Hinduism

- Other religions are not wrong, just inadequate
  - Practice certain aspects of other religions
- One god - the god is so vast, humans can’t comprehend it
  - Individual deities are aspects of that one god
- Brahma
- Samsara - cycle of reincarnation
  - Increase position by increasing Karma and fulfilling Dharma
  - Moksha - Hindu Nirvana; freedom from Samsara
- Comes from Vedism
- No founding date, no founder, no central text, no leader

What is Hinduism?
  Can’t answer; it is a constructed category

To what does the term Hinduism refer?
  "Hinduism refers to the composite of diverse doctrines, beliefs, and ways of life that evolved over the last 2000 years from Vedism."

Vedism - Complicated, expensive rituals to move up in position creates a rigid socio-economic caste system.

Devotionalism (Bhakti) - personal relationship with god
  - Develop Bhakti through concept of Darshan - to see and be seen by the gods.

Puja - Hindu worship
  - God is treated like an esteemed guest.
  - Bathed, dressed, garland with flowers, perfumed, food offerings are given, bells are rung, incense are burned.

- Texts (Puranas, Ramayana, etc.) are developed
  - Puranas - layout stories about gods
  - Shilpa Shashtras - for artist depictions; what does beauty look like

- Monumental Hindu art emerges during 4th - 5th C.
  - Art has four purposes in Hinduism
  - To adorn a religious structure; to differentiate it from a normal structure
  - To tell stories and instruct
  - To heighten the religious experience; to make you feel in awe of the god
  - Images of the gods; to serve as a vessel for Darshan.

- Art embodies four goals of Hinduism
  - Dharma - the pursuit of virtue or duty
  - Artha - wealth acquired ethically
  - Kama - love and desire in all of its forms
  - Moksha - liberation

Three Main Gods
  - Vishnu
  - Shiva
  - Brahma (different from general god)/Devi

Water - elixir of life that sustains the body
Fire - power of the divine
Bells - awakens the spirit, clears the mind

Ganesha - god of auspicious beginnings

Shiva - god of creations and destruction
  - Followers of Shiva - Shaivites
  - Volatile; can appear meditative and calm or angry and vengeful
  - Normal form - shown as wandering aesthetic
  - Parvati - spouse, faithful wife, form of Devi, vehicle is lion or tiger
  - Skanda and Ganesha - sons
  - Nandi - bull, vehicle of Shiva
  - Outcast
  - Dreadlocks, third eye, snake-skins
  - Abstract form: Linga - representation of Shiva’s energy