This course centers on the Devimāhātmya. Class time will be devoted primarily to translation and grammatical analysis and secondarily to discussion of the content.

This course has three objectives:

1. to shore up and expand your knowledge of grammar,
2. to expand your reading vocabulary and increase the speed of your reading comprehension,

and

3. to introduce you to the Devimāhātmya and its cultural background.

Attendance is mandatory, and inexcusable tardiness is not tolerated. Class attendance is ten percent of the final grade.

Not counting the first day of class, we have approximately forty meetings. Two of those meetings are reserved for review tests. Assuming we will be able to read approximately ten verses per meeting, we should be able to read about 380 of the approximately 700 verses of the text.

The first review test will probably occur early in the course. It will be worth ten percent of the final grade. The second review test will be worth twenty percent of the final grade. If the first review test occurs later in the semester, it may be the only review test, and therefore, it will be worth twenty-five percent of the final grade.

The final exam will include material from the entire semester. The first selection tested will be easy, the second, or second and third, average, and the last difficult. How well you translate those passages will determine 90% of the grade of the final. The other 10% will be based on your ability to translate a passage similar to those translated in class during the semester but which you have not seen before. (This is commonly known as the “sight passage”.) No one will be expected to translate it perfectly, but how well you do translate it may surprise you. The best way to prepare for such an
exam is to come prepared for every class, make certain you understand the source of the mistakes you and your fellow students make in class, make certain you understand the structure and meaning of each verse we translate in class, and after classes end and before the exam in May reread all the verses we translated in class.

Since you will be required to “stand and deliver” every class meeting (and using copious notes or simply reading a translation you did earlier is not encouraged), you will be “tested”, though not “graded”, every time we meet. The final grade will be determined by attendance (10%), the two review tests (30%), and the grade on the final exam (60%). If there is only one review test, then the final exam will be sixty-five percent of the final grade.

You may not take the final exam at any other time than when it is scheduled. Make plans accordingly. Missing the final exam is an automatic F.

The grading scheme is:

- 99 and above — A+
- 94 – 98.9 — A
- 90 – 93.9 — A-
- 87 – 89.9 — B+
- 83 – 86.9 — B
- 80 – 82.9 — B-
- 77 – 79.9 — C+
- 73 – 76.9 — C
- 70 – 72.9 — C-
- 67 – 69.9 — D+
- 63 – 66.9 — D
- 60 – 62.9 — D-
- 0 – 59.9 — F

The Devīmāhātmya is the primary text behind goddess worship in South Asia. Worship of the goddess is the third major division of Hinduism, behind Vaishnavism and Shaivism. The story told in this text is well known to all in South Asia, especially to Hindus of any stripe. It is not only important for its religious significance but also for providing the reader a basic understanding of how women are conceived by this patriarchal society.

I hope you are looking forward to our time together as much as I am.