



Religious Studies 159 / Fall 2010

# Music & Religion in South Asia

Tu-Th 4:15-6:05

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LH office hours W 2-3:0 or by appt.  
TK office hours by appt.

How is sound understood as revelation of divinity? How do songs express devotional emotion and theology? How do singing voices and poetic words, with instruments and physical actions, contribute to states of religious “trance” or “ecstasy”? How do film songs show popular religious culture? How do media affect both music and religion? How do musical performance and construction of music history become arenas for political ideology?

Music and other arts in South Asia are often intertwined with religion. While acknowledging that much South Asian music is *not* religious, we will emphasize the connections between music and religion in classical, devotional, folk, and popular examples. Guest teacher Tara Kini, a Hindustani classical singer from India, will join Linda Hess in introducing history, theory and practice of music as it relates to religion, especially Hinduism and Islam in India and Pakistan. Students will do musical practice along with academic study. We will have guest artists and films. No background is required.

## **Reading assignments**

All the readings will be in a course Reader to be distributed in class. Full bibliographic information on assignments is provided in the Reader.

## **Class Schedule**

All reading and listening assignments must be done before class on the day assigned. Often we ask for short responses to these assignments to be handed in or presented—sometimes written, sometimes oral. We have indicated such short responses for meetings 2-5 (in italics). Beyond that, we will provide response assignments week by week.

## September

### **(1) – Tu 9/21                    Opening**

TK & LH: overview of course.

### **(2) – Th 9/23                    Hinduism & Islam / North & South / Devotion & Song**

LH & TK: Intro to religion, history, music, South Asia

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Vasudha Narayanan, *Hinduism*, 6-21.

Kim Knott, *Hinduism, A Very Short Introduction* (7 pp)

\*Donna Wulff, “On Practicing Religiously: Music as Sacred in India,” in Joyce Irwin, ed., *Sacred Sound: Music in Religious Thought and Practice*,” 149-64.

\*Regula Qureshi, “Islam and Music” in Guy Beck, ed., *Sacred Sound: Experiencing Music in World Religions*, 89-108.

\*Viswanathan & Allen, *Music in South India*, 1-14

*Bring to class:*

a) ½ page response to one of the starred readings—to hand in.

b) At least one question on each of the starred readings. Write/type each question on a separate piece of paper in 24-pt.

### **(3) – Tu 9/28                    Sound in Hindu tradition**

LH: Vedas, yoga, tantra, ca. 1200 BCE-1000 CE. Film clip, *Altar of Fire*.

TK: practice of Vedic mantra and Om.

George Ruckert, *Music in North India*, 18-22 midpage

Hymn from the Rig Veda, “*Purusa Sukta*,” in Wendy Doniger, ed. & trans., *The Rig Veda*

Patrick Olivelle, from intro to *The Upanisads*, xli-lvi;

Jean Varenne, selections on yoga, subtle body, Om, inner sound

Andre Padoux, 427-29 in *Vac: The Power of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras*

Listening assignment: Vedic chant

*Before reading anything, listen to 3 tracks: Rig, Sama & Yajur Veda. Can you describe differences in what you hear? Turn in notes on whatever you have noticed. Then do the reading!*

### **(4) – Th 9/30                    Dhrupad & svara sadhana**

day devoted to practice with TK

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Ruckert 22-32

Sheila Dhar, “Pran Nath: an Odyssey,” 58-67 (we’ll read the rest of the essay later)

Hess, *Singing Emptiness*, pp. 29-37

*Listening assignment: Gundecha brothers, raga Kedar*

This is a 58-minute dhrupad alap, the exploratory opening section of a raga performance.

First, notice your own response, including emotional response.

Then, in a relaxed way, try the following.

Listen for 3 different musical phases.

What kinds of syllables do you hear?

What patterning of syllables do you notice?

**(5) – Tu 10/5                    Theories of music, aesthetics**

LH: history of aesthetic & musical theories, ca. 1<sup>st</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cents.

TK: exercise on the 9 *rasas*

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B.N. Goswamy “Rasa: Delight of the Reason,” in *The Essence of Indian Art*.

*Bharata Natya Shastra* -- ch. 6 + table of contents

*Sangītaratnākara*, passages

Patwardhan & Masson on Abhinavagupta in *Aesthetic Rapture* (2 pp)

*1-page response that considers the relationships among these 4 readings*

October

**(6) – Th 10/7                    Meeting of Indian & West Asian musics, Hindu & Muslim cultures.**

LH: 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> cents. Courts. Kathak film, Bollywood film clips

TK: lead practice, azan, thumri, etc.

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Bonnie C. Wade, “The Meeting of Musical Cultures in the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Court of the Mughal Akbar.” *The World of Music: ...* , 3-23

Ruckert on Allauddin Khan & Ali Akbar Khan, 227-45

*1-page response: What historical information, including dates, can you glean from Wade about how Hindu and Muslim cultures meet in music? What do you learn further about this in the portraits of Allauddin and Ali Akbar Khan, who lived in the 19th-20th cents?*

**(7) – Tu 10/12                    Raga and tala**

A day of practice led by TK

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Ruckert on raga & tala, 40-64

Viswanathan- Allen on raga & tala, 34-55

Sheila Dhar, “Raga, an Inward Journey,” 217-223

Listening assignment- tracks from the CDs of Ruckert & Viswanathan-Allen books

*1 page response: 1st paragraph - listen & note similarities & differences between Karnatak (Carnatic) & Hindustani pieces*

*Rest: Consider how these basic elements of Indian classical music, rāga & tāla, can be related to selected examples from classes 3-4-5. (Refer to at least one reading/listening assignment from each of these classes.)*

**(8) – Th 10/14                    Bhakti (devotional love) & bhajan (devotional song)**

LH: *Bhakti, sagun & nirgun*, focus on *sagun*. Introduce major Hindu forms of supreme being including Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, Rama, Kali, Parvati/Uma, Lakshmi, Sarasvati.

TK: teach bhajan

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Selected bhakti poetry:

Tamil poems to Shiva, trans. Indira Viswanathan Peterson; Kannada poems to Shiva, trans. A.K. Ramanujan; Tamil poems to Vishnu, trans. A.K. Ramanujan; Bengali poems to Krishna, trans.

E.C. Dimock & Denise Levertov; “Songs of Mirabai” intro & translations from Hindi by Nancy Martin; poems of Mirabai, trans. Hawley & Juergensmeyer; poems of Kabir, trans. Linda Hess

Edwin Bryant, from intro to *Bhagavata Purana* (20 pp)

David Haberman on Vaishnava *bhakti rasa*

*1-page response: The readings introduce the culture of bhakti, personal devotion to a supreme being, which involves cultivation of devotion and deep transformation of the devotee. Emotion, imagination, and other psychological processes are involved. After reading all the assignments, choose 3 poems that show different aspects of the poet's way of cultivating bhakti. Discuss what the poems show about this.*

OR

*Compose a song to devotional/mystical poetry & sing it for us.*

**MON. OCT. 18: Public lecture-demonstration by Shubha Mudgal with accompanists: “Hindu and Muslim Threads in the Fabric of Music in India & Pakistan” (highly recommended).**

**(9) – Tu 10/19 Nirgun bhakti, folk and oral traditions**

LH - on own work

TK: learn to sing bhajan (*Guruji main to ek niranjan dhyaunji*, and/or *Ham pardesi panchhi*)

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Hess, from *Singing Emptiness: Kumar Gandharva Performs the Poetry of Kabir*

Hess, from forthcoming ms. on Kabir oral and folk traditions

Read text of “Man mast hua” & description of performance circumstances; then listen to Kaluram singing it.

Film in class:

- first 10 minutes of “Chalo hamara des/ Come to my country”
- first half-hour of “Koi Sunta Hai/ Someone is Listening”
- Anal Shah’s video, kabir bhajan by wandering baba in Varanasi streets & river, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzB3c-xdOyk>, 5 min

*1-page response: Reflect on oral & written traditions of poetry, based on reading and listening. Also consider: in your own experience, how is it different to know texts of songs in an oral, embodied way, and as poetry on a page?*

Note: We are assigning the rest of the film “Koi sunta hai” (about one hour) to be viewed before class Thursday. Because we have a concert on Wed. evening, we are abbreviating the response assignment for Thursday. We’ll give everyone a copy of the film. We recommend watching on Tues. evening if possible.

**WED. OCT. 20, 8 p.m.: SHUBHA MUDGAL CONCERT**  
<http://livelyarts.stanford.edu/event.php?code=SHUB>

**(10) Th 10/21**

**SHUBHA MUDGAL, ANEESH PRADHAN, AND SUDHIR NAYAK IN CLASS**

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Watch the rest of the film “Koi sunta hai/ Someone is listening”

Response:

- 1 paragraph free response to film “Koi sunta hai”
- prepare 2 or 3 questions for Shubha Mudgal and accompanying musicians

**OCTOBER 23 (Sat.) by 11 p.m.: Preliminary project proposal due. Submit up to two ideas for your final project. These are expressions of interest. Write a few sentences on each idea.**

**(11) - Tu 10/26          Gurus and disciples**

LH: *guru-shishya parampara* and ways of telling music history

Film clips: musicians talk about the history of their music.

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Ravi Shankar, *My Music My Life*, 9-20, 43-58.

Daniel Neumann, “Becoming a musician in North India,” 30-58

Terry Riley, “Remembering Guruji” (on Pandit Pran Nath)

Sheila Dhar, “Pran Nath: an Odyssey,” 67-87 (completing the essay we started on 9/30)

Gita Shenoy on Gundecha Gurukul experience

*1-page: Reflect on how musicians regard the guru-disciple relationship, as seen in our various readings. Is anything held in common by all of them? Are there significant differences?*

**(12) – Th 10/28          Sufi music, focus on qawwali**

LH: on readings

TK: teach qawwali

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Regula Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan*, 1-5.

Carl Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, 179-91.

David Boyk, “Qawwali and Social Change” (unpublished paper), 1-32.

Watch/listen to Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Abida Parveen on youtube (we’ll give recommended links)

*1 page – choose one of the following*

*1. What are the most important and interesting links between music and Islam, based on today’s assignments?*

*2. Observe variety of performance elements in two youtube examples, and your own responses to the performances..*

**November**

**(13) - Tu 11/2          South Indian music : lec-dem by Stanford students**

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Viswanathan- Allen 70-102 “Contextualizing South Indian Performance, Socially and Historically”

*Take a break from writing responses!*

**(14) – Th 11/4          Music and the nation (1)**

LH on Bakhle reading; clips from film on music in Pakistan

TK: introduce Bhatkhande's notation & how to read it

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Janaki Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*. Chap 3 on Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (96-136), chap. 4 on Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (137-79).

*1 page: What light do these readings shed on the political meanings of classical music?*

**(15) – Tu 11/9 Music and the nation (2)**

Prof. Anna Schultz, guest lecture on construction of religious nationalism in Maharashtrian kirtan performance

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Anna Schultz, "Hindu Nationalism, Music, and Embodiment in Marathi *Rashtriya Kirtan*," in *Ethnomusicology* (2002) 46(2): 307-322.

Matthew Allen, "Systematize, Standardize, Classicize, Nationalize: The Scientific Work of the Experts' Committee of the Music Academy of Madras, 1930-1952," in *Performing Pasts: Reinventing the Arts in Modern South India*, Soneji & Peterson.

*No more response papers! (Still read the assignments please!!)*

**(16) – Th 11/11 New Technologies and Economies**

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Amanda Weidman: "In Search of the Guru: Technology and Authenticity in Karnatak Music" in *Performing Pasts: Reinventing the Arts in Modern South India*, ed. Peterson & Soneji. 225-48.

Sheila Dhar, "The New Face of Listening," 288-302.

George Ruckert, last words on Ali Akbar Khan. *Music in North India*, 85-88.

**TARA KINI CONCERT, Thurs. evening, Nov. 11**

**(17) – Tu 11/16 Film music**

LH on readings & film clips

TK teach songs.

Gulzar *Meera* 1979, clips in class.

"Main nahin makhan khayo" in Krishna Lila of Mahabharata TV serial – show in class

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*Meera* film with Subbalakshmi (1947 Hindi remake of 1945 Tamil film). Read & watch youtube links: <http://passionforcinema.com/m-s-subbulakshmi's-hindi-meera-1947/>

Optional: Heidi Pauwels "Bhakti songs recast: Gulzar's Meera Movie" in *Indian Literature And Popular Cinema: Recasting Classics*, ed. Heidi Pauwels, Routledge 2007, 99-120.

(Ask LH if you want a copy.)

**(18) – Th 11/18 TK – big review of what we've learned in practice**

**Nov. 19: Progress report due on final project. 2-3 pages including description, outline, sources. More details to follow.**

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**(19) – Tu 11/30: Student presentations**

**(20) – Tu 12/2 Student presentations**

**Requirements**

Attendance and participation very important.

Attend at least one concert, write two-page description and response (guidelines will be provided). We recommend that everyone attend the concert of Shubha Mudgal (Oct. 20). We also hope that everyone will be at the concert of our own Tara Kini on Nov. 11. Other concert opportunities will be offered. We may have financial aid for concert tickets.

Frequent short responses that are either written (1/2-1 page) or oral (1-2 minutes) responding to reading, listening, or practice assignments. The instructors will read/listen to them each week as they come in. You will also be responsible for collecting them and providing a folder/CD with your collected responses in class on Nov. 18.

Occasional unannounced quizzes

Final project:

Proposal due Oct.23

Progress report Nov. 19

Class presentation, individually or in groups for those who do group project, Nov. 30-Dec. 2.

Final project due on Dec. 3 (no flexibility on due date, apart from true emergency, because of Tara's departure)

More details on forms that final projects can take will be provided in the second week of class.

**Grading**

Attendance and participation: 20%

Concert report: 10%

Collected response pieces: 30%

Final project: 40%

Proposal and progress report must be submitted on time. Lateness will reduce grade.