

Philosophy of Life: Perspectives from the Upaniṣads

Programme(s) in which it is offered: M.A Sanskrit

Course Category: Core	Schedule of Offering: Odd
Course Credit Structure: 3	Course Code: PS521
Total Number of Hours: 3	Contact Hours Per Week: 3
Lecture: 3	Tutorial: 0
Practical: 0	Medium of Instruction: English/Sanskrit
Date of Revision: 07/01/2021	Skill Focus: Employability/Life Skills
Short Name of the Course: POL	Course Stream (Only for Minor Courses):
Grading Method: Regular	Repeatable: Credit
Course Level: Intermediate	

Course Description

This is a core course for all students of the regular M.A Sanskrit programme. It is part of the students' training in philosophical literature in Sanskrit (the other course being Indic Philosophy: Foundational Principles) as part of their degree. In this course, the students will get an opportunity to speculate about the most general questions about life and examine what the Upaniṣads have to say about those questions.

Course Introduction

In our life, it can be observed that all actions we take are for our happiness alone. Whatever we may pursue, desire, or reject, it is only for the sake of our happiness. But we find that after pursuing all objects of our desires, and even gaining them, we are still not happy. If this is the case, what should our mode of living be? How should we live our lives, to be fully happy? Is this even possible? Many philosophies claiming to answer this question have come in and out of fashion since human society began. But the question still remains a mystery. Is there really a way to remain happy in life? The ancient Vedic texts called the Upaniṣads can give us a new perspective on answering such questions. In this course, we inquire into their philosophy based on the teachings from one of the principal Upaniṣads, commented on by Ādiśaṅkarācārya Bhagavān, entitled Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad, about which Gandhi has said: "If all the Upaniṣads and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes, and if only the first verse in the Īśopaniṣad were left in the memory of the Hindus, Hinduism would live for ever." With this Upaniṣad, and help from parts of several other Upaniṣads, we ask the question: What is that life like, which is lived according to the Upaniṣads?

Course Objective

1. To understand the general discourse surrounding the question of "meaning" in life.
2. To familiarize the students with the basic tenets and goal of Upaniṣadic philosophy.
3. To inquire into 21st century life from the perspective of the Upaniṣads, and to assess their value in helping a modern person to live in today's society.

4. To understand the importance of the values prioritized in the Upaniṣads for our lives today, such as jñāna , vairāgya, and karma.

Course Outcome

1. The students will possess a broad understanding of the central concepts of upaniṣads
2. The students will be familiar with the discursive style of bhāṣya literature
3. The students will have in depth understanding of the contents of the Īśāvāsyopaniṣad.
4. The students will acquire the ability to apply the upaniṣadic concepts to find answers to the philosophical questions about life.

PO-CO Mapping

PO-CO Mapping Matrix

CO/PO Mapping	PO1	PO2	PO3	PO4	PO5	PO6	PO7	PO8
CO1	✓	✓						
CO2			✓				✓	
CO3		✓	✓	✓				
CO4					✓			✓

Prerequisites and other constraints

None

Pedagogy

The lectures will be based on reading material mentioned above. The students are expected to go through the material before coming to class. As this is a Master's-level course, students must participate in discussion and critical analysis as much as possible. Since the course deals with existential issues much emphasis is placed on self-reflection. Assignments will encourage students to propose their own ideas on how to implement the philosophy of life espoused in the Upaniṣads for themselves.

Suggested Reading:

- "Philosophy and Life" by Pandit Shuklaji in Indian Philosophy by Pandit Shuklaji, Trans. by K.K. Dixit. L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, 1977.
- Īśāvāsyopaniṣad with the commentary of Śaṅkara Śrī Śaṅkarācārya in Sanskrit along with the commentary ānandagirīyam , Shri Dakshinamurti Math Prakashana, Varanasi
- Vedantasara,Chaukhamba krishnadas Academy,Varanasi,Krishnadas Sanskrit Series-166
- Vedantaparibhasha, Shri Dakshinamurti Math Prakashana, Varanasi
- An Introduction to Indian Philosophy,Motilal Banarasidas,2015

Evaluation Pattern

Evaluation Matrix

	Component Type	Weightage Percentage	Total Marks	Tentative Dates	Course Outcome Mapping
Continuous Internal	Assignments	15%	15	At the end	1,2,3,4

Assessment (CIA) Components*				of every module	
	Mid-term Exam	20%	50	As per university schedule	1,4
	Test	15%	15	Due on last day of the classes	1,2,3,4
	CIA Marks	50%	80		
ESE		50%	100	As per university schedule	2,3

Module Sessions

Module 1: Introduction

(3 hours)

Introduction to Philosophy - Definitions of Life - Meaning of life: - Puruṣārtha - Approaches to Life

Reading:

- "Philosophy and Life" by Pandit Shuklaji in Indian Philosophy by Pandit Shuklaji, Trans. by K.K. Dixit. L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, 1977.

Module 2: Introduction to Upaniṣadic Thought

(9 hours)

Upaniṣads and their place in Indic Knowledge Systems - Common theme of the Upaniṣads - Central concepts in the Upaniṣads and Advaita-Vedanta : Brahman, Atman, Jīva, Īśvara, Jagat, Karma, Mokṣa, avidya

Reading:

- a) An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, Motilal Banarasidas, 2015
- b) Vedanta Paribhasha, Shri Dakshinamurti Math Prakashana, Varanasi
- c) Vedantasara, Chaukhamba krishnadas Academy, Varanasi, Krishnadas Sanskrit Series 166

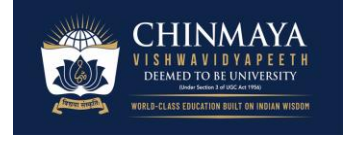
Module 3: Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad

(30 hours)

Mantra 1: Jñāna as ultimate teaching, Non-covetousness as a virtue - Mantra 2: Karma as teaching for those not yet ready for jñāna, Karma theory, Significance of doing one's duty - Mantra 3: Consequence of ignorance, Suicide - Mantras 4-5: Nature of the Self, Ineffability - Mantras 6-7: Result of knowledge of the Self, Mokṣa - Mantra 8: Nature of Brahman, Self as Brahman - Mantra 9-14: Avidyā and the Manifest, Vidyā and the Unmanifest, Their roles in life - Mantras 15-18: Prayer to the Gods for liberation, Giving up the sense of ownership of action (kartṛtva)

Readings

Version No:
Approval Date: 0



- a) Īśāvāsyopaniṣad with the commentary of Śaṅkara Śrī Śaṅkarācārya in Sanskrit along with the commentary ānandagirīyam , Shri Dakshinamurti Math Prakashana, Varanasi, advaitagrantharatnamañjūṣā

Module 4: Conclusion

(3 hours)