pp. ix-xix and Pintchman, pp. 1-18.

September 3rd: “The Vedic Female Demiurge: Goddess or Concept?” Read Pintchman, pp. 19-59.

WEEK 3:

September 8th: On-line tour of the Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, Tamilnadu and discussion. <http://view360.in/virtualtour/madurai/>

September 10th: “Matter, Illusion, Power: The Philosophical Feminine in Early Hindu Thought.” Read Pintchman, pp. 61-115.

WEEK 4:

September 15th: “The Role of Goddesses in Classical Hindu Cosmogonies.” Read Pintchman, pp. 117-143.

September 17th: **QUIZ I (over Pintchman, pp. 1-143).** “The Goddess as Wife and Consort in Classical Hinduism.” Read Pintchman, pp. 144-184.

WEEK 5:

September 22nd: “Durgā, Warrior Goddess and Cosmic Queen.” Read Kinsley, pp. 3-24.

September 24th: “Lakṣmī, Goddess of Abundance and Good Luck.” Read Kinsley, pp. 53-70.

WEEK 6:

September 29th: “Sītā, the Ideal Wife.” Read Kinsley, pp. 91-110.

October 1st: **QUIZ II (over Durgā, Lakṣmī, and Sītā).** FILM: “Devī,” Part I. PAPER TOPICS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED.

WEEK 7:

October 6th: FILM: “Devī,” Part II and discussion.

October 8th: “The Iconographies of *Satī*.” Read Hawley, pp. 3-53.

WEEK 8:

October 13th: “The *Satī* Tradition in Rajasthan.” Read Hawley, pp. 79-99.

October 15th: “The Implications and Symbols of the Roop Kanwar Case.” Read Hawley, pp. 101-172.

WEEK 9:

October 20th: FILM: “Father, Son, and Holy War: Trial by Fire” and discussion.

October 22nd: FILM: “Father, Son, and Holy War: Hero Pharmacy” and discussion.

WEEK 10:

October 27th: “Gender Issues and Early Buddhist History.” Read Cabezón, pp. 3-29 and Shaw, pp. 3-34.

October 29th: “Gender-switching and the Mystery of Kuan-Yin, a *Mahāyāna Bodhisattva*.” Read Kinsley, pp. 25-51 and Cabezón, pp. 159-192.

WEEK 11:

November 3rd: “Women in Tantric Theory and Circles.” Read Shaw, pp. 35-100.

November 5th: “Women in Tantric History and Relationships: Intimacy and Enlightenment.” Read Shaw, pp. 101-178.

WEEK 12:

November 10th: **QUIZ III (on Shaw)**. Guest lecture by David St. John on Bhagvan Malinath, the only female Jain saint.

November 12th: “Goddesses of Western Antiquity I: Inanna and Isis.” Read Kinsley, pp. 113-138 and pp. 165-183.

WEEK 13:

November 17th: “Goddesses of Western Antiquity II: Athena and Aphrodite.” Read Kinsley, pp. 139-164 and pp. 185-214. Also read excerpt from Homer’s *Iliad*.

November 19th: “A Mary Miscellany, Part I.” Read Kinsley, pp. 215-235.

WEEK 14:

November 24th: “A Mary Miscellany, Part II.” Ready Kinsley, pp. 235-260.

November 26th: **NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY.**

WEEK 15:

December 1st: Wrap-up lecture on Mary, and introductory lecture on the Wiccan revival and Paganism. No readings for today.

December 3rd: **QUIZ IV (over Kinsley, pp. 113-138, 165-183, and 215-260)**. Final questions and farewells.

Your final paper is due on Monday, December 7th by 5 P.M., and electronic submission is just fine, of course. Depending on your circumstances, I am more than willing to be flexible about this due date, but you must work out your arrangements with me in advance.