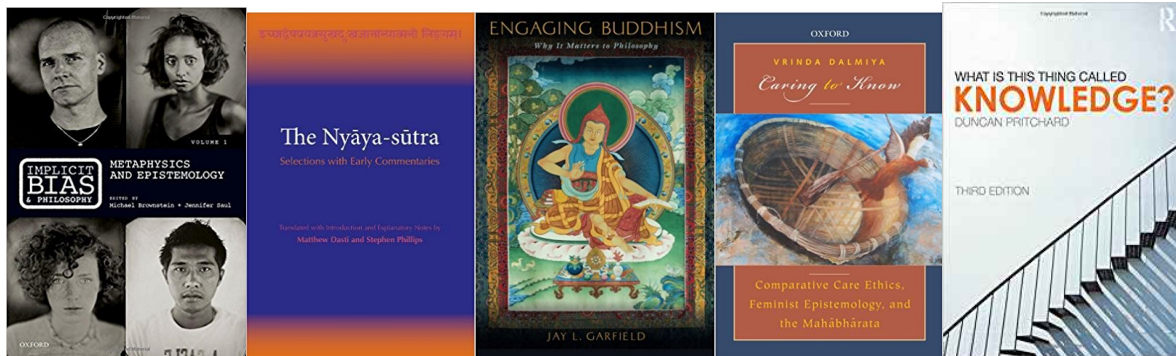


# Philosophy 149: Metaphysics and Epistemology

## Spring 2018



**Professor:** Anand Jayprakash Vaidya

**Time / Day:** T/R 12:00 - 13:15

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**Course Description:** ‘Implicit bias’ is a term of art referring to relatively unconscious and relatively automatic features of prejudiced judgment and social behavior. The most striking research on implicit bias has focused on implicit attitudes toward members of socially stigmatized groups, such as African-Americans, women, and the LGBTQ community. For example, imagine Frank, who explicitly believes that women and men are equally suited for careers outside the home. Despite his explicitly egalitarian belief, Frank might nevertheless implicitly associate women with the home, and this implicit association might lead him to behave in any number of biased ways, from trusting feedback from female co-workers less to hiring equally qualified men over women. Although psychological research on implicit bias is relatively recent, there are already many pressing metaphysical and epistemological questions.

This class will examine the metaphysics and epistemology of implicit biases. Prior to our examination of implicit biases we will develop a general understanding of topics in metaphysics and epistemology. Instead of using strictly western sources to learn about general metaphysics and epistemology, we will begin our examination of these areas by looking at debates that are found in classical Indian philosophy on the nature of reality and knowledge. Heterodox Buddhism and Jainism in contrast to Orthodox Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, and Vedānta are five of the nine schools of classical Indian philosophy that heavily debated topics in metaphysics and epistemology ranging from: the nature of universals and particulars, simplicity as a mark of what is real, realism, idealism, non-one-sidedness, knowledge, inference, perception, testimony, illusion, self, transformative experience, and importantly the role of conceptualization in experiential relations. Our engagement with the literature will be supplemented by cross-cultural philosophical engagement with ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Epicurus, and Epictetus, early and late modern Anglo-European Philosophers, such as Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant and 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers, such as Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Hubert Dreyfus, John McDowell, Tyler Burge, and Helen Longino. **Grading:** Each student will either write 4 short papers (1200 words) or 1 longer paper (4000 words). Any student that does a presentation can get out of 1 short writing assignment.