

YHU3297
Debate & Reasoning in Indian Philosophy
Semester 2, AY 2021-22

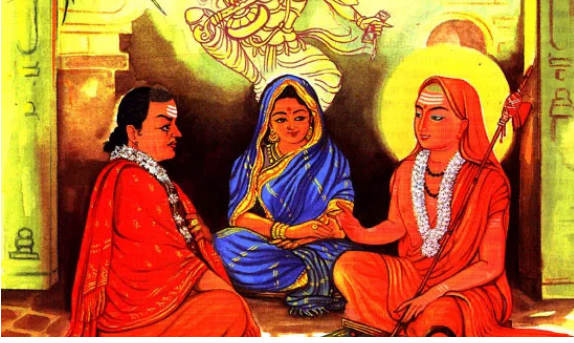


Image: Maṇḍana Mīśra & Śaṅkara debate, judged by Maṇḍana's wife, Ubhāya Bharati.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does good reasoning look like? What does it aim for? How should we argue with others? 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.

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.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

PRE-REQUISITES FOR THE COURSE

Students are recommended to have at least one philosophy course other than the PPT sequence.

COURSE MATERIALS

Most materials will be available through e-Reserves as articles. We will be reading and making heavy use of *The Nyāya-sūtra: Selections with Early Commentaries* by Matthew Dasti and Stephen Phillips (Hackett Publishing, 2017), so I recommend you purchase it. A copy is in our library and will be placed on reserve. A draft version of my book *Reason in an Uncertain World* (Oxford University Press, under contract) will be shared with you each week as optional reading. Please do not share it beyond this class.

COURSE ASSESSMENT BREAKDOWN

Participation 20%

Mini-papers 40% (20% each)

Final paper 40%

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

In this class, we will have two major kinds of assignments: interpretation and evaluation.

20% Participation

- *Discussion question.* Each class period, students will come to class prepared to raise a discussion question if called on, for credit.
- *Journal Club.* Each student will, once during the semester, share a piece of secondary literature (not already on the syllabus) which is helpful for understanding the week's topic.

30% Practice or "mini-" papers

- Students will write two short papers in which they take a position on an interpretive question (what the text is saying) or evaluative question (agree or disagree with what the text claims). These papers will be a maximum of 500 words (roughly two double spaced pages), and specific questions will be pre-assigned. All students must write one interpretive and one evaluative paper, though you will be given both options for each paper.

40% Final paper

- Your final paper may, like your practice paper, be interpretive or evaluative. Specific topics will be assigned, though you may choose your own with the permission of the instructor. Maximum of one additional source outside of the syllabus (the focus is not primarily research). The paper will be a minimum of 1000 words, maximum 1500.

Schedule of Topics, Preparatory Assignments, and Assessments

Note: The reading schedule may change depending on class progress. I will notify you by Canvas announcement if that is the case. Each week we will read primary source material along with secondary material. We will focus on Vātsyāyana's *bhāṣya* (NBh) on *Nyāyasūtra* (NS) and supplement it with sections from Uddyotakara's *Nyāyavārttika* (NV) and sometimes Vācaspati Miśra's *Nyāyavārttikatātparyāṭikā* (NVT), translated in Dasti & Phillips 2017 or my own work. For secondary material, we will read sections of Dasti & Phillips (2017) and an academic article or book chapter.

Unit 1: Introduction to Nyāya epistemology

In this unit, we'll lay the groundwork for early Nyāya epistemology and the interrelationship between argumentation and epistemology.

Week 1: General Introduction

- *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.6, 3.81-12
- Halbfass, Wilhelm. 'Darśana, Ānvīkṣikī, Philosophy,' in *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*. SUNY Press, 1988. 263-286.

Week 2: Introduction to Nyāya philosophy

- NS 1.1.1-2, NS 3,2.66-67
- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 8 (pp. 156-165)
- Phillips, Stephen. Chapter 1, *Epistemology in Classical India*. New York, Routledge, 2012.

Week 3: Introduction to the Ways of Knowing

- NS 1.1.3, NS 2.1.16-20

- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 1 (pp. 17-20), Chapter 2 (pp. 53-57)
- Mohanty, J. N. "A Fragment of the Indian Philosophical Tradition—Theory of Pramāṇa." *Philosophy East and West* 38.3 (1988): 251–260.

Unit 2: Two Ways of Knowing, Inference and Testimony

In this unit, we'll focus on two ways of knowing which are relevant for discussion and controversy.

Week 4: Inference

- NS 1.1.5,
- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 1 (pp. 28-34)
- Taber, John. (2004). "Is Indian Logic Nonmonotonic?" *Philosophy East and West*, 54 (2): 143–70.

Week 5: Pseudo-inference

- NS 1.2.4-8
- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 9 (pp.1 87-95)
- Gupta, Bina. (1980). "Are Hetvabhāṣas Formal Fallacies?" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (8):135-47.

Assignment: Mini-paper 1 due this week

Week 6: Testimony

- NS 1.1.7
- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 1 (pp. 35-37)
- Chakrabarti, Arindam. "Knowing from Words: Western and Indian Philosophical Analysis of Understanding and Testimony." *Telling As Letting Know*. B.K. Matilal and Arindam Chakrabarti, eds. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1994. 99-124.

Recess Week – No Classes

Unit 3: Controversy and Debate

In this unit, we'll consider how debate can resolve controversy and allay doubts in Nyāya philosophy.

Week 7: Doubt

- NS 1.1.23-31
- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 2 (pp.40-51)
- Davis, Lawrence. (1981) "Tarka in the Nyaya Theory of Inference." *Journal of Indian Philosophy*. (9):105-120.

Week 8: Rules for Debate, part 1

- NS 1.2.1-3
- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 9 (pp.177-179)
- Tripathi, Radhavallabh. "The Nature of Vāda." in *Vāda in Theory and Practice*. D.K. Printworld, 2021. (Kindle Edition)

Week 9: Rules for Debate, part 2

- NS 4.2.47-50
- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 8 (pp.170-172)
- Nicholson, Hugh. (2010). "The Shift from Agonistic to Non-Agonistic Debate in Early Nyāya." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (38):75-95.

Assignment: Mini-paper 2 due this week

Week 10: Fallacies, part 1 (*jāti, chala*)

- NS 1.2.12-18
- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 7 (pp.150-155), Chapter 9 (p. 195-96)
- Prets, Ernst. (2003). "Parley, Reason, and Rejoinder." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (31): 271-283.

Week 11: Fallacies, part 2 (*nigrahasthāna*)

- NS 1.2.19 5.2.1
- Dasti & Phillips Chapter 9 (pp.196-199)
- Todeschini, Alberto. (2010). "Twenty-Two Ways to Lose a Debate: A Gricean Look at the Nyāyasūtra's Points of Defeat." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (38): 49-74.

Unit 4: Concluding Thoughts

Week 12: Debate applied: Jayanta Bhaṭṭa

- Selections from Jayanta Bhaṭṭa. *Āgamaḍambara or Much Ado About Religion*. Trans. Csaba Dezső. Clay Sanskrit Library. New York: New York University Press, 2005. (PK3794 Cslj 2005, Yale-NUS College Library RBR)
- Kataoka, Kei. (2006). "Bhaṭṭa Jayanta on the purpose of Nyāya." *South Asian Classical Studies* (1):147-174.

Week 13: Student choice of reading

Reading Week – no assignments due
Final Papers due May 4 2021

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.

- **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, please ask, as I typically give them, rather than turning in late work.
- **Office hours.** I'm available for drop-ins, no appointment needed. You can schedule meetings using the online booking system. If you aren't able to find an open time, then please email.
- **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 when possible. You need not explain your reasons, but provide a medical or administrative excuse when appropriate.

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING STUDENT-FACULTY COMMUNICATION

Email & Questions: I try to respond to all emails within one business day at most. On weekends I am usually away from email. If you have not received a response, do feel free to email me again. I am happy for you to ask questions by email, but if you want to discuss your writing, it's best to stop into office hours.

Canvas Page: Each week's materials and instructions will be shared on Canvas modules. It is your responsibility to check Canvas on a regular basis (I will send emails when there are important, irregular, updates there.)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND PRIVACY

Our academic model encourages open and penetrating discussion of what can sometimes be challenging materials. Additionally, we seek to cultivate an intellectual space in which, as stated in the Faculty Statement on the Freedom of Expression, "there are no questions that cannot be asked, no answers that cannot be discussed and debated." This kind of intellectual exploration requires trust and privacy. Therefore, students may not record and/or distribute course discussions, lectures, lecture slides or handouts, readings, videos, or any course related materials without prior permission of the instructor.

This includes audio recording, video, transcription, and photography. Lectures and seminars that are delivered in-person, online, or as a pre-recorded videos should never be recorded or distributed beyond the course for which it was intended. Any notes which a student takes for their own learning and retention should not be shared beyond the Yale-NUS community. Students are encouraged to reflect upon and share their own learning experiences and ideas in whatever forum they wish. However, they should not share course content produced by their professors or their peers (e.g. a peer's essay, comments made in class, posts to a Canvas discussion thread) without prior permission through any channels including social media.

Important Notes: Violation of this policy is addressed in the student Code of Conduct and could result in disciplinary and/or legal consequences. As per Clause F2(a) of Policies Relating To Yale-NUS College Intellectual Property, copyright to an Authored Work shall be owned by the University Member who authored it. Authored Work could include syllabi, tests, examination scripts, study guides, lecture notes and teaching materials, including lectures recorded on audio and/or visual recordings.