

Review Sheet:
World Philosophy: India. Spring 2023

Below are a list of central terms and figures that it would be a good idea to review for the midterm exam. There is no guarantee that *only* these ideas and figures will appear on the exam.

Vedas and Upaniṣads;

- Vedas
- Upaniṣad
- karma
- *ātman*
- rebirth
- Yājñavalkya's conception of the self.
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Buddhism

- Early Buddhism as contrasted with Mahāyāna Buddhism
- *anātman* (the position of no-self)
- *duḥkha* (suffering)
- Dependent origination
- The 5 *skandhas* (aggregates): be able to explain each *skandha*
- The 4 Noble Truths: Be able to briefly explain each one.
- *Questions of King Milinda*: (Understand the main positions that are given and argued for in the text)
- Conventional designation (*prajñapti*)
- Abhidharma
- Conventional and Ultimate reality/truth
- Mahāyāna
- Madhyamika
- Yogācāra
- *dharma*s and intrinsic existence (*svabhāva*)
- Emptiness (*śūnyatā*)
- Nāgārjuna
- Vasubandhu
- *Root Verses on the Middle Way* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*): Review the main arguments from chapter one that we focused on in class
- The 20 Verses: Review Vasubandhu's main arguments for idealism
- Store-house consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*)
- Bodhisattva

Advice

Keep in mind that the exam will be (at least primarily) essay based. The best answers will be able to go beyond basic explanations of the concepts, to illustrate the philosophical importance of the ideas and concepts in question, in response to the essay prompt. A good way to study is to contrast the

different traditions and their understanding of shared concepts. For instance, be able to contrast the different traditions understanding of the self, or their attitude towards Vedic authority.

Learn what the various traditions and thinkers mean by the concepts above; don't simply rely on the meaning of the English translations. Buddhists are not claiming that all ordinary experience is suffering in the sense of being physically or mentally painful. They are claiming it is *duḥkha*, and you need to understand what they mean by *duhkha* to evaluate their claims about it.

Think of the relations between the various traditions and concepts that we have studied. Be able to contrast early Buddhist accounts of self, with that developed in the Upaniṣads. Be able to contrast the *skandhas* with the *dharmic* analysis developed by the Abhidharmas and so on. Also, try to think if the positions defended by these schools are reasonable. Are the Buddhists right to claim all ordinary existence is unsatisfactory (*duhkha*)? Why or why not? Try to do this with most of the basic positions and concepts developed in these traditions.

In your review of the primary sources, reread the assigned selections and focus on understanding how the concepts explained in class and in the textbook are presented and/or argued for in these sources. Given that students are not allowed to use electronic equipment during the exam (including phones and laptops to access ebooks), I will not expect detailed references to textual passages in your exam answers. Be able, however, to explain the basic positions and concepts, as presented in these texts, that we have focused on in class.

Good luck!