

PHILOSOPHY 300

History of Indian Philosophy

Fall 2023

1st Mid-Term Assignment

Due Monday, October 9

All papers must be properly word processed or typed with 1" margins on the top, sides and bottom. Use double-spacing and no larger than 12pt font. Turn in by uploading to Laulima as either a Word file or pdf file.

Write a 5-6 page response to one of the following:

The Vision of the Upanishads

What is the vision of enlightenment, the quest for *moksha*, taught in the Upanishads? How is this expressed in the secret teaching Naciketas learns from Yama, the god of death, in the *Katha Upanishad*? How does the phrase ‘*tat tvam asi*’ in the *Chandogya Upanishad* sum up the vision of the Upanishads? What is meant by *karma*, and how does it pose the central problem that must be solved in attaining *moksha*? What is *yoga* and how does it lead to *moksha*? How does this focus on *moksha* mark a radical departure from the focus on *yajna* in the earlier *Vedas*? What do you think of this vision of the Upanishads?

The Vision of Jainism

How does the vision of *moksha* in Jainism both compare and contrast with the view of *moksha* in the Upanishads? How does the Jain notion of *karma* pose the problem that must be solved in order to attain *moksha*? What is the Jain path to liberation? What is the difference between the two sects of Jainism? What is meant by *ahimsa*, the most influential teaching of Jainism? What do you think of this teaching of *ahimsa* and the vision of Jainism?

The Vision of the Buddha

What are the Four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha? How might these four truths be explained in terms of a visit to a physician? How does the Buddhist notion of enlightenment, *nibbana* (SK: *nirvana*) compare and contrast with the notion of *moksha* in the Upanishads? Explain how the Buddhist central teaching of *paticcasamuppada* (Sk: *pratityasamutpada*) marks a departure from the central vision of the Upanishads? What is the point of the Buddha’s teaching in the *Fire Sermon*? What is the difference between the two interpretations of the *Fire Sermon* brought out in the film *The Buddha*? What do you think of vision of the Buddha?

Grading Rubric

1) Writing 20%

Grammar, spelling, composition, and style. Your essay should be well organized. There should be an introduction, development of a theme, and a conclusion.

2) Philosophical Content 50%

The essay should reflect an adequate understanding of the texts. Your exposition of the text should include *at least two quotations* from the primary text material. All quotes should be properly marked within the text and must include a reference to the text cited.

3) Commentary 30%

Your own thoughtful reflections on the topic.