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PUBLIC Professor Series talk to explore delusion and the age-old quest to find spiritual liberation

Religious studies professor, Dr. Hillary Rodrigues, will present the fifth talk of the 2019/20 season of the Faculty of Arts & Science’s PUBLIC Professor Series this week, *Combatting Delusion: Gleanings from the Hindu Great Goddess and Eastern Sages*. The free event takes place Thursday, Feb. 27 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Sandman Signature Lethbridge Lodge and is open to the public.

If defined broadly, delusion is the firm belief in something that probably isn’t true. In many Eastern philosophies, delusions are endemic to the human condition and the cornerstones of most religions. In both Buddhist and Hindu philosophies, life’s highest goal, known in Sanskrit as nirvana or moksha, should be the ending of delusions. This is spiritual liberation, freedom from bondage to what is false. In this talk, Rodrigues will discuss the overlap between two seemingly disparate areas of his research: one on the Hindu Great Goddess, Durga, and the other on contemporary philosophies of spiritual liberation by Eastern teachers, such as J. Krishnamurti.



Rodrigues has taught for 28 years in the Department of Religious Studies, but the path he took to his current role was anything but linear. He completed a Bachelor of Chemistry at McGill University in the 1970s before deciding to “travel a bit” in advance of graduate school in the sciences. That bit of travel ended up being four years of touring throughout mostly South America, Europe and Asia. These experiences further fueled his interest in cultural diversity and how people throughout the world find meaning in their lives.

Over time, he taught in East Asia and even lived in a commune in California, before returning to university to pursue his doctorate in religious studies at McMaster University. He values those experiences outside of academia as highly as his formal studies.

Rodrigues has three main areas of research: Eastern religions and philosophies, mystical experiences, and the pedagogy of religious studies. He has written various books and academic articles in all these areas and has been honoured with the University of Lethbridge's Distinguished Teaching Award.

To view online: <https://www.uleth.ca/artsci/public-professor-series-dr-hillary-rodrigues>

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