

## Love in Indian Culture: Course Outline

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IAS 2590 – September – December 2009

Lecture: Wednesdays 2:30–4:15 pm, ERB 405

Tutorial: Thursdays 5:30–6:15 (& to-be-arranged)

### 1. Course Description

This course enables students to gain awareness and appreciation of literary and other representations of, and reflections on, the fundamental human experience of love, through the lens of Indian culture. As will be argued in this course, one of India's greatest contributions to world culture, over its more than 3000 year history, is its reflection, especially through literature, but very much also in the visual and performing arts, on the meaning, practice, and implications of love. In this course we will examine famous Indian love stories and love poetry, consider Indian philosophical discussion of love in comparison with some important western thinkers' contributions on the subject, and view and discuss excerpts of some contemporary Indian cinematic representations of love.

This journey through Indian insights into the perennially engaging theme of love will be driven by a constellation of questions about its nature and possibility. What is love? How is it awakened or lost? What makes a person able to love? Is there such a thing as pure love? And perhaps most importantly, How is love sustained and expanded in a world characterized by impermanence? At the same time the course will challenge students to consider what are the cultural assumptions behind the texts we examine – especially assumptions about women and their social “roles”; Indian “caste”; the aesthetics of *rasa* (taste, relish of relationship); notions of reality (*sat*) versus illusion (*maya*); action and reaction (*karma*); renunciation (*tyaga*) and liberation (*moksha*); and divine love (*bhakti* and *prema*).

### 2. Course Syllabus

Week	Topic	Description
1 Sept. 9	Beginning the journey: Course Introduction	Basic questions driving the course; scope and brief overview of content; expectations for assessment
2 Sept. 16	Love in a sacrificial world: ancient brahmanical texts; meanings of <i>kama</i>	Vedic creativity and desire; ritual and cosmic order; production and reproduction;

		love in the Veda Comparison: Five Greek forms of love, Sorokin's aspects and dimensions of love, & C.S. Lewis' <i>The Four Loves</i>
3 Sept. 23	Love, war, & world order I (Sanskrit epic literature – 1)	the <i>Ramayana</i> epic; love and duty; derivative literature ( <i>Ramacaritamanas</i> ); introduction to the concept of <i>bhakti</i> Comparison: Sita & Helen
4 Sept. 30	Love, war, & world order II (Sanskrit epic literature – 2)	The <i>Mahabharata</i> epic; Love and misfortune (the story of Nala & Damayanti); Draupadi and her five husbands; Debates on worldly engagement versus disengagement
5 Oct. 7	Romantic Love: Early medieval expressions	Kalidas' <i>Shakuntala</i> ; Vatsyayana's <i>Kamasutra</i> ; love & nature; love & separation; love & aesthetic representation Comparisons: Western & East Asian ideas of romantic love (1)
6 Oct. 14	Divine love (Bhakti texts – 1)	The <i>Bhagavata Purana</i> ; Krishna as divine lover & object of love; love-in-separation ( <i>viraha</i> ); the <i>Song of the Bumble Bee</i> Comparison: the Gopis' questions to Krishna & the <i>Symposium</i>
7 Oct. 21	Romantic divine love: The <i>Gitagovinda</i> (Bhakti texts – 2)	Jayadeva's <i>Gitagovinda</i> ; Aesthetic "taste" ( <i>rasa</i> ); Comparisons: European court poetry (East/West romantic love 2)
8 Oct. 28	Vernacular literature (Bhakti texts – 3)	Tamil traditions: Akam poetry, the Alvars and Nayanmars North Indian traditions: Surdas, Mirabai Comparisons: <i>agape</i> and <i>bhakti</i>
9 Nov. 4	The Moghul Period	Sufi poetry and mystical ideology Comparison: Plotinus & mystic ecstasy

10 Nov. 11	Interlude: the emotions of love and cultural expectations; the meeting of East & West in India	Reviewing examples previously examined; Colonial Indian representations of love; Comparison: (examples from Chinese literature?)
11 Nov. 18	Modern representations I	Love and modernity; M.K. Gandhi & R. Tagore on love Love and technology; Film excerpts ( <i>Apu's World...</i> )
12 Nov. 25	Modern representations II	Love and belonging Film excerpts ( <i>Devdas; Mr. &amp; Mrs. Iyer</i> )
13 Dec. 2	Concluding reflections: Love, imagination, responsibility, and personhood	Reviewing of themes treated throughout the course.

### 3. Learning Outcomes

Knowledge outcomes: Students can expect to be able to identify essential Indian classics dealing with the theme of love and to describe essential features of these texts' approaches to the subject; they will gain *ability* to *interpret* and make *comparisons* with respect to key ideas from different texts, about love as emotion and as social reality.

Skills outcomes: Students will gain *competence* in *reading, listening, speaking* and *writing* about the theme of love as a topic of reflection and analysis. As the course will be taught in English, with English translations of primary texts and also secondary readings in English, students whose native language is not English have the opportunity to engage and develop their English knowledge while becoming exposed to a fascinating galaxy of human cultural expression.

Attitude outcomes: Students can expect to develop a greater appreciation of literature from a foreign culture and a deeper appreciation of the complexities in the theme of love, as a basis for an enriched personal and social life.

### 4. Teaching and learning activities

The course will consist of weekly lectures and tutorial sessions, both for which attendance is expected and required. There will be assigned readings each week, from which students will be expected to prepare questions for discussion. If time and scheduling allows, we will also have some brief film excerpt viewing, also as the basis for discussions.

It is understood that English is not the first language of most students attending this course. Since the medium of instruction, reading, etc. will be English, students should allow for sufficient extra time to read and study for the course outside the classroom—by taking the time to carefully read the assigned readings and making sure the content of lectures is comprehended (one should plan to spend at least four hours per week outside of class time for reading and preparation). As it is a concern of the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies and of the CUHK administration that their students develop better English skills, it is expected that students make all effort to take full advantage of this opportunity in this course.

The class will meet for three periods each week. The double period (Wednesdays) will be used for lectures and discussion, and the single period (Thursdays, beginning September 24) will be for tutorial groups.

## 5. Assessment

Participation – 10%: Students are required to attend and participate in both lectures and tutorials.

Writing Assignments – 40%: There will be two (2) short writing assignments of circa 1500 words each (20% each = 40%).

Journal – 20%: Students are expected to keep a journal, reflectively responding to ideas and texts presented in lectures, and to weekly readings (to be submitted through Moodle: more details forthcoming)

Presentation – 25%: One oral tutorial presentation based on assigned readings (15%); and a short written report based on the presentation (10%).

More details on these assignments will be provided.

## 6. Learning Resources / Required and recommended readings

Excerpts and articles from the following list will be assigned or recommended from week to week for reading. (Some entries are books, from which excerpts or articles will be drawn; some entries are articles. Other additional readings not listed here may be assigned or recommended, but not all students will be reading all the same selections). Some texts will be available in the library (Chung Chi library); others will be made available as photocopies or electronically.

Dehejia, Harsha. *The Flute and the Lotus: Romantic Moments in Indian Poetry and Painting*. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 2002.

Delmonico, Neal. 1995. "How to partake in the love of Krishna." In *Religions of India in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., chapt. 13. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [CC: BL 2001.2.R384.1995]

Dimmock, Edward, and Denise Levertov, eds. 1965. *In Praise of Krishna: Songs from the Bengali*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Harlan, Lindsey, & Paul B. Courtright. 1995. *From the margins of Hindu marriage*. New York: Oxford University Press. [UL: HQ670.F76.1995]
- Hawley, John Stratton, and Donna Marie Wulff, eds. 1982. *The Divine Consort: Radha and the Goddesses of India*. Berkeley: Berkeley Religious Studies Series (U.C. Press). [CC: BL 1225.Q24.D58]
- Kalidas. *Sakuntala*. [English trans. at CUHK: see Lal, P., below] (a Chinese version is available: CC\_PK3796.S49 C5 1947).
- Klostermaier, Klaus K. 1994. *A survey of Hinduism*. 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press. [CC: BL1202.K56.1994]
- Lal, P. 1964. *Great Sanskrit Plays in new English transcreations*. New York: New Directions [CC: PK4474.A5L3]
- Leslie, I. Julia, ed. 1991. *Roles and rituals for Hindu women*. Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press. [CC: BL1237.46.R64]
- Lewis, C.S. 1960. *The Four Loves*. Orlando: Harcourt, Brace, & Co, 1988.
- Lynch, Owen M., ed. 1990. *Divine passions: the social construction of emotion in India*. Berkeley: University of California Press [electronic resource?]
- Miller, Barbara Stoler, trans. 1977. *Love Song of the Dark Lord: Jayadeva's Gitagovinda*. New York: Columbia University Press. [HKUmain 891.21 J42 C1 g02M].
- Phillips, Christopher. *Socrates In Love: Philosophy for a Die-Hard Romantic*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.
- Pollock, Griselda, et al. *The Sacred and the Feminine: imagination and sexual difference*. Ch 8: 'Sringara Rasa: the feminist call of the spiritual/erotic impulse in indian art'. [NA: N.72.F45.S23.2007]
- Raheja, Gloria Goodwin, and Ann grodzins Gold. 1994. *Listen to the heron's words: reimagining gender and kinship in North India*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [UL: GR 305.5.L18.R34.1994]
- Ramanujan, A.K., ed. and trans. 1985. *Poems of love and war: from the Eight Anthologies and the Ten Long Poems of classical Tamil*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ramanujan, A.K., et al, ed. and trans. 1994. *When God is a customer: Telegu courtesan songs*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [electronic resource]
- Ramanujan, A.K., ed and trans. 1967. *The interior landscape: love poems from a classical Tamil anthology*. Bloomington: Indian University Press. [NA? PL4760.E3.K8]
- Randhawa, Mohindar Singh. 1962. *Kangra paintings on love*. New Delhi: National Museum. [NA: Oversize: ND1007.K35.K32]
- Rosen, Steven, ed. 1996. *Vaisnavi: Women and the worship of Krishna*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

- Schweig, Graham M. 2005. *Dance of Divine Love: The Rasa Lila of Krishna from the Bhagavata Purana, India's Classic Sacred Love Story*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Siegel, Lee. 1978. *Sacred and profane dimensions of love in Indian traditions*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sorokin, Pitirim. 2002 [1954]. *The ways and power of love: types, factors, and techniques of moral transformation*.
- Upadhyaya, S.C., trans. *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*. 1961. [UL: HQ470.53.V33]
- Vaudeville, Charlotte. 1962. "Evolution of love-symbolism in Bhagavatism." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 31-40. [electronic resource].
- Valmiki's *Ramayana* [excerpt; version to be determined]
- Vyasa's *Mahabharata* [excerpt; version to be determined]
- White, Gordon David, ed. *Tantra in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## FILMS

- Kama Sutra*. Mira Nair, dir. 1997.
- Lagaan*. Ashutosh Gowariker, dir. 2001.
- Mother India*. Mehboob, dir. 2005.
- The Namesake*. Mira Nair, dir. 2007.
- A Passage to India*. David Lean, dir. 2000.
- Salaam Bombay*. Mira Nair, dir. 2003.
- Slumdog Millionaire*. Danny Boyle & Loveleen Tandan, dirs. 2009.
- Water*. Deepa Mehta, dir. 2006.
- The World of Apu* (Trilogy: *Pather Panchali* & *Aparajito* are the first two films). Satyajit Ray, dir. 1996 (1959). [UC Video-VHS PN1997.A683 1996]

## 7. Feedback for Evaluation

Students will be encouraged to communicate their evaluations of the course, especially as this is part of a completely new development of Indian studies at CUHK. Details of how evaluations can be communicated will be given during the course.

## 8. Lecturer's and Teaching Assistant's contact details

Dr. Kenneth Valpey

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Telephone: 2609-6622

E-mail: [kvalpey@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:kvalpey@cuhk.edu.hk)

Lecture venue: CKB UG05

Moodle website: \_\_\_\_\_.

Teaching Assistant:

Ms. MARTIN, Karine

Telephone: 6145-2740

E-mail: [martinkarine2000@hotmail.com](mailto:martinkarine2000@hotmail.com)

## **10. Course announcements**

We will have a Moodle-based internet site for our use to facilitate communication. Also, all students should feel free to meet with the instructor, Dr. Valpey, and/or the teaching assistants, for any questions that may arise in relation to this course during the semester, or just for a chat about course topics.

## **11. Academic honesty and plagiarism**

Please read and be aware of the University's policy on academic honesty and plagiarism, available at this location:

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> . The general principle in academic work is that we 'give credit where credit is due', never claiming or implying that others' ideas or writing are our own.