



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Reading the Kamasutra in the age of #metoo - 19700

Last update 17-09-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: General & Compar. Literature

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Talia Ariav

Coordinator Email: talia.ariav@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Schedule in advance

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Ariav Talia

Course/Module description:

The *Kāmasūtra*, or "Science of Desire," is a text written in the northern Indian subcontinent around the second or third century BC. The text deals with the various ways in which the imagined reader (a high class urban man), can live his life in the most pleasurable way. The text became famous in the West mainly thanks to its second chapter, which deals with a variety of sex positions, but it also deals with many other issues, such as the three goals of life, seduction, the married woman's lifestyle, prostitution, and more. In fact, this is a book that maps and regulates the norms of life in the ancient Indian city, as imagined by its author. We will closely read selected parts of the book (in Doniger & Kakar's English translation), alongside source literature that corresponds closely with the text, and secondary literature that deals with selected issues in connection with the material being read. Throughout the course we will focus on the ways in which we, readers of our time and place, can critically and beneficially encounter a textual world that expresses jarring and foreign attitudes and values. Most of the reading materials for the course are in English.

Course/Module aims:

The students will be exposed to pre-modern Indian scientific thought (the worlds of the *śāstra*) as well as tangential literary worlds. They will acquire tools that allow access to distant textual worlds (in place, time, and or in the scale of values), that emphasize attention to the ethical and aesthetic worlds in which the text was written, while also being attentive to the contingent values that dictate our own reading (and which cannot be canceled anyway) and to the potential dialogue created between us and between the text.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

The students will be exposed to pre-modern Indian scientific thought (the worlds of the *śāstra*) as well as tangential literary worlds. They will acquire tools that allow access to distant textual worlds (in place, time, and or in the scale of values), that emphasize attention to the ethical and aesthetic worlds in which the text was written, while also being attentive to the contingent values that dictate our own reading (and which cannot be canceled anyway) and to the potential dialogue created between us and between the text.

Attendance requirements(%):

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: seminar

Course/Module Content:

Order of classes:

1. critical reading and the gender lens in ancient texts.
2. critical reading and the gender lens- continued, plus introduction to the world of Indian sciences.
3. Kāmasūtra ch. 1: pleasure, money, duty.
4. Kāmasūtra ch. 2: sex.
5. continued: representations of sex in literature- selections from the Gāhā Sattasāī.
6. Kāmasūtra ch. 3,4,5 (women in society)
7. continued: constructions of passion at court
8. continued: constructions of passion in literature: the Mallavikāgnimitra.
9. continued: constructions of passion in literature: Sangam poems.
10. continued: constructions of passion in literature, the Amaruśataka.
11. Kāmasūtra ch. 6: Courtesans. Rep. in literature a story from the Daśakumāracaritam.
12. continued: constructions in literature early bhāna plays.
13. concluding remarks: the history of the reception of the Kāmasūtra in the West.

Required Reading:

במהלך הסמסטר נקרא בכיתה מהתרגום הבא:

Kāmasūtra. 2009. Translated by Wendy Doniger and Sudhir Kakar. Oxford: Oxford University Press

ונקרא מהמאמרים הבאים (הרשימה עשויה להשתנות בהתאם למהלך הקורס)

William Dalrymple. 2004. A Point of View: The sacred and sensuous in Indian art. BBC Magazine. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-26873149>

Doniger, Wendy. 2016. "The Strange and the Familiar in the Kamasutra" and "The Kautilian Kāmasūtra" in Redeeming the Kāmasūtra. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Doniger, Wendy. "The 'Kamasutra': It Isn't All about Sex." The Kenyon Review 25, no. 1 (2003): 18-37.

Doniger, Wendy. "From Kama to Karma: The Resurgence of Puritanism in

Contemporary India." *Social Research* 78, no. 1 (2011): 49–74.

Jacqueline Vayntrub, Laura Quick, and Ingrid E. Lilly. 2019. "Introduction," in *Gender and Philology's Uncommon Sense. Special Issue in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 8: 379-87.

Bragg, Melvyn (Podcast) "The Kama Sutra." *In Our Time: Culture*. February 2, 2012. <https://www.everand.com/podcast/418257015/The-Kama-Sutra-Melvyn-Bragg-and-his-guests-discuss-the-Kama-Sutra>

Ali, Daud. "Courtly Love and the Aristocratic Household in Early Medieval India." In *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History*, edited by Francesca Orsini, 43–60. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2007

Ali, Daud. "Rethinking the History of the 'Kāma' World in Early India." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 39, no. 1 (2011): 1–13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23884104>.

Rocher, Ludo. "The Kāmasūtra: Vātsyāyana's Attitude toward Dharma and Dharmaśāstra." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105, no. 3 (1985): 521–29. <https://doi.org/10.2307/601526>.

Desai, Devangana. 2000. *Khajuraho*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mallavikāgnimitra of Kalidāsa. 2009. Translated by Dániel Balogh & Eszter Somogyi. *Clay Sanskrit Library*, New York University Press.

קאלידאסה, המלך מאוהב: שני מחזות מהודו העתיקה. 2018. תרגום: עמרם פטר. ירושלים: ביאליק.

שירת הסנגם ודקדוק האהבה. תרגום דוד שולמן. (ירושלים, 2012)

Amaruśataka of Amaru. With Srngaradipika of Vemabhupala: A Centum of Ancient Love Lyrics of Amaruka. Critically edited With an Introduction, English translation and Appendices by Chintama Ramcandra Devadhar. Madras: Motilal Banarsidas. 1984 (1959).

Poems on Life and Love in Ancient India: Hāla's Sattasaī. 2009. Translated from the Prakrit and Introduced by Peter Khoroche and Herman Tieken. New York: State University of New York Press.

The Ten Princes (Daśakumāracaritam of Daṇḍin). 1927. Translated from Sanskrit by Arthur W. Ryder. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

The Quartet of Causeries by Shyamilaka, Vararuchi, Shudraka and Ishvaradatta. 2009. Translated from the Sanskrit by Dezso, Casba, and Somadeva Vasudeva. *Clay Sanskrit Library*. New York: New York University Press : JJC Foundation.

Saraf, Babli Moitra. 2024. "Translating the Kama Sutra: Anglophone Contexts." In The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Sexuality. Routledge.

Puri, Jyoti. 2010. "Concerning Kamasutras: Challenging Narratives of History and Sexuality." In Religions of the East. Routledge.

Additional Reading Material:

Grading Scheme:

Home Exam % 70

Active Participation / Team Assignment 30 %

Additional information: