

**DVPR 30201:**  
**Indian Philosophy I: Origins and Orientations**  
(IDENT. HREL 30200, SALC 20901/30901, RLST 24201)

Fall term, 2010  
Swift Hall 400  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:50

Instructor: Dan Arnold

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Syllabus available online at:

<[http://home.uchicago.edu/~daarnold/Indian\\_Philosophy2010.html](http://home.uchicago.edu/~daarnold/Indian_Philosophy2010.html)>

**Conception of the Course:**

This course introduces some of the early themes and textual traditions that will inform the development of Indian philosophy in its later, more mature phases. While the materials treated in this course are (regrettably) often taken to typify “Indian philosophy,” much of this literature might be better characterized as “quasi-philosophical”; for while such texts as the early *Upaniṣads* are surely pregnant with philosophically significant insights and reflections, their arguments are typically not systematic in anything like the way that will characterize the Indian philosophical tradition from about the fifth century CE, onward. To that extent, it does a disservice to the Indian philosophical tradition to take (e.g.) the texts of the *Upaniṣads* as best exemplifying “Indian philosophy.”

Nevertheless, it is surely true that these early materials inform the entire subsequent course of Indian philosophy. This is true partly insofar as the Indian philosophical traditions are basically *scholastic* in character – that is, philosophical thought is generally advanced in Indian contexts by way of commentarial elaborations of some foundational textual tradition taken as authoritative. But it is also true insofar as a great many of the issues debated in later Indian philosophy – issues concerning the nature of the self, the status of theism, and (what was developed with particular sophistication in India) the nature of linguistic meaning – can be said to stem from divergent intuitions first laid down in the earliest, quasi-philosophical texts. Thus, while these foundational texts reflect a style of reasoning that differs significantly from the more formal styles that later come to dominate Indian philosophy, early texts from the two most sharply divergent traditions of early Indian speculative thought – viz., Brahmanical and Buddhist – can be seen to lay down many of the positions and intuitions that will remain at stake in more formalized debate.

We will first consider something of the context for the contemporary study of Indian philosophy, then proceeding to survey some of the importantly divergent texts of the early Brahmanical and Buddhist traditions. We will also consider the emergence and early development of some of the canonical “schools” or (more literally) “perspectives” (*darśanas*) that provide the principal rubrics for later philosophical discourse. In particular, we will consider some of the early literature of the Sāṃkhya and Pūrva Mīmāṃsā schools, as well as that of early traditions of Indian Buddhist thought. Along the way, we will try to appreciate such issues as: whether anything

distinguishes these various traditions as commonly exemplifying *Indian* philosophy; some of the discursive, pedagogical, and spiritual practices of which these texts might be artifacts; and what kinds of things we might expect to see change as the traditions mature.

The principal aim throughout will be to study these developments *philosophically*, which is among other things to say that we will be concerned to ask what all might be *entailed by* (thought not yet explicitly said either for or against) the various positions considered. I propose, in this regard, that we might usefully characterize “philosophical” thought as most generally concerned to press claims for their inferential consequences – concerned to ask, that is, *what else must be true* for any one claim to make sense.

### **Required Readings:**

The following titles are (or will soon be) available at the Seminary Coop Bookstore, and on reserve at Regenstein Library:

- Patrick Olivelle, trans., *Upaniṣads*
- Laurie Patton, trans., *The Bhagavad Gītā*
- J. N. Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*

All other assigned and recommended readings are on reserve at Regenstein Library, with nearly all selections available (or soon to be available!) on electronic reserve through <<http://chalk.uchicago.edu>>. In addition, students should be aware of the invaluable bibliographic resource that is the “Bibliography” volume of Karl Potter, ed., *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, a continuously updated version of which is available online at <<http://faculty.washington.edu/kpotter/ckey/home.htm>>.

### **Course Requirements:**

In addition to regular attendance and spirited participation in (or at least, alert attention to) discussion, two written exercises will be assigned. The first will be a 5-7-page paper, due at the first meeting of the sixth week (=Tue., November 2); the second will be an 8-12-page paper, due no later than December 10. **Late papers will not be accepted without prior arrangement.**

### **Schedule of Topics and Readings:**

**WEEK 1 (Tue., Sept. 28 / Thur., Sept. 30):** Introduction: The emergence of the mature Indian philosophical tradition (and of the mature *study* thereof).

**Reading** (for Thur.): Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, “General Introduction [to *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*]” (e-reserve); Jonardon Ganeri, “Indian Logic and the Colonization of Reason” (e-reserve); Ronald Inden, “Brahmanism, the Aryan mind in the Tropics” (= *Imagining India*, pp.97-108; e-reserve); Daya Krishna, “Three Myths about Indian Philosophy” (e-reserve)

**WEEK 2 (Tue., Oct. 5 / Thur., Oct. 7):** Earliest beginnings: The early Vedic corpus.

**Reading:** Michael Witzel, “Vedas and Upaniṣads” (e-reserve); Arapura and Raja, “Philosophical Elements in Vedic Literature” (e-reserve); selected hymns from the *R̥g Veda* (available online at <<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/index.htm>>); *R̥g Veda* 1.1, 1.22, 1.50, 1.154, 1.162, 1.164, 3.62, 7.89, 8.48, 10.18, 10.71, 10.90, 10.119, 10.129, 10.154; selections from the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*: 2.2.4, ff., on the *agnihotra* sacrifice (*Sacred Books of the East* translation, vol. 1, pp.322-338; e-reserve); Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, pp.125-127; **film** (Tue.): Frits Staal, *Altar of Fire*. **Recommended reading:** Frits Staal, *Discovering the Vedas: Origins, Mantras, Rituals, Insights* (on reserve)

**WEEK 3 (Tue., Oct. 12 / Thur. Oct. 14):** The *Upaniṣads* and the transvaluation of temporal experience.

**Reading:** Patrick Olivelle, *Upaniṣads*, pp.xxix-xxxvi, xlix-lvi, 34-71, 146-156, 171-176, 231-247; Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*, pp.41-63, 271-274 [endnotes] (=“The Origins of Rebirth”; e-reserve); Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp.38-50 (=“The Fundamental Conception of the Upanishads and its Significance”; e-reserve); Matthew Kapstein, “Indra’s Search for the Self and the Beginnings of Philosophical Perplexity in India” (=Reason’s Traces, pp.53-76; e-reserve); Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, pp.1-7

**WEEK 4 (Tue., Oct. 19 / Thur., Oct. 21):** Beginnings of philosophy of language: The grammarian Patañjali.

**Reading:** K. V. Abhyankar and Jayadev Shukla, ed./trans., *Patañjali’s Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya*, pp.1-52 (=1st *āhnika*; e-reserve); B. K. Matilal, *The Word and the World*, pp.3-39 (=“Introduction”; “On Grammar and Linguistic Studies”; “Words and their Meanings”; and “Names and Things: Universals,” all on e-reserve); Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, pp.133-137

**WEEK 5 (Tue., Oct. 26 / Thur., Oct. 28):** More philosophy of language, and the beginnings of the philosophical *darśanas*: *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* and the philosophy of hermeneutics.

**Reading:** Ganganath Jha, trans., *Śābarabhāṣya*, pp.1-9, 16-25, 32-44 (=selections from “*Adhyāya* I,” e-reserve); Francis X. Clooney, *Thinking Ritually: Rediscovering the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini*, pp. 19-53 (“The Need and Possibility of Retrieval”), pp.129-61 (“The Dharma of the Sacrifice”; both on e-reserve); Wilhelm Halbfass, “The Presence of the Veda in Indian Philosophical Reflection” (e-reserve); V. N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Part II, Chapter 1: “Two Trends of Thought in Philosophy of Language” (e-reserve); John Taber, “Are Mantras Speech Acts? The Mīmāṃsā Point of View” (e-reserve); Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, pp.11-38

**WEEK 6 (Tue., Nov. 2 / Thur., Nov. 4):** The early systems, continued: Sāṃkhya.

**Reading:** Gerald Larson, trans., “The *Sāṃkhyakārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa” (= *Classical Sāṃkhya*, Appendix B; e-reserve); Erich Frauwallner, “The Sāṃkhya and the Classical Yoga System” (= *History of Indian Philosophy* vol. 1, pp.217-315; e-reserve); Christopher Chapple, “The Unseen Seer and the Field: Consciousness in Sāṃkhya and Yoga” (e-reserve); Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, pp.41-58

**WEEK 7 (Tue., Nov. 9 / Thur., Nov. 11):** The *Bhagavad Gītā*: popularization, synthesis, tradition.

**Reading:** Laurie Patton, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita*; Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, pp.105-122, 128-130. **Recommended reading:** R. C. Zaehner, *The Bhagavad-Gītā, with a commentary based on the original sources* (on reserve)

**WEEK 8 (Tue., Nov. 16 / Thur., Nov. 18):** The Buddhist challenge: Arguments against the *ātman*, and some Brahmanical rejoinders.

**Reading:** Selections from I. B. Horner, trans., *Milinda's Questions* (e-reserve); Matthew Kapstein, “Vasubandhu and the Nyāya Philosophers on Personal Identity” (=Chapter 9 of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*; e-reserve); John Taber, “The Mīmāṃsā Theory of Self-Recognition” (e-reserve); Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, pp.59-84

**WEEK 9 (Tue., Nov. 23 [NO CLASS on Thur., Nov. 25, Thanksgiving]):** Buddhist idealism: Vasubandhu's later elaboration of Buddhist commitments.

**Reading:** Vasubandhu, *Viṃśatikā* (“Twenty Verses,” my translation; to be circulated); Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, pp.84-90, 141-145

**WEEK 10 (Tue., Nov. 30):** One way to make sense of all this: The metaphysical perspectivalism of the Jains.

**Reading:** B. K. Matilal, *The Central Philosophy of Jainism* (reserve); Jonardon Ganeri, “Rationality, Harmony and Perspective” (e-reserve); Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, pp.90-92

**Final papers due by December 10!**