

# Unpacking the controversy surrounding Audrey Truschke

## Background

Hindu on Campus is a student-led initiative aimed at creating a safe space for diaspora Hindus to share their experiences regarding anti-Hindu bigotry and standing together against racism. We welcome submissions and testimonials through our [carrd](#).

## Investigation

In early March, we were contacted by anonymous Rutgers students from New Brunswick and Newark campuses who informed us about the online and in-class behavior of Dr. Audrey Truschke, an Associate Professor of South Asian studies at Rutgers Newark. We were presented with evidence from these students, which we found deeply disturbing. As previously stated in our [open letter](#), we can recap the following points:

### [From Open Letter]

- Following the horrific Capitol Hill insurrection and riots which shook our nation's fabric, Prof. Truschke [tweeted](#) about the presence of an Indian flag at the scene and immediately declared it to be the handiwork of "The Hindu Right," even though various media outlets showed that the [perpetrator was not a Hindu](#). **Such conflation creates a dangerous environment for Hindus and opens us up for potentially violent attacks by falsely linking Hindus to White Supremacists.**
- In [Aeon](#) magazine, Prof. Truschke **accused the *Bhagavad Gita***, one of the most famous and sacred Hindu texts that were the basis for Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence movement, as "**rationalizing mass slaughter**." Without any remorse, she even compared the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape case in India to an incident in the sacred epic *Mahabharata* and essentially led readers to **conclude that Hinduism endorses "rape culture" and misogyny** and thus lacks any ethics or value system.
- In April 2018, Prof. Truschke [called Rama](#), one of the most revered and central figures in Hinduism and Jainism, a "**misogynist pig**." What's worse, she claimed using the translation of Professor Robert Goldman, a well-reputed scholar on the Ramayana. However, [Goldman has himself clarified](#) that **Prof. Truschke's words have "nothing to do with our translation,"** that her language was "highly inappropriate," and that the whole saga was "extremely disturbing" and "quite shocking."
- In November 2018, as has been a repeated pattern, **Prof. Truschke [brushed away](#) the trauma inflicted on Hindus** and the people of India by Mughal king Aurangzeb, claiming that such numbers are often exaggerated as there was really no way of knowing how many people existed in India at that time; and that people of that time made up

numbers! Interestingly, **reputable sources have demonstrated that Aurangzeb enslaved and murdered [4.6 million](#) Hindus** and others while Prof. Truschke, who claims to be a “responsible historian” **conveniently decided to whitewash such horrific statistics**. In other instances, Prof. Truschke has defended the Mughal King by saying that he “protected more Hindu temples than he destroyed” and that he “[increased](#) Hindu participation at the elite levels of the Mughal state.”

Students also expressed concerns about the way Hinduism was portrayed in her syllabus. We used the [Wayback machine](#) to recover Dr. Truschke’s deleted materials as they were no longer available publicly.

We found the following:

#### **[From Open Letter]**

1. Prof. Truschke’s course material relies significantly on the works of Prof. Wendy Doniger. Doniger’s penchant for **painting Hinduism through the lens of sex, exoticism, and violence** is well-known. But, more insidiously, Doniger has gone on record for grossly [mischaracterizing](#) sacred Hindu texts such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, along with the *Bhagavad Gita*. In November 2000, Prof. Doniger declared: “The Bhagavad Gita is not as nice a book as some Americans think...Throughout the Mahabharata, the enormous Hindu epic of which the Gita is a small part, Krishna goads human beings into all sorts of murderous and self-destructive behaviors such as the war in order to relieve ‘mother Earth’ of its burdensome human population and the many demons disguised as humans ... The Gita is a dishonest book; it justifies war.” It is no coincidence that such a theme resonates with Prof. Truschke as seen earlier, given that Doniger had [supervised](#) her undergraduate thesis and has been one of her mentors.
2. While discussing the *Mahabharata* in week 4 and its “present-day connection” Prof. Truschke deliberately links the great epic to a bizarre claim made by someone in modern India that ancient Hindus invented the internet, in order to **portray Hindus as crackpots and devoid of scientific acumen**. We can’t help but wonder whether such preposterous connections are made by professors who teach other religions and sacred texts at Rutgers.
3. In the same vein, when discussing the *Ramayana* in week 6, the focus is on “social discontents” within the great epic, with a special “present-day connection” to the “fire test” (where Sita, one of the main characters of the epic, is asked to undergo a fire test to prove her chastity) to once again **paint a picture of “endemic misogyny” within Hinduism and a dangerous idea that today’s social problems in India can be traced back to sacred Hindu texts**. This seems

to be a deliberate pattern for Prof. Truschke, given her sordid portrayals of Rama, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* as discussed earlier. The same week also focuses on a controversial work discussing how there are over 300 versions of the *Ramayana*, in an attempt to dislodge and demote the importance of the most popular and original version by the great sage Valmiki. Unfortunately, **Prof. Truschke fails to provide a balanced view of the two epics** which enjoy immense popularity and respect in many countries around the world, including Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, South Korea, Nepal, Guyana, Trinidad, and Tobago, etc.

4. While discussing 500 year period of history in week 8, **Prof. Truschke once again hones in on the “problems,” with a special focus on the burning of a Hindu text purportedly deemed as oppressive and horrible**, along with the “present day connection” discussing an article where women from the marginalized communities are blackening the face of a statue of the ancient author attributed to the Hindu text. It is another attempt to paint Hindu society as inherently backward and oppressive and devoid of anything moral.
5. In week 9, while discussing the great Gupta empire, the focus is on the *Kamasutra* and “sex” yet again. No discussion of the famous works of the great poet Kalidasa, along with scientific and architectural achievements of the era, from the discovery of zero by Aryabhatta to the numeral system, and myriad innovations and contributions that have deeply impacted world civilizations.

## Launch of Petition and Open Letter

On March 4, we released the following [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) graphics in order to raise awareness about the issue, educate allies and help the Hindu students at Rutgers University.

On March 4, Truschke [blocked](#) our Twitter account, even though we never engaged with her.

On March 6 at 7:06am, Truschke [tweeted](#) “A lot of hate right now. Fuelled by my talk on Hindutva yesterday, a largely recycled petition, and/or randomness. The hate is unacceptable.”

We would like to make it very clear that nowhere in our campaign did we enable hate against Professor Truschke (We maintain strict policies on [reporting](#) individuals who have made threats) or reference her talk.

On March 6 at 1:54pm, we uploaded an entire [thread](#) of information from our open letter.

**Despite blocking us**, Truschke [tweeted her own thread](#) on the same day at 2:24pm, **attempting to respond to/rebut each of our claims** and engaged in ad-hominem attacks.

## **Comparing Hindus to White Supremacists**

On March 6 at 2:32pm, Truschke [tweeted](#) [in the same thread] “The Indian flag was flown at the US capitol on January 6, during the insurrection. Many drew attention to this at the time. Reports confirmed that, among those in attendance, were some associated with Hindutva ideology.” To which, she cited an article by The Print [titled](#) ‘Shameful, unfortunate’ — Tricolour amid Capitol Hill rioters draws sharp Twitter reactions"

It is to be noted that nowhere in the article does the word “Hindu” appear. The article she cites does not back up her claims.

## **Sharing racially prejudiced cartoons**

On March 6 at 2:39pm, Truschke [tweeted](#) [in the same thread] a racially prejudiced cartoon towards Hindus, reiterating her inherently bigoted stance that sacred Hindu texts condone modern-day sexual violence.

## **Ad-Hominem Attacks on Students**

On March 6 at 4:34pm, Truschke responded to a tweet by @meenal\_km123 who [asked](#) “I shared my concern of it being false & linked them [Hindu on Campus] to the Minute from Columbia’s site-they thanked me, told me they weren't aware & removed it immediately. Now I'm seeing your tweet about it. Since you conveniently blocked them, how were they supposed to see this tweet of yours?”

To which Truschke [replied](#) “It's not for them. It is for everybody else who might want to be informed about a handle that embraces misinformation in pursuit of a malicious agenda.”

From our [Medium article](#) addressed to President Jonathan Holloway, Chancellor Nancy Cantor, Senior Vice President Anna Branch, and Student Body President Nicholas Labelle, published on March 7.

*If this is the treatment of online Hindu student activists who have dissenting views — how would she treat her own students who have the right to disagree? As always, we welcome well-informed, structured, and respectful scholarly debate. What we do not welcome are Twitter stalking, harassment, and racially motivated online echo chamber rants.*

*Several Hindu high school students, having run into these threads, have privately expressed to us that they no longer wish to commit to a University like Rutgers, where minorities are treated this way. We are happy to share this information with you privately too.*

*All of these incidents go to show a pattern of behavior that exhibits deep-rooted xenophobia, hatred, and bigotry. Until all communities are included at Rutgers, we cannot move forward to make sustainable progress.*

On March 7 at 9:04am, Truschke tweeted “PSA -- There are lots of potential legitimate criticisms of my scholarly views (as there are of all scholarly views). They do none of the following:

threaten

prompt violence

cite Wikipedia

plagiarize

give false quotes

argue in bad faith

give ad hominem attacks

come from WhatsApp”

We would like to note that the sources we cited were mostly from Truschke’s own Twitter account and articles she had written. Nowhere did we engage in ad-hominem attacks and in fact, most of the attacks that Truschke had tweeted about Hindu students was in fact, ad-hominem in nature.

On March 7 at 11:29am, Truschke [retweeted](#) @ruaap which stated “Support academic freedom! Our faculty must have the right to conduct research, including on controversial subjects, without being faced with threats, ad hominem attacks, and bad-faith accusations. We stand with @AudreyTruschke”

Once again, all of our sources were cited by her own tweets and articles. Nowhere did we have any “threats, ad hominem attacks, and bad-faith accusations.”

### **Hate messages from Truschke’s followers**

On March 7 at 12:35 pm, Hindu students began receiving hate mail [telling them](#) to “Go the f\*ck back to India.”

On March 7 at 11:28pm, Hindu students were attacked online by one of Truschke's followers who [stated](#) "I feel for Audrey Truschke. I bet her comments section is stinking of old curry cus of these pagans lol"

On March 8 at 7:59pm, Rutgers Newark issued a statement stating:

*Rutgers University has received expressions of concern from members of the Hindu community about views expressed by Professor Audrey Truschke on Twitter. Rutgers emphatically supports Professor Truschke's academic freedom in pursuing her scholarship, abhors the vile messages and threats that are being directed at her, and calls for an immediate end to them. Scholarship is sometimes controversial, perhaps especially when it is at the interface of history and religion, but the freedom to pursue such scholarship, as Professor Truschke does rigorously, is at the heart of the academic enterprise. Just as strongly, Rutgers emphatically affirms its support for all members of the Hindu community to study and live in an environment in which they not only feel safe, but also fully supported in their religious identity. After all, our academic excellence is inseparable from our diversity of perspectives and voices. We remain committed to fostering full, open, and respectful engagement on ideas across this spectrum. Toward these ends, we are initiating dialogues to understand the sentiments of our Hindu community, and create a context that honors our complexity, while allowing us to do the difficult work of constructive and healthy engagement among our diverse community.*

*Enobong (Anna) Branch, Senior Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Rutgers University*

*Nancy Cantor, Chancellor, Rutgers University - Newark*

*Jacque Mattis, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, Newark*

On March 9 at 12:21am, we [tweeted](#) a thread in response to Rutgers Newark's statements, once again, respectfully voicing our concerns.

On March 9 at 2:24am, we brought to light violent threats that Hindu students were facing from Truschke, her followers, and supporters. [Examples](#) of the following:

*@brandybruja - Hind000zzzz making a right old nuisance of themselves across the board and spectrum. Soon the only place they'll be welcome, without thorough scrutiny, will be India. Jai hind.*

*@Antifa29197243 - Jai Shri Ram, Jai Seig hell*

*@PRDDC\_Tweets - Hind Nazis got their asses kicked by Westerners, again.*

*@watchman13 - Somebody tell me what the dotheads are mad about in one or two sentences I'm not reading all that*

Dotheads is a defamatory word that was used by the [Dotbusters](#), a ruthless gang that committed horrific hate crimes against Hindus in New Jersey in the 1980s. References to such hateful words from Truschke's supporters provide an insight into the type of bigotry she inspires. These are just samples of the many hate messages Hindu students have received. We have collected many more examples and will be documenting them for public use.

On March 9 at 11:56pm, a Hindu high school student admitted to Rutgers University voiced their concerns to our team and submitted an [opinion piece](#) citing fears of attending Rutgers.

### **Spreading misinformation about her own Hindu students**

On March 10 at 6:34am, Truschke [tweeted](#) "I echo this. I have never faced an accusation of bias from any student in my classroom in 15 years of teaching at 5 institutions. I've taught hundreds of students who identify as Hindu.

That doesn't mean I'm perfect. I'm not. But it suggests that this isn't a grassroots effort."

To which she [added](#) "Follow-up -- I am aware of students at other institutions, where I don't teach, and who are not in my classroom periodically objecting to me, usually with outside prompting"

Truschke once again engaged in spreading misinformation. Some of the students who shared their concerns with us are Hindu and had taken her course. As our priority is protecting the privacy of such students, we will not disclose names. With that in mind, Truschke displays disrespect towards dissenting Hindu student voices by suggesting "outside prompting."

### **Claiming Hindu students are agents of a foreign political party**

On March 10 at 7:27am, Truschke [tweeted](#) "Significant drop-off in the hate mail today. This is what we would expect for a coordinated BJP or affiliate IT cell attack."

For Truschke to deem Hindu American students and allies who respectfully voiced their concerns as "BJP or affiliate IT cell(s)" is highly xenophobic. According to her, Hindu Americans who reject hateful views on their faith are somehow affiliated with a foreign country and political party.



## **Support for Suraj Yengde, who called Hindus the “sick people of India”**

On March 10, Truschke retweeted a [tweet](#) from Suraj Yengde which stated “In solidarity with @YashicaDutt @AudreyTruschke. Stay strong y’all! Onward 🙌”

The same Suraj Yengde tweeted on December 11 2020 at 11:18am “Not a news but just reflect on how your Hindu brothers & sisters are defending rape & murder of Dalits. Be it Hathras, Chattarpur, or any news of dalit killing there are defenders. Ambedkar was right: **Hindus are sick people of India, it is their religious books who train the mind**”

## **Gaslighting of Hindu students by the South Asian Studies Program**

On March 10 at 5:46pm, Truschke [tweeted](#) “Statement of support from the South Asian Studies Program at Rutgers:”

We once again [objected to](#) this statement respectfully, as it did not take into consideration real concerns of Hindu students and dismissed them all under the excuse of “academic freedom.”

## **Calling Hindu Students “right wing” and dismissing concerns as “Whatsapp forwards”**

On March 11 at 5:46pm, Truschke [tweeted](#) “Critical reading of sources matters. Facts matter. The attacks on me seek to undermine the ability of all historians of South Asia to deal with a world of facts, rather than with a world of myths dictated by right-wing politics.”

Truschke paints students as supporters of “right wing politics” with no evidence to back up such claims and engages in ad-hominem attacks. Unfortunately, it is Truschke who peddles myths about Hindus and Hinduism.

On March 11, Truschke [retweeted](#) a statement from Dr Dheepa Sundaram “Facts matter. Research requires reading primary sources rather than WhatsApp forwards and out-context-tweets. @AudreyTruschke is a historian. These attacks don't engage in scholarly debate, they debase scholarship by embarrassingly parroting fact-free nonsense. #Solidarity”

Truschke leverages her position of power to suggest that students who disagree got their information from “WhatsApp forwards and out-context-tweets”



## **Claiming concerned Hindu students don't exist and this is about "impersonating Rutgers students"**

On March 11 at 8:44am, Truschke [tweeted](#) "There are anonymous sources claiming to speak as Rutgers students. There is mounting evidence that some are deceptive. To those who may be impersonating Rutgers students -- Please stop immediately. This is disrespectful, undermining, and deprives students of their own voices."

Truschke once again spread misinformation that no Hindu students came forward and that students cannot possibly disagree with her prejudiced views. On the contrary, **it is she who is depriving the students of their own voices.**

## **Fact Check: Hindu students are real and they exist**

To debunk her prejudiced views on Hindu students, consider the following statement [issued](#) by Rutgers on March 12 at 6:06pm:

*Rutgers University emphatically supports members of the Hindu community and expresses our sincerest apologies for our failure to communicate that clearly in our previous message. At our meeting today with members of the Rutgers Hindu community, this misunderstanding was made clear and again we apologize.*

*We are sorry for the hurt that members of the Hindu community have been experiencing in relation to recent events. Our commitment to inclusion includes religion, not just the right but the freedom to celebrate as an individual or community without fear. We know that the sacred traditions of Hinduism are central to the identities that define Hindu individuals, families, and communities. We abhor the vile messages and threats that are being directed at Hindu students, and call for an immediate end to them.*

*We are grateful to the student leaders across Rutgers University who raised their voices and personalized the sentiments of our Hindu community. We will be working in partnership with them to foster an environment that educates and embraces the range of cultural and religious identities, scholarly traditions, and perspectives of this community. This will be difficult work, but we will do this together because it is essential to live into our values and realize the promise of constructive and healthy engagement in a diverse community.*

*To our Hindu students, staff, faculty, and alumni, please know that Rutgers University is your home, and you are unequivocally a cherished part of the Rutgers family!*

*Respectfully,*

*Enobong (Anna) Branch, Senior Vice President for Equity Nancy Cantor, Chancellor, Rutgers University-Newark Jacqueline Mattis, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences-Newark*

Looks like Truschke was wrong in suggesting that there were false actors and “BJP IT cell” pretending to be Hindu students.

On the same day, Truschke continued to tweet letters of support from [ASHA](#), [GIPA](#), [InSAF](#) and [PIC](#) reaffirming her accusations.

On March 15, Hindu Students Council and Hindu YUVA issued a [joint statement](#) regarding their meeting with the administration:

*Our Statement Regarding the Meeting with the Rutgers Administration*

*Hindu students at Rutgers have been the target of religious hate speech on campus for years, which appears to have been encouraged by an Associate Professor's continuous Hinduphobic remarks in class and on social media. The threats escalated in the last few weeks, making Rutgers, our home, a hostile environment for many Hindus. We are happy to report that our recent meeting with the administration was a step in the right direction.*

*On March 12th, a coalition of concerned student organizations including Rutgers Hindu YUVA, Rutgers Hindu Students Council, Association of Indians at Rutgers, Indian Students Association at Rutgers Newark, Bengali Students Association met with the administration. Members of the administration that were present in the meeting were: Enobong (Arum) Branch (Senior Vice President for Equity), Nancy Cantor (Chancellor, Rutgers University-Newark), Jacqueline Mattis (Dean, School of Arts and Sciences-Newark) and a few other administrators.*

*Administrators stated that it was eye-opening and powerful to listen to how traumatized the Hindu students were as a direct result of the targeted hate that our community was receiving. Many of them shared that they were learning about this for the first time. They assured us that they will be working with Hindu students to create a safer space on campus. This is in addition to the public statement they released. During the meeting, we raised the following action items that we intend to pursue with the administration in the coming months:*

*Define and recognize Hinduphobia as a distinct category of bigotry and discrimination. This includes recognizing us as an ethnic and religious minority. Creating this definition is a critical step in officially recording transgressions and affording Hindu community members the same protections, as other religiously minoritized communities.*

*Employ a practicing Hindu professor who specializes in South Asian/Indian History and/or Hinduism whose scholarship pushes against the dominant perspective that is currently in place, so that Rutgers moves towards greater academic excellence.*

*We would like to thank the administrators for genuinely listening to our concerns and agreeing to take action beyond the conversation. The Hindu student community feels grateful for the immediate statement released by Rutgers Newark standing in solidarity with us. They understand the urgency of this situation and have assured us that they will continue to partner with us to work towards these two goals.*

*We are grateful for the organizations that are joining us in this cause and we will continue to voice the concerns of current and prospective Hindu students at Rutgers. For the concerned alumni, parents, and the larger Hindu community, we assure you that our efforts will not go in vain and we will continue to work towards fulfilling these requests till the end. Rutgers is our home and home is supposed to be where we feel safest. We are hopeful that Rutgers will remain dedicated to its values of diversity and inclusion.*

*"Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu" May the entire world be happy*

*Rutgers Hindu YUVA & Rutgers Hindu Students Council HSC*

On the same day, Truschke continued to [tweet](#) support from RUAAP, ignoring genuine concerns of Hindu students on campus and drumming up institutional support against a religious minority.

### **She has not publicly condemned the hate messages received by Hindu students**

To this day, Truschke has not condemned threats of violence against Hindu students by her fan base. We have provided a few samples of these messages above.

### **Truschke admits she has upset people, but has not apologized**

On March 15 at 5:04pm, Truschke [tweeted](#) "I mention this because I think that people should confront the hate they've engendered and from which they are benefitting. I know that can be uncomfortable.

For those upset with me, consider -- Do you really want to be associated with these kinds of bigotry?"

It is important to note two things:

1. ***I think that people should confront the hate they've engendered and from which they are benefitting*** - There is a clear double standard as Truschke fails to apologize for endangering Hindu students via her irresponsible tweets

2. **For those upset with me, consider** - Truschke acknowledges that she has upset members of the community but does not apologize for her remarks and continues to peddle conspiracy theories about how Hindu students support white nationalism

### **Sharing letters of support and statements of solidarity from South Asian origin faculty, many of whom have a track record of peddling Hinduphobia**

On March 17 at 8:02pm, Truschke [tweeted](#) a letter of support from “faculty of South Asian origin at Rutgers and co-signed by colleagues at other universities.”

*March 17, 2021*

*To the Rutgers community,*

*We write, as faculty of South Asian origin at Rutgers, with colleagues at other universities co-signing, to add our voices to that of Rutgers administrators in unreserved support of our colleague Dr. Audrey Truschke. We are encouraged by their defense of the principle of academic freedom and the practice of critical inquiry, which are essential to the work that we do both as scholars and teachers and should be guarded against political pressure. We also echo their call for the threats against Dr. Truschke and her family and the attacks that have targeted her on the basis of race and gender, often viciously and hatefully, to stop. As scholars from a wide range of faith backgrounds, including Hinduism, we understand in deep and personal ways what it means to occupy the position of minority in the United States. Many of us are also immigrants or the children of immigrants as well as racialized minorities. We will fight staunchly for safe spaces for all of our students to express their faiths and identities. It is part of our calling. It is also part of our calling to examine critically the social and political forces shaping our globe and to provide students with the analytical tools to do the same, as they see fit. The two missions are reconcilable: students can be safe and supported in their identities and intellectually challenged at the same time. We insist that a critical examination of Hindutva, a political ideology, is not the same thing as Hinduphobia. Dr. Truschke’s critique of the former rests on its majoritarian expression in India, in ways that threaten the safety, security, and equality of Muslims and other minorities. Her public scholarship resists the use of history and religious texts to accomplish those ends. This pursuit points to a desire to uphold the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have every confidence in Dr. Truschke’s respect for Hindus and Hinduism and its compatibility with a critique of Hindu nationalism as a social and political enterprise. We applaud Rutgers leadership in their defense of Dr. Truschke and their commitment to diversity and offer our solidarity in their steadfast support of both.*

After we released a [statement](#) regarding the letter, we immediately launched an investigation into the signatories of the letter and found deeply troubling evidence of Hinduphobia from many. All of this information with sources and documented evidence was compiled into a [short video](#).

Examples:

- **Biju Mathew's endorsement of statement on Hinduism** - Hinduism is a religion of violence. All Hindu gods killed their enemies and became heroic images. This is the only religion in the world where the killer becomes god. Whom did they kill? From Brahma to Krishna, those who were killed were Dalit bahunas. Now these images and the stories and narratives and everything is out there in the civil society. Now, because of this, the consciousness of worshipping the killer or worshipping violence did not give any space for human rights. ([Source](#))
- **Manan Desai's endorsement regarding comments on Hinduism** - Annihilation of caste, or destruction of caste, as Ambedkar said, is not possible without dismantling or destroying Hinduism as a religion. Hinduism does not reform, does not change because of the structural problems in the religion. ([Source](#))

On March 17 at 11:15pm, Priyamvada Gopal, an academic from Cambridge University [tweeted](#) "There is no such thing as 'Hinduphobia', and certainly not in the contexts in which these charges are made." in response to the letter signed by faculty and asked to sign the letter.

It's important to note that Truschke surrounds herself with those who outright deny Hinduphobia and gloss over experiences of real students.

### **Harassment and attempts to intimidate Rutgers Hindu female students on Twitter**

On March 18, Two Hindu Female Students from Rutgers University went on the [Brown Pundits podcast](#) to discuss Hinduphobia they were facing on campus.

On March 19 at 9:55am, Truschke attempted to publicly intimidate two young Hindu female students of color who spoke on the podcast by [tweeting](#) "It has come to my attention that some students at Rutgers wish they had read more Hindu texts. In one of my classes this term, students have read excerpts from the Rig Veda, Upanishads, Bhagavadgita, Ramayana (Kamban + others), and bhakti saints. We are doing this work. Join us"

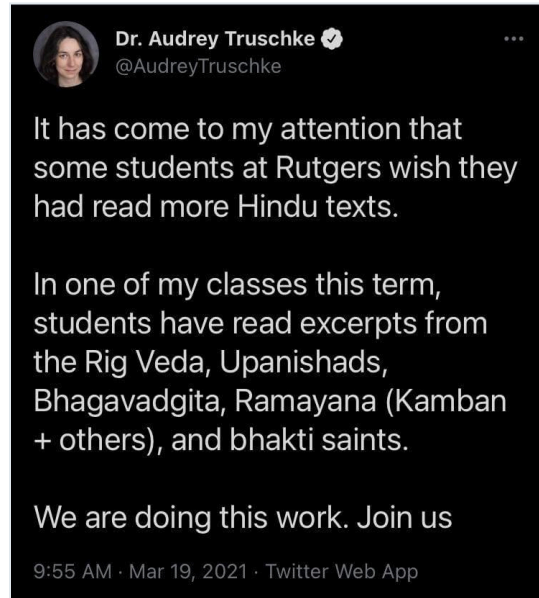
Dr Indu Viswanathan, a prominent Hindu scholar, [tweeted](#) [In response to the incident]:

*Two of the Hindu student leaders from Rutgers went onto a podcast run by Hindus to talk about Hinduphobia at Rutgers. Neither of them have ever publicly said anything negative about the associate professor.*

*The professor refuses to accept any critique of her misrepresentation of our scriptures by shutting down any Hindu who disagrees with her scholarship by crying "Hindutva". She then paints herself out to be the victim. The caucacity is astounding.*

*On the podcast, when asked how Hindus can better prepare themselves to speak out against Hinduphobia (including what this professor is doing), one of the students responded that Hindus should know our scriptures better.*

*This professor then tweets this out (See photo).*



*Can you imagine the TWISTED AUDACITY of this white woman? Can you imagine a WW in 2021 saying this to any other community after targeting, harassing, gaslighting, and mocking them and using every ounce of privilege and connection at her disposal?*

*This same person is constantly posting on social media and interviews and every chance she gets that Hindus won't accept that she knows more about Hindu scriptures than Hindus do. She shuts down Hindus who correct her Sanskrit misinterpretations.*

*Can you imagine an OVERT White Supremacist behaving this way with ANY other community and getting widespread endorsement from "progressive" scholars and orgs who say they're FROM THAT COMMUNITY?!*

*She LISTENED TO HINDU STUDENTS FROM HER INSTITUTION ON A PODCAST FOR HINDUS and passive aggressively tweeted AT the student!*

*Pay. Attention. To. This. Twistedness.*

One of the students, who wishes to remain anonymous, told us privately that they felt “harassed, stalked and intimidated” by Truschke’s tweet directly at them. They also reiterated that they would not feel comfortable being around Truschke. The student informed us that they deleted all social media profiles in fear of being stalked and had to ensure that Audrey Truschke’s profiles were blocked.

### **Claiming student concerns “lack substance,” that Hindus “invent atrocities” and that concerned Hindu students are “radicalized”**

On March 19 at 8:12am, Truschke [tweeted](#) “I spoke with The Caravan's Surabhi Kanga about what the last few weeks have been like for me, my take on some of the allegations, Hindutva on US college campuses, and more. Interview here:” and linked an [article](#) titled “The Hindu Right cannot debate me because it rejects critical thought: Audrey Truschke“

Ironically, it is Truschke who blocks those who disagree with her bigoted stances. Truschke labelled Hindu students and allies speaking out against her hateful rhetoric as “Hindutva on US college campuses.” Throughout the article, she made numerous statements exhibiting passive aggression against Hindu students:

1. ***SK: Do you think that the fact that your scholarship includes working on Mughal history triggers these attacks? Your book on Aurangzeb became, and continues to, be the subject of criticism and abuse against you. AT: Mughal history is an increasing target for political rewritings of the past in India. Specifically, Hindu nationalists try to rework Mughal history in an attempt to justify the oppression and violence they wield against Muslim communities today. This modern-day aggression is an atrocious trend that is costing lives, livelihoods, and freedoms in India. It has no justification in the present, and so Hindu nationalists try, in bad faith, to find their justification in the past by inventing atrocities, repeating colonial-era prejudices, and so forth. Historians do not lie about the past, which makes us a liability to the Hindu nationalist project.***

Truschke claims that “Hindu nationalists” are “inventing atrocities,” once again whitewashing and gaslighting horrific accounts of Hindu genocide under rulers like Aurangzeb. Imagine if a someone white said “Black people never went through slavery” or “Jewish people never went through the holocaust and invented the atrocity”? How



would it make Black or Jewish students feel? Why are Hindus an exception to this rhetoric?

2. ***SK: Among the people criticising you on social media, the “hinduoncampus” Twitter account has been particularly active. The account is alleging that your lectures are “Hinduphobic” and misrepresent the Hindu faith. How do you respond? AT: I have no evidence of who is behind that handle. At times, they appear to not be in full possession of knowledge of events at Rutgers. So far as I know, no student who has taken my classes has lodged a complaint, now or ever. I have taught hundreds of Hindu students at five universities over the past fifteen years. In short, these allegations lack substance.***

Of course, no student would want to come forward, given Truschke’s prior actions where students feel harassed and intimidated. Once again, Truschke attempts to spread misinformation. We will not be disclosing such information publicly out of privacy concerns for the students we protect. For Truschke to brush away real concerns of students and cite no evidence (conveniently) is an abuse of power and privilege.

3. ***SK: The account has also alleged that your teaching makes the Rutgers campus unsafe for Hindus. It has shared anonymous accounts of supposed students who have taken issue with your teachings and writings. What do you make of this? AT: I have no evidence of who wrote those statements. Also, so far as I have heard, the small group of objecting students are primarily enrolled at Rutgers-New Brunswick. I teach at Rutgers-Newark, a separate campus in a separate city. These allegations, also, lack substance.***

Truschke likes to paint the students as “the small group of objecting students” when in fact, as of 3/24/2021, there are **7,795 signatories** to the open letter with the largest group being students. In addition, **50+ student organizations** supported the open letter by sharing the graphics which went viral. Truschke is eager to dismiss real concerns of minority students (both ethnically and on religious lines) as “lacking substance.” As previously shown, she is even ready to go as far as to suggest these claims were fabricated instead of addressing them.

4. ***SK: More controversies have arisen regarding South Asian history in the past few years than ever before, often due to objections from the Hindu Right. Do you think that US universities have what could be called a “Hindu Right” problem? AT: It is a known issue that Hindu nationalist groups recruit and attempt to radicalise students on US university campuses. I have provided research on this subject to elected officials in New Jersey who are concerned about the spread of intolerance and hate in our state. One of the more heartening developments of the past few years has been grassroots, student-led***

*pushback against such trends with the establishment, for instance, of Students Against Hindutva Ideology.*

Truschke is spreading blatant misinformation about Hindu students, suggesting that they are “radicalized” by “Hindu nationalists” when the conversation was never about politics. Truschke uses this guise to support her social media turmoil and vitriol - and suggest that she is critiquing politics but instead spreading blatant Hinduphobia. While Truschke likes to suggest that “Hindu nationalist groups recruit and attempt to radicalise students on US university campuses,” there is absolutely no evidence of such claims from state level officials or from NJ Homeland security.

While Truschke is quick to dismiss real students concerns, similar standards do not apply to her.

Furthermore, Students Against Hindutva Ideology (SAHI) has a history of tainting and degrading Hindu festivals for political purposes. Consider their [statement](#) on Holi, one of the most popular Hindu religious festivals:

*Holi also further reifies Brahmanical Patriarchy by encouraging casteist and sexist slurs that are ritually hurled at Holika's figure as part of the ritual. This translates into the widespread violence against femmes in cities where Holi is practiced, creating a turbulent and frightening environment where gender based harassment attacks rise during this time. This includes groups of men throwing balloons filled with rocks, water, or even semen at femmes who are walking in the street. We cannot expect more from a festival whose heart is quite literally the burning of an Indigenous woman.*

[**Side note:** This is deliberate misinformation targeting a Hindu religious festival. Full explanation on the significance of Holi can be found [here](#).]

In addition, the founder of the group Shreeya Singh was [accused](#) by progressives of deep rooted Hinduphobia, Antisemitism and Islamophobia which were raised to the Biden campaign during the 2020 elections.

5. ***SK: In its statement, Rutgers promised to engage with your critics and the Hindu students on campus. Does this worry you? Do you feel the university is lending credibility to your critics by doing so? AT: The Rutgers administration should listen to student concerns across the board. They should also communicate to students when their demands are inappropriate, ill-worded, and harmful to others. College is a learning experience, and the administration and I are here to help students learn how to express themselves, think critically, question their assumptions, and find their own voices.***

Truschke suggests that student complaints are “*inappropriate, ill-worded, and harmful to others*” without any evidence and attempts to speak over student voices who express concern over her online behavior.

## **Claiming Hindu students are “Nazis” and “admirers of Adolf Hitler”**

On March 19 at 10:46am, Truschke [tweeted](#) “This letter of support adds important social, political, and cultural context to the recent bad-faith attacks against me. It is signed by a broad base of organizations representing many, diverse voices in the South Asian American community.”

The letter she shared engaged in horrific ad-hominem attacks against Hindu students and went as far to suggest that Hindu students admired Hitler and the Nazis.

The Letter:

*March 17, 2021*

*To Jonathan Holloway President, Rutgers University Nancy Kantor [Hey - if you're going to address the Chancellor of Rutgers Newark, at least spell her name right!] Chancellor, Rutgers University Enobong (Anna) Branch Senior Vice-President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Rutgers University Jacquie Mattis Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, Newark*

*Subject: Malicious campaign of intimidation against Dr Audrey Truschke, Associate Professor*

*Dear Rutgers Executives,*

*We, the undersigned organizations and individuals based in the United States and beyond, are writing to thank you for unequivocally supporting Dr. Audrey Truschke, Associate Professor of South Asian History at Rutgers University, against an ongoing systematic campaign of vilification against her including vile threats of extreme violence against her and her family.*

*This letter's purpose is not to defend Dr. Truschke's scholarship -- which, to use your words, she "pursues rigorously" -- for she is competent to defend herself. Yet, we must point out that many claims in the complaint from the Hindu students are dubious or outright lies.*

*The letter against Dr. Truschke claims that the "perpetrators" at the January 6, 2021 insurrection at the US Capitol in Washington, D.C. did not include any Hindus. That is a lie.*

*One "perpetrator", Krishna Gudipati, is associated with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), an affiliate of the VHP in India, which the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has classified as a "religious militant organization" for its violence against Muslims and Christians. Gudipati is an associate of the infamous Member of India's Parliament, Subramanian Swamy, who heads the Virat Hindustan Sangam of which Gudipati is a member. Dr. Swamy wants Muslims denied voting rights, a view that prompted Harvard University to drop his course.*

*Dr. Swamy belongs to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which, along with the VHP, is an offshoot of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a 95-year-old paramilitary Hindu nationalist outfit that wants to convert India into a Hindu nation where non-Hindu minorities are subjugated and relegated to the status of second-class citizens. Mahatma Gandhi's assassin belonged to the RSS. Mr. Modi, India's President and Vice-President, and many Indian ministers are lifelong RSS members.*

*The letter of complaint against Dr. Truschke also claims that "reputable sources have demonstrated that [17th-century Mughal emperor] Aurangzeb enslaved and murdered 4.6 million Hindus." However, the link for "reputable sources" is not a scholarly paper but a New York Times infographic, which is based on The Great Big Book of Horrible Things by Matthew White, a librarian who does not have any degree or formal training in history or statistics."*

*Mr. White based this figure not on any scholarly work by a historian but on his reading of 17th-century European traveler Niccolao Manucci's memoirs, which are considered to be "full of factual errors and colorful lies." Author-historian Manimugdha Sharma of The Times of India has tweeted that Manucchi did not claim Aurangzeb killed 4.6 million Hindus but only that Aurangzeb lost 100,000 soldiers a year in a war, which, too, has never been validated.*

*The real reason behind the campaign of intimidation against Dr. Truschke is her courageous and unwavering opposition to Hindutva, the supremacist ideology espoused by the RSS and its affiliates. It is this hateful ideology that is the driving force behind the rapidly escalating bigotry and horrific violence in India. The campaign attacking her scholarly integrity is intended to silence her, curtail her academic freedom as well as her advocacy for peace and pluralism. Hindutva's propagandists loathe that Dr. Truschke deploys her scholarship to devastating effect in debunking its supremacist myths they are desperate to perpetuate. These include the spurious claim that India is foremost a country of Hindus and that Muslims and Christians are outsiders, claims that India's Hindu nationalists use to justify violence against these minorities.*

*Dr. Truschke has exposed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), the anti-Muslim citizenship law that is "designed to strip... many Indian Muslims of citizenship." In February 2020, she attended a solidarity protest at Rutgers-New Brunswick where she received a copy of the Indian constitution's preamble, which she joined in reading aloud with other protesters.*

*In 2019, Dr. Truschke's wrote that the India's Supreme Court ruling that a Hindu temple be built where stood a 16th-century mosque that Hindu mobs razed it in 1992 "abjures both historical reality and any pretense of equal treatment of religious communities." The ruling was "based on modern faith and has nothing to do with history before the nineteenth century," she added.*

*In 2018, Dr. Truschke wrote about anti-Semitic attacks on her by Hindu nationalists. One tweet read: "I hope another Hitler comes back and finishes off your people." "These ugly attacks use vicious anti-Semitic slurs," she wrote, "frequently invoke the Holocaust, and draw on crude anti-Semitic tropes such as that I am somehow pursuing my academic research for money."*

*Those attacking Dr. Truschke and Rutgers Administration for backing her are intimately connected with the RSS and Mr. Modi. Before becoming Prime Minister, Mr. Modi was denied a US visa for nine years for his role in the massacre of 2,000 Muslims in India in 2002. Over time, Dr. Truschke's powerful voice has helped to bring increased global attention to — and scrutiny of — India's persecution of its religious minorities, who are 260 million of its 1.3 billion citizens.*

*Last June, the US Department of State's annual report on global religious freedom recorded "mob attacks by violent Hindu groups against minority communities, including Muslims," as well as "religiously motivated killings, assaults, riots, discrimination, vandalism and actions restricting the right of individuals to practice and speak about their religious beliefs."*

*Genocide Watch, a global watchdog on genocides founded by academician, international activist and former US diplomat Gregory Stanton, has categorized India as being at an advanced stage in the "10 Stages of Genocide" due to the violent conflict in Kashmir, preparations to deport Bengali Muslims in Assam, and anti-Muslim violence in north India.*

*In April, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommended that the US Department of State designate India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) — the list of the world's worst offenders of religious freedom — for "engaging in and tolerating systematic, ongoing and egregious religious freedom violations."*

*The USCIRF said Mr. Modi's government had instituted "national-level policies violating religious freedom across India, especially for Muslims." These policies include an anti-Muslim citizenship law and the "continued enforcement of cow slaughter and anti-conversion laws." It added: —Discriminatory policies, inflammatory rhetoric, and tolerance for violence against minorities... [had] increased the climate of fear among non-Hindu communities."*

*Saying that the "invaluable" USCIRF report would "help hold bad actors accountable," 14 US Senators asked then Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to accept it. Separately, four US Senators*

*cited India's "troubling steps," including the "controversial" citizenship law, that "threaten the rights of certain religious minorities and the secular character of the state," to ask Mr. Pompeo for a review of human rights and religious freedom in India.*

*Senator Bob Menendez (NJ) said the Citizenship (Amendment) Act "violates India's international legal obligations and its constitution," and urged then President Donald Trump to seek its "swift reversal." Congressman Tom Malinowski (NJ) criticized Indian Government's crackdown in Kashmir. In 2017, a bipartisan group of five U.S. Senators wrote to Mr. Trump asking him to raise the issue of India's deteriorating religious freedom with Mr. Modi.*

*This month, Freedom House, a reputed American research institute founded by former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, downgraded India's status from "Free" to "Partly Free" because Mr. Modi had "continued to crack down on critics." "India's Hindu nationalist movement," it said, had "encouraged the scapegoating of Muslims [who] faced attacks by vigilante mobs."*

*In 2018, the US Congressional Research Service wrote that the RSS and its affiliates "share a core motive to protect India's assumed Hindu identity from the perceived threats of Islam and Christianity, by some accounts through "purging" those religions from Indian society." In testimonies before the US Congress's Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, Amnesty and HRW have detailed the Modi government's persecution of India's religious minorities.*

*Over the years, Hindu nationalists in the US have relentlessly trolled anyone who has vocally criticized such religious persecution in India. In 2019, they organized a protest outside the Washington Post newspaper's office in Washington, D.C. because it was reporting accurately on India's persecution of its minorities. Last month, Washington Post wrote that the arrest of an environmental activist put India's "title as a democracy in question," and that there was a "broad pattern of speech suppression and other violations of democratic norms" in India.*

*Last week, several British Members of Parliament slammed Mr. Modi's government for its crackdown on thousands of farmers protesting against new agricultural laws.*

*Despite global criticism, the Indian Government is unmoved. India's Home Minister Amit Shah has said that Western human rights cannot be "blindly" applied to India.*

*In the end, we would like to share with you that the RSS has long been an admirer of Adolf Hitler. In 1939, then RSS chief M. S. Golwalkar said: To keep up the purity of the nation and its culture, Germany shocked the world by purging the country of Semitic races — the Jews. National pride at its highest has been manifested here." He added: "Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by."*

*That, in essence, is the ideology of Hindu nationalism, adhered by the RSS and its followers, in India and in the U.S. They are the people who attack Dr. Truschke for her erudition and courage. They are the people behind the petition against her.*

*Signed —*

*Hindus for Human Rights Students Against Hindutva Ideology Ambedkar International Center  
Ambedkar King Study Circle Dalit Solidarity Forum Boston South Asian Coalition Council on  
American Islamic Relations - CAIR (New Jersey) Islamic Society of Central Jersey Indian  
American Muslim Council India Civil Watch International Coalition to Stop Genocide ICNA  
Council for Social Justice Justice for All Center for Pluralism South Asian Left Activist  
Movement API Chaya Stand With Kashmir The Humanism Project, Australia Dr. Chloe Breyer;  
The Interfaith Center of New York Dr. Aslam Abdullah, Interim President, World Council of  
Muslims for Interfaith Relations (WCMIR) Dr. Rehan Khan, President, International Society for  
Peace and Justice*

### **Unpacking the letter:**

- *Yet, we must point out that many claims in the complaint from the Hindu students are dubious or outright lies. - As the letter proceeds to call Hindu students “liars”, it is to be noted that they only refute 2 claims out of the total 9 and appear to fall tone deaf to the rest*
- *The letter against Dr. Truschke claims that the "perpetrators" at the January 6, 2021 insurrection at the US Capitol in Washington, D.C. did not include any Hindus. That is a lie. - Nowhere in the letter did we say that the “insurrection at the US Capitol in Washington, D.C. did not include any Hindus” What we did say was that Truschke saw a photograph of the Indian flag and [immediately](#) stated that the person holding it was a Hindu. She had [tweeted](#) “There were a number of Hindu Right folks there” without any evidence and assumed the individual was Hindu to deliberately draw parallels to white supremacy*
- *Author-historian Manimugdha Sharma of The Times of India has tweeted that Manucchi did not claim Aurangzeb killed 4.6 million Hindus but only that Aurangzeb lost 100,000 soldiers a year in a war, which, too, has never been validated - Regardless of figures, the point about Truschke gaslighting and whitewashing Hindu genocide by Aurangzeb still stands. Like her previous statements on “invented atrocities,” Truschke has declared that Aurangzeb “[protected](#) more Hindu temples than he destroyed” and that he “[increased](#) Hindu participation at the elite levels of the Mughal state.”*



- *Those attacking Dr. Truschke and Rutgers Administration for backing her are intimately connected with the RSS and Mr. Modi.* - As a student led initiative, this has to be one of the most deeply troubling statements. Many of us, who do come from Indian origin backgrounds, have frequently been told “Go back to your own country” and that we aren’t “American enough” due to our ethnicity. For a white professor to echo the same messaging by claiming that Hindu American students are connected to foreign organizations or political figures because Hindu students respectfully object to hateful portrayal of their faith is directly against diversity and inclusion. Why would Hindu students feel welcome at a university which stands behind a professor who echoes white supremacy and xenophobia?
- *In the end, we would like to share with you that the RSS has long been an admirer of Adolf Hitler. In 1939, then RSS chief M. S. Golwalkar said: To keep up the purity of the nation and its culture, Germany shocked the world by purging the country of Semitic races — the Jews. National pride at its highest has been manifested here." He added: "Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by." That, in essence, is the ideology of Hindu nationalism, adhered by the RSS and its followers, in India and in the U.S. They are the people who attack Dr. Truschke for her erudition and courage. They are the people behind the petition against her.*

Again, this has to be the worst ad-hominem attack that Truschke has unleashed on students. To suggest that Hindu students are admirers of Hitler and support hateful ideology for voicing concerns and maintaining respect and pluralism, is nothing short of disgusting to say the least. This letter has been circulated virally on social media and has given the impression that Hindu students support Hitler and Nazism. It has tarnished the image of Hindu students and made many feel most uncomfortable to a point where they fear for their safety.

The rest of the letter cites whataboutery about Indian politics - which was never our concern to begin with.

We once again investigated the matter and produced a [short video](#) and [thread](#) on these “diverse” voices supporting Truschke, along with their track record of statements on Hinduism. **Although Truschke claimed the signatories were “diverse,” in reality, zero mainstream Hindu organizations signed the letter.**

## **Truschke's bigotry goes national**

On March 24, an article from Indiana Daily Student [titled](#) "OPINION: Why did the IU Islamic Studies Program tweet in support of a Hinduphobic professor?" from a Hindu American college student who wrote the following:

*The Islamic Studies Program at IU tweeted in support of her [Audrey Truschke] March 8 and 9, defending her comments against my religion through the guise of "academic freedom."*

*In a series of now-deleted tweets, Robert Crouch, the interim director of the IU Islamic Studies Program, called the concerns of Hindu students "lazy" and "immoral," explicitly stating that the program stands with Truschke and RU.*

*In an interview, Crouch apologized "if" he had caused any offense and said the Islamic Studies Program "does not have an official statement to make about this case."*

*The tweets were then deleted.*

We show the above to illustrate precisely the type of people who support Truschke and her Hinduphobia in the name of "academic freedom."

## **Claiming Hindu Charity Organizations are "Hindu supremacist groups"**

On April 2 at 7:10am, Truschke [tweeted](#) "Five organisations with ties to Hindu supremacist groups -- known for promoting religious bigotry, trying to stifle academic inquiry, and engaging in violence in India -- received US federal relief funds."

Along with a thread [tweeting](#) the following:

"The 5 groups --

- 1) Washington-based Hindu American Foundation (HAF)
- 2) Massachusetts-based Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA)
- 3) Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA
- 4) Infinity Foundation
- 5) Sewa International

The article details some of each group's links with the RSS."

Along [with](#):

“Review on the RSS--

A paramilitary organization

Promotes Hindu supremacy

Uses coercion and violence

Their most well-known contribution to world history is that an RSS man assassinated Mahatma Gandhi.

(full disclosure, RSS people also may be involved in recent attacks on me)”

[And](#):

“To add a personal note -- Some of the groups mentioned here, especially HAF, have participated in a recent coordinated effort attacking me.

That effort has involved targeted harassment of me and others and violent threats.

This is a huge red flag for a US-based organization.”

Truschke once again attempts to smear students by stating that those who are disagreeing with her respectfully are tied to the “RSS” and support “Hindu supremacy.”

On April 19, 2021, Truschke was [served](#) a **cease and desist** letter from the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) for amplifying libelous claims.

Suhag Shukla, the executive director [tweeted](#) “@audreytruschke was also served with a cease and desist notice for amplifying these libelous articles on social media, and her own defamatory statements-including a recent accusation that HAF organized a campaign of harassment encouraging violence against her & India's minorities”

On May 7, 2021, HAF [filed a lawsuit](#) in a U.S. district court against Truschke (and others) for defamation and conspiracy to defame HAF.

## **Denial of Hinduphobia**

On April 5, 2021, Truschke retweeted a [tweet](#) by Rutgers Associate Professor [Asher Ghertner](#) which stated “Most of my Rutgers colleagues who signed (and our South Asia exec committee) have created Hindutva troll Smart Folders to spam / junk anything with the fake word “Hinduphobia” in it. Trolls have Unlimited bandwidth- best to not give them any of Ours. Solidarity.”

## Support for Kancha Ilaiah

On April 5, 2021 at 5:49pm, Truschke [tweeted](#) “I'm teaching, in tandem, excerpts from Kancha Ilaiah's "Why I am not a Hindu" and Shashi Tharoor's "Why I am a Hindu," along with this: [http://kanchailaiah.com/2018/05/28/swami-shashi-the-political-hinduism-of-shashi-tharoor/...](http://kanchailaiah.com/2018/05/28/swami-shashi-the-political-hinduism-of-shashi-tharoor/) I hope it will raise some good questions and make for a productive discussion. #AcademicChatter #pedagogy #Hinduism”

The [link](#) she shared.

Kancha Ilaiah has a history of derogatory statements against Hinduism. In a panel in 2019 at the University of Michigan, Kancha Ilaiah [stated](#) “Annihilation of caste, or destruction of caste, as Ambedkar said, is not possible without **dismantling or destroying Hinduism as a religion** ... Hinduism does not reform, does not change because of the structural problems in the religion,”

Here, Audrey is seen promoting his work, an individual who has called for the destruction of Hinduism.

## Hate Mail

Hindu students at Rutgers received hate mail from Truschke's supporters in response to the Understanding Hinduphobia conference.

On April 8, 2021 at 7:15am, Project Paper Clip [tweeted](#) “Absolutely spot on..they are trying to get Dr. Audrey fired for exposing their Nazi ideology” [Deleted]

On April 8, 2021 at 10:15am, *Project Paper Clip* [tweeted](#) “Actually you scumbags and [@RutgersHSC](#) are hosting this event to silence people exposing the Nazi Hindutva ideology which seeks to rid India of minorities and turn India into a Hindu only nation. You scumbags are children of RSS BJP hate groups idolizing Hitler. The world knows.”

## Truschke's problematic teaching material on Hinduism

On April 8, 2021 at 8:43am, Truschke [tweeted](#) “Another beautiful day, another chance to teach about the diverse range of ideas and perspectives in South Asian history. One thing I taught this week: Bhimrao Ambedkar's "Away from the Hindus," which offers a highly critical perspective -- of an insider and of someone well read in religious studies literature -- on Hinduism, caste, and the highly sensitive topic of conversion.”

Once again, Truschke has tried time and time again to claim that she is “against Hindutva, not Hinduism,” yet openly teaches material which degrades Hinduism, encourages individuals “away from the Hindus” and only offers critical perspectives of the faith, despite no academic qualifications to teach it.

## **Tying Hindu festivals to “diseases”**

On April 14, 2021 at 8:03am, Truschke [tweeted](#) “If you're interested in the Kumbh Mela and disease, there's quite a history there. I recommend this book, which also discusses the origins of the Kumbh, political power exercised at the festival, and far more:”

Kumbh Mela is a Hindu religious festival, which Truschke equates with disease.

## **Linking COVID to Hinduism**

On April 14, 2021 at 8:03am, Truschke [tweeted](#) “I'm looking forward to teaching this later today -- Ravinder Kaur and Sumathi Ramaswamy's "The Goddess and the Virus," on uses of Hindu religious iconography to explore #COVID19 in India.

<https://asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/Chapter-6-Kaur-and-Ramaswamy.pdf>”

The [link](#) she shares once again, attempts to link COVID to Hindu gods.

## **Calling Hindu sacred pilgrimage as “death pilgrimage”**

On April 28, 2021 at 6:45am, Truschke [tweeted](#) “Mrtyu Yatra” in response to a News18 [tweet](#) which said “Uttarakhand Govt. has said that the annual pilgrimage (Chardham yatra) to Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunotri & Gangotri will begin on May 14.”

“Mrtyu Yatra,” is a phrase in Hindi/Sanskrit and can be translated as “Death Pilgrimage.” The Chardham Yatra (pilgrimage of the four abodes) is a sacred Hindu pilgrimage performed by millions of devotees - which she links to death.

## **Stalking the LinkedIn profile of the parents of Hindu students**

On April 28, 2021 at 10:43am, Rashmi Samant, a Hindu student at Oxford University [tweeted](#) “A new low. Audrey Truschke is stalking LinkedIn accounts of parents of students who held the recent Hinduphobia conference (which she refused to attend). Is she trying to desperately run a hate campaign like Abhijit Sarkar at Oxford?” with a screenshot of Audrey Truschke viewing LinkedIn profiles of Hindu students’ parents.

In response, Truschke [tweeted](#) on April 28, 2021 at 11:19am “Folks, I don't know what is causing this at this particular moment, and I don't much care -- Stop writing threats to me. Stop calling me names. Stop cursing at me. Stop the Hindutva harassment, pronto. [#hatemail](#)”

This goes to show how much of a thin line there is to be called “Hindutva” by Truschke - **when getting caught stalking Hindu students’ parents, she claims it is “Hindutva harassment”**

Interestingly, her website under the [current projects](#) section states “Professor Truschke is also engaged in a series of other projects, including investigating intimidation strategies and Sangh Parivar ties among the US-based Hindu Right.” **It is Truschke who is taking part in intimidation by stalking Hindu students’ parents.**

### **Truschke teaches new course on Hinduism**

On May 3, 2021 at 9:36am, Rutgers Newark [tweeted](#) “Check out a new course offering for fall 2021!” along with a flyer for “History of Hinduism” taught by Truschke.

Despite meetings with the administration, almost 8,000 signatures to the Rutgers petition, letters from groups in support of Hindu students, Rutgers allows Truschke to teach a course on Hinduism despite a lack of academic qualifications and a history of denigrating Hindu texts, deities and festivals.

### **Falsely claiming she’s a victim of “Hate Speech by Hindu Students”**

On May 4, Truschke took part in the EU-India summit. Her bio [read](#) “In 2021, organizations across the globe came forward in support of Truschke when was subjected to hate speech by a group of Hindu students, who circulated a petition that called for Rutgers University to terminate Truschke’s teaching assignment, alleging a distortion of Hinduism. The University faculty affirmed faith in Truschke’s scholarship.”

The administration clearly stated that they are working with Hindu students, with Chancellor Molloy being [present](#) at the Understanding Hinduphobia conference, organized by Rutgers Hindu Students Council. There was no hate speech from Hindu students’ side but only from Truschke.

### **Writing Hateful Op-Eds about Hindu Students**

On June 15, 2021 at 7:09am, Truschke [tweeted](#) “What is the price for giving historically -oppressed groups attention and a voice in the narration of history? In my case, teaching South Asian history, the price is pretty darn high due to fierce pushback from the Hindu Right. <https://academeblog.org/2021/06/14/the-hindu-right-chokes-academic-freedom/...> #Hindutva #Diversity”

In the article, Truschke claims the following [The italic text is quoted from the [article](#), written by Truschke]:

- **Falsely allying Hindu on Campus (a Hindu student run group) with “White Nationalists” and “Islamophobes”** - *An anonymous petition called for the Rutgers administration to curtail my academic freedom (instead, [they supported me](#)). The Hindu Right has used similar tactics, successfully, to [chill academic freedom in India](#). In the US context, they found allies in white nationalists and Islamophobes who joined the assault against me.*
- **Claiming Hindu American college students & 8,000+ signatories are part of the “Hindu Right”** - *The anonymous petition against me demonstrates how the Hindu Right seeks to infringe on academic freedom.*
- **Claiming Hindu concerns are “unmoored from reality” and “unfounded”** - *While some of the petition pushes an anti-diversity stance, much of it is unmoored from reality. I decline to repeat its unfounded accusations, but I am interested in how baseless allegations pose a threat*
- **Reiterating false claims that Hindu students do not exist and all concerns are external [previously debunked on numerous occasions]** - *The petition purports to be authored by Rutgers students, although there is no proof of that authorship, and some Rutgers–New Brunswick students have identified [an outside source for the petition](#). I have taught hundreds of South Asian descent students over the past fifteen years and have never faced a complaint or accusation from any of them. The shadowy architects of these hateful attacks infringe on Hindu students’ individuality and voices by claiming, falsely, to speak for all of them*
- **Attacking a Hindu student group as “Hindu Right”** - *This inane petition needs neither to be accurate nor persuasive to achieve its goals. Perhaps its hidden authors sought to make an example of me, dissuading others with similar pedagogies and research. The US-based Hindu Right has [endorsed such tactics](#) recently. Additionally, perhaps the attackers sought to manufacture outrage that would gobble up time and energy I could have devoted to research.*