



Bachelor of Arts in Sanskrit

Course Handbook

**(including CAMES and RAMES joint degrees
involving Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan or Hindi)**

Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

Academic Year 2025-26

Course Co-ordinator - [Dr Victor D'Avella](#)

This handbook applies to students who, in Michaelmas 2025, are starting their course (for information relating to the FPE), or are entering the Final Honour School (for information relating to the FHS). The information in this handbook may not be applicable for students starting in other years.

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available here ([Exam Regulations](#)).

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact the Senior Academic Administrator, [Edmund Howard](#).

The information in this handbook is accurate as of Michaelmas Term 2025; however, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges. If such changes are made the faculty will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

General faculty-wide information can be found in the [General Undergraduate Handbook](#).

This Handbook

The handbook sets out the basic framework for the BA in Sanskrit, and for the joint degrees in CAMES and RAMES which involve Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan or Hindi. You should consult the current edition of the Examination Regulations (<https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/>) for information regarding your course. The information in this handbook should be read in conjunction with:

- the Faculty's general Undergraduate handbook;
- the Examination Regulations;
- the Examination Conventions and Rubrics;
- the [University Student Handbook](#);
- your college handbook.

If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations, then you should follow the Examination Regulations.

Comments and criticism of the handbook are always welcome; they should be sent to the course coordinator, Dr Victor D'Avella (victor.davella@ames.ox.ac.uk), the [Director of Undergraduate Studies](#) or the Senior Academic Administrator, [Edmund Howard](#).

Version history

1	October 2025	Original publication
---	--------------	----------------------

Contents

This Handbook	2
Version history	2
Introduction	5
BA in Sanskrit.....	5
CAMES and RAMES joint degrees	5
BA Sanskrit: Course Outline	7
Year 1.....	7
Years 2 and 3	8
Subsidiary Language.....	10
Papers for Prelims	11
1. Texts.....	11
2. Grammar.....	11
3. General Paper	12
Papers for FHS.....	12
Compulsory Papers (for examination in 2026)	12
1. Sanskrit I: Kāvya	12
2. Sanskrit II: Śāstra.....	13
3. Sanskrit III: Ancient Indian linguistics	13
4. Sanskrit IV: The historical philology of Old Indo-Aryan	14
5. Sanskrit V: Option paper.....	14
6. Sanskrit VI: Essay questions on classical Indian literature, history and culture.....	17
7. Dissertation.....	17
Papers for FHS: Subsidiary Language Papers	18
Sanskrit as a Subsidiary Language	18
BA in Classics and AMES (with Sanskrit or Pali)	18
BA in Religion and AMES (Buddhism or Hinduism pathways)	19
FPE (Prelims).....	19
Pali	19
Tibetan	19
Sanskrit	19
Hindi.....	20
FHS.....	20

Buddhism options.....	20
Hinduism options.....	21
Paper details	22
Teaching.....	22
Recommended Patterns of Teaching (RPT)	23
FPE Sanskrit	23
FHS Sanskrit.....	24
Teaching Staff.....	24
Examination Regulations	25
Examinations and Assessment.....	25
Deadlines.....	25
Set Texts and Recommended Readings.....	26
Student Information and Support	31
Student Hub	31
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	31
Welfare and Support.....	31

Introduction

BA in Sanskrit

The BA course in Sanskrit aims to give students a solid grounding in the Classical Sanskrit language, and to impart at the same time a general knowledge of the Indian cultural setting in which Sanskrit has had its life and meaning. A substantial amount of the teaching proceeds through the close reading and understanding of texts. Emphasis is placed at the same time on developing a broad understanding of the major literary and intellectual developments in Sanskrit, developing a familiarity with what modern scholars have identified as key debates and topics, and developing an understanding of the history of Western scholarship on India. The history of Sanskrit as a language, and its place within the social history of India, is also given prominence. Alongside language classes and text reading classes, therefore, there are lecture courses on principal aspects of ancient and medieval Indian civilization, and students will be given regular tutorials, for which they will read relevant literature and write essays on various aspects of Sanskrit literature, history and culture.

No prior knowledge of any ancient language is expected for students entering the degree.

Alongside the study of Sanskrit, students choose one subsidiary language option, which is studied in the second and third years of the course. Students may choose from either Hindi, Early Iranian, Pali, Prakrit, Tibetan or Persian. Classics may be studied as a subsidiary option alongside Sanskrit as part of the Classics and AMES degree. Students on the Chinese BA course may choose Sanskrit as a subsidiary language, in which case they will follow the same track as a Classics student with Sanskrit as a subsidiary language.

The aims of the course are:

1. to give students a strong command of the script, grammar, and vocabulary of Classical Sanskrit;
2. to enable students to read simple Classical texts largely by sight, and texts of intermediate to advanced difficulty with the aid of a dictionary and/or commentary;
3. to give students an understanding of the importance of Sanskrit in the history of Indian civilisation, with particular reference to the intellectual, literary, and religious history of India;
4. to give students a strong command of a second AMES language;
5. to give students a broad knowledge of secondary literature on Sanskrit and ancient Indian culture, including dictionaries and reference works, and how best to make use of them;
6. to enable students to assess academic arguments made in secondary literature on Sanskrit topics, and write coherent discussions and criticisms of what they read.

CAMES and RAMES joint degrees

The course aims for Sanskrit and related languages within the CAMES and RAMES joint degrees are fundamentally the same as those given for the BA in Sanskrit above, granted that

students on joint degrees will spend a smaller proportion of their time studying Sanskrit (or Pali, Tibetan or Hindi). For more detailed introductions to the joint degrees, including their aims and learning outcomes, please see the specific handbooks for those degrees.

This handbook should be consulted for detailed descriptions of the AMES papers available in the joint degrees, and in cases of inconsistency between this handbook and the handbooks specific to the joint degrees, this handbook takes priority.

BA Sanskrit: Course Outline

Year 1

The first year of the course leads to the First Public Examination (FPE), also called the Preliminary Examination or Prelims, which is sat at the end of Trinity Term. The Sanskrit Prelims comprise three written examinations of three hours each:

1. Texts;
2. Grammar;
3. General paper.

In preparation for these papers, students will attend the Elementary Sanskrit classes (4–5 hours per week) as well as a series of lectures on the history, literature, religions and philosophies of India/South Asia (2 hours per week). The Elementary Sanskrit classes consist of intensive language instruction with a focus on mastering the grammar of the language and close analysis of texts. Students will also need to commit a considerable amount of their own time to reading textbooks, completing translation and composition exercises, reading texts, and learning paradigms and vocabulary. Weekly exercises will be marked by the class tutor, and students will also have regular review sessions, quizzes, and collections at the start of Hilary and Trinity Terms. Through these both you and the class tutor will be able to assess your progress.

The lecture series will run throughout the year and include the following general topics:

- Introduction to Indology (4 Lectures)
- Indian History (12 Lectures)
- Indian Literature (12 Lectures)
- Indian Religion of Philosophy (12 Lectures)

To deepen their knowledge of specific topics, students will be assigned ca. 12 essays (4 per term) that they will discuss in tutorials.

Preparation for Elementary Sanskrit

Students are not expected to have any knowledge of the Sanskrit language before starting the course. However, the Elementary Sanskrit course is fast moving, and you will be expected to start using Devanāgarī, the script in which Sanskrit is usually printed, from the outset. You are therefore recommended to familiarise yourself with Devanāgarī prior to the start of the course. Besides the Sanskrit coursebooks mentioned below, we recommend Lambert's *Introduction to the Devanagari Script*

(<https://archive.org/details/in.gov.ignca.3374>); there are also numerous online resources, including <https://ubcsanskrit.ca/lesson2/writingtutor.html>, <https://www.hindibhasha.com/hindiscripttutor.htm>, and <http://prakrit.info/vrddhi/lessons/02/>.

The course books which will be required for the Elementary Sanskrit course include Coulson's *Complete Sanskrit* (formerly *Teach Yourself Sanskrit*), Macdonell's *A Sanskrit Grammar for Students* (available for free on <https://archive.org/>), and Speijer's *Sanskrit*

Syntax (available for free on <https://archive.org/>) You are recommended to obtain copies of these books prior to the start of the course. Other course books and materials will be provided during the classes.

A basic knowledge of English grammar, and standard grammatical terms, is also highly valuable for students starting this course. Sanskrit is taught here with the “grammar and translation” method, which makes use of advances in the disciplines of historical linguistics and philology over the last two centuries. A knowledge of the terminology of these sciences of language is essential to learning Sanskrit as it is taught in Oxford and proves especially useful in studying the earlier layers of Sanskrit literature, the Vedas.

For students who have not encountered this terminology before, or the conception of language that lies behind it, mastering it while trying to learn Sanskrit presents an extra burden. Sanskrit has many inflected forms—a lot of declensions of nouns and adjectives and a lot of conjugations of verbs. A significant part of the Elementary Sanskrit course is taken up with memorizing them. To have a template into which to fit these inflections can help enormously; it can make the difference between struggling and progressing with confidence.

Students will therefore benefit from familiarizing themselves with the basics of English grammar and grammatical terminology—and more generally *how language works*—before the start of the course. It will be helpful to remember, for example, what it means that the subject and verb of a sentence agree in number and person; what it means that verbs also have tenses, moods, and voices, and that nouns and adjectives also have case and gender. It will be useful to remember what a participle, a gerund, a pronoun, and a subordinate clause are, and so on. Of course, some students will already be familiar with this terminology, but there is always more to learn. A useful online resource with which you can begin your review is the “Introduction to Traditional Grammar,” sections 1 and 2, available on the [WPWT website](#) at Southampton University. For a slightly more detailed overview, Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9 of *All about language* by Barry Blake provide useful introductions to many of the concepts and terminology that you need to know when studying Sanskrit. Familiarity with English grammar, if lacking, is also encouraged. See for example, Otto Jespersen’s [Essentials of English Grammar](#). It is also important to keep in mind that grammatical labels and linguistic analysis are imposed upon a language and that there will be more than one term for a grammatical concept or multiple ways of analysing a particular construction. This will be clear not only from the different terms used amongst Western grammars of Sanskrit, but also from the system of grammatical analysis within the Sanskrit tradition itself. Particular emphasis will be placed on the Sanskritic terminology and method of analysis.

Years 2 and 3

Although there is no year abroad in the Sanskrit BA, for the past few decades the Faculty has been able to send students to India, if they wish to go, in order to study during the summer vacation between their second and third years.

In the second and third years of the course, students study towards the Second Public Examination, or Final Honour School (FHS), which consists of nine in-person, hand-written

papers (listed below) and a dissertation. The Teaching provided in Years 2 and 3 will prepare students for this examination although it should be born in mind that language learning is cumulative and the material taught in Year 1 needs to be thoroughly revised at regular intervals especially over the long vacation before Year 2.

Throughout the second year, text reading classes provide a sample of both poetic as well as scientific (*śāstric*) texts. Along with relevant tutorials, these classes will prepare students for the two papers Sanskrit I: Kāvya and Sanskrit II: Śāstra, which will contain passages for translation as well as essay questions.

Alongside these two broad topics, the set text papers, Ancient Indian Linguistics and the Historical Philology of Indo-Aryan, introduce students to two of the historically and culturally most important genres of Sanskrit literature: ancient Indian linguistics, with a focus on *vyākaraṇa* as presented in Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, and Vedic Sanskrit. Teaching on Sanskrit grammar is provided by means of lectures, classes, and tutorials, in Year 2. Teaching on Vedic Sanskrit is provided by means of classes and tutorials, beginning in Trinity Term of Year 2, and continuing into Michaelmas Term of Year 3. For each of these papers, students will translate passages from the set texts as well as answer essay questions.

Students will continue to broaden their knowledge of topics in Indian History and Culture through a series of tutorials in Trinity Term of Year 2 and continuing into Year 3. Topics will include caste, gender, the rise of the Guptas, textual criticism, colonialism, and reception of Sanskrit exegesis by modern scholars. The study of these topics will prepare students for the Essay paper.

At the end of Year 2, students choose an area of Sanskrit literature, Indian History or Religion in which to specialise and, in consultation with their tutors, develop reading lists of primary and secondary sources that they can begin to study in the long vacation. During Michaelmas and Hilary Terms of Year 3, students will then read primary texts and take tutorials (4–6) in the selected area. This will form the basis of the Option paper, the contents of which will be determined by the exact nature of the subject selected but will usually include essays and translations from primary sources. There is, however, some flexibility, and students may work with faculty members to design a paper that best fits their interests.

Example topics for the Option paper:

- Poetry (kāvya, mahākāvya)
- Poetics (alaṃkāraśāstra)
- Drama (nāṭya)
- The Epics
- Indian Buddhism
- Śaivism
- Vaiṣṇavism
- Jainism
- Law (dharmaśāstra)

- Polity and Statecraft (arthaśāstra)
- Indian philosophy (e.g., nyāya, mīmāṃsā)
- Grammar (vyākaraṇa and related traditions)
- Upaniṣadic literature
- Other subjects previously approved for the chosen area include story literature and yoga.

The final paper is the dissertation. The dissertation offers students the opportunity to synthesise some of the many strands of learning they have undertaken during their degree, and to undertake detailed research into a particular topic in Sanskrit or Indology. For the dissertation, it is also sometimes possible for students to edit and translate unpublished texts from manuscripts or inscriptions. Students meet with an appropriate supervisor toward the end of Year 2 to discuss their topic and plan summer research. Additional supervisions take place throughout Michaelmas and Hilary term.

Subsidiary Language

Students will also take a subsidiary language. Study of the subsidiary language begins at the start of Year 2, and thereafter accounts for about one third of the work. Subsidiary languages consist of 3 papers.

Students may choose one of the following languages:

1. Early Iranian (Avestan, Old Persian, Middle Persian)
2. Pali
3. Prakrit
4. Tibetan
5. Hindi
6. Persian.

Further details are provided in the AMES UG Subsidiary Languages handbook, available on the Student Hub.

The Final Honour School is examined in ten papers, seven in Sanskrit and three in the subsidiary language.

Sanskrit

The following papers will be set:

1. Kāvya
2. Śāstra
3. Ancient Indian linguistics.
4. The historical philology of Old Indo-Aryan
5. Option paper
6. Essay paper
7. Dissertation.

Papers 8–10 are on one of the following subsidiary languages. Please see below and as well as the AMES UG Subsidiary Languages Handbook for further details.

All topics for the Option paper and dissertation as well as the choice of subsidiary language must be approved by the Faculty Board. For Classics, students must obtain permission from their college tutor and enter the joint school of Classics and AMES.

Students should note that not all subsidiary languages and optional areas of Sanskrit studies may be available each year.

Papers for Prelims

Recommended reading for each paper can be found at the end of the course handbook.

1. Texts

Paper description and teaching pattern:

This paper requires students to translate four passages the prescribed texts into good, idiomatic English from and answer short questions about their grammar and metre. Although there is some variation from year to year, the set texts usually consist of the following:

1. A selection of independent verses (*subhāṣitas*) provided in class.
2. Passages from the *Rāmāyaṇa* (e.g., *sarga* 1.2).
3. Selections from Lanman's *A Sanskrit Reader* including the story of Nala and Damayantī from the *Mahābhārata*, the *Hitopadeśa* and *Kathāsaritsāgara*.
4. Selections from the *Bhagavad-Gītā* with Śaṅkara's commentary, usually from Books I, II, IV, VI, or XI.

Texts will be provided in paper and/or electronic form by the class tutor, but students are advised to purchase or have access to Lanman's reader, which contains comprehensive vocabulary and notes. Both [Lanman's reader](#), and editions of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (e.g. Belvalkar's [edition](#) or with [Śaṅkara's commentary](#)) are freely downloadable online. For the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, students may also find it useful to purchase or have access to Zaehner's edition, which contains a detailed commentary.

2. Grammar

Paper description and teaching pattern:

In this paper students must demonstrate a detailed knowledge of Sanskrit grammar in three sections:

1. Translation of English into Sanskrit
2. Translation of an unprepared passage of Sanskrit into English
3. Writing out various nominal and verbal paradigms

The translation into Sanskrit will be based on exercises completed throughout the year. Select vocabulary will be provided for both passages.

3. General Paper

Paper description and teaching pattern:

This paper is based on lectures and tutorials on aspects of Indian history, culture and literature taken during the first year. It is examined at the end of Trinity Term in year 1. The exam requires students to write four essays answering questions on topics in ancient Indian history, culture and literature.

The purpose of the General paper is to introduce students to the study of ancient Indian civilisation, and to the importance of Sanskrit within Indian civilisation. For this paper, students will attend introductory lectures, covering the study of India, an overview of Indian history and an outline of topics in Indian literature. Students will also receive approximately 12 tutorials, for which they will write essays on introductory topics in the study of Sanskrit and ancient Indian literature and culture. See the end of this document for the recommended reading list for the first-year course.

Papers for FHS

Compulsory Papers (for examination in 2026)

1. Sanskrit I: Kāvya

Paper description:

The aim of this paper is to introduce students to Sanskrit *kāvya* ("poetry, belles-lettres") by reading selections from the genres of *mahākāvya* ("great poem, epic") in Michaelmas Term, *rūpaka/nāṭaka* ("drama") in Hilary Term and *gadyakāvya* ("prose poetry") in Trinity Term. A general introduction will be given each term to familiarise students with the conventions and complexities of the particular genre. Emphasis is placed on the works of Kālidāsa in the first term as his poetry has had an enduring impact on all subsequent Sanskrit literature. Alongside the reading of primary texts, students will write ca. 4 essays covering major themes and scholarly debates.

Texts read in previous years include: Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*, *Raghuvamśa*, *Vikramorvaśīya*, *Abhijñānaśākuntala*; Bhāsa's *Svapnavāsavadattam*; Bhavabhūti's *Mālatīmādhava*; Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita*; Bāṇa's *Kādambarī*, *Harṣacarita*.

This paper will consist of two parts. In Part 1, students will be required to translate two prepared passages and one unprepared passage from Sanskrit into English. In Part 2, there will be a selection of questions from which students will choose to write one essay.

Teaching pattern:

2 hours of text reading per week throughout Year 2.

4/5 tutorials throughout Year 2.

2. Sanskrit II: Śāstra

Paper description:

In parallel with the previous paper, the preparations for the *śāstra* paper will introduce students to the “scientific” side of Sanskrit literature. Since this is a vast field and mastery of even a single *śāstra* is difficult (ekasmiñ janmany ekaṃ śāstram “one śāstram per lifetime” as they say), only a small selection will be possible, starting with *alaṅkāraśāstra* (“poetics”) in MT. In HT one of the philosophical systems (*darśana*) is taken up such as Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Yoga, Vedānta, etc. The third text will be from Indian Linguistics and cover philosophy of language.

As with the *kāvya* paper, the *śāstra* paper will consist of two parts. In Part 1, students will be required to translate two prepared passages and one unprepared passage from Sanskrit into English. In Part 2, there will be a selection of questions from which students will choose to write one essay.

Teaching pattern:

2 hours of text reading per week throughout Year 2.

4/5 tutorials across throughout Year 2.

3. Sanskrit III: Ancient Indian linguistics

Paper description:

In this paper students will be introduced to the indigenous tradition of grammatical and linguistic scholarship. In ancient India, linguistic analysis held a prime status in academic thought and discourse and was central to the traditions of scientific and philosophical work. Over the course of three terms in their second year, Students will study a range of texts, introducing them to linguistic analysis from its very earliest origins, including the central, monumental work of Pāṇini, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and the philosophical speculations of the *Mahābhāṣya* and *Vākyapadīya*.

For this paper students will translate passages from the set texts into English and answer two essay questions.

Teaching pattern:

This paper will be taught through a combination of lectures, classes and tutorials throughout Year 2. Eight lectures, given in Michaelmas Term, will introduce students to the

tradition of linguistic analysis in ancient India. This will be followed by a series of classes in Hilary and Trinity Terms, in which key selections will be read from Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* or Bhaṭṭhari's *Vākyapadīya*. Four tutorials will be taken alongside the lectures and classes.

4. Sanskrit IV: The historical philology of Old Indo-Aryan

Paper description:

In this paper students will be introduced to the study of the earliest Vedic literature, and to the principles of historical philological analysis of these texts. The Vedas stand at the beginning of the history of Sanskrit literature and retained a position of primary importance throughout the history of ancient India. The language of the Vedas is different from Classical Sanskrit, being older and more archaic. This means that the original meaning and intention of the Vedic texts can only be understood with the help of principles of historical philology and, in many cases, through comparison with the older stages of related languages and language families (such as Avestan, Ancient Greek, and Latin).

Students will read a selection of texts from the *R̥gveda*, the collection containing the oldest surviving Vedic literature, and from the *Yajurveda*, which contains the oldest surviving prose literature in Sanskrit, and preserves important information about Vedic-era ritual. In some years, other Vedic texts may also be read.

The paper will consist of one essay question and three passages from the set texts to be translated into English.

Teaching pattern:

This paper is primarily taught through text reading classes, which usually take place twice per week in Trinity Term of Year 2 and Michaelmas Term of Year 3. The texts read will constitute the set texts for the exam. Student will also take around four tutorials, covering topics in the religion and language of the Vedas.

5. Sanskrit V: Option paper

Paper description:

For paper 5, students will choose an area of Sanskrit studies in which to specialise (subject to approval by the board of the Faculty). Depending on the topic selected, students will read primary texts, prepare essays or explore objects in museums or manuscripts in archives. The contents of the paper will be determined by the exact nature of the subject selected but will usually include essays and/or translations from primary sources.

Teaching pattern:

The option paper is studied in Year 3 with tutorials and text reading classes offered during Michaelmas and Hilary Terms; the arrangements for these classes will vary depending on the area chosen.

Popular options:

There is no fixed list of chosen areas, but popular options include the following: poetry, poetics, drama, epic, Indian Buddhism, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Jainism, law (*dharmaśāstra*), polity and statecraft, schools of Indian philosophy (e.g., *nyāya*, *mīmāṃsā*), grammar, Upaniṣadic literature.

Students may wish to explore some of the recommended literature before finalizing their choice of area. Other areas not listed here may also be chosen and a reading list will be provided as and when required. Note that all chosen areas are subject to approval and availability of teaching. Below is a brief description of the more commonly chosen areas. Recommended reading can be found at the end of the Course Handbook.

Poetry (*kāvya*, *mahākāvya*)

Kāvya, and especially Mahākāvya, represent the highest achievements of Sanskrit poetic art. For this chosen area, students will read and study more advanced texts, e.g. Māgha's Śīsupālavadha or Śrīharṣa's Naiṣadhīyacarita, which are among the most highly crafted poetry written in any language, and you will develop an understanding of the history, principles, and application of Sanskrit poetic art.

Poetics (*alaṃkāraśāstra*)

In ancient India a sophisticated science of poetics, *alaṃkāraśāstra* ("the science of embellishment"), developed detailed and subtle analysis of the poetic language with a particular emphasis on figures of speech (*alaṃkāra*) and how it is used to evoke emotions. For this chosen area, students will read original texts on poetics, and study the principles and methods of Sanskrit poetic science.

Drama (*nāṭya*)

Sanskrit drama, *nāṭya*, represents the inspired fusion of sophisticated poetry with a tradition of storytelling through dramatic performance. Kālidāsa's *Śākuntala* was one of the first Sanskrit literary works to be translated into a European language, and Sanskrit drama remains perhaps the most popular and accessible area of Sanskrit literature to Western readers. For this chosen area, students will read a range of Sanskrit dramas, and study the history and methods of Sanskrit drama, as well as the science of drama as defined in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

The Epics

The two great Sanskrit epics, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, hold a central place in Sanskrit literature and in elite as well as popular Indian culture. The *Mahābhārata* narrates the story of a great war between rival royal cousins; the characters and tales of its main storylines were central to much later Sanskrit literature. The *Rāmāyaṇa* tells the story of Rāma, the seemingly ideal king and, according to later tradition, an incarnation Viṣṇu; this story had huge popularity in ancient South and South-East Asia and remains highly popular in India today. For this chosen area, students will read selections from both epics, and will study the origins, history, subject matter and reception of the epics.

Indian Buddhism

Buddhism originated in the late Vedic period in north India within the same philosophical milieu which produced Jainism, as well as the Hindu Upaniṣads. Although Buddhists

eschewed the use of Sanskrit at an early period in favour of vernacular languages, later Buddhists could not avoid the cultural prestige and reach of Sanskrit, and many important Buddhist works were written in Sanskrit. For this chosen area, students will read Sanskrit Buddhist texts, including poetic Buddhist texts such as the *Buddhacarita*, and will study the history and doctrine of Buddhism in South Asia.

This chosen area may be most profitably chosen by students who take the subsidiary languages Pali or Tibetan, though it is by no means restricted to such students (nor are students taking Pali or Tibetan necessarily expected to take this chosen area).

Śaivism

Śaivism is one of the major religious trends within Hinduism, which reveres Śiva as the supreme being. For this chosen area, students will read selections of Śaiva literature and will study the origins of Śaivism and the thought and practice of Śaivism in ancient South Asia. Students who choose this option generally take part in the readings for the MPhil in Classical Indian Religion, Śaivism Pathway. See the [MPhil Handbook](#), p. 20 for a list of primary texts.

Vaiṣṇavism

Vaiṣṇavism is one of the major religious trends within Hinduism, which reveres Viṣṇu as the supreme being, usually in the form of a particular avatar or incarnation, such as Kṛṣṇa or Rāma. For this chosen area, students will read selections of Vaiṣṇava literature and will study the origins of Vaiṣṇavism and the thought and practice of Vaiṣṇavism in ancient South Asia. Students who chose this option generally take part in the readings for the MPhil in Classical Indian Religion, Vaiṣṇavism Pathway. See the [MPhil Handbook](#), p. 20 for a list of primary texts.

Jainism

Like Buddhism, Jainism originated in the late Vedic period in North India. As with the Buddhists, early Jains eschewed the use of Sanskrit, but later Jain writers could not avoid the cultural prestige and reach of Sanskrit. For this chosen area, students will read selections of Jain Sanskrit literature, and study the history, thought and practice of Jainism in ancient South Asia.

This chosen area may be most profitably chosen by students who take the subsidiary language option in Prakrit, though it is by no means restricted to such students (nor are students taking Prakrit necessarily expected to take this chosen area).

Law (dharmaśāstra)

Personal and social ethical conduct (*dharma*) held a place of central importance in ancient Indian culture and thought, and from the late Vedic period the codification of legal conduct became an increasingly significant topic of intellectual debate. For this chosen area, students will read selections of texts on the science of dharma, and will study the origins, content, and cultural significance of dharma literature in ancient South Asia.

Polity and Statecraft (*arthaśāstra*)

Alongside the concern for personal and social ethical conduct in ancient India, there arose a concern with the ethics of polity and statecraft. For this chosen area, students will read

selections from Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* and related texts, and will study the history and content of political science in ancient India.

Indian philosophy (e.g., *nyāya*, *mīmāṃsā*)

The orthodox Hindu traditions of Indian philosophy include Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta philosophy. For this chosen area, students will read selections of texts from one or more traditions of Indian philosophy, and will study the origins and thought of these philosophical traditions.

Grammar (*vyākaraṇa* and related traditions)

For this chosen area, students may go deeper into the thought and work of one or more of the major Indian grammarians, beyond the necessary limitations of what students will have covered for paper. For example, the detailed workings of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, or the philosophical or grammatical thought of Bhartṛhari, or the linguistic approach of the *Nirukta*, may be studied as part of this chosen area.

Upaniṣadic literature

The *Upaniṣads* are the last and best-known texts of the Vedic period, marking the transition from Vedic ritual practice to the philosophical and esoteric speculation which underlies modern Hindu thought and practice. For this chosen area, students will read selections from the *Upaniṣads* and study the origins, content, and later influence of Upaniṣadic thought and literature.

6. Sanskrit VI: Essay questions on classical Indian literature, history and culture

Paper description:

This paper enables students to go beyond the text reading which constitutes the majority of their degree work, to investigate the key ideas and historical events which underlie the Sanskrit literary tradition. The examination for this paper requires students to write four essays answering questions on a range of topics across the field of classical Indian literature and civilization.

Teaching pattern:

This paper is primarily taught through eight tutorials offered in Trinity Term of Year 2 and Michaelmas of Year 3.

7. Dissertation

A dissertation may be written in any of the subject any subject of Indian history, literature, religion or art as approved by the Faculty Board. Students should employ their critical language skills and engage with scholars, ancient or modern, who have written on the chosen topic. One possible option for the dissertation is an annotated translation of a previously unpublished Sanskrit text. This may include editing a previously unpublished Sanskrit manuscript. The Bodleian Library hosts an unrivalled collection of Sanskrit manuscripts, many of which have never been properly studied.

Teaching pattern:

Preparation for the dissertation begins at the end of Year 2 and continues through Year 3 with the bulk of the writing taking place during Hilary Term. Teaching and/or supervision for this paper is arranged as appropriate depending on the subject chosen.

Papers for FHS: Subsidiary Language Papers

Study of the subsidiary language begins at the start of the second year, and thereafter accounts for about a third of the work. All subsidiary languages are examined by 3 papers, usually consisting of two language papers and an essay paper. Students may choose from the following list of AMES languages:

- Early Iranian
- Hindi
- Persian
- Pali
- Prakrit
- Tibetan

For more information about these languages and how they are taught, please see the AMES UG Subsidiary Languages Handbook.

Sanskrit as a Subsidiary Language

Students taking BA Chinese and BA Classics and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies may choose Sanskrit as a subsidiary language.

Please refer to the AMES UG Subsidiary Languages Handbook for more information.

BA in Classics and AMES (with Sanskrit or Pali)

There are two versions of the course:

- (a)** Classics with Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, a four-year degree in which Classics is your main subject and you take up an Asian or Middle Eastern language in your seventh term; and
- (b)** Asian & Middle Eastern Studies with Classics, a three-year degree in which your main subject is drawn from Asian & Middle Eastern Studies and you take up Classics in your fourth term.

Students under (a) follow the Classics course up to Honour Moderations (First Public Examination). For the Final Honour School, students under (a) can choose Sanskrit or Pali as their subsidiary option (for other languages, see other handbooks).

Students under (a) choosing Sanskrit will follow the teaching and papers as for 'Sanskrit as a subsidiary language'.

Students under (a) choosing Pali will follow the teaching and papers described for Pali as a subsidiary language.

Subsidiary language information is described in the AMES UG Subsidiary Languages Handbook.

Students under (b) choosing Sanskrit as their main subject follow the teaching and papers for the BA in Sanskrit as described above, but with Classics taking the place of their subsidiary language option.

For all Classics options, see the relevant [CAMES and/or Classics handbooks](#).

BA in Religion and AMES (Buddhism or Hinduism pathways)

For AMES language options other than Sanskrit, Hindi, Tibetan and Pali, for AMES FHS pathways other than Buddhism and Hinduism, and for all options and papers under the Religion side of the degree, please see other handbooks.

FPE (Prelims)

Based on the candidate's choice of language, ONE of the following six options, each comprising three elements, must be offered:

Pali

Candidates will be required to offer three three-hour papers.

1. Texts I
Candidates will be expected to comment on set texts from the Pali Canon.
2. Texts II
3. Grammar
Candidates will be expected to show knowledge of Pali grammar, syntax and vocabulary.

Tibetan

Candidates will be required to offer two three-hour papers and an oral/aural examination.

1. Set texts
Candidates will be expected to translate and comment on Tibetan set texts.
1. Unseen translation, prose composition and grammar
Candidates will be expected to show knowledge of Tibetan grammar and an ability to translate unseen texts from Tibetan into English and to compose a passage in Tibetan.
2. Oral/aural examination

Sanskrit

Candidates will be required to offer three three-hour papers.

1. Sanskrit I: Texts
2. Sanskrit II: Grammar
3. Sanskrit III: Additional Texts

Papers 1 and 2 correspond to papers 1 and 2 of the Sanskrit BA prelims (pp. 10-11).

Hindi

Candidates will be required to offer three three-hour papers.

1. Texts I
2. Texts II
3. Grammar and Translation.

FHS

In the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies part of the course, candidates must take three papers and may take up to five all of which must be drawn from one of the following areas:

1. Buddhism
2. Eastern Christianity
3. Hinduism
4. Islam
5. Judaism

For pathways other than Buddhism and Hinduism, see other handbooks.

In the paper listings below, advanced language options are for candidates who have studied the same language for the First Public Examination.

A Course Statement listing all approved papers for any combination being studied at FHS will be published by the Interfaculty Committee. An overview of possible options is available below.

Buddhism options

All candidates must offer two papers, unprepared translation and prepared texts, from one of the following language options:

Sanskrit: [B1A]: Sanskrit unprepared translation, and [B2A]: Sanskrit prepared texts.

or

Advanced Sanskrit: Advanced Sanskrit unprepared translation [B1B], and [B2B]: Advanced Sanskrit prepared texts.

or

Pali: [B1C]: Pali unprepared translation, and [B2C]: Pali prepared texts.

or

Advanced Pali: [B1D]: Advanced Pali unprepared translation, and [B2D]: Advanced Pali prepared texts.

or

Tibetan: [B1E]: Tibetan prose composition and unprepared, and [B2E]: Tibetan prepared texts, with questions.

or

Advanced Tibetan: [B1F]: Advanced Tibetan prose composition and unprepared translation, and [B2F]: Advanced Tibetan prepared texts.

Candidates must offer one paper and may choose up to three papers from the following:

[B3]: Buddhist set texts: Pali or Sanskrit or Tibetan

[B6]: Further Buddhist Texts: Pali or Sanskrit or Tibetan

[B7]: Essay questions on classical Indian literature, history and culture

[B8]: Questions on Tibetan culture and history

[B9]: Essay questions on Pali language, literature and culture

[B10]: Any other paper, relevant to Buddhism, in the Honour School of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies approved by the Interfaculty Committee.

Hinduism options

All candidates must offer two papers, unprepared translation and prepared texts, from one of the following language options:

Sanskrit: [H1A]: Sanskrit Texts I, and [H2A]: Sanskrit Texts II.

or

Advanced Sanskrit: [H1B]: Advanced Sanskrit Texts I, and [H2B]: Advanced Sanskrit Texts II.

or

Hindi: [H1C]: Hindi unprepared translation, and [H2C]: Hindi prepared texts.

or

Advanced Hindi: [H1D]: Advanced Hindi unprepared translation, and [H2D]: Advanced Hindi prepared texts.

All candidates must offer paper **[H3]:** Essay questions on classical Indian literature, history and culture.

Candidates may offer up to two papers from:

[H4]: Brāhmaṇism

[H5]: Vaiṣṇavism

[H6]: Śaivism

[H7]: Option Paper

[H8]: Bhakti Texts

[H9]: Religion and Society in Hindi Literature

[H10]: Any other paper, relevant to Hinduism, in the Honour School of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies approved by the Interfaculty Committee.

Paper details

All of the above language papers ([B1/2] and [H1/2]) will require candidates to translate passages from both prepared texts as well as unprepared texts. Two or three short-answer questions on grammar, metre, and general content will accompany the passages from prepared texts. The list of prepared texts will be set in consultation with the instructor(s). Similarly for papers [B3] and [B6].

In the remaining papers, candidates will be required to answer 3 out of approximately 10 questions. When appropriate, the candidate will answer one question based on a passage from the prepared texts; the passage itself need not be translated. Details for [H7] are given on pp. 13ff. above.

Teaching

After attending the relevant elementary language classes offered for the BA in AMES, students who have chosen Sanskrit will determine in consultation with the language instructors which reading classes to attend in Years 2 and 3. These are usually a combination of the classes described for FHS BA Paper 1 Unprepared Translation (p. 11) and the set text classes for the MPhil degrees in Classical Indian Religion and Buddhist Studies ([see relevant Handbooks](#)). Students may also meet with instructors one on one to read other texts of interest. For other languages, arrangements will be made with the relevant instructors, but usually the normal second year language classes will be attended in full and individual classes will be offered for Year 3.

In preparation for [B7]/[H3] Essay questions on classical Indian literature, history and culture, students will attend the lecture series offered to Sanskrit BA students in Year 1. For papers [H4] Brāhmaṇism, [H5] Vaiṣṇavism, [H6] Śaivism, students will join relevant reading classes and tutorials for the respective pathways of the MPhil in Classical Indian religion. Similarly, students on the Buddhism pathway will have the chance to attend the lecture series, tutorials and reading classes offered to MPhil students in Buddhist Studies. These will prepare students for [B3] Buddhist set texts, [B4] Foundations of Buddhism, [B5] Buddhism in Space and Time and [B6] Further Buddhist Texts. Tutorials and lectures will be provided for [B8] Questions on Tibetan culture and history [B9] Essay questions on Pali language, literature and culture as needed.

Recommended Patterns of Teaching (RPT)

Below is an indication of the type and number of teaching hours on this course.

FPE Sanskrit

Paper	Term	Faculty		College		Comments
		Lectures	Classes	Tutorials	Classes	
[1.] Texts	MT		44			Figures in this table are in hours unless otherwise stated. Texts and grammar are taught together. Figures represent teaching over the term and include a weekly revision session with a teaching assistant. The final week of Trinity Term are reserved for revision and sight-reading practice.
	HT		44			
	TT		36			
[2.] Grammar	MT					Included above.
	HT					
	TT					
[3.] General Paper	MT	16		4		
	HT	16		4		
	TT	8		3		

FHS Sanskrit

Paper	Term	Year 1				Year 2				
		Faculty		College		Faculty		College		Comments
		Lectures	Classes	Tutorials	Classes	Lectures	Classes	Tutorials	Classes	<i>Figures in this table are in hours unless otherwise stated.</i>
[1.] Kāvya	MT		16	2						
	HT		16	2						
	TT		16							
[2.] Śāstra	MT		16	2						
	HT		16	2						
	TT		16							
[3.] Ancient Indian Linguistics	MT	8								
	HT		16	2						
	TT		16	2						
[4.] Historical Philology of Old Indo-Aryan	MT					16	2			
	HT									
	TT		16	2						
[5.] Option Paper	MT					16	2		The teaching will vary depending on the nature of the topic selected.	
	HT					16	2			
	TT									
[6.] Essay Paper	MT						4			
	HT						2			
	TT			4						
[7.] Dissertation	MT								Supervisions will be arranged with the assigned supervisor.	
	HT									
	TT									
[8.] Hindi (as an example)	MT		32			32			These numbers represent total teaching over 2 years for both papers 7 and 8.	
	HT		32			32				
	TT		32							

Teaching Staff

Core Sanskrit teaching staff:

- Professor [Diwakar Acharya](#) – Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics
- Dr [Victor D'Avella](#) – Departmental Lecturer in Sanskrit
- Dr [John Lowe](#) – Associate Professor of Sanskrit
- Professor [Jim Mallinson](#) – Boden Professor of Sanskrit

Subsidiary language options:

- Dr [Imre Bangha](#) – Associate Professor of Hindi
- Professor [Kate Crosby](#) – Numata Professor of Buddhist Studies
- Dr [Lama Jabb](#) – Instructor in Tibetan
- Professor [Ulrike Roesler](#) – Professor of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies
- Dr [Andrew Skilton](#) – Pali Instructor, Faculty of Theology & Religion
- Dr [Yuhan Vevaina](#) – Bahari Associate Professor of Sasanian Studies

Other teaching/research staff:

- Dr [James Benson](#) – Associate Professor of Sanskrit (emeritus)
- Dr [Shailendra Bhandare](#) – Assistant Keeper (South Asian Numismatics), Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum
- Professor [Monima Chadha](#) – Professor of Indian Philosophy
- Professor [Nandini Chatterjee](#) – Professor of Indian History and Culture
- Dr [Faisal Devji](#) – Professor of Indian History
- Dr [Christopher Fleming](#) – Associate member of AMES
- Professor [David Gellner](#) – Professor of Social Anthropology (emeritus)
- Professor [Sondra Hausner](#) – Professor of Anthropology of Religion
- Dr [Mallica Kumbera Landrus](#) – Keeper, Eastern Art, Ashmolean Museum
- Professor [Christopher Minkowski](#) – Boden Professor of Sanskrit (emeritus)
- Dr [Maria Misra](#) – Associate Professor of Modern History
- Professor [Fernanda Pirie](#) – Professor of the Anthropology of Law; Director of the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies
- Dr [Yiming Shen](#) – ERC Post-Doctoral Researcher
- Dr [Alan Strathern](#) – Associate Professor of History
- Professor [Jan Westerhoff](#) – Professor of Buddhist Philosophy

Examination Regulations

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available at <https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/>. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations.

Examinations and Assessment

For details on the assessment of individual AMES papers, please refer to the [exam rubrics and conventions](#) available on the Student Hub.

Deadlines

Date	Year of Course	Event	How
Monday 9 th Week Trinity Term	1	Provisional start date of the First Public Examinations.	
Friday 6 th Week	2	Deadline for application for	Online Options

Trinity Term		approval for choices in Paper 5 and 6 (as in the Examination Regulations), and for topics for paper 7 (dissertation).	Form to be distributed by Academic Administration Online Thesis Title Approval Form available through the Intranet Approval Forms page
Friday 4 th Week Michaelmas Term	3	Deadline for exam entry.	Via Student Self Service
12 noon Friday 10 th Week Hilary Term	3	Deadline for submission of Paper 7 (dissertation).	Via Inspira
Monday 7 th Week Trinity Term	3	Provisional start date of the Final Honour School examinations.	

Set Texts and Recommended Readings

Recommended reading for the **Prelims Texts Paper**:

- C. R. Lanman. [A Sanskrit Reader](#): Text and Vocabulary and Notes. 4th issue, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- James Mallinson. *The Ocean of the Rivers of Story by Soma-deva*. Clay Sanskrit Library, New York: NYU Press 2007.
- Judit Törzsök. *Friendly Advice by Naráyana*. Clay Sanskrit Library, New York: NYU Press, 2007.
- R. C. Zaehner. [The Bhagavad-Gītā](#) with a commentary based on the original sources. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1969.

Recommended reading for the **Prelims Grammar Paper**:

- Michael Coulson. *Complete Sanskrit*. Teach Yourself.
- A.A. Macdonell. [A Sanskrit Grammar for Students](#), 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962
- Antonia Ruppel, *The Cambridge Introduction to Sanskrit*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- J.S. Speijer. [Sanskrit Syntax](#). Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1886.
- Gary A. Tubb and Emery R. Boose. *Scholastic Sanskrit: A Manual for Students*. New York: The American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2007.

Recommended reading for the Prelims General Paper:

- *Thomas Trautmann, *India: Brief History of a Civilization* (OUP New York, 2015)
- Goodall, Dominic (ed.), *Hindu Scriptures* (University of California Press, 1996)
- Doniger, Wendy, *Hindu Myths: A source book* (Penguin Classics, 1975)
- Nayanjot Lahiri, *Ashoka in Ancient India* (Cambridge USA, Harvard Univ. Press, 2015)
- Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 1986)
- Romila Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India From the Origins to AD 1300* (Penguin, 2002).
- William Dalrymple, *The East India Company: the original corporate raiders*
- <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/04/east-india-company-original-corporate-raiders>
- *John Brockington, *The Sacred Thread: Hinduism in its Continuity and Diversity* (Edinburgh, 1996)
- Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge, 1996)
- *Christopher Fuller, *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India* (2d ed., Princeton, 2004)
- *Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (2d ed., Grove/Atlantic, 2007)
- Paul Williams (with Anthony Tribe), *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition* (Routledge, 2000)
- Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford UP, 1998)
- Paul Dundas, *The Jains*. 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2002)
- *Jonathan Keay, *India Discovered* (Harper Collins, 2001)
- Charles Allen, *The Buddha and Dr. Führer: An Archaeological Scandal* (Penguin India, 2010)
- Nayanjot Lahiri, *Finding Forgotten Cities: How the Indus Civilization Was Discovered*. (Permanent Black, 2005)
- Thomas Trautmann, *Elephants and Kings: An Environmental History* (University of Chicago, 2017)
- Jim Corbett, *My India* (Durkin, 1952)
- Jim Corbett, *Jungle Lore* (Oxford India, 1990)
- Mahesh Rangarajan, *Oxford Anthology of Indian Wildlife* (Oxford India, 2001)
- Mahesh Rangarajan, *India's Wildlife History: An Introduction* (Permanent Black 2017)

Recommended reading for Indian Linguistics:

- W.S. Allen, *Phonetics in Ancient India*.
- Peter Scharf, "Linguistics in India", in Keith Allen (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Linguistics*.

Recommended reading for The Historical Philology of Old-Aryan:

- Stephanie W. Jamison and Joel P. Brereton, *The Rigveda: The earliest religious poetry of India. An English translation*. Oxford University Press, 2014. [Read the introduction.]
- Stephanie W. Jamison and Michael Witzel, [Vedic Hinduism](#).

- A.A. Macdonell, *A Vedic Reader for Students*. Oxford University Press.
- A.A. Macdonell, *A Sanskrit Grammar for Students*. Oxford University Press. [Read Appendix III: Chief peculiarities of Vedic grammar.]

Recommended reading for Poetry (kāvyā, mahākāvya):

- Sheldon Pollock, *A Rasa reader: Classical Indian aesthetics*. Columbia University Press, 2016.
- Sheldon Pollock, 'Sanskrit Literary Culture from the Inside Out' in Sheldon Pollock (ed.), *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*. University of California, 2003, pp. 39-130. (The editor's Introduction to the volume is also relevant.)
- Yigal Bronner, David Shulman and Gary Tubb (eds.), *Innovations and turning points: Towards a history of kāvyā literature*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

Recommended reading for Poetics (alaṃkāraśāstra):

- Sheldon Pollock, *A Rasa reader: Classical Indian aesthetics*. Columbia University Press, 2016.
- S.K. De, *History of Sanskrit poetics*, second edition. K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960.

Recommended reading for Drama (nāṭya):

- Manmohan Ghosh, [*The Nāṭyaśāstra ascribed to Bharata-Muni, translated into English*](#). Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1951.
- V. Raghavan, *Sanskrit Drama: Its aesthetics and production*. Madras, 1993.

Recommended reading for The Epics:

- John Brockington, *The Sanskrit Epics*. Brill, 1998.
- Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman, *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: an epic of ancient India. Volume VII: Uttarakāṇḍa*. Princeton University Press, 2017. [Read the introduction. Introduction to the translations of the earlier volumes are similarly valuable.]
- Peter Hill, *Fate, Predestination and Human Action in the Mahābhārata : A Study in the History of Ideas*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2001.
- Bimal Matilal, "Moral Dilemmas, Insights from Indian Epics," in Jonardon Ganeri (ed.) *Ethics and Epics*, 2002.
- T. Oberlies, *A Grammar of Epic Sanskrit* (Walter De Gruyter: Berlin 2003).
- Paula Richman, *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*. University of California Press, 1991.
- Paula Richman, *Questioning Ramayanas: A South Asian Tradition*. Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Yaroslav Vassilkov, "Kālavāda (the doctrine of cyclical time) in the Mahābhārata and the Concept of Heroic Didactics" in Mary Brockington and Peter Schreiner (eds.) *Composing a tradition: concepts, techniques and relationships* (Proceedings of the First Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Puranas, August 1997). Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1999, pp. 17-34.
- E. Washburn Hopkins, "The Social and Military Position of the Ruling Caste in Ancient India" *JAOS* 13 (1889).

- E. Washburn Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India, its character and origin* (New York: Scribner, 1901).

Recommended reading for **Indian Buddhism**:

- Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons*. Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*. Translated by Paul Groner. University of Hawai'i Press, 1990.
- Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*. Translated by Sara Boin. Institut Orientaliste, 1988.
- Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*. Second edition. Grove/Atlantic, 2007.
- Andrew Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism*. Windhorse, 1994.
- Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, second edition. Routledge, 2008.
- Paul Williams with Anthony Tribe and Alexander Wynne, *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*. Second edition. Routledge, 2011.

Recommended reading for **Śaivism**:

- Peter Bisschop, 'Śiva', in Knut A. Jacobsen (ed.), *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, Vol. 1. Brill, 2009.
- Richard Davis, *Rituals in an Oscillating Universe: Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India*. Princeton, 1991.
- Gavin Flood, *Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion*. I B Tauris, 2006, pp. 131-145.
- Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Literature," in *Journal of Indological Studies* 24-25 (2012-2013), 2014, 1-113.
- Alexis Sanderson, "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions", in S. Sutherland et al (ed.) *The World's Religions*. Routledge, 1988, pp. 660–704. Reprinted in F. Hardy (ed.), *The World's Religions: The Religions of Asia*. Routledge, 1990, pp. 128–172.

Recommended reading for **Vaiṣṇavism**:

- Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and other minor religious systems*. Poona, 1913. [Old but still useful]
- Francis Clooney and Tony Steward, 'Vaiṣṇava', in Mittal and Thursby (eds.), *The Hindu World*.
- Gérard Colas, 'History of Vaiṣṇava Traditions: An Esquisse,' in Gavin Flood (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*. Oxford, 2003, pp. 229-270.
- Gérard Colas, 'Bhagavatism', 'Vaikhānasa' and 'Vaiṣṇava Saṃhitās' in Knut A. Jacobsen (ed.) *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Brill, 2009.
- André Couture, 'Viṣṇu', in Knut Jacobsen (ed.) *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Brill, 2009.
- Jan Gonda, *Aspects of Early Visnuism*. Oosthoek, 1954.
- Freda Matchett. "The Pervasiveness of Bhakti in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa," in Werner (ed.) *Love Divine: Studies in Bhakti and Devotional Mysticism*. Durham Indological Series, no. 3. Curzon, 1993.
- J.A.B. Van Buitenen, 'On the Archaism of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa' in M.B. Singer (ed.) *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes*. Chicago University Press, 1966.

Recommended reading for Jainism:

- Lawrence Babb, *Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996.
- Paul Dundas, *The Jains*. Psychology Press, 1992.
- Phyllis Granoff, "The Violence of Non-Violence: A Study of Some Jain Responses to Non-Jain Religious Practices." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15, 1 (1992) 1-43.

Recommended reading for Law (dharmaśāstra):

- Donald R. Davis Jr., *The Dharma of business: Commercial law in Medieval India*. Penguin, 2017.
- Timothy Lubin, Donald R. Davis Jr., and Jayanth K. Krishnan, *Hinduism and Law: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Patrick Olivelle, *Manu's Code of Law*. Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Patrick Olivelle, *A Dharma reader: Classical Indian Law*. Columbia University Press, 2016.
- Patrick Olivelle and Donald R. Davis Jr. (eds.), *Hindu Law: A New History of Dharmaśāstra*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Recommended reading for Polity and Statecraft (arthaśāstra):

- Mark McLish, *The history of the Arthaśāstra*. Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Patrick Olivelle, *King, governance and law in Ancient India*. Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Patrick Olivelle and Mark McLish, *The Arthaśāstra: Selections from the Classic Indian Work on Statecraft*. Hackett, 2012.
- Thomas Trautmann, *The Arthaśāstra: The Science of Wealth*. Allen Lane / Penguin, 2012.

Recommended reading for Indian philosophy (e.g., nyāya, mīmāṃsā):

- Jonardon Ganeri, *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- B.K. Matilal, *The character of logic in India*. SUNY Press, 1998.
- J.N. Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy: An Introductory Text*. Rowman, 2000.
- Karl H. Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*. Greenwood, 1972.

Recommended reading for Grammar (vyākaraṇa and related traditions):

- Eivind Kahrs, *Indian semantic analysis: the nirvacana tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- R.N. Sharma, *The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini*, volume 1. Munshiram Manoharlal, 2002.
- K.A. Subramania Iyer, *Bharṭṛhari*. Deccan College, 1992.

Recommended reading for Upaniṣadic literature:

- Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*. (English translation by A.S. Geden.)

T.T. Clark, 1919.

- Patrick Olivelle, *The Samnyāsa Upaniṣads*. Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Patrick Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Student Information and Support

Student Hub

The [Student Hub](#) is an ongoing project to provide a live online version of the handbook, together with more detailed course information and further resources such as forms and exam conventions, as well as archived documents from previous years. You can also access the Student Hub through the top bar of the Faculty Website, through the '**NEW Faculty Intranet**' button. You will need to log in using your SSO.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In accordance with our [Statement of Values](#), the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies is committed to creating a teaching, learning, and research environment in which every member of our community – at every academic level from undergraduate to senior academic, and among library and administrative staff – can achieve their full professional potential without discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, marriage or civil partnership, nationality, pregnancy or parenthood, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We welcome suggestions for making our courses more diverse and inclusive. In general, you are encouraged to tell us if you see any ways in which the courses or this handbook might be improved. Staff and students are welcome to contact the Equality and Diversity team with any suggestions or concerns:

Inner and South Asia Group Equality and Diversity Representative: [Christopher Fleming](#)

Faculty Equality and Diversity Officer: [Dominic Brookshaw](#)

Welfare and Support

Our community aims to encourage and support all students. The student experience at Oxford offers lots of opportunities for you to thrive, grow, and look after your own wellbeing, but we know that sometimes there can be stresses and challenges too.

We want to give you the agency to navigate welfare support, and to make your own decisions. This includes by:

- Keeping in touch with your College and Department, and letting them know if you need help
- Seeking support when needed
- Supporting your fellow students
- Registering with Disability Advisory Service for structured support if you have a disability

Should you have any concerns, or for guidance and support, please do not hesitate to contact the following people:

Disability Coordinators: [Thomas Hall](#) and [Edmund Howard](#)

Welfare Contact: [Edmund Howard](#)

Harassment Officers: [Laurence Mann](#) and [Leyla Najafzade](#)

Details of the range of sources of support available in the University are available from the [Oxford Students](#) website, including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.

More information about the support and resources available can be found in the general Undergraduate Handbook and on the Faculty and University websites.