This course studies the social basis of early Indian religious traditions. What were the historical contexts in which institutionalized religions emerged, evolved and transformed over centuries, is the primary concern. In chronological terms, the developments from the early Vedic traditions of the mid-second millennium BCE to the early medieval periods will be thematically surveyed.

I. Historiography of early Indian religious traditions: Problems and Perspectives
   In this theme, we look at the ways in which scholars from different disciplinary viewpoints, including history, have understood Indian religious traditions. The recent emphases on inter-disciplinary methods to study mythologies, sacred texts and liturgy that constitute religious traditions will be discussed.

II. Religion and society as revealed by early Vedic literature: The Rg Veda is a landmark for two reasons – it provides the first literary evidence for the settling of Indo-Aryan speaking communities in the sub-continent. Secondly, it allows us to study the social contexts in which Vedic religion had its roots.

III. Religion and society on the basis of later Vedic texts: Development of ritual priesthood and caste system. The elaboration of sacrifice and its socio-economic implications will be discussed.

IV. Religious movements of the sixth century BCE: Buddhism and Jainism, can we call them sectarian developments or sramanic movements? We look at the origins of the movements from what we know of their founders/prominent leaders. What was the social context that led to the development of such traditions? What were the philosophical currents that these traditions were engaging, discussing and debating with?

V. Evolution of Puranic religions: Image worship and associated rituals; the concepts of bhakti and ahimsa; the process of brahmanization of tribal cults; the concepts of acculturation, Sanskritization; the typologies of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Durgā.

VI. Schisms within Buddhism and Jainism: evolution of institutionalized forms of both traditions. The temporal spread of the traditions, acculturation/transformation through interactions with local traditions.

VII. The legend of Rāma Daśarathi and the evolution of his cult. This theme explores the ways in which Rāma appears as an iconic figure in early medieval literature and seeks reasons for this conspicuous positioning of the hero/deity and the cult that developed around him.

VIII. Inter-cultural exchanges, syncretism and contestations
Reading list:


Bhattacharya, N.N., *The Indian Mother Goddess*, Manohar, Delhi, 1999 (1970).*

--------, *Ancient Indian Rituals and Their Social Contexts*, Manohar, Delhi, 1996 (1975).*

--------, *History of the Sakta religion*, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1974.


--------, *God as Mother: A Feminine Theology in India An Historical and Theological Study of the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, Śrī Satguru, Delhi, 1990.


--------,


Chakravarti, Uma,  
*The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, OUP, Delhi, 1987.*

Champakalakshmi, R.,  
‘From Devotion and Dissent to Dominance: The Bhakti of Tamil Alvars and Nayanars’ in S. Gopal and R. Champakalakshmi, eds., *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology*, OUP, Delhi, 1996, pp. 135-63.*

--------,

*Religion, Tradition, and Ideology: Pre-colonial South India*, OUP, New Delhi, 20011.

Chanana, Devraj,  

Chatterjee, Asim Kumar,  

Chattopadhyaya, B.D.  
*Representing the Other? Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims*, Manohar, Delhi, 1998.*

--------,

‘Historical Context of the Early Medieval Temples of North India’, in *Studying Early India*, Permanent Black, Delhi, pp. 153-171.*

--------,

‘Reappearance’ of the Goddess or the Brahmanical Mode of Appropriation: Some Early Epigraphic Evidence Bearing on Goddess Cults’, in *Studying Early India*, pp. 172-90.*

--------,

*The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2017.

Coburn, Thomas,  

Coomaraswamy, A.K.,  
‘The Dance of Shiva’ in *The Dance of Shiva*, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1999 (1918).*

Doniger, Wendy,  

--------,


Eliade, Mircea, *Encyclopaedia of Religions*, relevant chapters.


Hudson, D. Dennis, *Bhagavata Religion and Beyond*, OUP, Delhi, 2010


Jamison, Stephanie Sacrifized Wife/ Sacrificer’s Wife: Women, Ritual and Hospitality in Ancient India, OUP, USA, 1996.*

--------, and M. Witzel, Vedic Hinduism, 1992,
http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~witzel/vedica.pdf *


Rethinking Hindu Identity, Routledge Publisher, Delhi, 2009.

Kane, P.V., History of the Dharmasastras, 5 volumes, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1930-1962.


Kramrisch, Stella The Presence of Śiva, Motilal, Banarsidass, Varanasi, 1988 (1984).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lorenzen, David N.</td>
<td>Who Invented Hinduism: Essays on Religion in History</td>
<td>Yoda Press, Delhi</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Book of Lakshmi</td>
<td>Penguin Viking, Delhi</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Commemorating Death: Forms and Symbols in Ancient and Early Medieval Tamilnadu’, Mamidipudi Venkataramanaiah Memorial Lecture, Andhra Pradesh History Congress</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh History Congress</td>
<td>2018.*</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Roots of Religion in Ancient India</td>
<td>K.P. Bagchi, Calcutta</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Publisher/Location</td>
<td>Year(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivelle, Patrick</td>
<td>The Early Upanishads: Annotated Text and Translation</td>
<td>OUP, Oxford</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dharmasutras: the Law Codes of Apastamba, Gautama, Baudhayana and Vasishtha</td>
<td>Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pande, G.C.</td>
<td>Studies in the Origins of Buddhism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life and Thought of Shankaracarya</td>
<td>Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramaswamy, Vijaya</td>
<td>Walking Naked: Women, Society, Spirituality in South India</td>
<td>IIAS, Simla</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richman, Paula</td>
<td>Many Ramayanas: the Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia</td>
<td>OUP, Delhi</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schopen, Gregory</td>
<td>Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India</td>
<td>University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharma, R.S.</td>
<td>‘Material Background of the Origin of Buddhism’, Das Capital Centenary Volume</td>
<td>PPH, Delhi</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shende, H.J.</td>
<td>Religion and Philosophy of the Atharvaveda</td>
<td>Poona,</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrimali, K.M.</td>
<td>Essays in Indian Art, Religion and Society</td>
<td>Indian History Congress/ Munshiram Manoharlal</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


------, *Cultural Transactions and Early India: Traditions and Patronage*, OUP, Delhi, 1994.*


