

**Yoga: From Vedic Origins to Western Transplantation  
Spring 2016.**

Edwin Bryant

01:840:321:01 (Cross-listed with 16:840:521:01)

Tuesday/Thursday 3:20 p.m. - 4:40 p.m. (5th period)

College Ave Campus.

Office hours Tuesday 1.45 - 2.45 PM

(and by appointment before or after class).

**Course Description.**

This course will undertake a close reading of *yoga* as presented in the traditional Hindu sourcebook on the subject, the 3rd century *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali, where it is defined as “the stilling of all states of mind” (i.e. meditative practices). The *Yoga Sūtras* is the classical text on meditative practice accepted as authoritative by all the orthodox Hindu schools, and our reading of it will be informed by the primary commentaries that have elaborated on the source text over the centuries prior to the colonial period. The course will subsequently trace the development of representations of *yoga* from these pre-modern expressions, through its appropriation and reconfiguring by Hindu figureheads, and into its modern Western transplanted form as primarily postural exercise. Students will thus gain exposure to some of the ways in which an ancient classical tradition is appropriated, transplanted, reconfigured and commodified in modernity.

Students will read the primary source text the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali for the first month with a view to obtaining a grounding in the pre-modern metaphysics and practices of *yoga*. The remaining two months of the course will chart the development of notions associated with *yoga* culminating in some of its present western transplanted forms.

**Course objectives.**

The course has two main objectives. The first is to expose students to the classical Hindu source on contemplative practices. The second is intended to equip students with an exposure to how religious phenomenon are significantly adapted and transformed by social, cultural and political circumstances.

**Course Requirements.**

Students will be required to make weekly presentations on the subject matter. They will be expected to submit an 8-10 page paper, which will afford them an opportunity to undertake a focused written research project. Additionally, the students will be assessed by class participation and two quizzes. Students will be assessed and graded as follows: class participation and chapter presentations (10%); mid-term quiz (25%); final quiz, (25%); research paper (40%). A 7 page paper writing guide is provided all students containing comprehensive instructions on research paper writing.

## Required Reading

1) *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali with Insights from the Traditional Commentators.* by Edwin Bryant Farrar Strauss and Giroux, 2010.

This book exposes the student to classical Hindu *yoga*, the goal of which is an experience of content-less consciousness, along with its accompanying practices and presuppositions, as transmitted over a period of 1500 years prior to the pre-colonial period, drawing on the main pre-modern commentaries over this period. We will spend 5 weeks on this book.

2) *Yoga Body: The History of Modern Posture Practice* by Mark Singleton, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

This book highlights the lack of any evidence in traditional Indian sources for the health and fitness orientated practices that are associated with *yoga* today. The book argues that the popular modern *yoga* has more to do with British gymnastics and body-building than any ancient Indian *yoga* tradition, and examines how *yoga* became the hugely popular phenomenon it is today. We will spend 2 weeks on this book

3) *Selling Yoga: from Counterculture to Pop Culture* by Jain Andrea, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

This book explores the popularization of *yoga* into its variegated modern commodified forms. It argues that *yoga* has taken on new meanings and religious functions that cannot be dismissed, and considers new expressions of the sacred in modern culture through the lens of some of *yoga*'s practices and rituals. We will spend 2 weeks on this book

4) *Gurus in of Modern Yoga* edited by Mark Singleton, & Goldberg, Ellen. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

This edited volume explores the contributions of a number of individual *gurus* to the formation of the practices and discourses of *yoga* today. It considers the history, characteristics, and roles of prominent *guru* figures and their role in contemporary *yoga* practices. We will spend 2 weeks on this book

## Recommended Reading.

Elizabeth, De Michelis *A History of Modern Yoga* Continuum, 2004.

Alter, Joseph S *Yoga in Modern India* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Strauss, Sarah *Positioning Yoga* Oxford: Berg, 2005.

Syman, Stephanie *The Story of Yoga in America* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010

Singleton, Mark and Byren, Jean, eds *Yoga in the Modern World* London: Routledge, 2008.

Sjoman, N.E. *The Yoga Tradition of the Mysore Palace* New Delhi: Abhinav, 1996.

### **Week I.**

**Tue/Thur Jan 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>**

Introduction to the course. Discussion in class examining the earliest pre-Patañjalian expressions on *yoga* prior to the common era, and proceeding to the metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and soteriological backdrop of the mainstream practices.

**Reading:** *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, chapter I.1-16: the definition and goal of classical Yoga

### **Week II.**

**Tue/Thur Jan 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading:** *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, chapter 1.

The conventional states of mind; *samādhi*:

The six progressive stages of the stilled mind; the seventh *samādhi* state beyond mind.

*Īśvara*: the theistic element in the *sūtras*.

### **Week III.**

**Tue/Thur Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading:** *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, chapter I continued. Chapter 2.

The *kleśas*: suffering, *karma* and reincarnation

### **Week IV.**

**Tue/Thur Feb 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading:** *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, chapter II continued.

The eight limbs of *yoga*

### **Week V.**

**Tue/Thur Feb 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading:** *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, chapter III.

The mystic powers

### **Week VI.**

**Tue/Thur Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading:** *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, chapter IV.

Yoga's response to the Buddhist challenge

### **Week VII.**

**Tue/Thur March 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Reading:** Singleton, chapters 1-4.

Colonials, 'jogis,' fakirs, and the social marginalization of the *yogī*; the International Physical Culture Movement.

**Week VIII.**

**Tue/Thur March 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading:** Singleton, chapter 5-9.

Countering colonial stereotypes: degeneracy, physical health and Hindu nationalism.  
Harmonial gymnastics and 19<sup>th</sup> century esoteric dance. The asana 'revival.'

**QUIZ I**

**Week IX.**

**Tue/Thur March 15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> SPRING BREAK**

**Week X.**

**Tue/Thur March 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading:** Jain, chapters 1-3.

Premodern yoga, counterculture and consumer culture.

**Week XI.**

**Tue/Thur March 29<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Reading:** Jain, chapters 4-6 & conclusion.

Branding yoga, postural yoga, Hindu origins and yogaphobia

**Week XII.**

**Tue/Thur April 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading:** Singleton, & Goldberg, chapters 1-5.

Key figures in early 20<sup>th</sup> century *yoga* and the Krishnamacharya lineages.

**Week XIII**

**Tue/Thur April 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading:** Singleton, & Goldberg, chapters 6-10.

Krishnamacharya lineages continued; *tantra* based *gurus*.

**Week XIV**

**Tue/Thur April 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Reading:** Singleton, & Goldberg, chapter 11-16.

*Bhakti-yoga*; Technology and Nation-Builders

**Week XIV**

**April 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>**

Discussion; Student presentation of their papers.

**ALL FINAL PAPERS DUE May 5th, 5.00 PM. Loree 108, Douglass Campus. Hard copies must be delivered, no electronic copies.**



## **Student-Wellness Services:**

### **Just In Case Web App**

<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

### **Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)**

**(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/**

[www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/](http://www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/)

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

### **Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)**

**(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 /**

[www.vpva.rutgers.edu/](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/)

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

### **Disability Services**

**(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

### **Scarlet Listeners**

**(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>**

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

## **Cheating and Plagiarism**

Short version: Don't cheat. Don't plagiarize.

Longer version: Cheating on tests or plagiarizing materials in your papers deprives you of the educational benefits of preparing these materials appropriately. It is personally dishonest to cheat on a test or to hand in a paper based on unacknowledged words or ideas that someone else originated. It is also unfair, since it gives you an undeserved advantage over your fellow students who are graded on the basis of their own work. In this class we will take cheating very seriously. All suspected cases of cheating and plagiarism will be automatically referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs, and we will recommend penalties appropriate to the gravity of the infraction. The university's policy on Academic Integrity is available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy>. I strongly advise you to familiarize yourself with this document, both for this class and for your other classes and future work. To help protect you, and future students, from plagiarism, we require all papers to be submitted through Turnitin.com.

Since what counts as plagiarism is not always clear, I quote the definition given in Rutgers' policy:

**Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are:**

- ñ **Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.**
- ñ **Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words another person's written words or ideas as if they were one's own.**
- ñ **Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.**
- ñ **Incorporating into one's work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources without proper attribution.**

A SPECIAL NOTE: Students often assume that because information is available on the Web it is public information, does not need to be formally referenced, and can be used without attribution. This is a mistake. *All* information and ideas that you derive from other sources, whether written, spoken, or electronic, must be attributed to their original source. Such sources include not just written or electronic materials, but people with whom you may discuss your ideas, such as your roommate, friends, or family members. They deserve credit for their contributions too!

Judgments about plagiarism can be subtle. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask for guidance from your TA