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>  

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 (Sāṁkhya, 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
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/ckeyt/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]”

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

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

[2] Jamison and Brereton, trans., selected hymns from the 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)
**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

[4] Matthew Kapstein, “Indra’s Search for the Self and the Beginnings of Philosophical Perplexity in India” (=*Reason’s Traces*, pp.53-76)

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

**Reading:** [1] Franklin Edgerton, trans., “Selections from the *Mokṣadharma (Mahābhārata, Book 12)*” (read only pp.256-266)
[3] Christopher Chapple, “The Unseen Seer and the Field: Consciousness in Śāṅkhyā 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 Mīmāṃśā school

[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 Mīmāṃśā Interpretive Theory”

Recommended: Sheldon Pollock, “Mīmāṃśā 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

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

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

Final papers due by Friday, March 22!