Indian Philosophy

This course is an introduction to Indian philosophy. Questions to be pursued include: What is the self? How is the self individuated (or not), and (how) does it persist? What are the obstacles to knowledge, both of self and world, and what are the means by which knowledge may be gained? What is the relationship between understanding the self, on the one hand, and right action and living well, on the other?

We will begin with (1) some principal Upanisads and the Bhagvada Gita, and then move to (2) some early Buddhist texts that challenge the authority of this tradition. After this, we will engage more fully with (3) the orthodox schools of classical Indian philosophy, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva-Mimamsa, and Vedanta, and, finally, (4) the founding text of Mahayana Buddhism, Nagarjuna’s Middle Way.

Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30-4:45