General Information

This class introduces students to the history of Sikhism, from the time of its inception in the fifteenth century to the present day, through a survey of early Sikh communities and Sikhism in South Asia to contemporary transnational Sikh and Punjabi communities worldwide. Themes covered include gurdwaras and “sacred” geography; Sikh and Punjabi identities; devotional religion, gender, caste, and egalitarianism; politics and religious reform; and the history of Punjab. Class work includes engagement with a wide range of primary sources (textual, ethnographic) and a virtual field visit to a historical Sikh gurdwara; there are no pre-requisites and no final exam.

Please read and review the entire syllabus carefully and clarify your questions with the instructor.
Special Note for Winter 2021

During the Covid-19 pandemic, delivery of class materials and communication with the instructor will be entirely online. Given the changing circumstances of this term, I may adjust the syllabus as required to accommodate any adversely affected students. All of us are confronting challenges and experiencing the pandemic in different ways. If you are facing obstacles to making progress in the course, please connect with the instructor ASAP to work out a solution. Ça va bien aller!

Topic List

All required readings/videos are uploaded or linked in MyCourses and must be completed within a one-week window, as indicated in MyCourses:
https://mycourses2.mcgill.ca/d2l/le/content/495703/Home

- Week 1: Introduction and Beginnings
- Week 2: Sikhism in Canadian Contexts
- Week 3: Sikhism in South Asian Contexts
- Week 4: Biographies of the Gurus
- Week 5: (Sacred) Places
- Week 6: (Sacred) Words I: Adi Granth, Japji, Janam Sakhis
- Week 7: (Sacred) Words II—Dasam Granth, Reht Maryada, Ardas
- Week 8: Sikhs, Mughals, Maharaja Ranjit Singh
- Week 9: Punjab, British Colonialism, Identity
- Week 10: Sikhs, Independence, Nationalism
- Week 11: Gender, Caste, Religious Reform
- Week 12: Transnational Sikh Communities in Global Perspective
- Week 13: Sikhism in the 21st Century

Evaluation Summary

1—30% = Weekly Discussion Posts and Final Discussion Board Portfolio
2—15% = 2 open-book quizzes and 1 map exercise (3 x 5%)
3—30% = Gurdwara Research Report, submitted in 3 parts (3 x 10%)
4a—25% = Written-only Option (=five brief assignments 250-500 words each x 5%)
4b—25% = Discussion Option (5 live discussion conferences x 5% each)
Evaluation Details
For each of the assignments below, detailed “Guidelines” will be posted in MyCourses > Content > Important Class Documents, beginning on 11 January 2021.

(1) 30%—Discussion Board Portfolio
Students are expected to read and reflect on all topics covered in the MyCourses discussion boards every week and participate by contributing one high-quality post per week (~150 words). At the end of the term, collect all your posts from the term into a final “Discussion Board Portfolio.” From your work, choose your three “best” posts to highlight with brief, analytic annotations reflecting on your term’s studies (~250 words each). Due Friday 16 April 2021.

(2) 15%—Two Quizzes and Map Exercise (3 x 5%)
Two brief quizzes (2 x 5%) and a map exercise (5%) will be scheduled during the term. Quizzes and the Map Exercise will remain open for approximately one week, are open-book, and should be treated as “graded assignments.” To help you prepare, a study sheet will be provided ~two weeks in advance of the quiz opening date.

(3) 30%—Gurdwara Research Report, graded in 3 parts (3 x 10%)
Cumulatively over the term, students will develop a research report on a historical gurdwara that is of interest to them, in consultation with the instructor. Final report must include at least one map and one image.

Gurdwara Research Report—“Scaffolded” Submission Dates:
25 January: Draft topic choice and source ideas are due (required, ungraded)
1 February: Topic choice and sources must be approved by instructor (required, ungraded)
1 March: Part 1—Background and context (~750 words = 10%)
1 April: Part 2—Issues, Analysis, Significance (~750 words = 10%)
23 April: Final Combined Report (~1500-1750 words max= 10%) Edit Part 1 and Part 2 together; condense and refine your combined work into a coherent final report.

(4) 25%—Participation: Written-Only OR Discussion Option
Students may choose to participate through an asynchronous “written-only” option, or a live, video-on synchronous “discussion” option.

4a—WRITTEN-ONLY OPTION: Brief take-home assignments: (5 x 5% = 25%)
- Students who choose this option will submit five brief take-home assignments (~250-500 words each, each worth 5%) in response to question prompts from the instructor. This option will include some brief additional reading assignments. This is an asynchronous class activity.

—OR—
DISCUSSION OPTION: Live Discussion (5 live conferences x 5% each=25%)

- Students who choose this option will participate in five (5) “live” discussion conferences (~40 min each), scheduled on Wednesdays during the official class time ~11:35–13:55 EST. Discussion will follow the prompts on the class Discussion Board. This is a video-on, synchronous class activity.

Indicate your participation preference (and any concerns) in this anonymous remote learning survey between now and 15 January:
https://mycourses2.mcgill.ca/d2l/lms/survey/user/surveys_list.d2l?ou=495703

Regular Weekly Workload

Class content and assignments are distributed over 13 weeks and are equal to three regular contact hours (39 hours). Students should plan their semester workload accordingly to allow for an additional six to nine hours per week (per course) for related course work:
https://www.mcgill.ca/oasis/academic/courses

- Discussion Board: carefully read the discussion prompts posted by the instructor; skim the discussion responses made by your peers.
- Content: Study weekly class readings/lecture capsules/videos/texts, etc. The expectation for “how to read” each class text is indicated by the label “REQ’D” or “REQ’D SKIM” in the title of each file.
- Attend one live class per week (~45 minutes, during our scheduled class time). This is a video-on, synchronous activity. If this is not possible for you on account of the circumstances this term, please email me ASAP to make an alternative accommodation.
- Choose one of the instructor’s prompts, and respond with one discussion post per week (~150 words, 200 max).
- Please see this link for an overview of all the term’s work, and the estimated time breakdown for all assignments and regular class work:
  https://mycourses2.mcgill.ca/d2l/le/content/495703/viewContent/5494321/View

Instructional Method and Accessibility

- Students have the right to submit work for evaluation in English or French.
- As the instructor of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience any barriers to learning in this course, have questions about the remote delivery plan for the course, and/or have any accessibility needs of which I should be aware, please contact me: (andrea.pinkney@mcgill.ca).
- For further support, please also reach out to the McGill Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD): https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/
- Make an OSD appointment: https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/new-osd-students/first-appointment
- OSD Email: disabilities.students@mcgill.ca
Privacy Restrictions and Remote Delivery of Course Materials

- Please note that all remotely delivered course materials for RELG 288 are for the exclusive use of students enrolled in the Winter 2021 class, for their personal educational purposes.
- All live class sessions will be unrecorded; taking screen shots and making screen recordings of classes are prohibited.
- All course “content,” including video and audio recordings, presentations, draft copies of work, discussion board content, and so on, is restricted and may not be reproduced, distributed, or shared in any format with any person outside of class or any domain outside of “MyCourses” without the express written consent of the author of the content.

Academic Integrity

- McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
- For all class assignments, be sure that your written work is comprised entirely of sentences that you have written yourself, starting from a blank document. If you submit writing that is based (however distantly) on text edited or modified from an (uncited) online source, this may constitute plagiarism. Please ensure that you are familiar with this and all other issues regarding intellectual honesty and academic culture at McGill. It is your responsibility to educate yourself on this and all other issues of plagiarism in the digital era: https://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/students/test
- If, after reviewing the syllabus and these resources, you have questions regarding academic culture at McGill, you are urged to consult with the instructor personally. Any student found to have submitted plagiarised work will be referred to the Faculty Disciplinary Officer for further action, as outlined under “Academic Integrity”: http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/policies

Unceded Territory

McGill University is on unceded territory that is claimed by Indigenous Peoples, including members of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabe nations. Please see these resources for further information:

https://www.mironline.ca/kanienkehaka-sovereignty/