

ASIAN (RELIGIOUS) PHILOSOPHY: INDIAN PERSPECTIVES

RELG 334/PHIL 315

Professor DANIEL M. STUART

Spring 2018



Meetings: Tuesday/Thursday, 11:40 am–12:55 pm, Callcott Social Sciences Center 003

Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Overview

India is famous for its many important religions. Less well-known are the rigorous and extensive philosophical arguments that associated themselves with Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and materialistic modes of thinking. This course will introduce you to the main questions that Indian philosophical thinkers were concerned with over two millennia, questions such as: *Is the world constructed by our perception real or illusory? What are the core psycho-physical processes that give rise to human suffering? What defines the horizon of moral possibilities for a person? What is the role of language in constructing human experience?* We will look at classical Indian responses to such questions not only for their historical significance, but for their contemporary relevance—in Asia as well as in the west.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- identify the basic characteristics, concepts, and terminology of Indian religio-philosophical traditions
- explicate the fundamental presuppositions of Indian religio-philosophical thinking
- provide examples of Indian philosophical argumentation and the social frameworks in which such argumentation took place
- articulate how philosophical theory and philosophical practice complement one another in the context of Indian religions

Grading Breakdown

- 20% *Attendance*—This includes regular attendance and participation in class discussions.
- 20% *3–5 page reflection paper*
- 25% *Midterm Exam*
- 5% *In-class presentation on final paper*
- 30% *Final 5–7 page paper*

Course Policies

Participation — Participation forms an important part of the course. Meaningful contributions to class discussions and other in-class activities enhance everyone's learning experience. Students should feel free to discuss the quality of their class participation with the instructor at any point during the semester.

Attendance—Prompt and regular attendance is crucial for success in the course. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. Attendance is mandatory, and if you miss more than three class sessions, you will lose 5% of your attendance grade for every additional class missed. If you miss more than ten classes, you will automatically fail the class. If you are absent for an excusable reason, be sure to present the needed documentation to the instructor immediately upon your return (e.g., if you are absent for a legitimate medical reason, bring a doctor's note as soon as you come back to class).

Grading Scale 100-90 A; 89-87 B+; 86-80 B; 79-77 C+; 76-70 C; 69-67 D+; 66-60 D; below 60 F

Electronic Devices: cellphone, smartphones, and other non-academic electronic devices are **NOT** permitted in class. If you use any such device during class time, you will be asked to leave and be counted as absent. Students should take notes using pen/pencil and paper.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: As students at USC, you are bound by the University of South Carolina Honor Code. All work produced for RELG 334/PHIL 315 must be your own. The professor does not tolerate cheating or plagiarism under any circumstances. By enrolling in the course and accepting the terms of this syllabus, you indicate your acceptances of this policy. Instances of cheating will immediately result in a zero for the assignment, and the professor reserves the right to pursue more drastic action with the Office of Academic Integrity and the University administration.

Required Texts

- King, Richard. 1999. *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Sarma, Deepak. *Classical Indian Philosophy: A Reader*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Links to additional course materials are available on Blackboard

Schedule of Weekly Readings and Assignments

***Important dates:**

- 2/8: 3–5 page paper topics distributed**
- 2/20: 3–5 page papers due**
- 3/8: Midterm exam**
- 3/11–18: Spring break**
- 4/24 and 4/26: In-class presentations on final papers**
- 5/4: Final papers due**

Week 1: *Introductions—India and the History of Philosophy*

T 1/16: Introduction and General Discussion: *Circumscribing Philosophy in Asia*

R 1/18: King 1999, Introduction and Chapter 1

Garfield and Van Norden (NYT): “If Philosophy Won’t Diversify, Let’s Call It What It Really Is”
Peone (The Weekly Standard): “Yes -- Let’s Call Philosophy What It Really Is”

Week 2: *India and the History of Philosophy—Varieties of Hindu Philosophy*

T 1/23: King 1999, Chapter 2

R 1/25: King 1999, Chapter 3

Week 3: *The Varieties of Hindu Philosophy—Buddhist Philosophical Technique*

T 1/30: Gupta 2012, pp. 19–51

R 2/1: King 1999, Chapter 4

Week 4: *Buddhist Philosophical Technique—Ontological Foundations*

T 2/6: Garfield 2015, pp. 1–15; 24–40

R 2/8: King 1999, Chapter 5; Bronkhorst 2013, pp. 11–17

***3-5 PAGE PAPER TOPICS DISTRIBUTED**

Week 5: *Ontological Foundations—Epistemological Engagements*

T 2/13: Film: *Inception* (2010)

R 2/15: King 1999, Chapter 6

Week 6: *Epistemological Engagements*

T 2/20:

***ASSIGNMENT: 3–5 PAGE PAPER DUE**

R 2/22: Ganeri 2001, pp. 1–41

Week 7: *Perception: How Do We Know the World?*

T 2/27: King 1999, Chapter 7

R 3/1: Coseru 2012, pp. 192–234

Week 8: *The Mind-body Problematic: Consciousness in Indian Philosophy*

T 3/6: King 1999, Chapter 8

R 3/8: ***MIDTERM EXAM**

Spring Break: 3/11–18

Week 9: *The World, Creation, and Causality*

T 3/20: King 1999, Chapter 9; Olivelle 2005, pp. 87–93

R 3/22: Potter 1963 [1999], pp. 93–116

Week 10: *Words and Things*

T 3/27: Sarma 2011, Part II, Chapter 10

R 3/29: Taber 1990, pp. 35–57

Week 11: *Nowhere to Stand?*

T 4/3: Sarma 2011, Part I, Chapters 3 and 4

R 4/5: Gold 2015, pp. 213–41

Week 12: *Non-violence as a Philosophical Position*

T 4/10: Gupta 2012, pp. 66–77; Sarma 2011, Part I, Chapter 5

R 4/12: Ganeri 2001, pp. 128–150

Week 13: *Dualism Discerned and Non-duality's Philosophical Hegemony in Indian Discourse*

T 4/17: Sarma 2011, Part II, Chapters 8 and 9

R 4/19: Nicholson 2010, pp. 67–83

Week 14: *Post-colonial Philosophical Engagements*

T 4/24: King 1999, Chapter 10

**Final Paper Presentations in class*

R 4/26: Film: *Holy Smoke!* (2000)

**Final Paper Presentations in class*

5/4: **FINAL PAPERS DUE*