

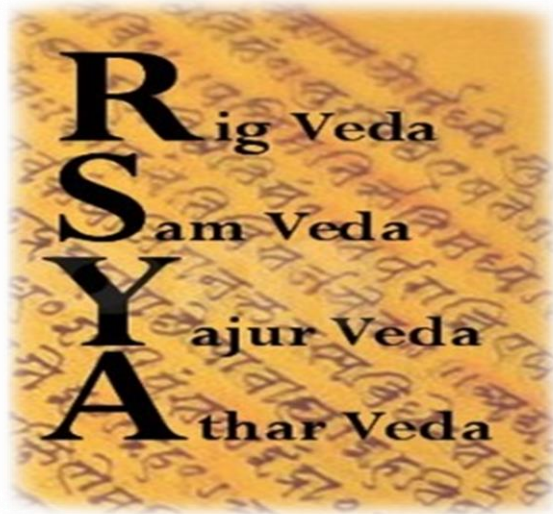
**Nālandā**  
UNIVERSITY

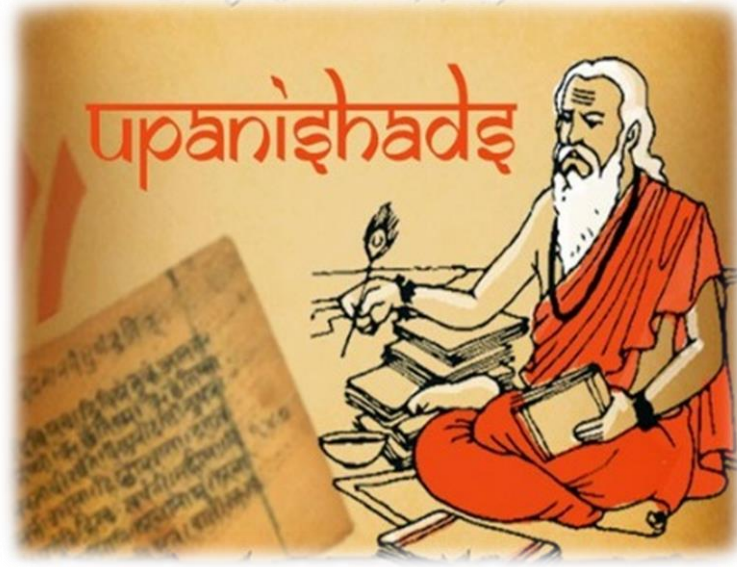
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## MASTER'S IN HINDU STUDIES (SANĀTANA)

Conceptualised and configured by

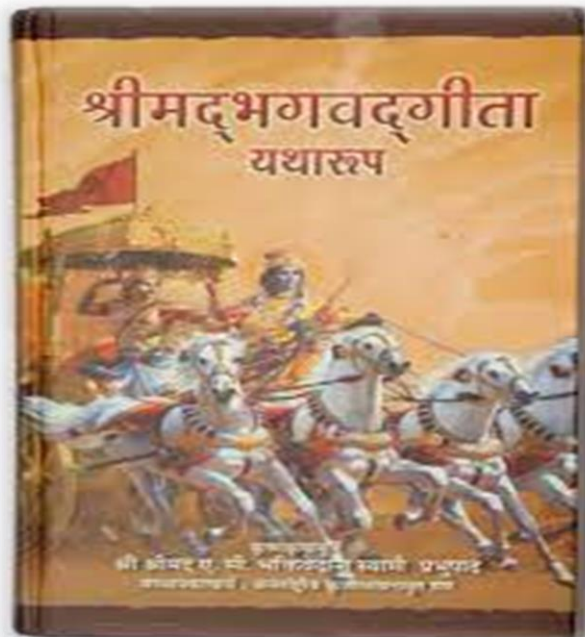
**Prof. Sunaina Singh**  
Vice Chancellor





एतानि भद्रा कलश क्रियाम

(Rgveda X.32.9)



## MASTERS IN HINDU STUDIES (SANĀTANA)

Over the millennium, the ancient seers, saints living across the river Sindhu made intuitive realisation of the eternal spiritual truth (*satya*). They visualised the core principles which governs the world causing material as well as spiritual progress of every living being known as *dharma*.

जगतःस्थितिकारणप्राणिनांसाक्षात्अभ्युदयनिःश्रेयसहेतुर्यः स धर्मः ।

– (Śaṅkarācārya in his commentary on Bhagavadgītā)

The core and eternal principles known as the *Sanātana dharma*, the mighty edifice of the Indian civilisation is manifested and transmitted both orally and textually within a variety of knowledge traditions and practices. The study of such rich oral as well as textual traditions and practices is the kernel of Hindu study. Different streams of the Hindu studies are like the branches of a single living tree of Indian culture, thought, ritual, and spirituality.

The course has been envisioned, designed and structured by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Sunaina Singh. It is uniquely designed to grasp the rich spiritual as well as intellectual system of the Hindus - *a distinctively interdisciplinary system where the textual and the oral, the verbal and the visual, the scientific and the metaphysical, the transcendental and the functional are interlocked as parts of a whole*. (Kapila Vatsyayana in *Kalātattvakośa*)

### **Mandate**

The two-year full-time residential M.A. programme in Hindu Studies will

- Attempt to retrieve the resource pool of knowledge on Hindu dharma and its spiritual traditions.
- Provide an overview of spiritual Hindu literatures and basic tenets therein.
- Introduce the major and minor texts along with select fundamental commentaries.
- Provide an opportunity to develop the specialization in any stream of Sanātana Hindu Studies.
- Foreground the relevance of the Sanātana Hindu Studies in the contemporary changing world order.

### **Outcome of the Programme**

A student with a MA degree in Hindu Studies (Sanātana) shall –

Develop a good understanding of foundational principles underlying Hindu spiritual traditions and culture.

### **Eligibility criteria for the programme for Indian and International students**

Minimum criteria are 55% or 2.2/4.0 GPA or equivalent Grade Point Average (GPA) in Undergraduate Degree.

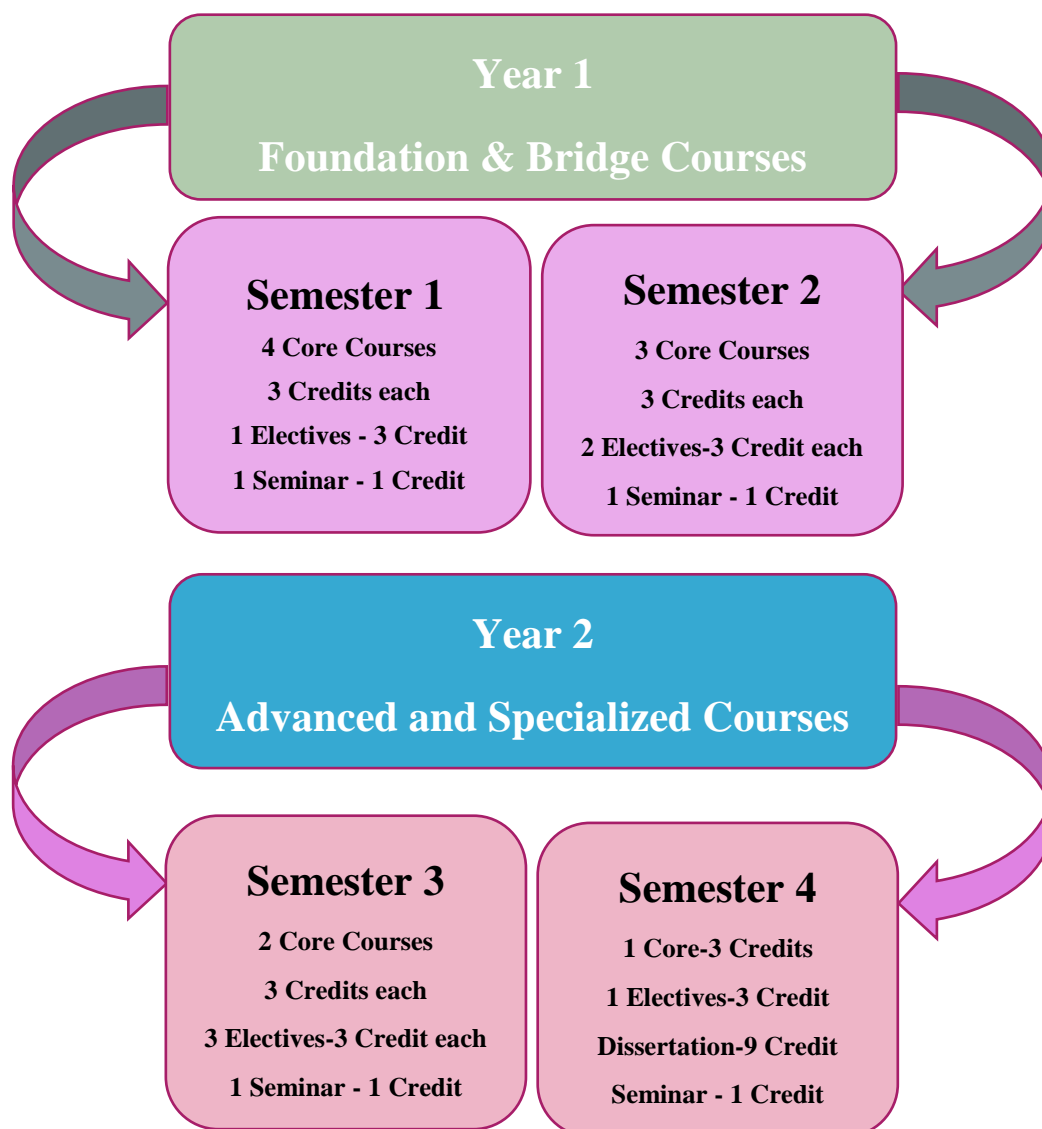
Students from any stream i.e., Humanities/Sciences/Engineering/Management/Law etc. can apply for the programme. Age no bar. The students have to submit the followings-

1. Self-Introduction/Bio-Note Statement (Not more than 250 words)
2. Statement of Purpose (SoP)
  - Why do you want to study at Nalanda University (100 words)
  - The reasons for choosing the programme (300 – 500 words)
3. Proof of proficiency in English is required for students coming from non-English speaking countries/medium. TOEFL/IELTS or any other standard certification in English. The candidate having full-time degree-level course entirely taught and assessed in English need not submit any certificate.

- Full-time residential programme with hybrid mode of teaching
- English as the medium of instruction
- Age no bar; Open for students/professionals from any fields.
- Fee as per other MA programmes

## Course Requirements

### Structure of Master's Degree: 64 Credits



Nalanda University has a common course structure across all its Schools. The courses are categorized into core, elective, and seminar courses. Additionally, each School has a dissertation component in the 4th Semester. The broad structure of each semester is given above. The MA programme has a total of 64 credits. Students are required to complete 16 credits per semester and submit a dissertation towards the fulfilment of a Master's degree. The MA dissertation must be supervised and approved by a regular faculty. The students may accumulate additional credits to their existing bank of credits as per University rules.

## Courses

- Introduction to the Vedas: Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, and Atharvaveda
- Introduction to Major & Minor Upaniṣads
- Introduction to Itihāsa texts: The Rāmāyaṇa & the Mahābhārata
- Introduction to Purāṇa texts: Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and Agni Purāṇa
- Ethics in Hindu Philosophy: Puruṣārthas, Āśramas, Varṇas
- Fundamentals of Hindu Philosophy: Six Darśanas Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā & Vedānta
- The Bhagavadgītā: the concept of Dharma, the path of Knowledge, devotion, and the idea of sthitaprajña
- Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
- The Yogasūtra of Patañjali: Theory and Practice
- Studying the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharatamuni
- Basic Tenets of Major Upaniṣads: Chāndogya Upaniṣad & Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad
- Philosophy of Language: Introduction to Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya and Bhartṛhari Vākyapadīya
- Study of Pañcatantra
- Poets & Philosophers of highest awakening
- Capsules of Knowledge: Sūtra, Vārtika & Bhāṣya (Commentaries)
- Study of Smṛti texts: The Yājñavalkya Smṛti
- The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya
- Study of Vedānta Philosophy with Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujacārya, Madhvācārya and Sadānanda
- Select Major Thinkers of Ancient India: Brahmagupta, Āryabhaṭṭa, Varāhamihira Bhāskara, Bāṇabhaṭṭa
- Nāgārjuna and the concept of Śūnya
- Mastering Sanskrit Language
- Seminar Course
- Dissertation



## COURSES FOR THE PROGRAMME

### First Semester: Foundation Course

#### Core (4)

- Introduction to the Vedas: Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, and Atharvaveda
- Introduction to Major & Minor Upaniṣads
- Introduction to Itihāsa texts: The Rāmāyaṇa & the Mahābhārata
- Introduction to Purāṇa texts: Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and Agni Purāṇa

#### Elective (1)

- Mastering Sanskrit Language, Level-1
- Ethics in Hindu Philosophy: Puruṣārthas, Āśramas, Varṇas

#### Seminar Course

### Second Semester: Bridge Course

#### Core (3)

- Fundamentals of Hindu Philosophy: Six Darśanas Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā & Vedānta
- The Bhagavadgītā: the concept of dharma, the path of Knowledge, devotion, and the idea of sthitaprajña
- Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa

#### Electives (2)

- Mastering Sanskrit Language, Level-2
- The Yogasūtra of Patañjali: Theory and Practice
- Studying the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharatamuni

#### Seminar Course

### **Third Semester (Advanced Course)**

#### **Core (2)**

- Basic Tenets of Major Upaniṣads: Chāndogya Upaniṣad & Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad
- Capsules of Knowledge: Sūtra, Vārtika & Bhāṣya (Commentaries)

#### **Electives (3)**

- Philosophy of Language: Introduction to Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya and Bhartṛhari Vākyapadīya
- Study of Vedānta Philosophy with Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujacārya, Madhvācārya and Sadānanda
- Study of Pañcatantra
- Poets & Philosophers of highest awakening

### **Fourth Semester (Specialised Course)**

#### **Core (1)**

- Select Major Thinkers of Ancient India: Brahmagupta, Āryabhaṭṭa, Varāhamihira Bhāskara, Bāṇabhaṭṭa

#### **Elective (1)**

- Nāgārjuna and the concept of Śūnya
- Study of Smṛti texts: The Yājñavalkya Smṛti
- The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya

#### **Dissertation**



## Course Descriptions

### ❖ **Introduction to the Vedas: Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, and Atharvaveda**

The Vedas are the primeval source of knowledge visualised by ṛṣis (seers). The hymns of the Vedas envelop multi-layered meaning, connotation, and concepts fundamental for Hindus intellectual trajectories. They are in fact the knowledge texts and source of philosophy, spiritual traditions, and culture of the Hindus.

The course primarily aims to provide students a basic understanding of all the four Vedas, their internal structure, different recitation methods, and themes therein. The course also sweeps over a close reading of some of the important hymns like Nāsadiya (the hymn of creation) Hiraṅgarbha (the hymn of golden womb), Puruṣa (the hymn of primeval man) Asyavāmīya and Vāk (the hymn of divine speech).

### ❖ **Introduction to Major & Minor Upaniṣads**

Upaniṣads are as a term given to a cluster of texts in which a disciple sits near a teacher to understand the hidden and mystic reality of the world. In this way, Upaniṣads are the knowledge of the absolute reality (*brahma-vidyā*) and epitome of Hindu spiritual tradition. They are the culmination of Hindu thought about the world and their creation. The course aims to provide students an overview of Upaniṣads, history, classification into major as well as minor, fundamental doctrines, and their significance.

### ❖ **Introduction to Itihāsa: The Rāmāyaṇa & the Mahābhārata**

Indic tradition perceives *itihāsa* as an event of earlier times, conjoined with a story with demonstration of the four *puruṣārthas*, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. In this framework, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* are classified as *itihāsa grantha*. This course intends to explore ‘what is itihāsa in the Indian context and in contrast to Modern History’. Every civilization develops its own pattern to carry forward its eternal values. India developed traditions of *itihāsa*, which were essentially a grand narrative and comprehensive plan for human life. The course primarily aims to understand and explain early Indian attitudes towards the past through studying some of the sections of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

### ❖ **Introduction to Purāṇa texts: Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and Agni Purāṇa**

Traditionally, the Purāṇas along with Itihāsa are regarded as the explanatory literature of the Vedas. The real and hidden meaning of the Vedas should be explored through these two classes of literature – *itihāsapurāṇābhyām vedām samupabṛmhayet*. With its distinctive narrative style of *Pañcalakṣaṇas* – *sarga*, *pratisarga*, *vaṁśa*, *vaṁśānucarita*, *manvantara* - Purāṇas communicates the same ontological and epistemological concerns as the Vedas and Upaniṣads provide. They are also relevant for the understanding of fundamental principles of the Hindu art. The course aims to provide an overview of Purāṇas, its history, essential characteristics, and their significance. The course also dwells upon close reading of some relevant sections of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and the Agni Purāṇa.

### ❖ **Ethics in Hindu Philosophy: Puruṣārthas, Āśramas, Varṇas**

Every Hindu philosopher primarily aims to explain the visible world and their connection to transcendental reality. Explaining the visible world, they also chart out the basics of human ethical values. Ethical values like *ahimsā*, *dharma*, *satya*, *asteya*, *śauca*, and *indriya-nigraha* are manifested through the framework of *puruṣārtha*, *varṇāśrama*. The ethical values make Hindu philosophy a synthesis of pluralistic society and fundamental reality of the cosmos. The course is an attempt to bring the ethical and humanistic elements expressed in Hindu Philosophies with emphasis on ethical values, the philosophical exposition of *puruṣārtha* and *varṇāśrama* system.

### ❖ **Fundamentals of Hindu Philosophy: Six Darśanas Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā & Vedānta**

The course aims to familiarise students about the basic fundamentals of six Hindu philosophical traditions, namely, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā & Vedānta. The course would provide the history of their development and introduce the foundational texts of each school with major philosophical principles, epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology.

### ❖ **The Bhagavadgītā: the concept of Dharma, the path of Knowledge, devotion, and the idea of sthitaprajña**

The text of *Bhagavadgītā* occupies the central place in Hindu culture. Hindu metaphysics, epistemology, ontology, ethics – all are interwoven in it. The purpose of *Bhagavadgītā* is to provide the meaning of *dharma*, to expound the path of *jñāna* (knowledge), *karma* (action) and *bhakti* (devotion). All the three paths should be

followed for the holistic development of a man. The idea of *sthitaprajña* is one of the central themes of *Bhagavadgītā*. A person whose knowledge is true, who performs action without desiring fruit, and who constantly meditates on God attains the state of *sthitaprajña*. The course aims a close reading of the text of the *Bhagavadgītā* and provide students the concept of *dharma*, the path of *jñāna* (knowledge), *karma* (action), *bhakti* (devotion), and the idea of *sthitaprajña*.

#### ❖ **Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa**

Indic tradition conceives *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki as an *itihāsa grantha* portraying the life of Rāma in seven *kāṇḍas* comprising 24000 verses. Hindu cultural history perceives *Rāmāyaṇa*, an ornate poem as the first *kāvya* (epic). It is also known as *caturviṃśatisāhaśrī-Saṁhitā*. Encapsulating the life of kings who led a spiritual life, the Ramayana becomes exemplification of *puruṣārtha vidyās* which stood for comprehensive plan of human life. The course aims to provide a close reading of the first *kāṇḍas* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* to introduce students about its history, development, and important themes.

#### ❖ **The Yogasūtra of Patañjali: Theory and Practice**

Yoga is one of ancient tradition of India and Patañjali (150 BC) codified it into 196 *Yogasūtra* classified in four sections namely, *Sādhana Pāda*, *Samādhi Pāda*, *Vibhūti Pāda*, and *Kaivliya Pāda*. It is the authoritative text on Yoga doctrine and practice. The course offers a detailed study of *Yogasūtra* and the fundamental concepts, and how it has developed over the millennia.

#### ❖ **Studying the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharatamuni**

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharatamuni deals with the rules of performative arts of Hindus. In fact, it is the Ur-text of Hindu performative arts. The text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is codified between second century BC to second century AD. The text is divided into thirty-six chapters in a sequential order. Bharatamuni arranged the whole structure of the text from the point of view of artistic experience, the artistic content, the modes of expression through word, sound, gesture, dress, movement, and speech.

The course intends to provide an overview of the history and retrieval of *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It also sweeps over the important themes like meaning of *nāṭya* (drama), critic of *anukaraṇa*, concept of *rasa*, *bhāva*, *abhinaya*, *vṛtti*, and *pravṛtti*.

#### ❖ **Basic Tenets of Major Upaniṣads: Chāndogya Upaniṣad & Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad**

Upaniṣads are as a term given to a cluster of texts in which a disciple sits near a teacher to understand the hidden and mystic reality of the world. In this way, Upaniṣads are the knowledge of the absolute reality (*brahma-vidyā*) and epitome of Hindu spiritual tradition. They are the culmination of Hindu thought about the world and their creation. The course aims to provide students some of the important sections of *Chāndogya* & *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and the fundamental doctrines explained therein.

#### ❖ **Philosophy of Language: Introduction to Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya and Bhartṛhari Vākyapadīya**

Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* and Bhartṛhari *Vākyapadīya* are the epitomes of Hindu's philosophy of language. Both texts are rudiments of the doctrine of *śabda-brahman* (Word as Supreme Reality). The *Ṛgveda* describes *śabda* as the active power of *brahman*. It is termed as *Vāk* or *Prajāpati* also. Foregrounding in earlier traditions, Patañjali and Bhartṛhari in their treatises philosophically explained that how *śabda* is central to all worldly activities and transcends the world. They expound *śabda* as *brahman*, nature of word-sentences, and the idea of integral nature of sentence. The course primary aims to do a close study of the issues described in the first *āhnika* (chapter) of Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* and first *Kāṇḍa* of Bhartṛhari *Vākyapadīya* to aware students about the meaning of *śāstra*, the definition of *śabda*, methodology, and the purpose.

#### ❖ **Study of Pañcatantra**

The *Pañcatantra* - a collection of interwoven animal fables containing metaphors and multilayered meanings. It is basically a treatise on *Nītiśāstra*, the conduct of life. The verses shaping the human life is the real character of the *Pañcatantra*. The *Pañcatantra* contains five parts, namely, *Mitra-bheda*, *Mitra-lābha*, *Kākolūkīya*, *Labdhapraṇāśa*, and

Aparīkṣitakāraka. The peculiarity of the structure of each part is that it opens with a main story interconnected with various substories.

The course aims to provide students the history of Pañcatantra, its, content, various characters, and the methodology of framing stories.

#### ❖ **Poets & Philosophers of highest awakening**

Hindu life, thought, and culture have been imbedded in the epics, dramas, philosophy, devotional poetry, and folk tales. The Upaniṣads (crux of the Vedas), great poets like Vālmīki, Vyāsa, Kālidāsa, Māgha, Bhāravi, Śrī Harṣa, Bhāsa, Śūdraka & Viśākhadatta, & philosophers like Gautama, Kaṇāda, Kapila, Patañjali, Jaminī, Bādarāyṇa, and many more inspired the life of Hindus and their value system. The course aims to study some of the portions of the texts of selected poets and philosophers of highest awakening.

#### ❖ **Capsules of Knowledge: Sūtra, Vārtika & Bhāṣya (Commentaries)**

Texts of Indian knowledge traditions are embedded in form of *sūtra*, *vārtika*, and *bhāṣya* termed as capsules of knowledge. Each system of Indian knowledge has passed through these three stages of development. A seer (*ṛṣi*) gives utterance to his vision of reality, known as *sūtra*- the first stage. Then, the second stage of systematization of a stream or system is done in which the original sutras are defined and explained. A third stage of further elaboration comes in which implications, applications, removing ambiguities, and addition are done. The next stage in form of criticism of other views, reconstruction of own views is also visible.

The course primarily intends to provide students an overview of the development of Indic knowledge systems through the capsules of knowledge, namely *sūtra*, *vārtika* & *bhāṣya*.

#### ❖ **Study of Smṛti texts: The Yājñavalkya Smṛti**

The entire intellectual trajectories of the Hindus can be classified in two divisions, *śruti* and *smṛti*. The literal meaning of *smṛti* is memory or recollection of what was earlier cognized. *Smṛtis* works are the recorded recollections of *śruti* (Vedas) preserved the tradition without any change, while *smṛtis* preserved a socially constructed tradition that was ever responsive to the demands of time and space. Smṛtis are the source of Hindu dharma, their material, moral and spiritual edification. Manu, Atri, Viṣṇu, Hārīta,

Yājñavalkya, Uaśanas, Aṅgiras, Yama, Āpastamba, saṁvarta, Kātyāyana, Bṛhaspati, Parāśara, vyāsa, Likhita, dakṣa, Gautama, Śātātapa and Vaśiṣṭha have codified the *smṛtis*. Among them *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* is significant and authoritative. It has three sections on *ācāra*, *vyavahāra*, and *prāyaścita*.

The course aims to close study of some of sections of the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* and also undertake a comparative study with other important *smṛtis*.

#### ❖ The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya

The *Arthaśāstra* - a treatise on science of administration and statecraft of early India - was composed by Kauṭilya. In the very beginning of his *Arthaśāstra*, Kauṭilya mentions that it is a compendium of almost all the *Arthaśāstras* that have been composed by earlier thinkers – *prthivyā lābhe pālāne ca yāvanyarthasāstrāṇi pūrvācāryaiḥ prasthāpitāni prāyaścāstāni saṁhṛtyaikamidaṁ arthaśāstram kṛtam*.

The course provides an historical overview of earlier thinkers of *Arthaśāstras* and how Kauṭilya encapsulated all these. The course sweeps over the some of the important sections of the *Arthaśāstra* like concept of four *vidyās* (*trayī*, *vārtā*, *daṇḍanīti* and *ānvīkṣikī*), nature of administration, sovereignty of state, six-fold policy, law, justice, town planning, collection, and protection of wealth.

#### ❖ Study of Vedānta Philosophy with Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya and Sadānanda

Upaniṣads are the culminating point of the Vedic literature and hence they are termed as Vedānta. Upaniṣads are basically a quest for ultimate truth. Attempts are made in Vedānta to express the nature of reality in intuitive and argumentative way. Earliest expositions of Vedānta are found in *Brahmasūtra* of Bādarāyaṇa and its commentary by Śaṅkarācārya with non-dualistic approach. Rāmānujācārya of 11<sup>th</sup> century in his *Bodhāyana Vṛtti* interpreted this with Viśiṣṭādvaita approach. In 13<sup>th</sup> century, another thinker Madhvācārya further interpreted it with a different approach. The *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda is one of the foundational texts to understand Vedānta philosophy. Sadānanda was one of the ten disciples of Śaṅkarācārya's school. The course intends to provide a basic understanding of Vedānta philosophy by reading some of the sections from commentaries of Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya (on *Brahmasūtra*) and *Vedāntasāra*.

### ❖ **Select Major Thinkers of Ancient India: Āryabhaṭṭa, Varāhamihira Brahmagupta, Bhāskaracārya, and Bāṇabhaṭṭa**

The course intends to provide an overview of history of Indian knowledge traditions and its unique characteristics by selecting some major thinkers of ancient India like Āryabhaṭṭa, Varāhamihira, Brahmagupta, Bhāskaracārya, and Bāṇabhaṭṭa. Āryabhaṭṭa, Varāhamihira, Brahmagupta, and Bhāskaracārya are the illustrious acaryas of Indian Mathematics and Astronomical Sciences. The course also aims to follow a close study of some of the important sections of their respective texts.

### ❖ **Nāgārjuna and the concept of Śūnya**

Nāgārjuna (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), in his magnum opus *Mūlamādhyaṃika Kārika* shows that all things of empirical reality are mere conceptual constructs (*prajñaptimātra*), and hence, lacking the true existence. The empirical reality is in fact a concealment reality (*saṃvṛti-satya*) on the ground that they conceal the true reality (*pāramārthika-satya*). The course aims to deliberate on Nāgārjuna *Mūlamādhyaṃika Kārika* to study the arguments of his denial of empirical reality and to understand the fundamentals of concept of *śūnyata*.

### ❖ **Mastering Sanskrit Language (Level 1-2)**

To unfold the original texts of Hindu tradition, it is necessary to learn Sanskrit language. With this imperative, the course aims to offer students an interactive experience of learning the Sanskrit language through four stages, namely, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The course also focuses on understanding the structure and grammar of Sanskrit.

### ❖ **Seminar Course**

The Seminar course is basically an interdisciplinary course designed for students to enrich their presentation and writing skills. Critical engagement with faculty, peers will help them to chart out topics for their research, and dissertation. One of the aims of this course is to aware them about the methodology of their select topics. It will help them in participating International, National Seminars, Conferences and Debates.



### ❖ **Dissertation**

In the final semester of the programme, students shall write the dissertation that will be an original piece of research. The dissertation will be a specialised study of the courses studied. Students will select a theme of their academic interest in consultation with supervisor/s. In the dissertation, students shall demonstrate their capacity to carry out independent research based on the primary and secondary sources. It is expected that the dissertation will have academic rigour and originality so that it can potentially be published in a peer-reviewed research journal. In view of these considerations, the maximum word limit of the dissertation will be 10,000 to 12,000, including notes (but excluding bibliography).