

Module Title: PHIL 0162 The Self in Classical Indian Philosophy

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Course Description

In this module, we will consider debates about the nature of the self in classical Indian philosophy. We will look at two Buddhist (Abhidharma and Madhyamaka) theories of the self. We will then examine some arguments that the non-Buddhists (especially the Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā philosophers) gave against these theories. Along the way, we will also discuss some of the questions that these debates raise in epistemology and ethics: for example, whether our memories give us any reason to believe in an enduring self, and whether denying the existence of the self can help us justify altruism.

Course Objectives

Through reading and careful analysis of key Sanskrit and Pali texts on the self (in translation), study of this module is intended to give students an overview of classical Indian metaphysics, ethics, and epistemology.

Intended Learning Outcomes

In this module, students will develop the general skills appropriate to a theoretical philosophy module at this level. They will also learn to engage with challenging classical Indian texts: they will familiarize themselves with the key concepts used in these texts, reconstruct the arguments offered in them, and critically assess these arguments.

Assignment Structure

For undergraduate students, the summative assessment will be a 3500-word essay, and for postgraduate students, it will be a 4000-word essay. Both of these will be due on December 19, 2018.

Attendance

Please see UCL's Attendance Policy (for more information see <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/chapters/chapter-3-registration-framework-taught-programmes/section-3-attendance-and-absence>)

Attendance of seminar meetings by students is mandatory. UCL recognises that students may sometimes miss seminars due to genuine extenuating circumstances, such as illness or bereavement. Therefore, provided that a student has an attendance record of 70% or higher, the student is eligible for

the summative assessment in a module, and can gain credit for that module. If, for whatever reason (even illness or bereavement), a student's attendance is lower than 70%, then they can potentially be barred from summative assessment in the module, which will mean they are 'incomplete' in it. If a student is incomplete and it is their first attempt at the module, they have to resit. If it is their second attempt, they can't graduate.

Readings

All readings for this course will be made available on the Moodle site for the module.

Readings

Session 1: Introduction

Recommended Readings:

1. Collins, Steven. *Selfless persons: Imagery and thought in Theravada Buddhism*. Cambridge University Press, 1990. Section 3.1]
2. Kapstein, Matthew. "Indra's Search for the Self and the Beginnings of Philosophical Perplexity in India." *Religious Studies* 24, no. 2 (1988): 239-256. Reprinted in *Reason's Traces*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2001.

Optional Accompanying Texts:

1. Olivelle, Patrick (trans.). Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8. In *The Early Upaniṣads*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1996.
2. Bhikkhu Bodhi (trans.). "The Non-Self Characteristic." *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2000.
3. Walshe, Maurice (trans.). "The Great Discourse on Origination." *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 1995.

Week 2: The Abhidharma Theory of Selves and Persons, Part I

Primary Texts:

Duerlinger, James (trans.). A Translation of Vasubandhu's "Refutation of the Theory of a Person." Sections 1 and Section 2 (upto 2.5.3). In *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons*. London: Routledge.

Required Background Reading:

SEP article on Vasubandhu, Section 2.1.

Optional Secondary Literature:

Ganeri, Jonardon. The Imperfect Reality of Persons. In *The Concealed Art of the Soul: Theories of the Self and Practices of Truth in Indian Ethics and Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. [Chapter 6].

Week 3: The Abhidharma Theory of Selves and Persons, Part 2

Primary Texts:

Duerlinger, James (trans.). A Translation of Vasubandhu's "Refutation of the Theory of a Person." Section 4. In *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons*. London: Routledge.

Required Background Reading:

SEP article on Vasubandhu, Section 2.1.

Optional Secondary Literature:

Duerlinger, James (trans.). Commentary on Section 4. In *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons*. London: Routledge.

Week 4: The Madhyamaka Theory of Selves and Persons

Primary Text:

Katsura, Shoryu and Mark Siderits (trans.) *Nāgārjuna's Middle Way: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2013. [Chapters 1,12, 15]

Required Background Reading:

SEP article on Nāgārjuna.

Optional Secondary Literature:

Westerhoff, Jan. *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. [Chapter 2]

Week 5: The Madhyamaka Theory of Selves and Persons (Continued)

Primary Text:

Primary Text:

Katsura, Shoryu and Mark Siderits (trans.) *Nāgārjuna's Middle Way: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2013. [Chapters 9, 10, 18]

Required Background Reading:

SEP article on Nāgārjuna.

Optional Secondary Literature:

Westerhoff, Jan. *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. [Chapter 2]

Week 6: The Nyāya Arguments for the Existence of the Self, Part 1**Primary Text:**

Kapstein, Matthew (trans.). "Vātsyāyana and Uddyotakara on the Self." In *Reason's Traces*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2001.

Required Secondary Literature:

Taber, John. "Uddyotakara's Defence of a Self." In *Hindu and Buddhist Ideas in Dialogue*, pp. 107-124. London: Routledge, 2016.

Week 7: The Nyāya Arguments for the Existence of the Self, Part 2**Primary Text:**

Dasti, Matthew, and Phillips, Stephen (trans.). *The Nyāya-sūtra: Selections from Early Commentaries*. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 2017. [Chapter 4]

Required Secondary Literature:

Ganeri, Jonardon. "Cross-modality and the self". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000):639-658.

Week 8: The Mīmāṃsā Arguments for the Existence of the Self, Part 1

Primary Text:

Das, Nilanjan (trans.) *The Theory of the Self in Kumārila's Verse Commentary*. Unpublished Manuscript. [Upto Verse 90].

Required Background Reading:

SEP article on Kumārila, especially section 3.3.

Week 9: The Mīmāṃsā Arguments for the Existence of the Self, Part 2**Primary Texts:**

Das, Nilanjan (trans.) *The Theory of the Self in Kumārila's Verse Commentary*. Unpublished Manuscript. [From verse 90 to the end.]

Required Secondary Literature:

Taber, John A. "Mīmāṃsā theory of self-recognition." *Philosophy East and West* (1990): 35-57.

Week 10: Anger, Altruism, and the Self**Primary Text:**

Crosby, Kate and Andrew Skilton (trans.). *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Excerpts from Chapters 6, 8, and 9]

Required Background Reading:

SEP article on Śāntideva [Section 3].

Optional Secondary Literature:

1. Bommarito, Nicolas. "Bile & Bodhisattvas: Śāntideva on Justified Anger." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 18 (2011): 356-381.
2. Williams, Paul, *Altruism and Reality: Studies in the Philosophy of the Bodhicaryāvatāra*, New York: Routledge, 1998. [Chapters 3 and 5]
3. Goodman, Charles. *Consequences of Compassion: An Interpretation and Defense of Buddhist Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Chapter 5].

