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**Curriculum Development for Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Name of Institute:**Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts

**Course Name: Religion and Rebellion: Roots of resistance in the ground of Tradition**

[An examination of the relationship between religion(s) and power in the political, social and ecological fields]

**Course Code:**

**(UG/PG):** UG

**Number of Credits:** 4 (60 Hrs)

**Level: 2**

**Introduction**

Are religions necessarily on the side of conformity and of oppression? Is it possible for religious ideas, philosophies and practices to inspire critical examination of, and constructive resistance to, oppressive political, social and ecological institutions and behaviour?

This course proposes to help students explore the potential in religion itself, and in various religious traditions (including tribal religions} for thought and action and modes of being that are critical of abuses of power, oppressive and exclusionary behaviour in a way that

a)      Links religious socio-political ethics and practices to onto-metaphysical principles/ ideas

b)      Emphasizes the challenge religion poses not merely to the externalized targets of political critique and resistance but to internal/inner impulses that people our psyches

c)       Looks at ideas and practices, texts and prominent figures which express such a potential

d)      From across a spectrum of religions and significant representative periods/moments in their history (ancient, modern/contemporary)

e)      Does this, at all points, within a comparative framework of exploring the dominant secularist- humanist ethics that emerged from the European enlightenment, “disenchantment”, modernization and colonization

**Learning Objective(s):**

* To enable students to re-**examine** stereotypes about particular religions and about religion itself, so that
* They have access to and **understand**the rich fund of ideas and experiences available within religious systems
* And inculcate an awareness and **recognition**of multiplicity of interpretations,
* While simultaneously working towards criteria for evaluating their reliability using resources from both within and outside the religious traditions
* To develop awareness in students so that they **recognize**both the scope and limits of human action based on a clear examination of ideas concerning human nature and the human condition
* To help students sort out their thinking about ethics, to **distinguish** between the reliable and the unreliable, and arrive at a working **understanding** of options other than unexamined relativism
* To clarify issues surrounding contemporary events and their representations, especially in the mass media
* To develop skills in **defining** religious, philosophical concepts and analogous concepts in secular systems of thought
* To equip students with skills in **description**, analysis and argumentation and in arriving at well-informed, responsible conclusions

**Pedagogy:**

Reading of excerpts from primary and secondary texts from within the religious traditions combined with Readings from practising as well as non-practising scholars to expand students' horizons in their **understanding** of political, social ethics

* Encourage students to go beyond stereotyping of particular religions and Religion in general , through
* **Examination** of media stereotypes of social, historical and intellectual conditioning through a process of careful study, reflection and examination of the reliability of sources
* Independent research on topics of interest to extend what has been done in class
* Lectures on ideas and concepts as well as interactive sessions
* Organized debates on specific aspects of the topics
* Counterarguments concerning the ways in which religions have been used in oppressive and violent ways **examined** at relevant points
* Religious art, music, ritual, symbols will also be studied using appropriate media

**Pre-requisites: NA**

**Course Outline**

Note: a tentative conceptual framework drawn from philosophy of religion and other relevant disciplines and formulated in Module 1 will provide the necessary “scaffolding” for building a nuanced and responsible understanding of these rather complex realities -  this will be further fortified through subsequent modules

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| S.No. | Topic | Hours |
| 1 | **Introduction**: 1) **Common Conceptions/mis-conceptions** about Religion  **Explore reasons**: e,g, modernization/secularization, the “Grand Narratives” of modernity, role of mass media  Is religion intrinsically oppressive, repressive, divisive? Issue of interpretations, appropriations  2) **Religious figures and ideas that have challenged** injustice, oppressive/divisive attitudes and policies  3) **Relationship between religious ethics and ontology/metaphysics**. Is there a critical core in the heart of religions? Compare with humanistic ethics  4) **Religion and Power**: Discussions, reflection  5) **Towards an explanation of seeming contradictions**: criteria for reliability of interpretations, conceptual frameworks  6) **Major themes, areas and problems** under discussion: examples:  Politics (ruler and the ruled)  Society (Class, caste, gender)  Ecology  7) **Modern secular, humanistic approaches:** comparison  8) **Contemporary trends**: Contemporary religious activism and conflicting claims | 8 |
| 2 | HINDUISM   * **Ancient Roots** of critical ideas and practices -  the great synthesis -  formulation of a critical core * **Ontology, metaphysics** -  Vedanta * **Scriptures and question of authority**:The relevance of Sruti/Smriti distinction, the flexibility of Tradition   **Discussion**, Reflection:  **Interpretations**: how do we know what is right? What guidance do religions provide towards conceptual frameworks/clarifications?  **Issues**: Caste, Gender, War and Peace, Ecology  **Evidence from the Scriptures:** Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Epics, Puranas  **Inner and Outer dimension**: Metaphorization -  War -  Mahabharata: kingship, ahimsa, dharma, compare yuddha dharma, etc.  **Medieval Extensions of Ancient core** - The Bhakti movement -  social, political implications, caste; gender, etc. -  practices  **Continuities**:  **Colonialism and Modernity**-  Evaluating impact (and its ambiguities)  **Critical Responses from Religions:**BrahmoSamaj  Mahatma Gandhi  Politics: Swaraj, Ahimsa  Economy, Ecology: Critique of Western civilization  Tagore: spiritual roots, writing on Asia  **Contemporary movements**:  Discussion of Savarkar and contemporary contestations | 6 |
| 3 | BUDDHISM  **Ancient basis of Ethics**: Scriptures   * **Basis of ethics** **(political, ecological) in Buddhist ontology, metaphysics** * Anatta * Dependent origination * Eightfold Path -  its integration of metaphysics, ethics and metanoic practice * Prajna – Karuna * **Philosophical schools** and their interpretations: political, social implications * Mahayana concepts * **Politics**: ancient rulers * **Ecology**: Buddha Nature * **War and Peace**;  Buddhist principles in the Martial Arts, non-violent resistance * **Modern, contemporary** practitioners, e.g. Dalai Lama, ThichNhat Hanh (Interbeing)   In Buddhist societies, in the contemporary West  **Discussion of contemporary Buddhist nationalism** (Burma, Sri Lanka): evaluation in the light of Buddhist teachings  **Discussion: compare with secular humanist thought** | 12 |
| 4 | CHRISTIANITY  **Onto-metaphysical basis of Christian politics, social**   * **Scriptures**: New Testament -  the “old law” perfected in the new * Ten Commandments (O.T.) * Two Commandments (O.T., N.T.) * Sermon on the Mount * Parables * Render unto Caesar?   **Formation of the church**   * early Christian communities - * early church: * Formulation of orthodoxy, Doctrine, * The formation of scriptural canons, * shifts in gender and power * Discuss:Kingdom not of this world?   **Christianity and Empire**  **Monasticism** -  the great synthesis of monastic and ecclesiastical -  their mutual reflexivity  Augustine: City of God   * Evaluation of the Crusades   **Holy Poverty**  **Ecology**  Brother Sun, Sister Moon: St. Francis  **Protestantism**:   * Liberatory implications, relation to modernity and disenchantment, ambiguities (Revisionism within Protestantism: Tillich) * Niebuhr * **Christianity and Colonialism**   **Eastern Christianity** -  metaphysics, metanoia, kenosis, theosis: implications; sacredness of earth  **Modern/contemporary trends**   * Liberation Theology * Megachurches, Televangelism   **Christianity and the potential for ecological regeneration**: Pope Francis  **Discussion, Reflection:**comparing Secular Humanism and Christian approaches  **Reflection:**Reliability of Interpretations: towards resolving contradictions | 12 |
| 5 | **ISLAM**  **Onto-metaphysical Basis** of Islamic political, social, ecological Ethics   * **Tawhid**, pluralistic implications * **Free will** * **Stewardship -**Khalifa   **Modes of Revelation**: theological and socio-political implications   * Ayat * Huda: the sovereign place of reason in Islam * Five Pillars - their nuanced interpretations, implications (interiorization, metaphorization) * The Shariah:   Discuss: enabling framework for ethical action, or repressive and restraining?   * The Sunnah * Usul-al-fiq: Higher objectives guiding the relationship between the temporal and the spiritual   **Themes**: (examples)   * The ruler and the ruled * War and Peace * Justice and Mercy   **Sufism**: the great synthesis: critical reflexivity; metaphorization, interiorization; implication -  Al-Ghazali  **Contemporary Trends**   * **Modern Interpretations** of the Sharia * **Ecology** * **Islamic Feminism**   **Politics: Islam’s Responses to the Modern State and to Secularization**   * Discuss: Is the Islamic state an “impossible state?” Modernity, * Globalization, geopolitical struggles, * mass media * Sufi resurgence | 12 |
| 6 | “INDIGENOUS” / “TRIBAL” RELIGIONS  **Metaphysical, Philosophical, Cosmological**, **Narrative, Ritual** Traditions relating to Politics, Ecology, etc.   * Native American/Pre-Columbian America   Politics, Ecology   * Sub-Saharan Africa * Australia * India: “tribal” religions | 8 |
| 7 | **Concluding Reflections, Evaluations:**  **Towards an evaluation of contesting, conflicting claims** about the Relationship between Religion and Power, Religion and Politics, etc. | 2 |
|  | **Total** | 60 |

**Evaluations:** as per SIU rules on Pg no. 20 – 5.1)e III; see Pedagogy section

**Books Recommended**

Gandhi, Mohandas. Gandhi: Selected Writings. (2012). Courier.

MacCulloch, Diarmaid. (2009), A History of Christianity.Penguin.

Ramadan, Tariq. (2009).Radical Reform.Oxford University Press.

ThichNhat Hanh, (2003).Interbeing. Full Circle.

**Parallel/Similar courses in the existing curriculum:**

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| S.No. | Name of the course | Institute where it was offered |
|  | NA |  |
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| Name of Member | Shantanu Ozarkar | Dr.Shweta Sinha Deshpande | Manjari J |  |  |
| Designation | Assistant Professor | Assistant Professor | SSLA visiting Faculty |  |  |
| Org. / Inst. | SSLA | SSLA | Pune Undiversity |  |  |
| Signature |  |  |  |  |  |

Name of the Expert: Dr.Shweta Sinha Deshpande

Signature:

Date