

DVPR 30301:
Indian Philosophy I: Origins and Orientations
(IDENT. SALC 20901/30901, RLST 24201, HREL 30200)

Fall term 2014
Swift Hall 201
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:50

Instructor: Dan Arnold

Office hours: Swift 401A, Wednesdays, 3:00-5:00 (or by arrangement); contact my secretary (Julia Ivory-Woods, 702-7049) in the Martin Marty Center for an appointment

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Syllabus online at: <http://home.uchicago.edu/~daarnold/Indian_Phil2014.pdf>

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*
- **Franklin Edgerton**, trans., *The Bhagavad Gītā*

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 Chalk. 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/ckeyt/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 brief *take-home exam, due at the first meeting of the sixth week* (=Tue., November 4); the second will be a *10-to 15-page paper, due no later than Friday, December 12*.

>> **For useful help in writing philosophical papers, see Jim Pryor’s website:**
<<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>>

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

WEEK 1 (Tue., September 30 / Thur., October 2): Introduction: The philosophical study of Indian philosophy and the “specter of Orientalism”

Reading (for Thur.): **Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan**, “General Introduction [to *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*]” (Chalk); **Daya Krishna**, “Three Myths about Indian Philosophy” (Chalk); **Wilhelm Halbfass**, “Research and Reflection: Responses to my Respondents” (Chalk); **Randall Collins**, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*, pp.224-255 (Chalk)

WEEK 2 (Tue., October 7 / Thur., October 9): Earliest beginnings: The early Vedic corpus

Reading: Michael Witzel, “Vedas and Upaniṣads” (from Gavin Flood, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Hinduism*; Chalk); Arapura and Raja, “Philosophical Elements in Vedic Literature” (Chalk); Stephanie Jamison and Joel Brereton, *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*, Introduction, pp.3-35, 53-62 (Chalk); Jamison and Brereton, trans., selected hymns from the *Rg Veda* (Chalk): *Rg 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; Chalk); film (Tue.): Frits Staal, *Altar of Fire*. **Recommended:** Frits Staal, *Discovering the Vedas: Origins, Mantras, Rituals, Insights* (on reserve); S. W. Jamison and M. Witzel, *Vedic Hinduism* (online at <<http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~witzel/vedica.pdf>>)

WEEK 3 (Tue., October 14 / Thur., October 16): The *Upaniṣads* and the transvaluation of temporal experience

Reading: Patrick Olivelle, *Upaniṣads*, pp.xxix-xxxvi, xlix-lvi, 34-71, 143-156, 171-176, 231-247, 252-265; Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*, pp.41-63, 271-274 [endnotes] (=“The Origins of Rebirth”; Chalk); Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp.38-50 (=“The Fundamental Conception of the Upanishads and its Significance”; Chalk); Matthew Kapstein, “Indra’s Search for the Self and the Beginnings of Philosophical Perplexity in India” (=Reason’s Traces, pp.53-76; Chalk); Bruce Lincoln, “The Tyranny of Taxonomy” (Chalk)

WEEK 4 (Tue., October 21 / Thur., October 23): 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*; Chalk); 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 Chalk)

WEEK 5 (Tue., October 28 / Thur., October 30): More philosophy of language, and the beginnings of the philosophical *darśanas*: *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* and the philosophy of hermeneutics

Reading: Larry McCrea, trans., *Śābarabhāṣya* [selections], pp.11-12, 15-20 (Chalk; compare the translation of Jha, pp.16-125); Larry McCrea, “The Hierarchical Organization of Language in Mīmāṃsā Interpretive Theory” (Chalk); Francis X. Clooney, *Thinking Ritually: Rediscovering the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini*, pp.131-61 (Chalk); Sheldon Pollock, “Mīmāṃsā and the Problem of History in Traditional India” (Chalk) V. N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Part II, Chapter 1: “Two Trends of Thought in Philosophy of Language” (Chalk); Gilbert Ryle, “Are There Propositions?” (Chalk)

WEEK 6 (Tue., November 4 / Thur., November 6): The distinctive dualism of Sāṃkhya

Reading: Franklin Edgerton, trans., “Selections from the *Mokṣadharmā* (*Mahābhārata*, Book 12)” (Chalk); Gerald Larson, trans., “The *Sāṃkhyakārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa” (=Classical Sāṃkhya, Appendix B; Chalk); Christopher Chapple, “The Unseen Seer and the Field: Consciousness in Sāṃkhya and Yoga” (Chalk)

WEEK 7 (Tue., November 11 / Thur., November 13): The *Bhagavad Gītā*: popularization, synthesis, tradition

Reading: Franklin Edgerton, trans., *The Bhagavad Gītā*. **Recommended reading:** R. C. Zaehner, *The Bhagavad-Gītā, with a commentary based on the original sources* (on reserve)

WEEK 8 (Tue., November 18 / Thur., November 20): The Buddhist challenge: Arguments against the *ātman*, and some Brahmanical rejoinders

Reading: Selections from I. B. Horner, trans., *Milinda's Questions* (Chalk); **Matthew Kapstein**, "Vasubandhu and the Nyāya Philosophers on Personal Identity" (=Chapter 9 of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*; Chalk); **John Taber**, "The Mīmāṃsā Theory of Self-Recognition" (Chalk)

WEEK 9 (Tue., November 25 / NO CLASS on Thur., November 27 [Thanksgiving]): Buddhist idealism: Vasubandhu's later elaboration of Buddhist commitments

Reading: Vasubandhu, *Viṃśatikā* ("Twenty Verses," my translation; to be circulated)

WEEK 10 (Tue., December 2 / Thur., December 4): One way to make sense of all this: The metaphysical perspectivalism of the Jains

Reading: B. K. Matilal, *The Central Philosophy of Jainism* (reserve – also available online); Jonardon Ganeri, "Rationality, Harmony and Perspective" (Chalk)

Final papers due by Friday, December 12!