

## **COURSES FOR GITAM STUDENTS BY VISITING PROFESSOR FROM JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY, USA**

Dr.Sushil Mittal, Professor, James Madison University, USA and Honorary Professor, GITAM University will be offering two certificate courses – “Hindu Intellectual History and Ideas” and “Gandhian Thought and Practice” which are open to all students of GITAM University from August 1<sup>st</sup> to August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. These unique and highly relevant contemporary courses will be offered from Monday to Saturday from 5p.m. onwards, free of cost. All interested students are invited to register themselves at GITAM School of Gandhian Studies Office on or before 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2017. A brief description of the two courses is given below. For any further queries please write to [director\\_sgs@gitam.edu](mailto:director_sgs@gitam.edu) or call 0891-2840317.

### **Hindu Intellectual History and Ideas**

This course introduces Hindu traditions and practices. We look at the ways ancient Hindu thinkers understood the nature of reality and human beings’ place within it. We examine the notions of world, community, and self as experienced and interpreted by Hindus. What are the basic assumptions underlying the Hindu worldview or world image? How do these assumptions interrelate with the various dimensions of Hindu physical, psychological, and cultural experience? How are they expressed in history, ritual, and social structures and institutions? What practical and spiritual concerns do they reflect, and what ideals and values do they create? And what tensions do we find between the ideal and the real? In short, how do Hindus experience life religiously and socially? While we spoke above of “the Hindu worldview or world image” as though this were a single entity, we shall find, in fact, that there are many Hindu worldviews and images: popular and elite, sacrificial and devotional, ascetic and social-affirming, traditional and modernizing, male and female. How do these differing perspectives with their various views/images interrelate? What are the tensions between them, and in what ways, if at all, are they integrated, transcended, or simply accepted or even ignored? Our strategy is to move between cosmological, theological and philosophical understandings, and the ways these motivate ordinary and extraordinary human lives.

Throughout the course, we will also (i) try to make sense of chaos (*adharmā*) and discover the lurking irrationality of order (*dharma*), and thereby suggest a creative role of chaos in order; and (ii) challenge the Western category of religion and the universalism associated with Western religious mythologies.

## **Gandhian Thought and Ideas**

Of all the world leaders in the twentieth century, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) is certainly one of the most influential. He is unique as a social theorist, a moral and spiritual philosopher, and a social and political activist. He serves as a bridge from post-modern to modern and pre-modern thought, as well as between Western and non-Western religious and cultural traditions. His experience transcends boundaries of culture, geography, religion, and politics. Even more, Gandhi's leadership changed the world. Indeed, it continues to change the world. He challenged the dominant world structure of his time, the colonial system, and struggled with some of the most significant issues of our time: violence and terrorism, racism, the oppression of women, the role of religion in the modern world, the nature of capitalism, and conflict between ethnic and religious communities. In this course, we explore the ideas and the story of Mohandas Gandhi -- later called "Mahatma" the Great Soul -- to reflect upon the issues facing our modern world.

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