

Phil 270-01, MWF 12:00 to 12:50
Spring 2011
Montana State University
WILSON: 1115

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Indian Philosophy

The purpose of this course is to introduce Indian Philosophy to students who are familiar with twentieth century analytic philosophy. The course is primarily intended as a survey course in different schools of Indian Philosophy and thought dating back to the Vedic and Epic periods. I will discuss how most Indian philosophical schools emerged from a human quest to achieve the highest goal of life, that is, the liberation from sufferings. Although most schools agreed regarding the highest goal of life, they, however, disagreed as to how one should go about achieving it. These disagreements led to a development of new analytical tools required to defend their positions. One central theme is to point out the richness of Indian philosophical tradition comparable to its ancient and modern counterparts of the West. I will challenge the myth that Indian philosophical tradition is primarily rooted in faith and mysticism.

Prerequisites

You should have taken at least one other philosophy course. It will also be useful to have taken a course on informal logic.

Texts

Required:

M. Hiriyanna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, (EIP)

S. Radhakrishnan & C. Moore (ed.), *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (SBI)

Required Work for Students

- (1) Four short papers. Each should be about 2 to 3 page long.
- (2) A midterm.
- (3) A final exam.
- (4) A lively interest in the problems discussed in the class.

Grading

- (1) Four short papers: 10% + 10% + 10% + 15% = 45%. The due dates for the papers will be during the 3rd week of Jan, the 1st week of Feb, 3rd week of Feb, and the 2nd week of April respectively. [These dates are subject to change]
- (2) Midterm: 20%. Due date: March 9 (or around)
- (3) Final exam: 25%. Due date: May 3rd @ 4:00-5:50 in the afternoon.
(Final exam is the most important part of the course. Therefore, students should take it very seriously.)
- (4) Class attendance and participation 10%

READINGS

Introduction

SBI: pp. xvii-xxxi.

1. I will discuss Indian philosophy under three headings: (I) ethics or morality, (II) epistemology or theory of knowledge and (III) metaphysics or ontology.

2. Ethics: This is a branch of philosophy that addresses questions of different kinds. For example, what is morality? What is right? What is good? And so on. See the *Bhagavad-Gita* to know more about these matters. Most schools of Indian philosophy have something to say about morality and the goal of acquiring knowledge in relation to the purpose of human life.

SBI: pp. 101-112; pp. 138-143.

3. Epistemology:

It is an area of philosophy that deals with questions of the following sort. For example, are most of our beliefs justified? If so, how so? If not, why not? In this connection, I will discuss, among other things, an Indian realist's responses to these questions. They can be found in EIP, chapter IV, pp. 84-105. I will also consider several views held by Indian philosophers regarding knowledge and justification of inference (EIP).

4 Metaphysics or ontology: This is a branch of philosophy, which provides answers to the questions like "what are the constituents of the universe?", "Is there only one catalogue of objects possible or many"? Why are answers to these questions important to philosophy? And many more. I will consider various answers given by Indian philosophers who represent different schools of thought.

(EIP & SBI).

5. Different Schools of Indian Philosophy:

(A): Non-Vedic schools

A. Materialism (Carvaka)

SBI: pp. 227-249 & EIP: pp. 57-59.

B. Jainism

SBI: pp. 250-271 & EIP: pp. 59-70.

C. Buddhism

SBI: pp. 272-345. & EIP: pp. 70-83.

(B): Vedic Schools

A. Nyaya-Vaisesika

SBI: pp. 349-385 & EIP: pp. 84-105.

B. Sankhya-Yoga

SBI: pp. 424-452 & EIP: pp. 106-128.

C. Purva-Mimamsa

SBI: pp. 486-505 & EIP: pp. 129-150.

D. Vedanta: The absolute monism

SBI: pp. 509-542 & EIP: pp. 151-174.

6. Conclusion: