



**Instructor: Daniel M. Stuart (email: [stuard@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:stuard@mailbox.sc.edu))**  
**TR 10:05am – 11:20am, Humanities Classroom Building 318**  
**Office: 331 Rutledge College (office hours are by appointment)**

Yoga has become a **mainstream cultural phenomenon** in affluent Western societies. Yoga studios, yoga styles, yoga accessories, yoga celebrities, and yoga magazines proliferate, marking yoga as **India's greatest cultural export**.

**But what were the original yoga traditions of ancient India, and how are they related to modern postural yoga?** This course explores the spiritual and religious traditions of India through the prism of yoga, a word meaning “practice” or “discipline.” From its earliest pre-history to the classical formulations of yoga in the *Yoga-sutra* and the *Bhagavad-gita*, to Buddhist and Hindu and Jain renditions of yoga and to fascinating stories about medieval yogis performing miracles with their yogic superpowers, the course introduces students to the **richness of all that yoga meant in its original cultural contexts**. But we also critically examine the modern transformation of yoga into a westernized phenomenon and the creative, innovative developments – as well as the cultural tensions and controversies – that have emerged as a result.

A **variety of assignments** allow students to experience the practice dimension of yoga and to develop a case study of their choosing.

## Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete the course should be able to

- demonstrate their familiarity with the key concepts and terms of yoga and relevant South Asian religious traditions
- explain the main outlines of yoga's historical trajectory from its origins in South Asia to modern postural yoga
- critically discuss and analyze the range of meanings attributed to yoga and the contemporary controversies and tensions involving authenticity, commodification, and cultural appropriation in yoga

## Course Readings

### Books available for purchase at the Bookstore:

Barbara Stoler Miller (trans.), *The Bhagavad-gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*

Barbara Stoler Miller (trans.), *Yoga: Discipline of Freedom*

Stephanie Syman, *The Subtle Body: The Story of Yoga in America*

David Gordon White, *Sinister Yogis*

### All other readings available as PDF documents via Blackboard (B)

## Course Requirements and Grading

1. *Attendance and Participation, including class discussion and in-class group projects (20%)*

Your contributions in class should reflect careful and thoughtful reading of the assigned materials, and active engagement with the ideas. If you have concerns about class participation, please come and talk to me.

2. *Four short writing assignments (1–2 page) in the course of the semester (20%)*
3. *Mid-term exam (30%)*

4. *Case study (30%)*

As the final project for this course, you will visit a yoga studio or center of your choice and produce a report on the site, the organization, the style of yoga practiced at this

site, and how traditional or Indian elements of yoga are incorporated (or not) in the yoga teaching and practice there. The site may be in Columbia, SC, or elsewhere. The report will be both published in the class blog and presented in class. Detailed guidelines for developing the case study will be provided.

### *Grading Scale*

100-90 A; 89-87 B+; 86-80 B; 79-77 C+; 76-70 C; 69-67 D+; 66-60 D; 59 and below F

## **Course Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

The University of South Carolina has clearly articulated its policies governing academic integrity and students are encouraged to carefully review the policy on the Honor Code in the Carolina Community. Any deviation from these expectations will result in academic penalties as well as disciplinary action. The area of greatest potential risk for inadvertent academic dishonesty is plagiarism. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, paraphrasing or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement.

### **Attendance**

Prompt and regular attendance is crucial for success in the course. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. We will follow the university's policy regarding attendance and the effect of unexcused absences on a student's course grade. If you are absent for an excusable reason, be sure to present the needed documentation to the instructor immediately upon your return (e.g., if you are absent for a legitimate medical reason, bring a doctor's note as soon as you come back to class). The University attendance policy specifies that students may miss up to 3 class meetings (10% of class time) without penalty. Beyond that, class absences will affect your class participation grade.

### **Classroom Conduct**

All cell phones are to be turned off or silenced during class; there is no text messaging, web browsing, etc, during class. Please come to class on time, and be respectful of everyone else in the class. Refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Disrespectful or disruptive behavior, such as talking out of turn, may result in dismissal from class and/or an academic penalty.

### **Assignment Submission**

All assignments should be submitted using Blackboard's "submit assignment" link. Assignments lose 20% of their point value per day late and will be counted as if the whole assignment was submitted at the time of the latest timestamp present.

### **Accommodating Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Office of Student Disability Services: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email [sasds@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sasds@mailbox.sc.edu), or stop by LeConte College Room 112A. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Student Disability Services.

## Schedule of Classes

### Week 1      **The Present Day and the Prehistory of Yoga**

- Jan 15      Introduction to the course  
Jan 17      White, *Sinister Yogis*, Ch. 6

### Week 2      **The "Prehistory" of Yoga**

- Jan 22      Narayanan, pp. 28-40 (B)  
*The Rig Veda and Atharva Veda* (selections) (B)  
Jan 24      *The Upanishads* (selections) (B)

### Week 3      **Classical Hinduism and Jain Yoga**

- Jan 29      Narayanan, pp. 41-57 (B)  
Jan 31      Vallely, pp. 148-168 (B)  
"The Life of Mahāvīra," *Kalpa Sūtra* (B)

### Week 4      **Jains and Buddhists**

- Feb 5      *Tattvārtha Sūtra: That Which Is*, Ch. 9: Inhibiting and Wearing off Karma (B)  
Feb 7      Keown 2013 [1996], pp. 17-31 and 48-60 (B)

### Week 5      **Buddhist Yoga**

- Feb 12      *Ānāpānasati sutta*: Mindfulness of breathing  
*Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*: The foundations of mindfulness (B)  
Feb 14      Keown 2013 [1996], pp. 32-47 and 96-111 (B)

SHORT ASSIGNMENT # 1 DISTRIBUTED (due on 2/22/2019)

**Week 6      The Three Yogas of the *Bhagavad-gita***

**Feb 19**      *The Bhagavadgita in the Mahabharata*, ch. 1-9

**Feb 21**      *The Bhagavadgita in the Mahabharata*, ch. 10-18

**Week 7      The Ultimate Yoga Classic: The *Yoga-sutra* of Patañjali**

**Feb 26**      *Yoga: Discipline of Freedom*, pp. 1-43

**Feb 28**      *Yoga: Discipline of Freedom*, pp. 44-83

SHORT ASSIGNMENT # 2 DISTRIBUTED (due on 3/8/2019)

**Week 8      Medieval Yogis and Subtle Bodies: Yoga and Tantra**

**Mar 5**      White, *Sinister Yogis*, Ch. 1

**Mar 7**      White, *Sinister Yogis*, Ch. 2, 4

**Spring Break: 3/10–3/17**

**Week 9      Hatha Yoga: The Yoga of Exertion**

**Mar 19**      *Hatha-yoga-pradipika* (selections) (B)

White, "Yoga: Brief History of an Idea," pp. 15-17 (B)

**Mar 21**      Midterm Exam

**Week 10      Yoga in Narrative and Art**

**Mar 26**      Swami Venkatesananda, *The Concise Yoga Vasistha*, pp. 333-62 (B)

**Mar 28**      [www.asianart.org/exhibitions\\_index/yoga-artwork-highlights](http://www.asianart.org/exhibitions_index/yoga-artwork-highlights)

Narayanan, pp. 70-77 (B) **(The instructor will be out of town for a conference—no class)**

SHORT ASSIGNMENT # 3 DISTRIBUTED (due on 4/5/2019)

## **Week 11 Yoga Comes to America**

- Apr 2** Syman, Ch. 2-3  
Henry David Thoreau, *Letters to a Spiritual Seeker* (selections) (B)
- Apr 4** Narayanan, pp. 66-69 (B)  
Syman, Ch. 5

## **Week 12 New Age Yoga: Gurus, Psychedelics, Pop Culture, and Hollywood**

- Apr 9** Syman, Ch. 9-10
- Apr 11** Syman Ch. 12-13

## **Week 13 Is Yoga Hindu? Is Yoga Indian? Cultural Appropriation and the "Religiousness" of Yoga**

- Apr 16** Andrew Nicholson, "Is Yoga Hindu? On the Fuzziness of Religious Boundaries" (B)
- Apr 18** Candy Brown, "Declaration of Candy Brown" (B)  
Damon Huss, "Curriculum Content and the First Amendment in Public Schools" (B)

Recommended reading (online):

- <https://moonlitmoth.wordpress.com/2014/11/24/why-i-stopped-teaching-yoga-my-journey-into-spiritual-political-accountability/>
- <https://saapya.wordpress.com/>

SHORT ASSIGNMENT # 4 DISTRIBUTED (due on 4/26/2019)

## **Week 14: Case Study Reporting**

- Apr 23** Student presentations on case studies
- Apr 25** Student presentations on case studies

**CASE STUDIES DUE: May 2, 5 pm. Papers should be submitted to me by email at [stuardt@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:stuardt@mailbox.sc.edu).**