

Content Objectives for Introductory Unit

By the end of this introduction you should be able to describe:

1. the structure of this team-based learning course.
2. (a) the three branches of Hindu tradition &
(b) Hinduism as it exists in America today.
3. (a) the terminology used to analyze religion in this course &
(b) things to avoid when studying other religious traditions.

STUDY GUIDE KEY:

RED = important practices & source sections

GREEN = terms for TRA

IMPORTANT: * = essential info in EGHT

Course Structure & Team-Based Learning

(a) from course policies

classroom etiquette
attendance

(b) TBL assignments

study guide
team readiness assessment (TRA)
application exercises for teams

terminology for the academic study of religion
“Essential Elements of Religious Life (on-line syllabus)

(a) “The Academic Study of Religion” (intro & 1st section)

objectivity empathy neutrality

(b) belief & the unseen (2nd & 3rd sections)

belief vs. reflection
unseen powers unseen forces unseen worlds

(c) “Dimensions & Layers: ...the Visible Elements of Religion” (remainder)

practice actions objects words spaces
community specialists

“American **Hindus:* The Ganges and the Mississippi”**
(under “Additional Readings” in the Learning Modules tab of [SacCT](#))

One Reality kaleidoscope
Vishnu* Vaishnava/ite* Krshna* Shiva* Shaiva/ite* Rāma*

(a) introduction (p.80-82)

civic vs. religious pluralism
Woburn Clergy Association 66,000 gods

(b) Sunnyvale, CA: Persian Road (p.82-84)

namaste pujari imaging the divine (=image making*)
Rāma* Saravatī* Kālī*

(c) Livermore, CA: North Vasco Road (p.84-86)

Lakshmī* central deity Kalinga vs. Chola
priest newborn baby new car blessing

American temple-based Hinduism = Hindu temple culture
“Lord Krshna*...,” “Pilgrimage to Pittsburg,” “Michigan Marriage...,”
“...Holi in New Jersey” & “Growing up Hindu...”
(under “Additional Readings” in the Learning Modules tab of [SacCT](#))

(a) Hare Krishna temples & Sayreville, New Jersey: (p.116-20, 130-34)

[A.C./Swami]	Bhaktivedanta	Krshna*	Chaitanya	Rādha
	anticult movement		Chariot Festival	
<i>darshan</i>	Janmashtami	Holi	<i>gulal</i>	Holika fire

(b) Pittsburg, PA, Lanham, Maryland & Detroit, Michigan: (p.123-30)

	rivers	Venkateswara	<i>bhajans</i>
	Vaishno Devi	Sivaya Subramniaswami	
“mud room”	wedding	Rāma*	Sītā
			Hanumān vs. Superman

(c) California, New Jersey & Pennsylvania (p.134-40)

<i>samskaras</i>	baby	priest	bananas & apples	sacred thread
Graduation Puja		Arsha Vidya Gurukula		Himalayan Institute
second generation [of Hindu immigrants]			family and youth camps	

universalist Hinduism* assimilated to American culture
Swami Vivekananda & Yogananda Paramahansa (RDR, 9-15)

(under “Additional Readings” in the Learning Modules tab of [SacCT](#))

(a) “America’s First Hindu (p.96-101)

Kate Sanborn	Green Acre	Hardman Hall	
World Parliament of Religion	universal religion	string of pearls	Raja Yoga

(b) “The Vedanta Society” (p.101-4)

Swami Tathagatananda	Indian immigrants	<i>sannyasi</i>	monastery/convent
Ramkrishna	Jesus and Buddha	Vedanta	

(c) “The ‘Science of Religion’” (p.105-8)

science of yoga	“original Christianity”	mind-body medical movement
mail-order self-study	Harry T. Rowe	Lake Shrine Center

passages to locate and study in the primary source:

"The black image has four arms and bears the traditional emblems of Krishna--the club, the conch, the discus. This image of Krishna, now elaborately decked with clothing, garlands, and necklaces, is the permanent, consecrated one. AT his feet, however, is a smaller metal image of Krishna as the child, endearingly called Lalji. It is this fully consecrated image that is moved from place to place during the day, duplicating the presence of Krishna in the larger image. In this form Krishna is taken from the altar into the back chamber of the temple at bedtime, is awakened in the morning, is brought once again to the altar... and is moved at special times into the swing next to the altar to enjoy the pleasures of swinging."

"How does one explain all this to people encountering it for the first time? Why so many gods? Why the images? These certainly are the questions of anyone reared in the monotheistic traditions of the West. Not only the many gods, but the prolific imaging of the divine is a problem. The taboo against the 'graven image' runs deep in our consciousness, and most people don't take the time to study Hinduism and ask just what it all means. My own metaphor has always been the kaleidoscope, with its multitude of tiny parts and pieces, colors and forms, the whole glittering altar [of a Hindu temple.] And yet, with a twist of the wrist, all these pieces fall into a different pattern; there are many centers and many intricate displays of the periphery."

"The event began with a meal, which the boys shared with their mothers, in former times marking the last such meal they would share with the women of the household. In the long series of rites that followed, the boys signified their readiness for what lay ahead by standing on a stone slab, symbolic of the firmness of resolve that must accompany a life of learning. Each received the sacred thread, a white three-stranded cord that was tied by the father and the guru around the boy's chest, over the right shoulder, and under the left arm. They will wear this sacred thread for the rest of their lives. Toward the end of the ceremony, the whole assembled family was called to attention for the...receiving of the sacred teachings."

"...the priest again asked the whole congregation to join in prayer. 'Please pray if your daughter or son is of the age to get married,' he began. A deep and prayerful silence fell across the hall. 'Pray that they will get a good match and will enjoy the blessings of a good marriage.' Thsi fire prayer was clearly heartfelt, for these Indian immigrant parents who have chosen to settle in [an American city] are uncertain what it will mean for their children and grandchildren. For most, a 'good marriage' means to a Hindu young man or woman hailing from their own strata and part of India, but here in the United States, most will be grateful for a good marriage to any young Hindu man or woman. The intermarriage rate among Indian Americans is high."