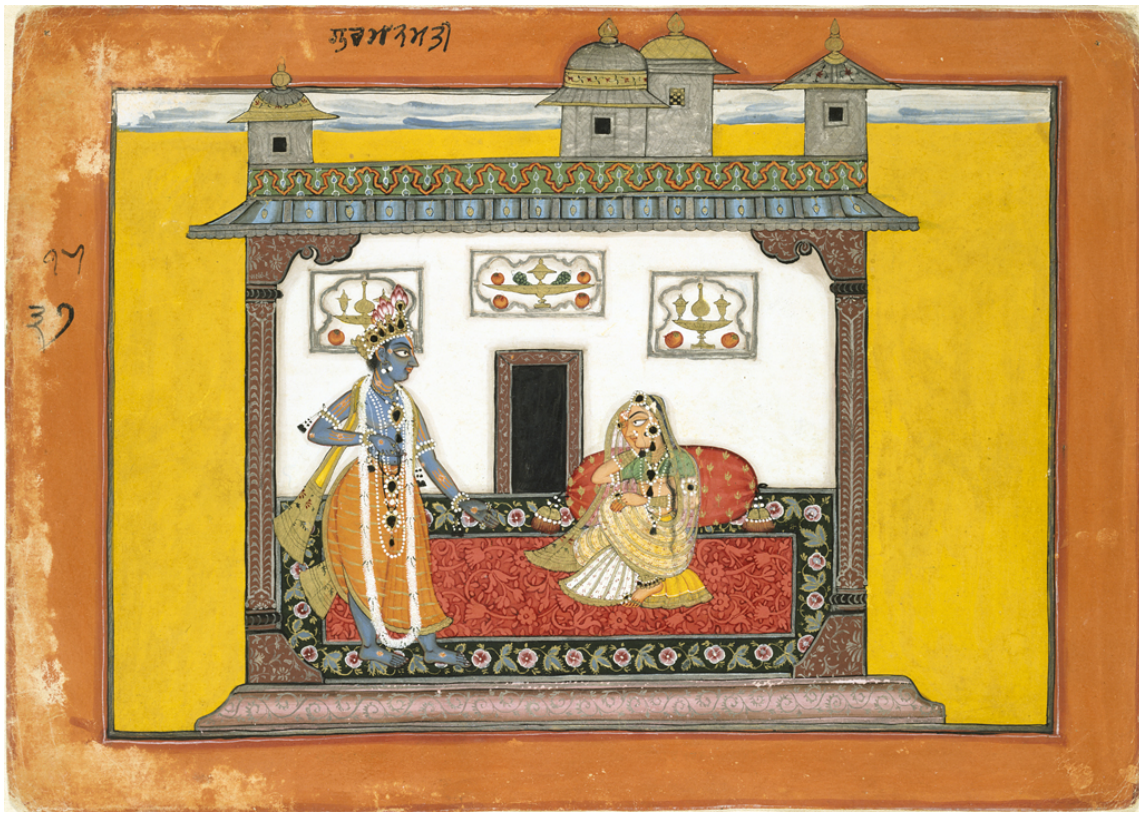


Sense and Sensuality in Indian Religious Literature

General Education, Category 2, REL 136xg, THH102
Spring 2012, MW 12:00-1:20.

*(Please note that the lecture will only be 80 minutes long
like similar classes in this category, even though the schedule says 12:00-1:50).*

Instructor:	James McHugh.
Office:	Room ACB 226.
Email:	jmchugh@usc.edu
Office hours:	Tues 10:00-12:00 or by appointment.
Telephone:	(213) 740 7141



“Various sophisticated perfumes are celebrated as eminent inflamers of lust. The best lover should be carefully instructed at the start from perfume texts...”

The Complete Man-about-town (a medieval Indian “Buddhist” text on erotics).

The technologies of pleasure in medieval India are unsurpassed by those of any other culture. The virtuous pursuit of wealth and pleasure was a religiously sanctioned aim of life, especially for the elite: for royalty, international merchants, and so on. Numerous technical manuals of how to experience pleasure were produced, and the literature of the period, itself a source of pleasure, abounds in descriptions of lavish and sophisticated sensuality. The pursuit of pleasure was not restricted to humans, but also gods enshrined in beautiful temples were served with many of these very same delights, and literary representations of the divine, both in heavens and on earth, abound in sensual descriptions. The lifestyle of nuns, monks, and other ascetics was also often defined as a perfect negation of particular luxuries.

In this course, we will explore this culture of pleasure, divine and secular in part by examining the senses, and also by a sustained reading of selected great works of Sanskrit literature, all within the context of medieval South Asian culture and religions.

To set the scene, we shall first examine the nature of the senses in Indian philosophical thought, and also read texts that explain the theory of the goals of human life. We will then move on to examine the arts of pleasure as they apply to the senses one by one, considering the role of the senses in religion. For each sense we will study one or more of the cultivated pleasures appropriate to that sense.

Students will also study the basics of the traditional understanding of Sanskrit poetry, thus learning to appreciate South Asian Sanskrit literature as many educated South Asians would have done in the past. Using primary sources in translation (prose, poems, epics, and story literature), we will explore both the technical literature of pleasure, as well as other genres of Indian literature that describe (approvingly and disapprovingly) the pleasures of the senses. We will relate the technology of pleasure to the nature of ritual, the life of the ascetic, and also to many genres of religious text. Wherever possible, we will also explore this sophisticated culture with our own senses - we will study some South Asian art, listen to devotional music, and so forth, and also consider theoretically the ways in which exploring cultural phenomena through the senses differs from exploring them via texts.

Throughout the course we will also bear in mind larger questions, such as the ways in which western scholarship has depicted India historically; the role of gender and social class in Indian discourses of pleasure; the historical impact of the international trade in luxury commodities; the relation between the categories of ethics and aesthetics, and how the cultural practices and religions we study impact contemporary global politics and society. Students will also at all times *compare* the manner in which the diverse religious traditions of South Asia articulated their identity in the manner they approached the senses.

The course fulfills the GE Area II requirement.

Required Books:

Ashvaghosha, *Life of the Buddha*, trans. Patrick Olivelle, Clay Sanskrit Library.
-Literary biography of the Buddha.

Valmiki, *Ramayana III, The Forest*, trans. Sheldon Pollock, Clay Sanskrit Library.
-One of the most dramatic parts of this important literary Indian epic.

Vatsyayana, *Kamasutra*, trans. Wendy Doniger and Sudhir Kakar, Oxford University Press.
-The *Kamasutra* is about far more than "sex", and vital to understanding the contexts of many of the other texts, especially as regards the senses.

Vidyakara, *Sanskrit Poetry from Vidyakara's Treasury*, ed. and trans. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
-Excellent anthology and translations of sophisticated classical poetry.

Please note that you are required to bring paper copies of assigned texts with you to section, whether these are books or .pdfs which you should print out.

Teaching Assistants and Discussion Sections:

Sections: *Monday 9:00-9:50, and Monday 10:00-10:50:*

Sharon Luk, Ph.D. Candidate in American Studies and Ethnicity

sharonlu@usc.edu

Office Hours: MW 11:00-11:50 in SOS Computer lab or by appointment

Sections: *Wednesday 9:00-9:50, and Wednesday 10:00-10:50:*

Vasu Venkata, Ph.D. Candidate in English

ssvenkata@gmail.com

Office Hours: Thurs 12:00-1:00 in the Ide Room in THH.

Assignments and Grading:

Discussion Section Requirements (Discussion section participation 10%, weekly response papers* 10%)	20%
Midterm Examination (Includes some term identifications and written answers on images and texts)	25%
Bibliography project	5%
Practice Essay (2-3 pages)	5%
Final Essay (5 pages)	20%
Final Exam (Friday May 4 th , 11:00am-1:00pm) (Same format as midterm)	25%

* On assigned weeks (most but not every week) you will bring a paper copy of a one-page double-spaced response to the discussion section based on ONE of the questions posted on Blackboard under "Weekly Response Paper Assignments."

Final letter grades will be calculated as follows:

A+	97-100 %
A:	94-97
A-:	90-94
B+:	87-90
B:	84-87
B-:	80-84

So, 89.5% will be a B+, 90% will be an A-, and 90.5% will also be an A-. This is the grading scheme as given on Blackboard to all classes.

HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS CLASS: If you attend all classes and listen (think of the lectures as the text book...), do the reading on a regular basis (there is not so much reading for this class as we do a lot of poetry) and attend sections you will find yourself well prepared for the exams and final papers with very little effort as I tend to repeat many of the main points from the texts in class and much of the information should feel like second nature after a while.

Other class policies

1. This syllabus is a work in progress and may be amended as we proceed into the semester.
2. Powerpoint presentations from class lectures will not be posted online.
3. The instructor and TA's are eager to accommodate any students working with USC Disability Services Programs (DSP). Please introduce yourself to us at your earliest convenience.
4. Reading assignments are to be completed *in advance* of the class day on which they appear in the class schedule.
5. No cell phone use or texting in class is permitted.
6. No recording lectures, in any medium, without the instructor's permission.
7. No eating during lecture or section (drinks are fine).
8. Laptop use in class is only permitted for the purposes of notetaking.
9. Make-up midterm exams are only possible with a doctor's note. **No examinations can be rescheduled due to your travel plans.** There are no make-ups for the final exam.
10. Please note that the Drop/Add date for Spring 20121 is Friday, January 27.
11. Section leaders can apply their own rules regarding laptops, food and other matters relating to sections as they see fit.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Use of course materials

In SCampus 2000-2001 (page 91 under Academic Policies) there is a policy which reads: "Notes or recordings made by students based on a university class or lecture may only be made for purposes of individual or group study, or for other non-commercial purposes.... This restriction also applies to any information distributed, disseminated or in any way displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email or otherwise on the Internet, or via any other medium. Actions in violation of this policy constitute a violation of the Student Conduct Code, and may subject an individual or entity to university discipline and/or legal proceedings."

Course Outline:

Please remember: Reading assignments are to be completed *in advance* of the class day on which they appear in the class schedule.

Week 1. Introduction to Course.

M / Jan 9 Introduction to syllabus and course.

W / Jan 11 Introduction to Sanskrit and South Asian literature and some more comments on the course.

Reading on Blackboard:

Selections of a wide variety of early and medieval texts from India: prayers, poems, elephants, medicine etc.

Week 2. A Short Introduction to Medieval Indian religion, history, and culture.

M / Jan 16 **Martin Luther King Day – university holiday, class cancelled.**

W / Jan 18 Introduction to Sanskrit literature.

Reading:

Vidyakara, *Sanskrit Poetry from Vidyakara's Treasury*, Introduction 1-31, 44-47.

Reading *in* class: The poems about the moon (**ALWAYS BRING YOUR READING TO CLASS TO MAKE USEFUL NOTES ON IT**).

Week 3. The Goals of Life in South Asian religions.

M / Jan 23 More poetry, and a Basic Introduction to Indian Philosophy.

Reading for class:

Vidyakara, *Sanskrit Poetry from Vidyakara's Treasury*, pp. 88 – 117.

Selected material on Indian philosophy, on Blackboard.

W / Jan 25 The Pleasures of Kāma, and Suggestion in Poetry.

Reading:

Kamasutra, 3-21.

Vidyakara, 118 – 120, 138-163.

Week 4. Research skills.

M / Jan 30 Class on Research Skills and Using the Internet for Academic Research.

W / Feb 1 **Indian Philosophy II, the Bhagavad Gita.**

Week 5. The Senses in Indian Philosophy and Poetry

M / Feb 6 The senses in Indian philosophy and poetry, plus the Dangers of Kāma .

Reading:

Bodhicaryavatara selection, (on Blackboard).

Vidyakara, 175-185, 200-205, 229-231, 282-284.

Smell 1: Perfumes

W / Feb 8 Exploration of perfumes and aromatics.

No reading.

BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT DUE IN CLASS**Week 6. Smell II: Stinks.**

M / Feb 13 Desiring God (Krishna) in *kāvya* poetry: *Gita Govinda* (The Song of Krishna the Cowherd).

Reading:

Gita Govinda, extracts on Blackboard.

Kamasutra, 45-48.

W / Feb 15 Stinks, detachment and impurity.

Reading on Blackboard:

Selections from the Buddhist *Path of Purification*, *The Prince Who Loved Sweetmeats* (a humorous Jain story). Also read again the Buddhist text (*Bodhicaryavatara*) on foul bodies in the cremation ground on Blackboard from Week 5.

Week 7.

M / Feb 20 – Presidents' Day, University Holiday, no class.

W / Feb 22 **MID-TERM EXAMINATION IN CLASS.**

Week 8. Taste I.

M / Feb 27 Miscellaneous Romance

Reading:
Selections from a play, a humorous story. a

In class: an article on erotic arithmetic.

W / Feb 29 Luxury food and food in literature.

Reading on Blackboard:
Readings on food on Blackboard

Week 9. Taste II: The History of Drinking and Intoxicants in India

M/ Mar 5 The History of Drinking and Intoxicants in India

Reading:
No reading set.

PRACTICE ESSAY DUE IN CLASS.

W / Mar 7 The Life of the Buddha I.

Reading:
The Life of the Buddha, 3-157.

Week 10.

SPRING BREAK

Week 11. Touch I – Pleasure.

M / Mar 19 Living and Dying in Varanasi

Documentary in class, no reading set.

W / Mar 21 The *Kamasutra*.

Reading:
Kamasutra, introduction and 28 – 54. Also review the texts we have read so far for the various pleasures of touch.

Week 12. Touch II – Pain.

M/ Mar 26 *The Life of the Buddha II.*

Reading:

The Life of the Buddha 187-207, 373-418.

W / Mar 28 Karmic suffering.

Reading on Blackboard:

The Law Code of Manu selections, descriptions of suffering and various hell-realms taken from various Indian scriptural and literary sources.

Week 13. Sight I: Illustrating the Life of Rama

M / April 2 *The Ramayana I.*

I will present the basic story of the epic using images.

W / Apr 4 *The Ramayana II.*

Reading:

Extracts from the Forest book, on Blackboard.

Week 14. Sight II: I.

M / Apr 9 Theory of vision, medieval religious art and seeing the divine image.

No reading set.

W / Apr 11 *The Ramayana III: animation Sita Sings the Blues* in class.

Reading:

New article on the controversy concerning Ramanujan book on the Ramayana, also *about Sita Sings the Blues*. Links on Blackboard.

Week 15. Hearing I

M/ Apr 16 Sacred sound.

Reading: No reading.

W / Apr 18 *The Ramayana IV* and the crisis at Ayodhya.

Reading:

Chapter on sacred geography of India, from Diana Eck, *India, a Sacred Geography*.

Week 16. Hearing II: Music, and Review of Class.

M / Apr 23 Classical Music and Ragamalas – performance TBA.

Reading:

Start on reading for Thursday.

W / Apr 25 Review of class.

Final Paper Due Monday April 30th

Final Exam: Friday May 4th, 11:00am-1:00pm