

**DVPR 30201:**  
**Indian Philosophy I: Origins and Orientations**

(IDENT. RLST 24201, SALC 20901/3090, HREL 30200)

**Winter term, 2018**  
**T/Th, 9:30-10:50**  
**Swift Hall 201**

**Instructor, office hours:** Dan Arnold (d-arnold@uchicago.edu), available in office (Swift 401A) **Thursdays, 3:00-5:00pm**; for an appointment, sign up on the sheet kept in the Martin Marty Center by Julia Ivory-Woods (702-7049)

**Course Teaching Assistant:** Dhruv Nagar (dhruva@uchicago.edu)

**Syllabus online at:** <[http://home.uchicago.edu/~daarnold/Indian\\_Phil2019.pdf](http://home.uchicago.edu/~daarnold/Indian_Phil2019.pdf)>

**Conception of the Course:**

This course introduces some of the early themes and textual traditions that set much of the agenda for the later development of Indian philosophy. Although texts such as the early *Upaniṣads* are rather too often taken to typify “Indian philosophy,” much of what we read particularly in the first half of the term might be better characterized as “quasi-philosophical” – as pregnant with philosophically significant insights and reflections, but not yet systematic in the ways that will characterize the Indian philosophical tradition from about the fifth century CE, onward. Nevertheless, most of the views developed with increasing sophistication later in the tradition can be recognized as stemming from divergent intuitions first laid down in the earliest, quasi-philosophical texts. Tracing the early development of some of these, we will take some soundings in a few of the divergent “schools” or (more literally) “perspectives” (*darśanas*) that provide the principal rubrics for later philosophical discourse – in particular, in influential works from a few Brahmanical traditions of thought (Sāṃkhya, Nyāya, and Pūrva Mīmāṃsā), as well as from the Buddhist and other non-Brahmanical traditions that were so influential for the history of Indian philosophy. Throughout the course, the aim will be to study these developments *philosophically* – that is, just as scholars in Philosophy departments read (say) Aristotle or Kant not just as historically significant but also *for their philosophical insight*, we will likewise aim to take seriously the possibility that any or all of the texts we consider may have something *true* to say about the world and the human condition.

**Required Readings:**

The following are not only on reserve at Regenstein, but also available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore (students found to have purchased them instead on Amazon may be subject to stern rebuke):

– Patrick Olivelle, trans., *Upaniṣads*

- Barbara Stoler Miller, trans., *The Bhagavad Gītā*
- Matthew Dasti and Stephen Phillips, trans., *The Nyāya-sūtra*

All other assigned and recommended readings are on reserve at Regenstein Library, in most cases electronically via Canvas. (Please note that **you will find all the course readings in the “Library Reserves”** area of the Canvas page for this course.) In addition, students may want to 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:**

It is expected that students will exhibit regular attendance and spirited participation in (or at least, alert attention to) discussion, which all are responsible for conducting both rigorously and respectfully. In addition, two written exercises will be assigned. The first will be a brief exercise due at the first meeting of the sixth week (=Tue., February 12); the second will be a 10-to 15-page paper, due no later than **Friday, March 22**.

>> **For useful help in writing philosophical papers, consider philosopher Jim Pryor’s advice:** <<https://philosophy.dept.shef.ac.uk/papers/PryorWRITE.pdf>>

### **Weekly schedule of Topics and Readings:**

**WEEK 1 (Tue., January 8 / Thur., January 10):** Introduction: The philosophical study of Indian philosophy and the specter of Orientalism

- Reading** (for Thur.): [1] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, “General Introduction [to *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*]”  
 [2] Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*, pp.224-255  
 [3] Wilhelm Halbfass, “Research and Reflection: Responses to my Respondents”

**WEEK 2 (Tue., January 15 / Thur., January 17):** Earliest beginnings: Vedic religion

**Film** (Tue.): Frits Staal, *Altar of Fire*

- Reading:** [1] Stephanie Jamison and Joel Brereton, *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*, Introduction, pp.3-35, 53-62  
 [2] Jamison and Brereton, trans., selected hymns from the *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)  
 [3] Selections from the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*: 2.2.4, ff., on the *agnihotra* sacrifice (*Sacred Books of the East* translation, vol. 1, pp.322-338).

**Recommended:** Frits Staal, *Discovering the Vedas: Origins, Mantras, Rituals, Insights* (on reserve); S. W. Jamison and M. Witzel, *Vedic Hinduism* (online at <<http://tinyurl.com/plxhefm>>)

**WEEK 3 (Tue., January 22 / Thur., January 24):** The *Śramaṇa* movement and the transvaluation of temporal experience

- Reading:** [1] Patrick Olivelle, *Upaniṣads*, pp.xxix-xxxvi, xlix-lvi, 34-71, 143-156, 171-176, 231-247, 252-265  
[2] Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*, pp.41-63, 271-274 [endnotes] (=“The Origins of Rebirth”)  
[3] Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp.38-50 (=“The Fundamental Conception of the Upanishads and its Significance”)  
[4] Matthew Kapstein, “Indra’s Search for the Self and the Beginnings of Philosophical Perplexity in India” (=Reason’s Traces, pp.53-76)  
[5] Bruce Lincoln, “The Tyranny of Taxonomy” (=Discourse and the Construction of Society, pp.131-41 + endnotes)

**WEEK 4 (Tue., January 29 / Thur., January 31):** The distinctive dualism of Sāṃkhya

- Reading:** [1] Franklin Edgerton, trans., “Selections from the *Mokṣadharmā* (*Mahābhārata*, Book 12)” (read only pp.256-266)  
[2] Gerald Larson, trans., “The *Sāṃkhyakārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa” (=Classical Sāṃkhya, Appendix B)  
[3] Christopher Chapple, “The Unseen Seer and the Field: Consciousness in Sāṃkhya and Yoga”

**WEEK 5 (Tue., February 5 / Thur., February 7):** The *Bhagavad Gītā*: popularization, synthesis, tradition

**Reading:** Barbara Stoler Miller, trans., *The Bhagavad Gītā*.

**Recommended:** R. C. Zaehner, *The Bhagavad-Gītā, with a commentary based on the original sources* (on reserve); this gives a helpful sense of the range of commentarial interpretation of the text

**WEEK 6 (Tue., February 12 / Thur., February 14)** Arguments for the the reality of *self* and other existents: The Nyāya school of thought

**Reading:** Dasti & Phillips, trans., *The Nyāya-sūtra*, pp.1-59, 74-94

**WEEK 7 (Tue., February 19 / Thur., February 21):** Philosophy of language: More Nyāya, and a bit from the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā school

**Reading:** [1] Dasti & Phillips, trans., *The Nyāya-sūtra*, pp.60-73, 138-155

[2] V. N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Part II, Chapter 1: “Two Trends of Thought in Philosophy of Language”

[2] Larry McCrea, trans., *Śābarabhāṣya* [selections], pp.1-20

[3] Larry McCrea, “The Hierarchical Organization of Language in Mīmāṃsā Interpretive Theory”

**Recommended:** Sheldon Pollock, “Mīmāṃsā and the Problem of History in Traditional India”

**WEEK 8 (Tue., February 26 / Thur., February 28):** The Buddhist challenge: Arguments against the reality of *self*

**Reading:** [1] Selections from I. B. Horner, trans., *Milinda’s Questions*

[2] Mark Siderits, “Buddhas as Zombies: A Buddhist Reduction of Subjectivity”

**WEEK 9 (Tue., March 5 / Thur., March 7):** Buddhist idealism: Vasubandhu’s later elaboration of Buddhist commitments

**Reading:** [1] Mark Siderits, “Yogācāra: Impressions-Only and the Denial of Physical Objects” (= *Buddhism as Philosophy*, pp.146-179)

[2] Vasubandhu, *Viṃśatikā* (“Twenty Verses,” my translation; to be circulated)

**WEEK 10 (Tue., March 12):** Concluding reflections on the construction of “Philosophy” as *western*

**Reading:** [1] Wilhelm Halbfass, “On the Exclusion of India from the History of Philosophy”

[2] Robert Bernasconi, “With What Must Philosophy Begin? Hegel’s Role in the Debate on the Place of India within the History of Philosophy”

[3] Daya Krishna, “Three Myths about Indian Philosophy”

**Final papers due by Friday, March 22!**