

## PHILOSOPHY 191: PHILOSOPHY WITHOUT BORDERS: INDIA AND EUROPE

Spring 2014

Emerson 310, Thursdays 2-4

### INSTRUCTORS

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Indian and Western European traditions of philosophy are rarely studied together, and yet they grapple with many of the same fundamental questions: What am I? What can I know? What really exists? Can a productive philosophical conversation be had between these two philosophical traditions? If so, what would it sound like? We will try to answer these questions by engaging in a close reading of several classic Buddhist texts from the Indian tradition and Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* and *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* from the Western European tradition. We will focus our inquiry on five philosophical topics: language and the contents of mind; causation; the external world; self; and skepticism. While we expect to find surface similarities and differences between the traditions, our goal is to uncover what lurks beneath: some of the apparent similarities may arise from very different assumptions and for very different reasons; and some apparent differences may mask underlying similarities. As we proceed, our first task is to interpret the texts. Our second task is to unearth background assumptions of the texts, discern the goals of the texts, figure out the intended audience of the text, and understand the form of argument adopted by the text. Our third task is to figure out whether and how to construct a productive conversation between the traditions. Among other things, this will require that we forge a common language between them, or at least a workable translation.

Why bother trying to bring these two traditions into conversation with each other? Engaging with philosophical positions that challenge your preconceived opinions is unsettling, but often productively unsettling. Sometimes you change your opinion, and sometimes you work out the reasons why you were right to hold the opinion you started with. Sometimes you learn that you have a problem you never realized you have. Sometimes you learn that something you think is a deep problem is really a pseudo-problem. In this class, we expect this form of productive challenge to operate at two levels: (a) our understanding of Hume and the Indian philosophers should deepen through the inter-traditional exchange, and (b) our own opinions should be challenged in interesting ways by listening in on, and participating in, the conversation.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

The Hume readings for this course will be drawn primarily from his *Treatise on Human Nature* and *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, but also from his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. There are many different editions of these texts available. *Please be sure to purchase the editions listed below.* Copies are available at the Coop but are also readily purchased online at amazon.com. The Buddhist readings for this course will be available online.

David Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature* (Oxford Philosophical Texts), edited by David Norton and Mary Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). ISBN-13: 978-0198751724.

David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Thomas Beauchamp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). ISBN-13: 978-0198752486.

### RECOMMENDED COMMENTARIES

Saul Traiger, Editor, *The Blackwell Guide to Hume's Treatise* (Blackwell Publishing, 2006) (hereafter, *Traiger*). ISBN-13: 978-1405115094.

Don Garrett, *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 1997). ISBN-13: 978-0195159592.

Mark Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy* (Hackett, 2007). ISBN-13: [978-0872208735](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0872208735) [Primarily for Background Reading]

### REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

#### *Reading*

Some weeks there is quite a lot of material to read, and other weeks not so much. Either way **start early**. The material is dense and difficult and you will need to read at least portions of it several times before you come to class so that you are prepared to engage in the discussion. The recommended *commentaries* provide a useful guide to help you sort through the issues and arguments discussed in the text. The recommended *secondary literature* enters into more sophisticated and detailed debates concerning the text, and is primarily intended as an initial place to turn if you decide to write a paper on the topic.

#### *Discussion*

This class is a seminar, and so the format for the class will be discussion. We will come every week with material to organize our discussion, but we expect that everyone will come to class prepared to talk about the material.

#### *Weekly Outlines*

To help you focus your reading, you will prepare a **short informal outline** of the assigned text each week. Just what form the outline takes is up to you. It can be an old-fashioned outline, a diagram, a flow chart, or anything helps you to organize the ideas and argument of the text. The point is simply for you to have a way of organizing and preserving what you've read. Bring **two copies** to class so that you can hand in one at the start of class and keep one to use during class. Although the outlines will not be graded, turning them in each week is *required* for passing the course.

#### *Weekly Discussion Questions*

To help you further focus your reading, we will have you **meet in small groups** that we will assign some time **before** class to develop a question for us to discuss in class. The question should be something you feel is important to understanding the text. Your group will **submit online** (a) a clearly stated version of the question, (b) an explanation for why you think this is an important question to answer, and (c) a text (or two) that you think is important for figuring out how to answer the question. We will choose the groups randomly for each topic. You will decide amongst yourselves when to meet and for how long (you can

even do the work together online). And you will choose a point person to present the group's answer to the class.

### ***Midterm Paper***

A 5-7 page paper will be due **Friday, April 11**. We will provide some recommended topics, or you may write on a topic of your choosing so long as you get approval from Professors Patil and Simmons. Please note that the Philosophy Department has a Departmental Writing Fellow (DWF), Paul Julien, who is available to help you with your papers. For details see <http://sites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k90505&pageid=icb.page537979>

### ***Final Paper***

An 8-10 page *rewrite* of the midterm paper will be due during finals week.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to doing the kind of textual interpretation and comparative analysis we are going to do in this course, and so we encourage you to talk about the course material with other students and do your own research in the library and online. On the other hand, *the work on your essays must be entirely your own*. If books, articles, websites, or discussions have helped you with your paper, cite them in proper footnote and bibliography form. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses that undermine the trust on which the scholarly endeavor rests.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the [Accessible Education Office](#) (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term, February 7, 2014. Failure to do so may result in our inability to respond in a timely manner.

### **COURSE CALENDAR**

#### **January 30: Introduction and Course Overview**

#### **February 6: Language and Contents of the Mind - Hume**

**Topics:** Hume's Science of the Mind, Impressions (of Sensation and of Reflection), Ideas (of Memory and of Imagination), The Copy Principle, Concepts (Abstract Ideas), Beliefs, Laws of Association, Theory of Meaning

**Required Reading:** *Treatise* Introduction, 1.1.1-7 and 1.3.7 and *Enquiry* 1-3

**Optional Commentary:** Traiger, ch. 3; Garrett, chs. 1-3

#### **Optional Articles:**

Janet Broughton, "What Does the Scientist of Man Observe?" *Hume Studies* 18(2) (1992): 155-168.

R.J. Butler, "Hume's Impressions" *Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures* 9 (1974-1975): 122-136.

#### **February 13: Language and Contents of the Mind – Buddhism**

**Topics:** Ratnakīrti's Science of the Mind, Non-conceptual and Conceptual Content, Sensation and Conceptual Construction, Exclusion, Theory of Meaning.

**Required Reading:** "Ratnakīrti's World: Towards a Buddhist Philosophy of Everything," Ratnakīrti's *Demonstration of Exclusion*.

**Optional Commentary:**

Siderits, ch. 2, "Early Buddhism: Basic Teachings"; Siderits, ch. 10: "The School of Dignāga: Buddhist Epistemology." [Background Reading]  
Parimal G. Patil, "The Theory of Exclusion, Conceptual Content, and Buddhist Epistemology."

**Optional Articles:**

Lawrence J. McCrea and Parimal G. Patil, "Introduction" in *Buddhist Philosophy of Language in India* (Columbia 2010).  
*Apoha: Buddhist Nominalism and Human Cognition*. Edited by Mark Siderits, Tom Tillemans, and Arindam Chakrabarti (Columbia 2011).

**February 20: Language and Contents of the Mind – Finish Up**  
**Topics and Readings TBA**

**February 27: Causation and Causal Inference – Hume**

**Topics:** Centrality of causation in our doxastic lives; Causation and Necessary Connection; Causal Inferences; Two Definitions of Causation; The New Hume Debate.

**Required Reading:** *Treatise* 1.3.1-8 and 14 and *Enquiry* 4-5 and 7.

**Optional Commentary:** Garrett, ch. 5.

**Optional Articles:**

Kenneth Winkler, "That New Hume" *The Philosophical Review* 100(4) (1991): 541-579.  
Don Garrett, "The Representation of Causation and Hume's Two Definitions of 'Cause'" *Nôus* 27(2) (1993): 167-190.  
David Owen, "Hume and the Lockean Background: Induction and the Uniformity Principle" *Hume Studies* 18(2) (1992): 199-208.

**March 6: Causation – Buddhism**

**Topics:** Causation in Buddhist Philosophy; Causal Connections; Causal Inferences; Epistemology of Causation.

**Required Reading:** Dharmakīrti's *The Examination of Relations (Sambandhaparīkṣā)* and *Compendium on the Sources of Knowledge (Pramāṇavārttika)*, selections). Cf. Buddhism Readings from February 13.

**Optional Commentary:**

Vincent Eltschinger, "Dharmakīrti", *Review International de Philosophie* 64/3 [253] (2010) pp. 397-440. [Background Reading]

Tom Tillemans, "Dharmakīrti" SEP.

John Dunne, *Foundations of Dharmakīrti's Philosophy*, chapter 3 (Wisdom 2004).

**Optional Articles:**

Brendan Gillon, "Dharmakīrti and the Problem of Induction" in *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition*. Edited by Ernst Steinkellner (Vienna 1991).

Masahiro Inami, "On The Determination of Causality" in *Dharmakīrti's Thought And Its Impact on Indian and Tibetan Philosophy, Proceedings of the Third International Dharmakīrti Conference, Hiroshima, November 4-6, 1997*. Edited by Katsura Shoryu (Vienna 1999)

Horst Lasic. "Dharmakīrti and His Successors On The Determination of Causality" in *Dharmakīrti's Thought And Its Impact on Indian and Tibetan Philosophy, Proceedings of the Third International Dharmakīrti Conference, Hiroshima, November 4-6, 1997*. Edited by Katsura Shoryu (Vienna 1999)

Horst Lasic. "On the Utilisation of Causality as a Basis of Inference: Dharmakīrti's Statements and Their Interpretation." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 31: 185-197, 2005.

**March 13: External World – Hume**

**Topics:** Exploration of our belief in an external world of bodies that exists entirely distinct from our sensory perceptions; the "vulgar" versus the "philosopher's" belief; breakdown of the belief.

**Required Reading:** *Treatise* 1.4.2-4 and 1.2.6; *Enquiry* 12.1

**Optional Commentary:** Traiger, ch. 7

**Optional Extra Reading:**

Donald Ainslie, *Hume's True Skepticism*, chapters 2-4, manuscript on website.

Annemarie Butler, "On Hume's Supposed Rejection of Resemblance between Objects and Impressions" *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 18(2) (2010): 257-270.

**March 20 SPRING BREAK**

**March 27: External World – Buddhism**

**Topics:** The 'basis' of our thoughts; atomism; idealism.

**Required Reading:** Dignāga's "Critical Examination of the Basis of Cognition" (*Ālambanaparīkṣā*).

**Optional Commentary:**

Siderits, ch. 8, "Yogācāra: Impressions Only and the Denial of Physical Objects."  
[Background Reading]

Vinitadeva's *Commentary on the 'Critical Examination of the Basis of Cognition*

**Optional Articles:**

B. K. Matilal, *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), Chapter 7, "What Do We See?"

Matthew Kapstein, "Mereological Considerations in Vasubandhu's 'Proof of Idealism,'" in *Reason's Traces* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), pp.181-204

### **April 3: Self – Hume**

**Topics:** Note about the two selves in Hume (Book 1 vs Book 2); self as a bundle of perceptions; self as a commonwealth of perceptions; primary vs secondary ideas.

**Required Reading:** *Treatise* 1.4.5-6

**Optional Commentary:** Traiger, ch. 8; Garrett, ch. 8.

**Optional Articles:**

Donald Ainslie, "Hume's reflections on the identity and simplicity of mind" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 62(3) (2001): 557-578.

Don Garrett, "Rethinking Hume's Second Thoughts about Personal Identity" in *The Possibility of Philosophy Understanding: Essays for Barry Stroud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 15-42.

### **April 10: Self – Buddhism**

**Topics:** The Treasury of Metaphysics; Dharma and *dharmas*; Buddhist Personalists; Non-Buddhist Soul-theorists.

**Required Reading:** Vasubandhu's "Critique of the Doctrine of Self" (*Ātmavādapratīṣedha*) and Five Aggregates (*Pañcaskandhaka*)

**Optional Commentary:**

Jonathan Gold, "Vasubandhu" SEP. [Background Reading]

James Duerlinger, *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons: Vasubandhu's Refutation of the Theory of Self*, (Curzon/Routledge 2003).

**Optional Articles:**

Vincent Eltschinger and Isabel Ratić, *Self, No-Self, and Salvation: Dharmakīrti's Critique of the Notion of Self and Person*. Vienna 2013.

### **April 17: Skepticism – Hume**

**Topics:** Forms of skepticism; benefits of skepticism; relationship between skepticism and naturalism.

**Required Reading:** *Treatise* 1.4.7 and *Enquiry* 12

**Optional Commentary:** Traiger, ch. 9; Garrett, ch. 10.

**Optional Articles:**

Donald Ainslie, *Hume's True Skepticism*, draft of chapter 7.

Annette Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments: Reflections on Hume's Treatise*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991, Chapter 1.

Janet Broughton, "Hume's Naturalism about Cognitive Norms" *Philosophical Topics* 31 (2003): 1-19.

Lorne Falkenstein, "Naturalism, Normativity, and Skepticism in Hume's Account of Belief" *Hume Studies* 23 (1997): 29-72.

**April 24: Skepticism – Buddhism**

**Topics:** Are Buddhists skeptics?; emptiness; "two truths."

**Required Reading:** Nāgarjuna's "Dispeller of Disputes" (*Vigrahavyāvartanā*) and "Fundamentals of the Middle Way" (*Mūlamadhyamakārikā*) [selections]

**Optional Commentary:**

Siderits, ch. 9, "Madhyamaka: The Doctrine of Emptiness" [Background Reading]

Jan Westerhoff, "Nagarjuna" SEP [Background Reading]

Mark Siderits and Shoryu Katsura, *Nagarjuna's Middle Way: Mūlamadhyamakakarika* (Wisdom 2012).

Jan Westerhoff, *The Dispeller of Disputes*: Oxford University Press, 2010.

**Optional Articles:**

B.K. Matilal, "Debates and Directives" in *Classical Logic in India* (SUNY 1998).