

Sociology

Generic Elective (GE) 23 Understanding Religion

GENERIC ELECTIVE COURSE-23 (GE-23) : Understanding Religion

CREDIT DISTRIBUTION, ELIGIBILITY AND PRE-REQUISITES OF THE COURSE

Course title & Code	Credits	Credit distribution of the course			Eligibility criteria	Pre-requisite of the course (if any)
		Lecture	Tutorial	Practical/ Practice		
GE 23 Understanding Religion	4	3	1	0	12th Class Pass	Nil

Learning Objectives:

1. To understand religion as a social phenomenon.
2. To grasp key dimensions of religion and their interlinkages with other social processes.
3. To trace the changing character of religion as a social institution in the context of modernity.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, the students will be able to:

1. Identify and define the religious phenomenon across cultures.
2. Interpret and analyse the religious beliefs and practices from a sociological perspective.
3. Evaluate the place of religion in modern society.

SYLLABUS OF GE:

Unit I What is religion? (9 Hours)

This Unit Constitutes religion as an object of Sociological inquiry.

- a. Nature of the Sacred
- b. Studying Religion

Unit II. Elementary aspects of Religion: Belief, Ritual and Practice (12 Hours)

This Unit introduces the students to Durkheimian view on religion and explores belief,

ritual and practice as key elements of religion.

a. Belief

b. Ritual and Practice

Unit III. Religion in Modern Society (12 Hours)

This Unit maps aspects of religion in modern societies.

a. Secularization

b. New Religious Movements

Unit IV. Aspects of Religion and Society in India (12 Hours)

This Unit familiarizes the students with some aspects of religion and Society in India.

a. Dharma and Values of Life

b. Faiths in Practice

c. Devotional Traditions

Practical Component: NIL

Essential/Recommended Readings:

Unit I. What is Religion?

a. Nature of the Sacred

Caillois, Roger. *Man and the Sacred*. United States: University of Illinois Press, 2001. Ch.1. General Interrelationships of the Sacred and the Profane. Pp. 19-32

b. Studying Religion

Winzeler, Robert L. *Anthropology and Religion: What We Know, Think, and Question*. Altamira Press, 2012. Pp. 1-35.

Unit II. Elementary aspects of Religion: Belief, Ritual and Practice

a. Belief

Jones, Susan Stedman. *Durkheim Reconsidered*. Polity Press, 2013. Ch. 11. Belief and the Logic of the Sacred. Pp. 201-217.

Firth, Raymond. *Religion: A Humanist Interpretation*. Taylor & Francis, 2013. Ch. 4 Gods and God: Monotheism and Polytheism Pp. 72-92.

b. Ritual and Practice

Bowie, Fiona. *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction*. 2e. Wiley, 2000. Ch. 6. Ritual Theory and Ch 9. Pilgrimage. Pp. 138-168, 237-259

Unit III. Religion in Modern Society

a. Secularization

Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Anchor, 2011. Chapter 5. The Process of Secularization. Pp. 105-125

Casanova, José. "Rethinking secularization: A global comparative perspective." *Religion, globalization, and culture*. Brill, 2007. 101-120.

b. New Religious Movements

Wilson, Bryan. Jamie Cresswell. *New Religious Movements: Challenge and Response*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2012. Ch1. New Religious Movements: their incidence and significance. Pp. 15-29.

Srinivas, Tulasi. *Winged Faith: Rethinking Globalization and Religious Pluralism Through the Sathya Sai Movement*. United Kingdom: Columbia University Press, 2010. Ch 3. Illusion, Play, and Work in a Moral Community: Divine Darshan and the Practices of Transnational Devotion. Pp. 156-200.

Unit IV. Aspects of Religion and Society in India

a. Dharma and Values of Life

Coomaraswamy, Ananda Kentish. *Hinduism and Buddhism*. Munshiram Manoharlal 2011. Ch 1. Hinduism. Pp. 3-31.

Mathur, K.S. *Hindu Values of Life: Karma and Dharma*, in T. N. Madan ed. *Religion in India*. India: OUP India, 1992. Pp. 63-77.

b. Faiths in Practice

Fuller, Christopher John. *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India*. Princeton University Press, 1992. Ch 3 Worship. Pp. 57-82

Mines, Diane P. *Fierce Gods: Inequality, Ritual, and the Politics of Dignity in a South Indian Village*. Indiana University Press, 2005. Chapter 6. Gods of Yanaimangalam. Pp. 125-146.

Clothey, Fred W. *Religion in India: A Historical Introduction*. Routledge, 2006. Ch 9. Religion in Contemporary India. Pp. 193-221.

c. Devotional Traditions

Vaundeville, Charlotte. *Sant Mat: Saintism as the universal Path to Sanctity*. In Karine Schomer, W. H. McLeod ed. *The Sants: Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India*. India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987. Pp. 21-40.

McLeod, W.H. *The Meaning of 'Saint' in Sikh Usage*. In Karine Schomer, W. H. McLeod ed. *The Sants: Studies in a Devotional Tradition of India*. India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987. Pp. 251-263.

Suggested Readings:

Eck, Diana L. *Darśan*. Columbia University Press, 1998.

Fuller, C. J. "The Hindu Pantheon and the Legitimation of Hierarchy." *Man* 23, no. 1 (1988): 19–39.

Geertz, Clifford. "Shifting Aims, Moving Targets: On the Anthropology of Religion." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 11, no. 1 (2005): 1–15.

Gilsenan, Michael. *Recognizing Islam: An Anthropologist's Introduction*. Croom Helm, 1982.

Mauss, Marcel., Hubert, Henri., Hertz, Robert. *Saints, Heroes, Myths, and Rites: Classical Durkheimian Studies of Religion and Society*. Taylor & Francis, 2016

Mosse, David. "Catholic Saints and the Hindu Village Pantheon in Rural Tamil Nadu, India." *Man* 29, no. 2 (1994): 301–32.

Shah, A. M. *The Structure of Indian Society: Then and Now*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019. Ch. 4. Sects and Hindu Social Structure. Pp. 68-97.

Smith, Donald Eugene. *South Asian Politics and Religion*. Princeton University Press, 2015.

Stark, Rodney., Finke, Roger. *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. University of California Press, 2000.

Turner, Victor Witter. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*. Taylor & Francis Incorporated, 1995.

Weber, Max. *The Sociology of Religion*. Beacon Press, 1993.

Note: Examination scheme and mode shall be as prescribed by the Examination Branch, University of Delhi, from time to time.