

Topic: Hinduism for a Secular State**Prof Arundhati Virmani**

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Bio: Arundhati Virmani is a historian, currently senior research scholar at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre Norbert Elias, Marseille. She received her Ph.D. degree from Sorbonne University (1981) and was Lecturer, then Reader at Delhi University, Department of History. She has taught in the University of Bordeaux Montaine, Aix-Marseille University and Marseille Business School. She was Fellow of the Canon Chair in Business Ethics at the Rennes School of Business. Her research on the Indian subcontinent lies at the crossroads of different fields : political history from colonisation to independence, links between religion and state, entrepreneurial cultures. She has been visiting scholar in several universities in Europe and India. Her books include *L'Inde, une puissance en mutation* (Paris, La documentation française, 2001), *India 1900-1947, Un britannique au cœur du Raj*, (Paris, Autrement, 2001), *A National Flag for India ; Rituals, Nationalism and the Politics of Sentiment*, (Delhi, Permanent Black, 2008, paperback 2015), *Atlas Historique de l'Inde* (Paris, Autrement, 2012), *Les Indiens. Voix multiples*, (Paris, Ateliers Henry Dougier, 2015, winner of the 2016 Asia Literary Prize awarded by the Association of writers of the French Language). Her edited works include *Political Aesthetics. Culture, Critique and the Everyday*, (London, Routledge, 2015, 2nd ed. 2017)

Abstract: On the aftermath of independence, attempts to introduce a humanist, universalist, Hinduism were made to appease religious tensions and create a consensual ground for communities to live together peacefully. For the defenders of the future secularist society, this appeared the best way to ensure social stability and progress. I discuss the main elements of this proposal focusing principally on the writings and public discourses of philosopher, statesman, Sarvapelli Radhakrishnan from 1911 to the early 1970s. Three principal questions are addressed: first, the political implications of a humanist Hinduism confronted with the popular, traditional religious groundswell, secondly, the reasons behind its political failure and finally a reflection on the place of universalist, humanist Hinduism in contemporary Indian political culture.

Date: **14 Feb 2019, Thursday**

Time: **4:00 pm – 5:30 pm**

Venue: **A 106, R & D Block**

