Course Catalogue Description:

Philosophies of India. Survey of the major philosophical schools of Indian philosophic development. Emphasizing the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, with consideration given to competing notions of the self, consciousness, the origin of human suffering, and the possibility of transcendence.

Course Description:

This is a course on the philosophies of India, focusing particularly on Hindu and early Buddhist thought. Philosophy in India is not only spiritual but intensely practical. Insight into the nature of reality, or of human consciousness, has profound consequences for the person who gains it. Knowledge, in India, is not so much a matter of knowing that something is true as it is a gnosis, an immediate contact with a reality beyond our ordinary conventional, waking awareness.

Westerners assume that a philosophical tradition so strongly inclined to mysticism would also tend to be naïve or simplistic. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, the Indian tradition is rich and complex and quite rigorous. Its concerns are similar enough in some respects to those of the Western Philosopher so that we in the West can appreciate their significance; at the same time, the development of philosophy in India has taken some very novel turns and is full of surprises.

For example, Consciousness Is! How can matter arise out of consciousness?
Matter is! How can consciousness arise out of matter? These questions display the fundamental difference between Indian views of man in the world and Western, rational-reductionistic views of the world and man. The first question exhibits the essence of philosophical development in the West. India gives us a Science of Man and consciousness out of which the world arises. The West provides a Science of the World out of which arises man and consciousness. The Indian Philosopher asks: “What does it mean to be conscious human being in this world?” The Western Philosopher, particularly with the emergence of modern science, asks: “What does this world of which we are conscious mean?” Both India and the West address three fundamental questions: (1) What is there? (2) How is it known? (3) Who are we who know it and how do we fit in? But, as revealed above the responses to the questions are distinctively different. The perspectives from which the queries and answers emerge are radically different. With these questions in mind, we will explore several major schools of Indian Philosophical development with an emphasis on their contributions to the Science of Man and Consciousness. The comparative philosophical framework will help us illuminate Indian contributions as well as enhance insight into our own perspectives and paradigms.

This course has no prerequisites other than passing the WPE. Because it is an advanced study class, a minimum of 20 pages of writing is required.

This course, like all philosophy courses, intends to improve your abilities to critically assess complex philosophical argumentation, to develop a reasoned framework for your own worldview as well as enhance your composition skills. It also intends to expose you to highly sophisticated schools of philosophical thought from other cultures.

However, this course is, most importantly, intended to help you find within yourself the attentivity, the sensitivity, and the skillful means, and the heart necessary to comprehend and incorporate useful elements from the major philosophical traditions of India. This course also endeavors to open your eyes and mind to the profound Comparative Philosophical process without which you cannot understand Indian Philosophy.

Since Indian culture and philosophy place a premium on learning how to learn as well as learning itself, a further objective of this course is to create an environment in which both levels of learning become simultaneously possible for you. Your sanity (mental concentration and even-mindedness) depends on the cultivation of learning how to learn as well as learning itself.

Assignments:
You will be expected to read each of the books assigned for the course. One take-home essay assignment will be given for each book. Each essay must be a minimum of 1500 words. You will be expected to undertake an in depth, critical analysis of the major philosophical themes in each book with a special emphasis on how the work responses to the three most fundamental philosophical questions cited above within the course description.

**Texts:**

*Freedom from the Known* by Krishnamurti  
*The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* translated by Georg Feuerstein  
*Advaita Vedanta* by Eliot Deutsch  
*Indian Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* by Sue Hamilton  
*Experience and Philosophy* by Franklin Merrell-Wolff

A recommended book is *Mahabharata: A Play Based Upon the Indian Classic Epic*. This book is currently out of print, but you can find copies from Web sources like Amazon.com. Since you will be viewing the play in class, having the book as backup might be quite helpful to some of you.

**Attendance:**

You are allowed a maximum of three absences. For each absence over three your final grade will be reduced by 5 points (5%). Special arrangements are possible for students who encounter extreme circumstances, e.g., death in the family, long-term illness, etc. However, it is your responsibility to notify me of these circumstances immediately. No after-the-fact explanations of serial absences will be accepted under any circumstances.

**Disability Accommodation:**

If you have a documented disability (visible or invisible) and require accommodation or assistance with assignments, attendance, note taking, etc., please tell me ASAP so that arrangements can be made.

**Preparation:**

You must keep up with the reading. Indian Philosophy can be very demanding of your time and attention. Most students find they need to read the material several times before they have understood it. After the first week there will be daily interrogations of randomly selected students on the reading material to
determine currency in preparation. Failure to be prepared will result in point deductions of 2 points per incident.

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Collaboration Policy:

You are free to work together on questions and essays outside of class. Be advised, that if multiple students’ (past and present) work exhibit striking similarities, they will be failed in the course. Use each other as a source of ideas, but do your writing by yourself. Plagiarism in any form from any source is not tolerated. It will result in failure in the course.

Form of Submitted Work:

Each essay must typed, double-spaced in 14-point type with one inch margins. Email submission of essays is acceptable only when you have provided compelling reasons. Email submissions must reach me before or on the due date. Please submit to the singprof@foothill.net email address. Email submissions must also be in 14-point type.

Due Dates and Late Policy:

Essays will be due on announced due date. Essays will be downgraded 10% for every late day.

Grading:

Essays will be graded on the basis of two primary criteria: Form and Content. Matters of form include grammar, spelling, punctuation, clarity, and organization. Matters of content include: Textual accuracy, thoroughness and overall quality of thought. If there are five writing assignments, each essay will be worth 20 points; if four assignments, each essay will be worth 25 points. Your final grade will be determined by the essay scores. Final letter grades are assigned on a standard scale: 92 and above = A, 90-91 = A-, 88-89 = B+, 82-87 = B, etc.

Writing Component:

This is an Advanced Study course. Hence, your writing will be evaluated and graded. Up to 5 points collectively will be deducted for writing errors in the essay. ESL students will be given some leeway on the first assignment. After that, the essays must be read, proofed, and corrected by someone who has mastered standard English. Failure to accomplish this will result in point deductions for writing errors.
Weekly Course Outline:

Week 1  Krishnamurti
Week 2  Krishnamurti
Week 3  Krishnamurti
Week 4  Krishnamurti
Week 5  Yoga Sutras
Week 6  Yoga Sutras
Week 7  Yoga Sutras
Week 8  Yoga Sutras
Week 9  Advaita Vedanta
Week 10 Advaita Vedanta
Week 11 Advaita Vedanta
Week 12 Advaita Vedanta
Week 13 Experience and Philosophy
Week 14 Experience and Philosophy
Week 15 Experience and Philosophy

Essays assignments will be announced at regular intervals, depending on how well you are handling the material and the class. Assignment announcements will be made approximately one week before the assignment is due.

Caveat:

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

EXERCISES IN DISCERNMENT OR SEEING IS FORGETTING THE NAME OF THE THING SEEN

AMIR’S FABLE

There is an old fable, which tells that Truth and Falsehood went for a swim together, leaving their clothes on shore. Falsehood coming out of the water first, puts on Truth’s clothes. Truth, being what it is, absolutely refused to wear Falsehood’s clothes, thus remained naked. Ever since then, Falsehood, appearing as Truth, has been accepted as
Truth, while Truth still
Awaits to be seen.

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CHUANG TZU’S TALE

At the Gorge of Lu, the great waterfall plunges for thousands of feet, its spray Visible for miles. In the churning waters below, no living creature can be seen. One day Confucius was standing at a distance from the pool’s edge, when he saw An old man being tossed about in the turbulent water. He called to his disciples And together they ran to rescue the victim. But by the time they reached the Water, the old man had come out onto the bank and was walking along, Singing to himself. Confucius hurried up to him. ‘You would have to be a Ghost to survive that,’ he said, ‘but you seem to be a man, instead. What Secret power do you have?’ ‘Nothing special,’ the old man replied. ‘I Began to learn while young, and grew up practicing it. Now I am certain Of success. I go down with the water and come up with water. I follow It and forget myself. I survive because I don’t struggle against the Water’s superior power. That’s all.’