

Introduction to the Sikhs
Critical Race and Ethnic Studies
Professor Nirvikar Singh

Course Description

This course introduces the Sikh community, including its origins, history, belief system and contemporary challenges. Other topics include Sikh music, art, literature, and aspects of Sikh society. Specific attention is paid to the Sikh diaspora community in the United States, and in California in particular, including comparative perspectives with respect to other minority communities.

The text we will use for the class is *Sikhism: An Introduction* by Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh (IB Tauris, 2011). This is required reading. It is an inexpensive paperback and can be purchased from the BayTree Bookstore or online.

All other readings are optional.

Course Outline and Readings

(See list following table for details of readings)

Week	Topics	Readings (prior to lecture)
Week 1	Overview – Basic doctrines, identity, origins, background on Punjab region	None
Week 2	The Sikh belief system	Text, Chs. 1-4; Cole, Chs. 1-9
Week 3	Founding and early evolution	Text, Chs. 1-3; Grewal, Chs. 1-4
Week 4	Struggle, colonialism and modernity	Text, Chs. 5 and 7; Grewal, Chs. 5-10; Cole, Chs. 10-14
Week 5	Sikh music, art and literature	Text, Ch. 8; NGKS2; Web-based music samples
Week 6	Sikh society: class, gender, political and religious institutions	Text, Ch. 6; NGKS1; Grewal
Week 7	The global Sikh diaspora	Text, Ch. 9; Cole, Ch. 15; Dusenbery; B&J
Week 8	The Sikh community in California	I.J. Singh; Topical readings
Week 9	Contemporary issues for the Sikhs in the US	I.J. Singh; Topical readings
Week 10	Sikhs in the US in comparative perspective	I.J. Singh; Topical readings

Optional readings

1. Understanding Sikhism, W. Owen Cole
2. The Sikhs of the Punjab, J. S. Grewal
3. The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent, Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh(NGKS1)
4. The Name of My Beloved: Verses of the Sikh Gurus, Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh (NGKS2)
5. Sikhs at Large: Religion, Culture and Politics in Global Perspective, Verne A. Dusenbery
6. The Four Quarters of the Night: The Life-Journey of an Emigrant Sikh, Tara Singh Bains and Hugh Johnston (B&J)
7. Sikhs and Sikhism: A View with a Bias, I.J. Singh
8. The Sikh Way: A Pilgrim's Progress, I.J. Singh
9. Being & Becoming a Sikh, I.J. Singh
10. The World According to Sikhi, I.J. Singh
11. Sikhs Today: Ideas and Opinions, I.J. Singh

Expected Work and Evaluation

Multiple choice quizzes, short answer assignments, group discussions, and a written assignment (final paper).

Approximate workload distribution for 2-units of credit:

6 hours per week, made up of

- Lecture: 1.5 hours per week
 - Students will watch prerecorded video lectures and answer multiple choice questions after each lecture to review comprehension.
- Reading, short answer assignments, weekly discussion, final paper research and writing: 4.5 hours per week

Evaluation will be based on:

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| • Multiple choice quizzes after each lecture | 25% |
| • Four short answer written assignments (300 words each) | 25% |
| • Instructor-guided weekly group discussions | 25% |
| • 1500-word final paper | 25% |

There are no examinations.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. describe, at an introductory level, the beliefs and practices, history, music, art, literature, and social and political structures of the Sikhs.
2. trace the temporal and spatial path of the Sikh diaspora in the US.
3. list the contemporary challenges of the Sikhs as a diasporic community.
4. compare the Sikh diaspora in the US (and specifically in California) to their own experiences of the US and of varying constructs of American identity.
5. compare their own language and culture to the language and culture of the Sikhs.
6. conduct simple research using print and online sources.
7. demonstrate various writing and discussion skills.
8. provide tactful and actionable feedback to their peers on academic work.

Academic Integrity

All members of the UCSC community benefit from an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. You are expected to present your own work and acknowledge the work of others in order to preserve the integrity of scholarship.

Academic integrity includes:

- Following exam rules
- Incorporating proper citation of all sources of information
- Submitting your own original work

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Copying/purchasing any material from another student, or from another source, that is submitted for grading as your own
- Plagiarism, including use of Internet material without proper citation
- Submitting your own work in one class that was completed for another class (self-plagiarism) without prior permission from the instructor.
- Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript. For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Misconduct page](#) at the [Division of Undergraduate Education](#).

Accessibility

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by email, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Religious Accommodation

UC Santa Cruz welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request the reasonable accommodation for religious practices. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation without penalty. You should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your instructor early in the term. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the [Dean of Students office](#).

Principles of Community

The University of California, Santa Cruz expressly prohibits students from engaging in conduct constituting unlawful discrimination, harassment or bias... [More here](#). I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity and supports inclusivity. We need to work together to build this community of learning. I ask all members of this class to:

- be open to and interested in the views of others
- consider the possibility that your views may change over the course of the term
- be aware that this course asks you to reconsider some "common sense" notions you may hold
- honor the unique life experiences of your colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other

University of California, Santa Cruz

- listen to each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- ground your comments in the texts we are studying. Refer frequently to the texts and make them the focus of your questions, comments, and arguments. This is the single most effective way to ensure respectful discussion and to create a space where we are all learning together.

Title IX/Care Advisory

UC Santa Cruz is committed to providing a safe learning environment that is free of all forms of gender discrimination and sexual harassment, which are explicitly prohibited under Title IX. If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, know that you are not alone. The Title IX Office, the Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE) office, and Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) are all resources that you can rely on for support.

Please be aware that if you tell me about a situation involving Title IX misconduct, I am required to share this information with the Title IX Coordinator. This reporting responsibility also applies to course TAs and tutors (as well to all UCSC employees who are not designated as "confidential" employees, which is a special designation granted to counselors and CARE advocates). Although I have to make that notification, you will control how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. The goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

Confidential resources are available through [CARE](#). Confidentiality means CARE advocates will not share any information with Title IX, the police, parents, or anyone else without explicit permission. CARE advocates are trained to support you in understanding your rights and options, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. You can contact CARE at (831) 502-2273 or care@ucsc.edu.

In addition to CARE, these resources are available to you:

- If you need help figuring out what resources you or someone else might need, visit the [Sexual Violence Prevention & Response \(SAFE\) website](#), which provides information and resources for different situations.
- [Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) can provide confidential counseling support. Call them at (831) 459-2628.
- You can also report gender discrimination and sexual harassment and violence directly to the University's [Title IX Office](#), by calling (831) 459-2462 or by using their [online reporting tool](#).
- Reports to law enforcement can be made to the UC Police Department, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1.
- For emergencies, call 911.

Difficult Conversations

In our in-class and online discussions and dialogues, we will have the opportunity to explore challenging, high-stakes issues and increase our understanding of different perspectives. Our conversations may not always be easy. We sometimes will make mistakes in our speaking and our listening. Sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. We will always need respect for others. Thus, an important aim of our classroom interactions will be for us to increase our facility with difficult conversations that arise inside issues of social justice, politics, economics, morality, religion, and other issues where reasonable people often hold diverse perspectives. This effort will ultimately deepen our understanding and allow us to make the most of being in a community with people of many backgrounds, experiences, and positions.

Student Services

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

Many students at UCSC face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

[Student Success and Engagement Hub](#)

The Division of Student Success provides campus-wide coordination and leadership for student success programs and activities across departments, divisions, the colleges, and administrative units.

[Tutoring and Learning Support](#)

At Learning Support Services (LSS), undergraduate students build a strong foundation for success and cultivate a sense of belonging in our Community of Learners. LSS partners with faculty and staff to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments in Modified Supplemental Instruction, Small Group Tutoring, and Writing Support. When students fully engage in our programs, they gain transformative experiences that empower them at the university and beyond.

[Slug Support Program](#)

College can be a challenging time for students and during times of stress it is not always easy to find the help you need. Slug Support can give help with everything from basic needs (housing, food, or financial insecurity) to getting the technology you need during remote instruction.

To get started with SLUG Support, please contact the [Dean of Students](#) Office at 831-459-4446 or you may send us an email at deanofstudents@ucsc.edu.

[Slug Help/Technology](#)

The ITS Support Center is your single point of contact for all issues, problems or questions related to technology services and computing at UC Santa Cruz. To get technological help, simply email help@ucsc.edu.

On-Campus Emergency Contacts

Slug Help/[Emergency Services](#). For all other help and support, including the health center and emergency services, start [here](#). Always dial 9-1-1 in the case of an emergency.