



# Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

## Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

# Spiritual Living in Hindu Philosophies

Course Code	G_BATRSAL092
Credits	6
Period	P1
Course Level	200
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	dr. P.K. Bindlish
Examiner	dr. P.K. Bindlish
Teaching Staff	dr. P.K. Bindlish
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar

## Course Objective

### Introduction

Are diverse philosophies under Hinduism complementary, supplementary or entirely different? How do they make sense together towards our material and spiritual existence? The course discusses selected Hindu philosophies with an applied orientation towards spirituality.

The Hindu worldview led to diverse philosophical traditions. These traditions enjoy their distinct presence and at the same time, also take part in issues of inter-philosophical and/or multi-philosophical interest among them. The course introduces the Hindu philosophical systems (Darśana). It provides a background for reflection upon the philosophical unity that underlies all of them in theory as well as practice. It further explores how these different Darśanas (Hindu philosophies) make sense together towards a holistic spiritual existence in Hindu worldview. It comprises themes based on selected content from six major Vedic Darśanas: Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā-Vedānta. The course will also have discussions on some contemporary issues relevant to the society, such as lack of social cohesion (one of the main global risks in coming time) and reflection on Darśanas for one's own practice and development of self-awareness.

### General aim

The aim of the course is to provide the students with an understanding of the Hindu philosophical systems, their underlying unity, and their practical applications towards spirituality. By the end of the course, students will have developed an analytical insight into the different Darśanas and their relevance to contemporary society.

### Learning goals

The course aims to achieve the following learning goals:

#### Acquiring knowledge

Gaining knowledge of the Hindu philosophical systems (Darśanas), the conceptual knowledge on existential questions, the religious role, meaning and relevance of Darśanas towards spirituality.

#### Gaining insights

To promote analytical understanding of the darśanas and their positioning within other scriptures of Hinduism.

To explore the philosophical unity that underlies all Darśanas in theory and practice.

#### Informed reflection and evaluation

Develop an integrative framework for reflecting on contemporary issues using darśanas.

Compare ideas about reality and life in the Western context through informed judgements and conceptualisation.

Learning to develop discernment and intellectual humility when confronting the limits and contradictions in application to contemporary issues.

Develop academic skills, intellectual courage and the academic self-confidence needed to appreciate the Hindu

way of life.

Application of knowledge

Stimulate application of the insights through discussion and group assignments.

To examine the different Darśanas and their practical applications towards the development of self-awareness.

Applying darśanas to dealing with contemporary issues in Hindu society, such as social cohesion.

Practising communication

Developing skills in academic writing, presentation and discussion especially in working with peers through discussion and (peer) feedback.

To be able to communicate the newly acquired knowledge, insight and applications in the form of academically adequate writing and presentation.

Developing learning skills

Learning to deal intellectually with Hindu knowledge systems.

Learning to distinguish between different inter-Darśanas comparisons and interpretations in an analytical and self-reflective way.

## Course Content

Course topics

In this course we will therefore focus on the following themes:

Unit 1: Introduction to Hindu Philosophical Systems

Definition and scope of Hindu Philosophy

Overview of the six Vedic Darśanas (philosophical systems)

Main themes of these Darśanas

Epistemology and ontology in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika

Dualism and puruṣa-prakṛiti in Sāṃkhya

Self-realization and liberation in Yoga

Rituals and Vedic interpretation in Mīmāṃsā

Non-dualism and ultimate reality in Vedānta

Inter-philosophical and multi-philosophical issues

Unit 2: Sāṃkhya-Yoga Darśanas

Sāṃkhya and Yoga: concepts, principles, and practices

Relationship between Sāṃkhya and Yoga Darśanas

Applied orientation towards spirituality: practical aspects of Sāṃkhya and Yoga

Unit 3: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Darśanas

Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika: concepts, principles, and practices

Relationship between Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika Darśanas

Applied orientation towards spirituality: practical aspects of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika

Unit 4: Mīmāṃsā-Vedānta Darśanas

Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta: concepts, principles, and practices

Relationship between Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta Darśanas

Applied orientation towards spirituality: practical aspects of Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta

Unit 5: Philosophical Unity among Darśanas

Philosophical unity underlying all Darśanas in theory and practice

Ways to synthesize and integrate diverse Darśanas

Relevance of philosophical unity towards holistic spiritual existence

Unit 6: Contemporary Issues and Reflections on Darśanas

Discussion on some contemporary issues relevant to the society

Reflection on Darśanas for one's own practice and development of self-awareness

Application of Darśanas towards spirituality and daily life

## Additional Information Teaching Methods

### Methodology

The course will use a blended approach to learning, consisting of synchronous and asynchronous elements. It will include a combination of lectures, discussions, group activities, debates, reading texts, interpretation of text, case studies, reflective writing assignments. Participants will be encouraged to engage in critical thinking, analysis, and reflection in order to develop a deeper understanding of Hindu philosophies. They are expected to do self-study, participate actively in class discussions, contribute to group activities, demonstrate their understanding of concepts through presentations and a term paper.

### Method of Assessment

#### Assessment

Flip learning Classroom presentations by the participant (20%). - In these flip learning presentations the participant reveals their reflective insight to various specific aspects of Hindu philosophies. The participant can also opt for a write-up of about 600 words giving personal reflections on a particular topic related to the content of this module.

The paper (80%). The paper is supposed to discuss a subject of personal interest to the participant and should include some independent research in libraries and / or online. In the paper the participant shows academic writing skills and the ability to make a deeper investigation independently of a particular aspect of Hindu philosophies. The size of the paper should be within 3000 words.

### Literature

The following are some of the texts that will be used as primary and secondary sources for this course. Additional articles, videos, and online resources will also be provided to supplement the course materials.

Bijlert, V.A. van. Nyaya Sutra. Unpublished excerpts

Epistemology in Classical Indian Philosophy - <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-india/>

Dasti, M., & Phillips, S. (2017). The Nyaya-sutra: Selections with early commentaries. Hackett Publishing.

Holloway, M. R. (1963). " Indian Philosophy: A Critical Survey," by Chandradhar Sharma.

Hamilton, S. (2001). Indian philosophy: A very short introduction (Vol. 48). OUP Oxford.

Joshi, K.L. (Eds), (2015) Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha (English Translation) by EB Cowell and AE Gough, Parimal Publications

Larson, G. J. (2001). Classical Sāṃkhya: An interpretation of its history and meaning. Motilal Banarsidass Publ..

Reference scriptures (Hindu Texts):

Original texts of Vedic Darśanas, their Hindi and English translations

Vātsyāyana, P. (1984). The Nyāya-sūtras of Gauṭama.

Thibaut, G. (1964). The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyana (With the Commentary of Śaṅkara) The Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana.

Useful Reading (Optional, most of them are common to all course in this minor):

Aiyer, S. (1935). Evolution of Hindu moral ideals. Calcutta University.  
<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.237098>

Bartley, C. (2015). An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Hindu and Buddhist Ideas from Original Sources. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Bhaskarananda, S. (1994). The essentials of Hinduism: A comprehensive overview of the world's oldest religion. Viveka Press.

Bijlert, V. A. van. A sociological model of Hinduism. Unpublished syllabus

Board of Trustees (1916). Sanātana Dharma: An Elementary Text-book of Hindu Religion and Ethics., Central Hindu College. (<https://archive.org/details/dli.csl.8138>)

Chatterjee, S., & Datta, D. (2016). An introduction to Indian philosophy. Motilal Banarsidass.

Embree, A. T., & de Bary, W. T. (Eds.). (2011). The Hindu tradition: Readings in oriental thought. Vintage.

Flood, G. (Ed.). (2008). The blackwell companion to Hinduism. John Wiley & Sons.

Flood, G. D. (1996). An introduction to Hinduism. Cambridge University Press.

Frazier, J. (2017). Hindu worldviews: theories of self, ritual and reality. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Klostermaier, K. K. (2007). A survey of Hinduism. Suny Press.

Knott, K. (2016). Hinduism: A very short introduction (Vol. 5). Oxford University Press.

Radhakrishnan, S. (1927). The Hindu view of life.

## Additional Information Target Audience

This module is part of the Minor Hindu Spirituality. Religion and Society.

In addition to the students who ave opted for the minor(s) in which this course is included, students from following discipline may find this course useful:

- Religious studies & Theology
- Psychology
- Business
- Students who have followed the previous modules of the Minor on Buddhism, Yoga and Spirituality or related minor(s)

## Explanation Canvas

- Some reading material which is free from copyrights will be made available through Canvas.
- The students are encouraged to use the discussion forum of Canvas for posing questions and for interaction with the teacher and with each other.
- Presentations must be uploaded on the Canvas before presenting in the class.

## Recommended background knowledge

It may help to study some introduction to Hinduism.