

Hindu Spiritual Care

Course Description

This course of 60 contact hours offers an opportunity for students to study contemplative theory and practice using Hindu scriptures, interreligious resources as well as scientific resources from Transpersonal psychology, Neuroscience and Chaplaincy. Emphasis will be on practical and contemplative approaches to gaining wisdom from these resources (details given in the syllabus below). Students will be encouraged to find a location for Field Work in a Temple or Chinmaya Mission community, or in a local hospital setting, in order to volunteer as a chaplain-in-training. Students will bring their experiences to the class. The course will conclude with an assignment for each student to present a written “verbatim” study of a spiritual care interaction (drawn from their Field Work) and understand how the healing in their care is based on practical Vedantic theology.

Course Introduction

The field of Vedānta-Informed Chaplaincy explores contemplative approaches to scriptural studies to gain theological knowledge that can be applied in practical spiritual care settings. The field of Spiritual Care, while still emerging, is recognized by the American Academy of Religion, and is increasingly taught both as a university discipline as well as clinical/hospital settings. Students will learn how scholars in contemplative studies use various scientific, interdisciplinary, interpersonal, and comparative-theological tools and methods.

Course Objectives

- The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to the “Mindfulness to Transcendence” (MT) framework of the clinical chaplaincy/spiritual care process.
- Students will learn how to identify interpersonal narratives in Hindu scriptural texts and study them using the MT framework of the clinical spiritual care process.
- Going between their scriptural studies and interpersonal spiritual care case studies in their Field education (seva or clinical chaplaincy settings), the students will try to gain the practical experiential understanding of Vedanta

theology underlying the MT framework of chaplain.

Course Outcome

At the end of the course the students would be able to

- Identify the main themes in Hindu slokas and images.
- Describe the mental state of Brāhmaṇa and a sthitaprajña as related to chaplaincy.
- Demonstrate ability to interpret yoga sūtras using Sanskrit language skills as well as psychology and neuroscience.
- Apply the clinical chaplaincy framework in the study of Bhagavadgita and Rāmāyaṇa.
- Analyze the place for Comparative theological studies in the chaplaincy contexts.

Pedagogy

This course employs classroom lectures, weekly reflections, online discussion boards, readings, and class presentations. The student is expected to actively engage in the components mentioned above. The student is also encouraged to practice the clinical skills of chaplaincy in his/her community setting.

Suggested Readings:

- Coomaraswamy, Ananda K., and Joseph A. Fitzgerald. *The Wisdom of Ananda Coomaraswamy: Reflections on Indian Art, Life, and Religion*. World Wisdom, 2011. (Available of Google Books)
- Seshadri K. G. (2014). Endocrinology and the arts at the feet of the dancing Lord: Parathyroid hormone resistance in an Indian icon. *Indian journal of endocrinology and metabolism*, 18(2), 226–228. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2230-8210.129117>
- Ramakrishnan P. (2014). Response to the "Endocrinology and the arts at the feet of the dancing Lord: Parathyroid hormone resistance in an Indian icon". *Indian journal of endocrinology and metabolism*, 18(5), 741–742.
- Ramakrishnan P. (2019) Understanding Clinical Chaplaincy Approach to Biomedical Ethics: An Imminent Need and a Challenge. In: Lucchetti G., Prieto Peres M., Damiano R. (eds) *Spirituality, Religiousness and Health*. Religion, Spirituality and Health: A Social Scientific Approach, vol 4. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21221-6_13
- Chinmayananda, Swami. [no date] *The Holy Geeta*. Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust.
- Chinmayananda, Swami. (1980) *Meditation and Life*. Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust.
- Swaroopananda, Swami. (2018) *Maha Mrityunjaya: The Mantra of Life over Death*. Mumbai: Chinmaya Prakashan. Kindle Edition

- Tejomayananda, Swami. 1993. *Hindu Culture: An Introduction*. USA: Chinmaya Mission West.
- Madhusudana Saraswati *Bhagavad-Gita* (translated by Swami Gambhirananda. Advaita Ashrama; First, 3rd reprint edition (May 24, 1998)
- Winthrop Sargeant. *The Bhagavad Gita: Twenty-fifth-Anniversary Edition* (Excelsior Editions) 2009.
- P. Ramakrishnan, "Rama in the Forest: A Hindu chaplaincy framework for grief resolution from Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa." *Hindu Approaches to Spiritual Care*, p. 93-104.
- Methodology of Reenactment hermeneutics: Stueber, Karsten R. "The Psychological Basis of Historical Explanation: Reenactment, Simulation, and the Fusion of Horizons." *History and Theory*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2002, pp. 25–42., doi:10.1111/1468-2303.00189
- Bharata-Mun. *The Nāṭyaśāstrās*. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Academy (January 1, 2002)
- Royona Mitra (2016) Decolonizing Immersion, *Performance Research*, 21:5, 89-100, DOI: 10.1080/13528165.2016.1215399 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13528165.2016.1215399>
- Feuerstein, Georg. (1989) *The Yoga- sūtra of Patañjali: A New Translation and Commentary*. United Kingdom: Inner Traditions/Bear.
- Francis X. Clooney. (2010) *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Borders*. Wiley Blackwell

Module 1: Understanding Vedānta Theology

(12 hours)

This is the introductory module in which the students can learn Vedānta theology through ślokas, hymns and images, and Hindu festivals, pujas and vratas. The topics include - Introduction to Hindu ślokas, study of Hindu images, svādhyāya for chaplaincy purposes.

Students will also learn how to present their clinical interaction in "Verbatim" highlighting the contemplative or mindfulness processes that are involved in it. Such a chaplaincy case study is dubbed as "The Verbatim."

Required Readings:

- Week-1:
 - Study of selected dhyana ślokaś, regular pūjā-stotrās (worship-hymns) (to be shared)
 - Come to the class to share your favourite set of dhyana shlokas to study them.

- Understanding the basics of studying Sanskrit texts (sūtra, mantrās, and ślokās) and how to interpret them for scholarly studies and clinical chaplaincy.
- Here are a few weblinks handy for Sanskrit dictionary typing and diacritics:
 - <https://www.learnsanskrit.cc/>
 - https://www.lexilogos.com/keyboard/sanskrit_devanagari.htm
 - https://www.lexilogos.com/keyboard/sanskrit_latin.htm
- Week-2:
 - Coomaraswamy, Ananda K., and Joseph A. Fitzgerald. *The Wisdom of Ananda Coomaraswamy: Reflections on Indian Art, Life, and Religion*. World Wisdom, 2011. (Available of Google Books)
 - Seshadri K. G. (2014). Endocrinology and the arts at the feet of the dancing Lord: Parathyroid hormone resistance in an Indian icon. *Indian journal of endocrinology and metabolism*, 18(2), 226–228. <https://doi.org/10.4103/2230-8210.129117>
 - Ramakrishnan P. (2014). Response to the "Endocrinology and the arts at the feet of the dancing Lord: Parathyroid hormone resistance in an Indian icon". *Indian journal of endocrinology and metabolism*, 18(5), 741–742.
- Week-3
 - Parameshwaran R. (2015). Theory and practice of chaplain's spiritual care process: A psychiatrist's experiences of chaplaincy and conceptualizing trans-personal model of mindfulness. *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 57(1), 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.148511>
 - Ramakrishnan P. (2019) Understanding Clinical Chaplaincy Approach to Biomedical Ethics: An Imminent Need and a Challenge. In: Lucchetti G., Prieto Peres M., Damiano R. (eds) *Spirituality, Religiousness and Health. Religion, Spirituality and Health: A Social Scientific Approach*, vol 4. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21221-6_13
- Week-4: Cooperative and Self-reflective Class Assessment.

Suggested Readings:

- Chinmayananda, Swami. (1980) *Meditation and Life*. Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust.
- Chinmayananda, Swami. (2002) *Vishnu Sahasranama: 1000 Ways to the Transcendental*. Mumbai: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust
- Nathan, R.S. (1983) *Symbolism in Hinduism*. Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust
- Swaroopananda, Swami. *Maha Mrityunjaya: The Mantra of Life over Death*. Mumbai: Chinmaya Prakashan. Kindle Edition
- Swaroopananda, Swami. (2007) *Sankat Mochan Ashtakam*. Mumbai: Central

Chinmaya Mission Trust

- Tejomayananda, Swami. (2008) *Hanuman Chalisa*. Mumbai: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust

Module 2: Bhagavadgītā Studies and Chaplaincy hours)

(12

This module concentrates on looking inwards, providing glimpses of the nature of Self. *Srimad-bhagavad-gītā* is undoubtedly the best text to know about the Self. This module focuses on Vedic teachings on the Self and the other. We will explore what is the meaning of death, what is loss, what is pain and suffering, and so on. The topics include an introduction to scholarly studies on Hindu scriptures, ātman-anātman debate, bhakti and jñāna etc. Upanisads (focus on *Chāndogya*) will be examined as well.

Required Readings:

- Week-1: Bring to the class your favourite BG shloka/s to discuss how you will apply them in (clinical) spiritual care.
 - Chinmayananda, Swami. [no date] *The Holy Geeta*. Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust. Select Chapters 1, 2, 5, 8, 12, 15, 16
 - Madhusudana Saraswati *Bhagavad-Gita* (translated by Swami Gambhirananda.) Advaita Ashrama; First, 3rd reprint edition (May 24, 1998)
 - Winthrop Sargeant. *The Bhagavad Gita: Twenty-fifth–Anniversary Edition* (Excelsior Editions) 2009.
 - For Bhagavad-Gita chanting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XFXFVeQ8dg>
- Week-2: Same as above + Upanishadic studies, for example:
 - Chandogya Upanishad (Focus on Uddalaka Shvetaketu interaction: <https://iami1.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/chandogyachapter6some-shlokas.pdf>) and Implications on interreligious chaplaincy
 - Chinmayananda, Swami (1977) *Isavasyopanisad*. Madras: Chinmaya Publications Trust.
 - *Hinduism at a Glance: Gita and Upanisads* (1996) Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust.
- Week-3: Chaplaincy case studies:
 - Parameshwaran R. (2015). Theory and practice of chaplain's spiritual care process: A psychiatrist's experiences of chaplaincy and conceptualizing trans-personal model of mindfulness. *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 57(1), 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.148511>
 - Ramakrishnan P. (2019) Understanding Clinical Chaplaincy Approach to Biomedical Ethics: An Imminent Need and a Challenge. In: Lucchetti

G., Prieto Peres M., Damiano R. (eds) Spirituality, Religiousness and Health. Religion, Spirituality and Health: A Social Scientific Approach, vol 4. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21221-6_13

- Week-4: Cooperative and Self-reflective Class Assessment.

Module 3: Itihāsās through the Lens of Chaplaincy

(12 hours)

This module concentrates on the application of the concepts learned in the previous module with models available in our Itihāsās. Its emphasis on learning how the narratives from Hindu Itihāsās can be profound examples of spiritual caregiving. Students will learn how to study the interaction between Lakshmana and Rama through the clinical chaplaincy lens. The Verbatim methodology to understand how Lakshmana provided spiritual care to Rama.

Students will be encouraged to identify a setting in which to practice Spiritual Care skills, such as a temple, Hindu congregation, university or hospital chaplaincy department, and become familiar with the chaplain's deep listening skills in his/her interpersonal interaction with the care recipient. This is when they would begin presenting their spiritual care interactions as Verbatim case studies.

Required Readings:

- Week-1: Bring one short story of incident/scene from Ramayana which you are very curious to study and understand for spiritual care purposes.
 - Selected readings (sargās) from Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: Here are a couple of handy websites (1) <https://www.valmiki.iitk.ac.in/> (2) <http://valmikiramayan.pcriot.com/>
- Week-2:
 - Same as above
- Week-3: Clinical chaplaincy-informed study of Ramayana
 - P. Ramakrishnan, "Rama in the Forest: A Hindu chaplaincy framework for grief resolution from Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa." *Hindu Approaches to Spiritual Care*, p. 93-104.
 - Methodology of Reenactment hermeneutics: Stueber, Karsten R. "The Psychological Basis of Historical Explanation: Reenactment, Simulation, and the Fusion of Horizons." *History and Theory*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2002, pp. 25-42., doi:10.1111/1468-2303.00189
- Week-4: Cooperative and Self-reflective Class Assessment.

Suggested Readings:

- Bharata-Muni. The Nāṭyaśāstrās. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Academy (January 1, 2002)

- Royona Mitra (2016) Decolonizing Immersion, *Performance Research*, 21:5, 89-100, DOI:10.1080/13528165.2016.1215399
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13528165.2016.1215399>
- Rajagopalachari, C. 2015. *Ramayana*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- Subramaniam, Kamala. 1983. *Ramayana*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

Module 4: Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra (PYS) Studies and Chaplaincy (12 hours)

This module is devoted to practise-based understanding of yogic approach to chaplaincy. The students will be initiated into studying yoga sūtras consisting of 4 chapters.

Introduction to the Contemplative Spiritual Care/Chaplaincy Process. The readings in this section will build upon the learnings from the previous three modules to facilitate the students' skills and understandings on deep/empathic listening. The required readings on PYS will help students identify the contemplative (Mindfulness-based) chaplaincy framework in their spiritual care interactions.

Required Readings:

- Week-1: Come to the class with your favourite (set of) sutras from Patanjali's Yoga Sutra's 1st and 2nd Pada to discuss how they can inform and be informed by neuroscience and psychology.
 - Chidananda, Swami. (1973) *Path to Blessedness: Quintessence of Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali*. Rishikesh: Divine Life Society
 - Feuerstein, Georg. (1989) *The Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali: A New Translation and Commentary*. United Kingdom: Inner Traditions/Bear
 - Web Resources:
 - <https://yogasutraforinnerwork.wordpress.com/chapter-1-samadhi-pada/>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y87Ktcar6R4>
- Week-2: Come to the class with your favourite (set of) sutras from Patanjali's Yoga Sutra's 3rd and 4th Pada to discuss how they can inform and be informed by neuroscience and psychology.
- Week-3: Studying how to apply Patanjali's YS to study Sita's agnipariksha in Valmiki Ramayanam
- Week-4: Cooperative and Self-reflective Class Assessment.

Module 5: Interreligious Reading and Chaplaincy

(12 Hours)

This is the final module of the course where students are made aware of non-Hindu traditions also. The primary objective is to facilitate students to learn and understand how to gain deeper insights in Vedānta theology through the empathetic study of selected narratives from the Holy scriptures of non-Hindu traditions.

Required Readings:

- Week-1: Francis X. Clooney. (2010). *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Borders*. Wiley Blackwell
- Week-2: Bring a scriptural narrative from the scriptural texts of religious tradition other than yours to
 - (1) empathetically study and understand it through the theological lens of your religions tradition, and
 - (2) apply the methodology of "Clooney's Comparative Theology" for spiritual care in interreligious settings
- Week-3: Studying how to apply the Clooney's CT methodology to study the practical theology of clinical chaplaincy.
- Week-4: Cooperative and Self-reflective Class Assessment.

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STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

OUTCOME	ASSESSMENT
1. Identify the main themes in Hindu shlokas and images.	1. A summative paper (about 300 words) on any one of the ślokās or images of worship in Hindu tradition. (<u>Due Week 4</u>)
2. Describe the mental status of Brāhmaṇa and a sthitaprajña	2. A Critical Essay that analyzes the verses of choice from Bhagavad to highlight the importance of the practice-based study of theology (300 words). (<u>Due Week 8</u>)
3. Demonstrate ability to interpret yoga sūtras using Sanskrit language skills as well as psychology and neuroscience.	3. An Analytical Essay elaborating of student's choice of yoga sūtras and their interpretation using psychology, phenomenology and/or neuroscience. (300 words) (<u>Due Week 12</u>)
4. Apply the clinical chaplaincy framework in the study of Rāmāyaṇa.	4. Using a select portion of Rāmāyaṇa to illustrate the chaplaincy process in it. (300 words). (<u>Due Week 16</u>)
5. Analyze the place Comparative theological studies in the chaplaincy contexts.	5. Apply the comparative theological knowledge from the resources offered in the course to study the verbatim spiritual care interaction from Field Education for self-reflective study of the healing outcomes in the care. (1500 words; <u>Due Week 20</u>)