

History Seminar: Major World Religions

Hinduism

Hinduism's History: *Where Did It Come From?*

- **It's Soil:** Indus Valley (*Hindu Sanskrit for Indus Valley*)
- **It's Seed:** Polytheism (c. 2300-1500 BC).
- **It's Roots:** Pantheism (c.1500-500 BC).
- **It's Shoots:** Brahmanism (c.500 BC-500 AD).
- **It's Fruits:** Eastern Religions (C.500 AD – Present).



Hinduism's Scripture: *What Is Their Authority?*

- **Vedas:** A Collection of Sanskrit Wisdom Literature in Four Major Texts.
- **Upanishads:** A Philosophical Synthesis of Vedic Teachings. Functions like a Sequel to Vedas.
- **Bhagavad-Gita:** A 700 Verse Epic Poem. Literally, "The Beautiful Song of God."

Hinduism's Theology: *What Do They Believe?*

- **Brahman:** An impersonal, formless, and attributeless divinity that is the source of all "ultimate reality."

- **Trimurti:** The most prominent deities in contemporary Hinduism, including:
 - **Brahma:** *Creator* (Married to Saraswati)
 - **Vishnu:** *Preserver* (Married to Lakshmi)
 - **Shiva:** *Destroyer* (Married to Parvati)
- **Avatars:** The mythical, material incarnation of a powerful deity on Earth.
 - **Krishnu:** *The Eighth Avatar of Vishnu*
 - **Gautama Buddha:** *The Ninth Avatar of Vishnu*
- **Atman:** An immortal, uncreated soul that migrates to different bodies in different lives.
- **Samsara:** The cycle of rebirth or reincarnation of a soul from one life to the next.



- **Karma:** The law of cause and effect in which every “action” has a reaction or consequence in this life or the next.
- **Moksha:** Salvation from the cycle of reincarnation.
- **Nirvana:** The profound peace of mind acquired in salvation.

Hinduism’s Distinctives: *What Do They Practice?*

- **Purusharta:** Four Objectives in Life
 - **Dharma:** Morality
 - **Artha:** Prosperity
 - **Kama:** Pleasure
 - **Moksha:** Liberation

- **Yoga:** Ritual practices, involving physical, spiritual, and mental components, that lead to salvation.
 - **Karma Yoga:** The Path of Work and Action
 - **Bhakti Yoga:** The Path of Love and Devotion
 - **Jnana Yoga:** The Path of Knowledge
 - **Raja Yoga:** The Path of Meditation
- **Varna:** Social hierarchy or caste system prescribing duty (dharma):
 - **Brahmins:** Scholars, Priests, Teachers
 - **Kshatriyas:** Rulers, Administrators, Warriors
 - **Vaishyas:** Farmers, Merchants, Agriculturalists
 - **Shudras:** Servants, Laborers
 - **Dalits:** Untouchables (Often excluded from varna system altogether)



- **Puja:** Worship, respect, or homage paid to gods, typically involving all five senses by including prayers, lighting a lamp, burning incense, making offerings of fruit or flowers, and ringing a bell.
- **Diwali:** Festival of Lights Honoring Lakshmi, Goddess of Wealth and Good Fortune. Typically Mid-October to Mid-November and Last 5-6 Days.
- **Guru:** Personal spiritual teacher or guide. Literally a “dispeller of darkness.”

Hinduism's Differences: *How To Share The Gospel.*

- Show Them a **Bigger God:** *The Trinity*
- Show Them a **Surer Authority:** *The Bible*
- Show Them a **More Realistic Condition:** *Sin*
- Show Them a **Better Hope:** *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*