

PHI 238 - 3 credits

## ASIAN PHILOSOPHIES

*time & venue*

Tue 2:00-4:40 PM in C-349

*instructor* Marcello Di Bello

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*office hrs* Tu 5:00-6:00 in C-365



### Who is this guy?

"Leisurely and contented, Happy and knowledgeable, Full of wit and humor, Exuberant with interest." His Sanskrit name is Nagasena, an eloquent speaker and debater. He was famous all over India for his preachings on the "hear no evil" maxim. The senses of hearing is one of the six sources through which mankind become aware of the world. He is often portrayed as scratching his ear, a gesture symbolizing the purification of the sense of hearing in the search for peace and quiet.

(Source: [www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net))

### What will I learn in this course?

The topic "Asian Philosophies" is vast and can hardly be surveyed in just one course. I decided to focus on Indian philosophy with an emphasis on Hindu and Buddhist thinkers. In this course, you will learn some of the history of Indian philosophy, especially its early beginnings, as well as read excerpts from key texts in the Hindu and Buddhist philosophical traditions. The reading of primary texts will be accompanied by other materials, such as textbook-style summaries, scholarly commentaries and podcasts. In this way, you will develop skills of both analysis and synthesis.

## Is there a textbook?

There is no textbook for this course. The course draws from different sources, specifically:

- ✦ History of Philosophy Without any Gaps: India (<https://historyofphilosophy.net/india>)
- ✦ S. Hamilton, *Indian Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford UP 2001
- ✦ S. Chatterjee and D. Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (7th edition), Rupa 2007
- ✦ N.J. Mohanti, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, Rowman & Littlefield 2000
- ✦ J. Ganeri, *Philosophy in Classical India*, Routledge 2001.
- ✦ J. Ganeri, *The Concealed Art of the Soul*, Oxford UP 2007
- ✦ S. Radhakrishnan and C.A. Moore (eds), *Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton UP 1957
- ✦ R. Calasso, *Ka*, Adelphi 1996

There is no need to buy any of these books, but of course you are welcome to. Copies of selected readings will be available to students at no cost.

## Does this course have a website?

Yes, it does. Readings and other course materials are available at

[www.marcellodibello.com/phi238/](http://www.marcellodibello.com/phi238/)

The schedule with topics to be covered each week is posted on the website. Deadlines and other important dates are posted on the website, as well. You should check the website regularly, at least once a week. *Blackboard will not be used.*

## How will I be graded?

Your final grade will depend on the following:

- |                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| ✦ philosophical diary             | 25% |
| ✦ presentation                    | 25% |
| ✦ midterm exam                    | 25% |
| ✦ final paper <u>or</u> oral exam | 25% |

**What is a philosophical diary?**

As the name indicates, a philosophical diary is a diary in which you write your own philosophical reflections on a regular basis. On the course website, you'll notice that for each week there is a section titled "How to prepare for this class." Read it carefully. It contains instructions on what to write in your philosophical diary. Make sure you clearly mark each entry in the diary with a date and a title. I will randomly collect diaries during the semester, so make sure your diary is always up-to-date. Your diary will also be the only aid to rely on during the midterm exam. Laptops, books, cellphones will not be allowed.

**What should I do for the presentation?**

During the first half of each class meeting, one or two students will give a presentation of the weekly readings and other course materials. It is up to you to decide what to do in the presentation. You can use slides or a handout to guide the class discussion. But you can also do other things, such as create a video you can show during class or make your classmates play a game. Be imaginative and creative! The only constraints are: (1) you should cover the topics, readings and course materials assigned for the week; and (2) you are responsible for at least 45 minutes of class activities.

**Should I write a final paper and also take the final exam?**

No. You have the option to write a final paper on a topic of your choice (7-10 pages) or take an oral exam with me (30 minutes). I will ask you a few questions about the course topics and you should answer them as precisely as you can.

**Will grades be curved?**

Grades will not be curved, but typically grades tend to be clustered around the C and B ranges with few students getting A's or D's.

**Is there a late submission policy?**

If you hand in your work late, you will *not* get credit for it. Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis if you can provide a well-documented reason for being late.

**Are there tutoring services for this course?**

The *Academic Center for Excellence* provides tutoring in the humanities, social sciences, and writing. Please visit their website at [www.lehman.edu/issp](http://www.lehman.edu/issp) or call 718-960-8175.

**I have a disability. Can you help me?**

Students with disabilities who may need classroom accommodations are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Disability Services. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services, Shuster Hall, Room 238, at 718-960-8441.