



# PHIL\*3910 Indian Philosophy

Fall 2020

Section(s): 01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 4.00 - October 16, 2020

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## 1 Course Details

### 1.1 Calendar Description

This course provides an analysis of selected primary sources of Indian philosophy in translation, from the Vedic Upanishads to the "integral yoga" of Sri Aurobindo. Emphasis will be on the basic inspirational works of Hinduism and Buddhism, and their respective views on the ultimate nature of reality, the self, suffering, freedom, ignorance and enlightenment.

**Pre-Requisites:** 1.50 credits in Philosophy or 7.50 credits

### 1.2 Course Description

A survey of Indian philosophy centered on a detailed examination via Zoom of four Upanishads (*Iśa*, *Katha*, *Mandukya*, and *Chandogya*), the *Bhagavad Gita*, and Buddhism (the *Dhammapada*, Nagarjuna's *Mula-madhyamika-karika*, and Vasubandhu's *Trimshika*).

### 1.3 Timetable

Monday and Wednesday from 01:00PM to 02:20PM in cyberspace.

### 1.4 Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home.

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## 2 Instructional Support

### 2.1 Instructional Support Team

**Instructor:** Kenneth Dorter

**Email:** kdorter@uoguelph.ca  
**Telephone:** +1-519-824-4120 x53218  
**Office:** MCKN 353  
**Office Hours:** Email me whenever you have a question. If you prefer to talk via Zoom we can work that out too.

## 2.2 TA

Nour Abuhsan

Email: nabuhsan@uoguelph.ca

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## 3 Learning Resources

### 3.1 Required Resources

#### Radhakrishnan and Moore (Textbook)

Radhakrishnan and Moore (editors): *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (Bookstore)

Note: Transliterations from Sanskrit are not always pronounced the way they look in English. See the pronunciation guide on pp. 638-9 of Radhakrishnan and Moore.

#### Upani ads (Readings)

Dorter (ed.): Five Upani ads (Courselink)

#### Nagarjuna (Readings)

Nagarjuna, *Mula-madhyamaka-karika* [*Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*] (Courselink).

#### Śankara (Readings)

Śankara, *Viveka-chu-damani* [*The Crest Jewel of Discrimination*] (Courselink).

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## 4 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should:

- Develop your skills in exegesis and in independent research (your essay).
  - Be familiar with the history of early Indian philosophy.
  - Have a good understanding of how empirical and spiritual issues can be related to each other in philosophy.
  - Have a good acquaintance with philosophical Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism.
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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

I'm not sure how much material we can get through in a Zoom session so I won't set firm dates but I'll keep you posted via email as to where we are in the readings.

### 5.1 Lecture

**Topics:**

From *Five Upaniṣads* (download from Courselink):

*Iśa*

*Katha*

*Chandogya*: BOOK 6 ch.1-3, 8-16

BOOK 1 ch.1; and BOOK 7 (all)

BOOK 5 ch. 3-18

BOOK 8 ch. 7-15 and *Mandukya*

*Upaniṣad*

**Topics:**

From *Source Book in Indian Philosophy*:

*Bhagavad Gita*: 3 chapters per class

Buddhism:

274-286: Early texts

292-325: *Dhammapada* (7 chapters per class)

*Mula-madhyamaka-karika* (Courselink): chapters 1, 24, and 18.

333-337: *Trimśika*.

**Topics:** Advaita Vedanta: Śankara's *Vivekachudamani* (download from Courselink).

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## 6 Assessments

In addition to the final exam (50%) you may write **either** two 1250 word essays (25% each) **or** one 2500 word essay (50%). 1250 or 2500 words are minimum lengths – **essays may be longer if justified by the content**. You can also use the first 1250 word essay as a trial run for the 2500 word essay, or you can expunge the grade for your first essay by submitting a 2500 word essay later. **All essays must be submitted to the Turnitin dropbox on Courselink.**

### 6.1 Assessment Details

#### Final exam (50%)

The final exam will consist of **three essay questions** (25 marks each) on the material covered in class (to be selected from a list handed out at the last class, which will be a review class), and **five identification questions** (5 marks each) from: Carvaka, Jainism, Nyaya, Vaise?hika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva-Mimamsa, and Vedanta. For the identification questions you need only read Radhakrishnan & Moore's introductions to chapters VII, VIII, X-XV.

#### Essay (0%)

I didn't write a value for "Weight" because there are two alternatives: see above, Introduction.

Essay topics may be of two kinds. 1) Discussion of a general problem in Indian philosophy. 2) Explication of an Indian philosopher or text **not dealt with in class** (see Radhakrishnan & Moore, chapters V-VIII and XVI-XVII). **You can also write on the Shankara text on Courselink even though it's listed as a class text, because it's unlikely we'll get to it in class.**

Relate your discussions both to **Indian texts** and **your own judgment**. You may write on an Indian philosophical text that **isn't part of the Readings For class discussion** (above), or you may write on a general problem in Indian philosophy. Here are four possibilities.

1. Reincarnation is an important feature of several Indian philosophies (see Radhakrishnan & Moore's index under "cycles of births and deaths", "rebirth", "samsara"). It

is a powerful incentive for moral behavior, but it is hard to reconcile with the contribution that the body makes to our individuality, and also with belief in heaven and hell. How convincing is this theory? What difference does it make if we believe it, and what does it imply about the relation between the soul, the body, and the individual that I am at present? (The following books by Ian Stevenson are on 3-day reserve – there's no need to consult more than one: *Cases of the Reincarnation Type* BL515.S746, *Children Who Remember Previous Lives* BL515.S747, *The Evidence for Survival from Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations* BF1311.R35 S88, *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation* BL515.S75. If you use Stevenson's books, also look at the articles on Stevenson in Courselink.)

2. What is the nature of the self or soul? (There are numerous entries in Radhakrishnan & Moore's index under "Self", "self", "Soul", "soul".)

3. It sounds plausible to say that bodily desires interfere with the mind's ability to see reality, and that therefore asceticism is important. But it also sounds plausible to say that the body is natural, and that any attempt to cut the mind off from it leads to an unnatural and sterile intellectualism. Is asceticism an advantage or disadvantage for our effort to discover truth? (See Radhakrishnan & Moore's index under "asceticism", "sannyasa", "sannyasin").

4. Several Indian philosophies argue against the adequacy of conceptual knowledge for attaining truth because truth is ineffable. But concepts mean using words in a consistent way, so it seems that the alternative must be using words in an *inconsistent* way. But why wouldn't that just confuse us rather than help us?

## 6.2 Essay deadlines and guidelines

### GUIDELINES FOR ESSAYS

1. Deadlines: 2500 word essay: Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>; **or** two 1250 word essays: Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> and Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. **For the first deadline** late essays will be accepted until the end of the week without penalty; after that you'll have to defer to the single essay option. **For the second deadline** late essays will be penalized one mark (out of 100) per day. No essay will be accepted after **9 a.m. the weekday before** the final exam. Students will not normally be required to answer questions about their essay but may in some cases. I'll email you if any questions arise so check your email daily since I won't be able to grade it if I can't reach you.

2. Subject: Any philosopher or text in the subject area of the course that **isn't studied in class**, or any relevant issue not studied in class. Check with me to make sure. There's nothing wrong with referring to works studied in class as long as they aren't the main focus.

3. Sources: If the essay deals with a philosopher focus on **primary texts** (texts of the original author), although secondary sources (works *about* the original author's texts) may be used as a supplement. **Quotations in a secondary source don't count as primary texts** because they're taken out of context. The point is to develop skill in exegesis and evaluation; reporting the results of other people's exegesis and evaluation doesn't accomplish this. If not enough primary material exists (as might happen if you write on someone obscure) use at least three secondary sources.

4. Content: Combine scholarship and creativity, i.e. both attentiveness to the text (where applicable) and a personal response of your own. If you're interpreting a particularly difficult text it may be enough just to give a clear explanation of it. Where the interpretation is more straightforward your creativity can take the form of considering objections to the author's views and how the author might reply to them; explain why you think the author can or cannot withstand the criticisms. **Whether you write on a problem or a text consider possible objections to your own views.** The more challenging you can make these issues, the better: treating answers as obvious isn't worth as much as seeing how they are controversial and difficult.

5. Format: The five paragraph model you learned in high school was training wheels to teach discipline. People don't really write essays like that. Just organize your ideas to be as clear as possible. Use double spaced full sized font (12 point). Also use page numbers. 1250 or 2500 words are minimum lengths – **essays may be longer if justified by the content.**

6. Style: Use "I" rather than awkward and outdated circumlocutions like "the author." And use inclusive language like "humankind" instead of "mankind", "people ... they" instead of "a person ... he." Other possibilities: "he or she", "she or he", "s/he", etc.

7. References: Give references to all information and ideas taken from someone else, even if they aren't direct quotations. Otherwise it may be plagiarism (when in doubt ask). Listing your sources in a bibliography isn't enough since it doesn't show where you make use of them. References should list the **author** (or at least the individual title if the author is unknown) that you're citing first. For example, if you use Radhakrishnan & Moore (editors), *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, and cite p. 58 (**you must give page numbers**), write "Taittiriya Upani ad", Radhakrishnan & Moore, 58", **not** "Radahakrishnan & Moore, 58". If you use the latter format I'll assume you're citing only a secondary source (what the editors wrote). The bibliography

should say Radhakrishnan & Moore (editors), *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Sample philosophy essays are available on Courselink.

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## 7 University Statements

### 7.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

### 7.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

### 7.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

## 7.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

## 7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website  
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website  
<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

## 7.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community—faculty, staff, and students—to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct  
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>



Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## 7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

## 7.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

## 7.9 Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

## 7.10 Illness

The University will not normally require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for fall 2020 or winter 2021 semester courses. However, requests for Academic Consideration may still require medical documentation as appropriate.

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