

**Death and
Gender in
Urban
Environments:
India**



SWMS 227
Spring 2023
Dr. Diana Blaine

Course Description: This experiential GE course examines how beliefs about mortality are produced by history, gender, culture, and context. While traveling across northern India, the class will examine relationships between the handling of death and the construction of national and communal identity. Students will visit sites sacred to a number of India's major religions, considering the intersections between the world of the gods and the world of mortals; between disparate cultures; and between self and other. Topics will include bodily disposal, beliefs about the afterlife, religious pilgrimage, gendered and colonial violence, and monuments and memorials. Course fulfills GE B and H.

Course Objectives:

Compare Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Sikh death and burial practices and beliefs in India

Examine tensions and cooperation between historical and contemporary religious communities

Analyze the function and aesthetics of memorials and other element of the built environment

Explore major historical events that produced modern India

Consider gender dynamics in each of the above contexts.

Course Readings (subject to change):

Bregman, Lucy. *Death and Dying in World Religions*

Hay, Stephen. *Sources of Indian Tradition, Vol. 2: Modern India and Pakistan (Introduction to Oriental Civilizations)*

Jeffrey, Craig. *Modern India: A Very Short Introduction* (USC libraries e-book)

Kinsley, David. *The Sword and the Flute*

Lopez Jr., Donald S., ed. *Religions of India in Practice*

Mani, Lata. "The Female Gaze, the Colonial Subject" in *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India*.

Obayashi, ed., *Death and Afterlife: Perspectives of World Religions*

Sumegi, Angela. *Understanding Death: an Introduction to Ideas of Self and the Afterlife in World Religions* (USC libraries e-book)

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*.

Course Costs: all transportation, including round-trip airfare to India; lodging; all excursions, tours, admissions; all breakfasts: \$2289. Additional costs for lunches, dinners and personal expenses, approx. \$600.

Course Assignments (subject to change):

Reading responses 20%

Site observations 30%

Personal reflection 20%

Final project: 30%

Course Itinerary (subject to change):

Pre-travel reading: Jeffrey, Craig. *Modern India: A Very Short Introduction* (USC libraries e-book)

May 15: pre-travel class on Zoom 1-3 pm PT

May 16: pre-travel class on Zoom 1-3 pm PT

May 17: pre-travel class on Zoom 1-3 pm PT

May 21: depart LAX 6:30 pm

May 22: on flight

May 23: arr. Delhi 8:45 am. Travel to hotel. Rest and relax

May 24: explore old Delhi

May 25: bus travel to Agra (4 hours). Taj Mahal and Agra Fort.

May 26: day trip to Fatehpur Sikri. Afternoon in Agra on your own. Evening walking tour through market.

May 27: travel to Amritsar (bus to Delhi airport, flight to Amritsar)

May 28: Golden Temple and Amritsar memorials. Afternoon drive to India/Pakistan border to witness change of the guard.

May 29: bus travel to Anandpur Sahib (4 hours). Afternoon visit to Gurdwara Patal Puri.

May 30: continue exploring Anandpur Sahib. Includes lunch. Afternoon drive to Dharamshala (3 1/2 hours). Evening in Dharamshala free.

May 31: visit Dalai Lama temple complex, Tsuglag Khang complex, and Nam Gyal Monastery

June 1: flight to Varanasi via Delhi. Afternoon cycle rickshaw ride through Varanasi market. Remainder of evening free.

June 2: early morning boat cruise on Ganges. Breakfast at hotel following. Visit to Sarnath. Remainder of evening free.

June 3: full day of touring Varanasi. Evening witness Aarthi, Hindu prayer ceremony on Ganges

June 4: drive to Bodhgaya (6 hours). Remainder of day free.

June 5: 1/2 day tour Bodhgaya. Remainder of afternoon and evening free. Personal Reflection Due.

June 6: excursion to Nalanda and Rajgir.

June 7: flight to Kolkata. Evening free.

June 8: tour Kolkata, including Kali Temple. Farewell dinner.

June 9: depart Kolkata for Los Angeles. Arrive LAX 2 pm.

June 12: final project due to Blackboard

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.