

DVPR 30201:
Indian Philosophy I: Origins and Orientations
(Ident. HREL 30200, SALC 20901/30901)
Winter Term, 2005
Swift Hall 400
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:50

Instructor: Dan Arnold
Office hours: Swift 401A, Wednesdays, 9:00-11:00 (or by arrangement)
E-mail: d-arnold@uchicago.edu
Phone: 702-8276

Objectives 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 earliest *Upaniṣads* are surely pregnant with philosophically significant insights and reflections, their arguments are typically not systematic in anything like the way that characterizes 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, say, the texts of the *Upaniṣads* as co-extensive with “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 the Indian context by way of commentarial elaborations on a basic textual tradition that is taken as in some sense 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 question of theism, and (what was developed with particular sophistication in India) the question of the referents of words and the conditions of the possibility of language – 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, examples of 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 are later at stake in more formalized debate.

This course will proceed, then, by first considering the context of the contemporary study of Indian philosophy, before surveying some of the importantly divergent texts of the early Brahmanical and Buddhist traditions. Having done so, we will consider the development of some of the canonical “schools” or (more literally) “perspectives” (*darśanas*) that provide the rubrics for much later philosophical discourse. In particular, we will consider some of the early literature of the Sāṃkhya and Pūrva Mimāṃsā schools, as well as following the early development of Indian Buddhist thought.

Along the way, we will try to appreciate such issues as: what 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 tradition matures. Attending to the

latter will consist, basically, in a *philosophical* assessment of the various texts considered – an assessment, that is, that asks what all might be *entailed* by (though not yet explicitly said either for or against) the positions considered. For we can usefully characterize “philosophical” activity as a discursive practice that proceeds by pressing claims for their inferential entailments – or by asking (to put the point conversely) *what else must be true* in order for any particular claim to be possibly true.

Required Readings:

Available at the Seminary Coop Bookstore, and on reserve at Regenstein:

- Patrick Olivelle, trans., *Upaniṣads*.
- R. C. Zaehner, trans., *Bhagavad Gītā*
- Matthew Kapstein, *Reason’s Traces*

In addition, many readings (various articles and selections from larger works) are available on e-reserve. An important scholarly resource is available online at <<http://faculty.washington.edu/kpotter/ckeyt/home.htm>>; this reproduces (in a continuously updated form) Karl Potter’s *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I: Bibliography – which gives a virtually exhaustive list of Indian philosophers and their dates, along with a virtually exhaustive catalog of editions and translations of their texts, scholarly studies, etc.

Course Requirements:

It is not only hoped that students will evince wakeful (nay, spirited) participation in class discussion, but expected that they will submit two pieces of written work: a 4-6-page paper due at the beginning of week 6, and a 10-15-page paper due during the exam period.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week 1 (Tue., 1/4; Thur., 1/6):

Is it “philosophy”? On the history and direction of the study of Indian philosophy. **Readings:** Sarvepalli **Radhakrishnan**, “General Introduction [to *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*]” (noting, as well, the table of contents of this volume; e-reserve); Ronald **Inden**, *Imagining India*, pp.97-108 (e-reserve); Daya **Krishna**, “Three Myths about Indian Philosophy”(e-reserve); Frits **Staal**, “Euclid and Pāṇini” (e-reserve); Jonardon **Ganeri**, “Indian Logic and the Colonization of Reason” (e-reserve).

Week 2 (Tue., 1/11; Thur., 1/13):

The earliest background: The earliest part of the Vedic corpus. **Readings:** Michael **Witzel**, “Vedas and Upaniṣads” (e-reserve); Arapura and Raja, “Philosophical Elements in Vedic Literature” (e-reserve); selected hymns from

the *Rig Veda* (available online at <<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/index.htm>>): *Rig 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*: Fourth *Brāhmaṇa*, on the *agnihotra* sacrifice (e-reserve).

Week 3 (Tue., 1/18; Thur., 1/20):

The *Upaniṣads* and the transvaluation of temporal experience. **Readings:** Steven **Collins**, *Selfless Persons*, pp.41-63, 271-274 [endnotes] (e-reserve); **Olivelle**, pp.xxix-xxxvi, xlix-lvi, 34-71, 146-156, 171-176, 231-247; Paul **Deussen**, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, pp.38-50 (e-reserve); Matthew **Kapstein**, *Reason's Traces*, pp.53-76.

Week 4 (Tue., 1/25; Thur., 1/27):

A counter-perspective: Early Buddhist arguments against the *ātman*. **Readings:** Selections from the *Milindapañha* (e-reserve); Chapter 9 of the *Abhidharmakośa* (Kapstein, *Reason's Traces*, pp.347-375); selections from the *Kathāvatthu* (pp.8-14) (e-reserve); Jonardon **Ganeri**, "Argumentation, Dialogue, and the *Kathāvatthu*" (e-reserve); Matthew **Kapstein**, *Reason's Traces*, pp.77-98.

Week 5 (Tue., 2/1; Thur., 2/3):

The beginnings of the systems: The *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* of Jaimini. **Readings:** Wilhelm **Halbfass**, "*Darśana, Ānvikṣikī, Philosophy*" (e-reserve); **Halbfass**, "The Presence of the Veda in Indian Philosophical Reflection" (e-reserve); Francis X. **Clooney**, *Thinking Ritually: Rediscovering the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini*, pp.19-53, 131-161 (e-reserve); selections from Ganganatha Jha, trans., *Śābara Bhasya* (e-reserve).

Week 6 (Tue., 2/8; Thur., 2/10):

The early systems, continued: Sāṃkhya. **Readings:** Erich **Frauwallner**, *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp.217-315 (e-reserve); Eli **Franco**, "Whatever Happened to the *Yuktidipikā*?" (e-reserve); Gerald **Larson**, *Classical Sāṃkhya*, pp.255-277 (e-reserve); Christopher **Chapple**, "The Unseen Seer and the Field: Consciousness in Sāṃkhya and Yoga" (e-reserve).

Week 7 (Tue., 2/15; Thur., 2/17):

The *Bhagavad Gītā*: popularization, synthesis, tradition. **Reading:** Zaehner, trans., *Bhagavad Gītā*.

Week 8 (Tue., 2/22; Thur., 2/24):

Philosophy of Language (possibly to be continued in Week 9): Further selections from Ganganatha Jha, trans., *Śābara Bhasya* (e-reserve); Clooney, *Thinking Ritually*, pp.77-79 (e-reserve); Frits **Staal**, "The Science of Language" (e-reserve); K. Kunjunni Raja, "Philosophical Elements in Yāska's Nirukta," "Philosophical Elements in Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*" (e-reserve); Harold **Coward** and K. Kunjunni **Raja**, "Introduction to the Philosophy of the Grammarians," pp.63-97 (e-reserve); B. K. **Matilal**, *The Word and the World*, pp.3-39 (e-reserve); John

Brough, “Theories of General Linguistics in the Sanskrit Grammarians,” “Some Indian Theories of Meaning” (e-reserve).

Week 9 (Tue., 3/1; Thur., 3/3):

Back to the Buddhists: On the cusp of epistemology. **Reading:** Vasubandhu’s *Vimśatikā* (my translation; e-reserve); **Kapstein**, *Reason’s Traces*, pp.181-204; Nāgārjuna’s *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (e-reserve).

Week 10 (Tue., 3/8; Thur., 3/10 is optional):

Wrapping up. (Possibly Nāgārjuna’s *Vigrahavyāvartanī* this week.)