

Philosophy 186: 20th Century Indian Philosophers on Knowledge and Consciousness

Instructor: Anand Jayprakash Vaidya

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Location:

Day / Time: Tuesday and Thursday 12:00 to 13:50 online meetings

Office:

Office Hours: Appointment

Course Description:

This course engages the work of 20th century Indian philosophers who wrote or write on classical Indian philosophy while engaging analytic philosophy. Our first topic will be the nature of knowledge. In particular we will look at compositional vs. non-compositional theories of knowledge in analytic and Indian philosophy. Our second topic will be the nature of consciousness. In particular, we will look at panpsychism vs. cosmopsychism in analytic and Indian philosophy.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Read philosophical texts and analyze the structure of their arguments.
- Express well-reasoned positions on philosophical issues and problems.
- Critically examine one's own philosophical beliefs and assumptions.
- Thoughtfully enter into philosophical dialogue with one's peers.
- Understand how 20th century Indian philosophers have engaged 20th century analytic philosophers through the lens of classical Indian philosophy.

Course Texts

We will be using a reader in this course. It will be referred to by the following abbreviation in the course schedule:

R Anand Jayprakash Vaidya, Readings on Knowledge and Consciousness.

Available online at

<https://anandvaidya.weebly.com/20th-century-indian-and-analytic-philosophy.html>

Course Assessment

1. While grades will not be assigned based on participation, class participation is crucial to success. We will be engaging in a lot of discussion and argumentation. Students should come to class with three questions. At least one of those questions should be in the following format. The other two questions can be more general, but they should, nevertheless, reference the material for the day or prior material. Questions can be directed to me, but more often than not they should be directed at your fellow classmates.

While I can and will at times offer answers, we will need to engage the material collectively. This isn't about what I think, but about what you think. I am only a guide.

Question Format

- P: pick a passage you want to engage.
- I: offer an interpretation of the passage.
- Q: state a question based on your interpretation.
- A: offer your answer to the question.

Your actual question is not just Q, rather it is the one below addressed to the class:

Class question: what do you think of my PIQA?

There are many different kinds of Q in PIQA. What does this word in this passage mean? What is the argument in this passage? Why should I believe the view offered in this passage? I think the position in this passage runs into the following problem, does it? Also when you offer your own answer to the question put your answer as the conclusion of an argument. For example, for the following reasons I think the answer is. Often you will want to use your interpretation of the passage anchored on the actual passage to give your answer.

2. Two writing assignments, that are exams. 1st one due at the beginning of the sixth week, 2nd one due during Finals week. Each assignment is 2500 words. And each one is worth 50%. Each assignment will have questions I will ask and you will answer. You will get the questions in advance. Both due to me by email: dr.vaidya@gmail.com. Subject heading: Phil 186_Paper Exam#_ Last Name

Paper Format

- (i) Statement of the question
- (ii) Your complete answer

Course Schedule

(The schedule is subject to revision based on class discussion and my decision about when to move on, students are advised to pay attention at the end of class where I will explicitly mention a change. At any point in time I might add papers or switch the direction of discussion.)

Week 1: Jan T9, R11 **Unit 1: Knowledge**

Read: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/>, Sections 1, 3, and 7

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-india/>, Section 1, 7

Analytic and Experimental Philosophy in the Reflection of Comparative Philosophy
By A. Vaidya **R**

Exam Paper 1: Knowledge Assigned T Jan 9

Week 2: Jan T16, R18

Read: *Does Indian Epistemology Concern Justified True Belief?* By K. H. Potter. **R**

What Does Kumarila mean by Intrinsic Validity? By J. Taber. **R**

Week 3: Jan T23, R25

Read: *Are Pramā Factive?* By J. Ganeri **R**

Pramā are Factive By M. Dasti and S. Phillips **R**

Week 4: Jan T30, Feb R1

Read: *Parasitism and Disjunctivism in Nyāya Epistemology* By M. Dasti **R**

Nyāya Perceptual Theory: Disjunctivism or Anti-Individualism By A. Vaidya **R**

Week 5: Feb T6, R8

Read: *Knowledge, Belief, and Doubt: Some Contemporary Problems and their Solutions from the Nyāya Perspective* By J. L. Shaw **R**

Elements of Knowledge-first Epistemology in Gaṅgeśa By A. Vaidya **R**

Week 6:

Feb T13, R15 **Unit 2: Consciousness**

Read: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consciousness/>, Section 5

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panpsychism/>, Sections 1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3, 4.2, 4.3

Exam Paper 1: Knowledge Due T Feb 13

Exam Paper 2: Consciousness Assigned Feb T 13

Week 7: Feb T20, R22

Read: *Emergentism in Greek and Indian philosophy*
By J. Ganeri **R**

A New Debate on Consciousness: Bringing Classical and Modern Vedānta into dialogue with Contemporary Analytic Panpsychism By A. Vaidya **R**

Week 8: Feb T27, R29

Read: *The Playful Self-Involution of Divine Consciousness: Sri Aurobindo's Evolutionary Cosmopsychism and His Response to the Individuation Problem* By S. Medhananda **R**

Week 9: March T5, R7

Read: Analytic Panpsychism and the Metaphysics of Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita
By A. Vaidya **R**

Week 10: March T12, R14

Read: Beyond Cosmopsychism and the Great I Am

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Panpsychism and the Inner-Outer Gap Problem
By M. Albahari **R**

Why Advaita Vedānta cannot solve the Hard Problem of Consciousness
By A. Vaidya **R**

Finals Week March 20-24

Paper 2: Consciousness Due March R 21