



Maṇḍana Miśra & Śaṅkara debate, judged by Maṇḍana's wife, Ubhāya Bharatī.

Debate and Reasoning in Indian Philosophy

(YHU3297)

Tuesday/Friday 4:30pm to 5:50pm
Classroom 2

Instructor: Prof. Malcolm Keating

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Office hours:

- *First come, first serve:* Tuesdays, Friday 3:30-4:30pm
- *Scheduled slots:* <http://malcolmkeating.youcanbook.me> or by email

Websites:

- www.malcolmkeating.com See resources under “Current Student Information.”
- Canvas Page

Course Description:

What does good reasoning look like? What does it aim for? How should we argue with our opponents? Naiyāyikas, known as “Logicians” or “Reasoners,” presented and defended sophisticated methods of reasoning and norms for debate that are still being studied today. In this course, we focus on sections of the *Nyāya-sūtra* in translation and its early commentaries, along with some other select texts. Not only will we consider methods and norms, but we will look at how Indian thinkers put them into practice in arguments on topics such as the existence of God.

Course Approach:

In this course, we will read Sanskrit philosophy in translation, accompanied by secondary resources. Our class time will be spent testing & applying the ideas in these texts. We will also incorporate reflection on Sanskrit theory of debate into our own argumentative strategies.

A Note about Prerequisites:

This course is 3000-level. I recommend that students should have taken at least one philosophy course (PPT does not count for this) before taking this course.

A Note about Health and Well-being:

Not only does your academic performance suffer without enough sleep, socializing, and nutrition, *you* suffer as a human being. Please read this syllabus carefully so you understand course expectations and are able to meet them without sacrificing your health. If you find yourself in a difficult position this term, please contact me about what we can do to ensure you can thrive in this course.










Course Goals


Upon successful completion of this course:

1. Students will understand the major commitments of Nyāya philosophy, in particular with regard to epistemology of inference and rules of debate, as well as important criticisms.
2. Students will attain beginning competence in reading Sanskrit philosophical literature in translation and integrating it responsibly with secondary literature.
3. Students will attain beginning competence in writing philosophical papers which (a) present a thesis original to the student, (b) argue for the thesis using careful and charitable reading of primary and secondary material, and (c) engage with compelling objections to the position and/or develop further implications of the view.
4. Students will be able to critique philosophical positions about reasoning and debate (a) by drawing upon appropriate resources in Indian philosophical literature and (b) by employing their own reasoning skills.
5. Students will be prepared to take more advanced classes in Indian philosophy or epistemology generally.

About Assignments

In this course, we will focus upon doing philosophy through *reading* texts  *discussing* their ideas , and *writing* responses of our own . We will have assignments which focus on three areas: reading, speaking, and writing. Since most philosophy majors (and people who take philosophy courses) do not go on to an academic career, we will also emphasize *application* of skills and content of this course .

Questions    Before the class each week, students will either *succinctly* (1) raise a question for discussion on the Canvas discussion board or (2) identify an application of the ideas in contemporary contexts. Each student will be randomly chosen to informally present their question or application in class one day during the term (5%).

Seminar Participation  Each student is responsible for collegial, insightful, substantive involvement in seminar discussions. Regular class attendance is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for earning an excellent participation grade (10%). Students will complete a short participation goal-setting exercise, to be followed up by a self-assessment of their performance in class (5%).

Class debates 🗣️ Each student will participate in a final debate with another student on a philosophical topic, employing the principles we study in the course. Participants will write a self-evaluation (20%).

Mini-papers 📝🔧 Students will write two short papers (3-4 pages or 750 to 1000 words) in which they either identify a philosophical/interpretive puzzle and attempt a resolution or apply philosophical ideas to contemporary issues. This paper should not consult any sources apart from those in the course syllabus. Mini-paper 1 is 10% of the grade, mini-paper 2 is 20%.

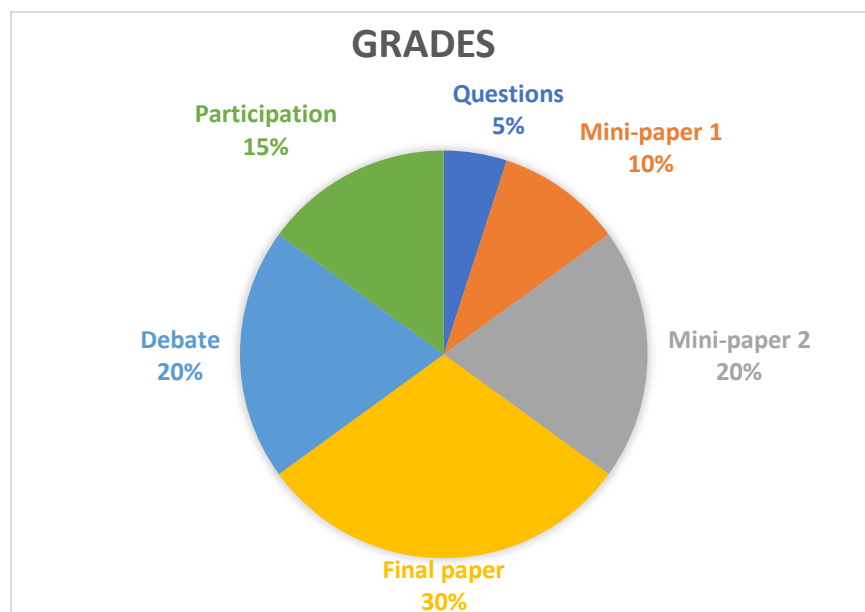
Final Paper 📝🗣️ Students have two options for their final project:

1. They may write a final paper (6-8 pages) in which they expand on one of their previous mini-papers. The paper may, but need not be, constructive engagement between Anglophone and Nyāya philosophy. Part of the final paper grade is an outline of the final paper, to be turned in beforehand.

2. They may engage in, film, and submit, a final debate with another classmate in which they define and justify the ground rules for the debate and its aim(s), determine a topic of appropriate scope and importance, and write an evaluation of the resulting debate. Each participant is graded on their reflection and contributions to the debate design (design is due at the same time as final paper outlines). Note that on this option, the debate design report *receives a single grade*.

Class Participation 🗣️

Each student is responsible for collegial, insightful, substantive involvement in seminar discussions. Regular class attendance is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for earning an excellent participation grade. Students will complete a short participation goal-setting exercise, to be followed up by a self-assessment of their performance in class (10%).



Grading details. I use the College's CAP-consistent grading scheme.

1. I round in the following manner:
 - An 83.49% is rounded to an 83.5%, which remains an 83% for a B.
 - An 83.50% is rounded to an 84% which is a B+.
2. I do not curve.
3. There is no extra credit.

Course Policies

This syllabus is not a *contract*, but a *guide* to your success in the course. It does not lay out a set of necessary and sufficient conditions, but the norms for our cultivating a learning community together. Please ask if you need clarification on any of these points.

- **Tech.** No laptops, tablets, or phones are to be used in class. Printed copies of the course readings are available and I ask that you take notes by hand unless you have a disability requiring technological assistance.
- **Late assignments and makeups.** Only officially excused absences allow for makeup work. Late assignments are subject to a 5% deduction per day they are late, and are not accepted more than 3 days after the deadline unless prior consent for a late submission has been secured. *If you need an extension, ask, rather than turning in late work.*
- **Office hours.** I'm available for drop-ins, Tuesdays and Fridays. You can schedule meetings using the online booking system or by email. Note that no-shows risk losing their privilege to schedule online and must instead drop in.
- **Plagiarism** undermines the aims of your participation in this course. According to the College's official Academic Policy, I refer students who are suspected of plagiarism to the Academic Integrity Committee. This applies to intentional *or* unintentional plagiarism, defined as (in descending order of egregiousness):
 1. Representing someone else's work as your own
 2. Quoting a source verbatim without attribution.
 3. Paraphrasing a source without attribution.
 4. Reliance on the content of a source without attribution.

If I encounter plagiarism I will typically recommend a zero to the Academic Integrity in the case of (1), and penalties ranging from an "F" to a rewrite for less credit for (2) through (4). I encourage you to cite your sources when in doubt, and ask me if you are unsure how to do so. Please also acknowledge any students or professors whose conversations have informed your thinking.

- **Attendance** is crucial for your success in the class, and your absence also impacts your peers, as they benefit from your contributions to the class. Significant unexcused absences—more than three classes in a semester—will impact your seminar participation grade. Please email me ahead of time if you will be absent. You need not explain in detail your reasons, but provide a medical or administrative excuse when appropriate.

Schedule of Readings

The readings below are due for the week indicated. Throughout the course we will pair primary readings with secondary material. Required purchases: Matilal 1999, Dasti & Phillips 2017, and Patil 2009. See bibliography for details.

| | Topic | Reading for the Week | | Writing Assignments |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Introduction | <i>BU</i> 3.6, 3.8.1-12, xxiii-lvi; <i>CLI</i> 2.31-37 | | Participation goals |
| Unit 1: Reasoning (Logic) | | | | |
| 2 | Nyāya | <i>NS</i> (Ch 1), <i>CLI</i> 1.1-6 | | |
| 3 | <i>anumāna</i> | <i>NS</i> (Ch 9), <i>CLI</i> 1.6-14 | | |
| 4 | <i>anumāna</i> | <i>NS</i> (Ch 9), <i>CLI</i> 5 (all) | | |
| 5 | method | <i>NS</i> (Ch 4), Davis 1981 | | |
| 6 | for a Hindu god | <i>NS</i> (Ch 6), Patil Ch 2 | | |
| 7 | against a Hindu god | <i>NS</i> (Ch 6), Patil Ch 3 | | Mini-paper 1 |
| Unit 2: Debate | | | | |
| 8 | Nyāya debate (<i>vāda</i>) | <i>NS</i> (Ch 9), <i>CLI</i> 2 | | — |
| 9 | Types of debate | <i>CLI</i> 3, Nicholson 2010 | | |
| 10 | Buddhist debates | Asaṅga, Wayman 1958 | | |
| 11 | A “live” debate | <i>Much Ado about Religion</i> , Act 3, Solomon 1976 | | |
| 12 | Implications | Vaidya 2016 | | Mini-paper 2 |
| 13 | Implications | Lloyd 2010 | | — |
| Conclusion | | | | |
| 14 | Conclusion | Final debates | Final debates | Self-assessment |
| <i>Exam week</i> | | | | |
| <i>Reading week</i> | | | | Final Paper/ Report |

Bibliography

An asterisk* indicates a text that must be purchased due to copyright restrictions. An ^L indicates a text available in our library. Other texts will be made available on Canvas. If finances are a constraint, please let me know and we will find a way for you to get the materials.

- ^LBU = Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, in *Upaniṣads*, Patrick Olivelle, trans. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. (BL1124.54 Upa 2008, Yale-NUS College Library Books)
- *CLI = Matilal, B.K. *The Character of Logic in Classical India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- *^LNS = Akṣapāda Gautama. *The Nyāya-sūtra: Selections with Early Commentaries*. Translated, with Introduction and Explanatory Notes, by Matthew Dasti and Stephen Phillips. Hackett, September 2017. (B132 Nya.Ga 2017, Yale-NUS College Library RBR)
- Asaṅga. "[Asaṅga's Rules of Debate](#)." *A Millenium of Buddhist Logic*. Vol 1. Ed. Alex Wayman. Buddhist Tradition Series Vol 36. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Davis, Lawrence. "Tarka in the Nyaya Theory of Inference." *Journal of Indian Philosophy*. (1981) 9:105-120.
- ^LJayanta Bhaṭṭa. *Āgamaḍambara or Much Ado About Religion*. Trans. Csaba Dezsö. Clay Sanskrit Library. New York: New York University Press, 2005. (PK3794 Cslj 2005, Yale-NUS College Library RBR)
- Kang, Sung Yong. "An Inquiry into the Definition of *tarka* in Nyāya Tradition and Its Connotation of Negative Speculation" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2010) 38:1-23.
- Lloyd, Keith. "Learning from India's Nyāya Rhetoric: Debating Analogically through Vāda's Fruitful Dialogue." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. (2013)43:3, 285-299,.
- Nicholson, Hugh. "The Shift from Agonistic to Non-Agonistic Debate in Early Nyāya." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2010) 38:75-95.
- *^LPatil, Parimal. *Against a Hindu God*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. (BQ4440 Pat 2009, Central Library Books)
- ^LSolomon, Esther. *Indian Dialectics: Methods of Philosophical Discussion, Volume 2*. Ahmedabad: B.J. Institute of Learning and Research, 1976. (B132 Dia.S v.1, Central Library Closed Stacks)
- Vaidya, Anand. "[Does Critical Thinking and Logic Education Have a Western Bias? The Case of the Nyāya School of Classical Indian Philosophy](#)." *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 00, No. 0, 2016
- Wayman, Alex. "The Rules of Debate According to Asaṅga." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 78, No. 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1958), pp. 29-40.