Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi leads the International Day of Yoga on the capital mall New Delhi June 21, 2015 Straits Times Singapore
Description:
What is yoga? Often those in yogic practices declare that yoga is not associated with "religion" but rather either “spiritual” or totally “secular.” This course will consider contemporary yoga now, in the context of its origins in India paying close attention to the ways the human body and the larger cosmos are intertwined. The practice of yoga always concerned the re-formation of both mind and body—and included a broad understanding of health—but in what sense? Here the newer work in cognitive studies, contemplative studies (sometimes called Mindfulness or Wisdom research) will be important.

Issues:
1. Who “owns” Yoga? / What are the origins of modern yoga?
Although yoga appears everywhere now in almost every form, questions linger over its origins. Is the yoga practiced and understood today a direct descendent of ancient Indian yoga? Recently the American Hindu Foundation launched a Take Back Yoga movement, which attracted the attention of the New York Times. On June 21, 2015, Prime Minister Modi firmly claimed yoga as Indian by leading a carefully organized worldwide demonstrations including leading a yoga session on the lawn of the capital buildings in Delhi.

The question of "ownership" moves yoga into economics, religious identity, and politics but also historical research.

2. Does modern yoga have antecedents in other parts of Asia or even with Europe?

Recently the Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian mounted an amazing art collection depicting or related to yoga, YOGA: THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION, October 19, 2013–January 26, 2014. The website affirms the early complexity and diversity of yoga.

And several new books argue that yoga, as we know it, also has roots in 19th century Europe and America health and fitness movements. And today I have seen Yin Yoga, which combines Chinese and Indian Practices

3. How do we “study” yoga? – A Difficult Balance

Recently a movement with many facets has emerged Contemplative Pedagogy or Mindfulness. Interestingly most of the excitement seems to be located in psychology, especially clinical and counseling, in education, and medical schools, with much less input and enthusiasm from religious studies departments.

Today many yoga instructors and popular gurus, argue that yoga is rooted in experience not in rational learning, yet yoga has a long history within religious texts including the famous Yoga Sûtra of Patañjali, which outlines practices but also interprets meaning of yoga.
Required Books


Both books have a Kindle Edition, which is less expensive but purchase the paper—so you will have this in class or alternately bring good notes.


Plus readings on Blackboard

Course Policies

Please Read Carefully now!

○ Attendance is required at all class sessions. I can allow only 2 unexcused absences total. Please plan your schedule to allow for religious holidays within this allowance. Because this is a MW class, those on sports teams should not be affected. However if you take any class days for sports events (with proper documentation), then I can allow NO unexcused absences in addition to your sports commitments.

○ An excused absence means that you have emailed both the TA and myself and received approval for absences in advance due to special circumstances. Please if you speak to me in class--confirm any conversation with an email. In case of illness, you must talk to afterwards. The policy of the Health services is to provide a note only when the student has been advised to miss classes.

○ Common Courtesy: (I should not have to mention these points but sad experience makes this necessary.) The class begins at 3:45 . Please be on time; walking in late shows little respect for your fellow student or for me. If you have a tight connection between classes let us know and we can seat you accordingly. All cell phones, tablets are to be turned entirely off including text messaging and all I-pods shut down. I have also decided to exclude computers from the class—new research has shown that taking notes in class by using paper and pen or pencil is the most effective way of learning! AND contemplative studies seem at odd with a constant barrage of digital chatter.

○ Academic Integrity: I expect the work you present to be totally your own with all sources, which you have used, fully acknowledged. I will provide full instructions as to citation and form. Both the TA and I are willing to help you if you have any doubts. If we find any evidence of academic dishonesty of any kind, I will report the incident to the Academic Integrity Office. The sanctions will include lowered your
grade, or result in failure for the entire course depended on the severity. Please check http://academicintegrity.syr.edu for more information.

- Disability Policy: Any students that need accommodation because of disability should discuss it with the professor during office hours or by appointment and be prepared to provide documentation to the Office of Disability Services (ext. 4498 or 1371)
- Paper Deadlines: There are no extensions on papers.

Requirements:
1. Not simply attendance, but also active reading, listening, and participation in class. This is important as the class is evolving and we are building a syllabus and a new course together.
2. Because of the materials, requirements will be papers/projects rather than exams. I will occasionally give a short quiz on the reading. The major requirements are 4 short papers during the term, and a field research project at the end with an oral presentation in groups and individual final papers.
3. On the fieldwork projects: The final project will ask you to work in groups on a contemporary yoga movements in Syracuse or if you have accesses—in any city.

Topics
- Who “owns” yoga?
- What is the history of yoga within the ancient Hindu tradition?
  - What is the difference between mediation and postural yoga?
- What happened to Yogis at the time Europeans encountered India in the 17th century?
- What elements of European and American health/fitness movements refined and reconstructed yoga?
- What are Contemplative studies, Wisdom research, and Mindfulness studies and how do these relate to how we “study” yoga?
- How has experimental science changed the public perceptions of yoga?
- What is the current state of such research?
- History of the introduction of yoga into America
- Contemporary yoga movements, global and local

4 papers @10 points each
Classroom participation and work
Including quizzes
Oral presentation of research project
Final paper

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International Day of Yoga ION Station Shopping Center
Singapore
SCHEDULE:

Week 01. Aug 31 - Sept 2: Considering the International Day of Yoga—what was this and what did such an event mean for yoga?

Week 02. Sept 7 (holiday), Sept 9: Controversies over the origins of yoga

Reading:
  “The History of Yoga” pp. xvii-xlili Course book

PART ONE: THE HISTORY OF YOGA IN INDIA—THREE VERSIONS

Week 03. Sept. 14-16: Taking Eliade's Yoga: Immortality and Freedom as a history of yoga within ancient Hindu practices

Reading: Mircea Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom Origin version in French Le yoga; immortality et liberté. Paris, Payot, 1954. (From his dissertation in the 1930s) Read SLOWLY Forward, Chapter 1, “Doctrines of Yoga”; then skim Chapter 3 “Yoga and Brāhmanism”

Week 04. Sept. 21-23: Eliade introduces and interprets the TECHNIQUES

Reading: SLOWLY Chapter 2, Techniques for Autonomy

Paper 1 due FRIDAY OCTOBER 2 AT MIDNIGHT on Blackboard -- REQUIRED OF EVERYONE.

Week 05. Sept. 28-30: READING PATAÑJALI

From The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali

Bryant, “The Subject Matter of the Yoga Sūtra” pp. xlv-lviii

*Warning this is short but not sweet I recommend taking it with an aspirin.

Note that Edwin Bryant does not simply translate the text but provide a sometimes long commentary on each verse—here he is following the traditional way a scripture is read in India—slowly verse-by-verse with the master—here our scholar—explaining the importance and meaning of the text. Bryant summarizes older commentaries and provides his own.

THEN READ VERY SLOWLY PAGES 3-21 TO GET THE FEEL OF THE WORK. WE WILL DO MORE IN CLASS.
PART TWO: GETTING TO THE CASES—LOOKING AN EXAMPLE OF CONTEMPORARY “YOGA” MOVEMENTS

Week 06. Oct 5, Oct. 7: Origins of modern yoga in the 19th century
Reading is from Mark Singleton, who has encountered sharp criticism for his presentation of yoga and yogis in the 18th and early 19th centuries as a kind of circus act. His argument is more complicated.
Reading: Singleton, *Yoga Body*, chapter 2, “Fakirs, Yogins, Europeans,” Chapter 3 “Popular Portrayals of the Yogin”, and Chapter 6, “Yoga as Physical Culture I: Strength and Vigor.”

Week 07. Oct 12-14: Introduction of Yoga into America—*some history and context*
Readings:
Stefanie Syman, *The Subtle Body: The Story of Yoga in America*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010 (Syman is a professional writer, not an academic—very readable) 3-79

The questions for this week:
How did yoga come to America?
What cultural and religious sensibilities were already here?
Generally what forces worked on yoga as it transformed from its Indian roots to new American context?
So our questions are historical but also conceptual—what are the best ways to describe the process of what Williamson names “Acculturation”. Notice that we already have touched on these issues with Yogananda and iyengar—but now is the time to generalize—see if there is a pattern.
Monday: Syman 3-36
Wednesday: Syman 36-79, Williamson 3-25.

Then Paramahansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*
LOOK at the entire book and concentrate on the checked chapters:
1 My Parents and Early Life
2 Life Mother’s Death and the Amulet
12 Years in my Master’s Hermitage
23 My University Degree
26 The Science of Kriya Yoga
Week 09. Oct 26-28
Oct 26—more of the Autobiography of a Yogi

Oct 28 Yogananda and Education
Paper 2 due Friday October 28 on Blackboard at Midnight

PART THREE: ENTER SCIENCE AND MINDFULNESS, CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES AND WISDOM RESEARCH

Week 10 Nov 2-4: Considering Mindfulness pedagogy (teaching techniques) as a part of “Yoga”
This course will be listed in the new Minor in Mindfulness and Contemplative Sciences in the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics. As part of the emerging Contemplative Practices and Studies Center at SU, an evaluation of teaching practices has become important. I think this is all part of a general trend toward a “yoga culture” in the US—i.e. a willingness to take this all seriously in some way, now as part of the university system.
Monday: Chapter 1 and 2—1-38
Weds: 89-109 which are actually suggested practices-
*In all of this reading consider in what ways yoga figures in this Mindfulness movement and HOW?*

Paper 3 due Friday Nov 13 at 11:59 on mindfulness

Week 11. Nov, 11: Yoga and Science—very contemporary studies
The readings for this week are both simple and dense. The first is a New York Times best seller:
Prologue 1-11
Chapter III, Modes
Introduction (1-4), Chapter 1- and 2 (7-35)

Reading are on Blackboard

Paper 4 due FRIDAY Nov 20th at 11:59 on Yoga and science –note this is just before Thanksgiving break– I recommend doing this earlier

Week 12. Nov 16, 18: Field Research week: YOGA IN CENTRAL NEW YORK

THANKSGIVING WEEK Nov 23-25

Week 14: Nov 30, Dec 2

Week 15: Dec 7- Dec 9

FINAL PAPER: due Wednesday Dec 16 at midnight