COURSE SYLLABUS
THE ART OF YOGA AND MEDITATION: PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICUM

Contact and Course Information

Professor: Dr. Andrea Mantell- Seidel
Course number: REL 3399 Sec. U01
Credits: 3 credits
Semester: spring 2011
Course Times: T TH 8:00-9:15
Office Hours: TTH 9:30-11:30 or by appointment
Offices: LACC, DM 353
Phone: 348-2894

Required Class Materials:
- Comfortable clothes
- Yoga mat (recommended) or cotton blanket
- Towel, something to cover eyes for meditation
- Optional: yoga blocks, yoga belts, water bottle
- Journal book
- Text Books
- FIU e-mail account

Email: seidela@fiu.edu

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

"Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook."

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Art of Yoga and Meditation: Philosophy and Practicum: Through a concentrated study of yoga asanas (postures), mantras (sacred chants), meditation techniques, pranayama (breath
control) and philosophical and religious scriptures, students will engage in questioning, analysis, and application. Studio and theory.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

Your final grade will be composed of your take-home exam grades, participation and effort in class, and the assigned journal projects.

Grades are based on attendance, written assignments, class participation, and individual progress.

33%  -Final essay exam
34%  -Written journal and mid-term exam
33%  -Attendance and active class participation (evaluation based on attendance record, punctuality, concentration, attitude/effort, progress, participation in in-class assignments, and skills acquisition)

**Grading Scale:**

98-100  A+  “As” are awarded for excellent to exceptional work, free of technical and stylistic errors, showing sustained thought and engagement with the material on an appropriate but impressive academic level.
93-97    A    “Bs” are awarded for good to very good work, with some occasional errors, which nonetheless clearly indicates a good grasp of the material and assigned task.
90-92    A-    “Cs” are awarded for average to above average work, meeting minimal standards but marked with errors, and exposing gaps in student performance and/or fulfillment of the assignment.
88-89    B+    “Ds” are awarded for barely passing to below average work, usually riddled with errors and seriously deficient in fulfilling the assignment.
83-87    B    “Fs” are awarded for unacceptable work.
80-82    B-    Below 60  F  
78-79    C+  
73-77    C    
70-72    C-    
68-69    D+    
63-67    D    
60-62    D-    

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To impart knowledge about the basic technique and practice of yoga, including instruction in breath control, meditation, and physical postures
2. To develop physical competency and mental concentration
3. To gain an intellectual and theoretical understanding of the principles embodied in the Yoga Sutras, the Bhagavad-Gita, and other important texts and doctrines

**LEARNING OUTCOMES/COMPETENCIES**

1. Students understanding of philosophy and religion as well as daily life issues will be challenged and enhanced.
2. Intellectual and philosophical understanding of the theory of yoga and basic related Hindu scriptures will be developed.
3. Physical skill and conditioning including increased flexibility, strength, coordination, endurance, and breath control will be enhanced.
4. Powers of concentration, focus, and awareness will be heightened.
5. A humanistic, spiritual sensibility will be cultivated and enhanced.

THEORETICAL TOPICS
- The **Bhagavad-Gita**, meaning “Song of the Lord” is the sixth sacred text of the great Indian war epic, the *Mahabharata*. Composed in the form of a philosophical poem and dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and his charioteer, the god Krishna, the Bhagavad-Gita has inspired centuries of Indian philosophers and men of wisdom and deeply influenced the religious and cultural life of the Indian subcontinent.
- The **Yoga Sutras** (or thread) delineate yoga’s aim, the necessary practices, the obstacles along the path, their removal and the precise descriptions of the results that will be obtained from the practice. This is the primary text of Raja Yoga or the mental science of yoga.

LEARNING STRATEGIES
1. Verbal instruction through lectures and class discussion
2. Posture demonstrations
3. Class participation and practice of postures, breathing, and meditation techniques
4. Reading and written assignments

BIBLIOGRAPHY/SELECTED READING ASSIGNMENTS
Students are required to read the books listed below during the course of the semester. Readings should provide foundational source material for writing the mid-term and final take-home essay. Students are encouraged to read some of the optional listings as well.

**Required:** Students are required to read ALL of the following texts:
Tolle, Eckard, *Power of Now*

**Optional, recommended:**
Chopra, Deepak, *Seven Spiritual Laws of Success: A Practical Guide to the Fulfillment of Your Dreams*
Cope, Steven. *Yoga and the Quest for the True Self*
Dwyer, Wayne. *The Power of Intention*
Gardner, Lawrence, *Lost Secrets of the Sacred Ark*
Iyengar, B.K. S. *Light on Yoga*
Iyengar, B.K. S. *Light on Pranayama*
Sri Aurobindo. *Integral Yoga.*
Wilbur, Ken, *A Brief History of Everything* and *A Theory of Everything*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION**

   After the first two classes, class will begin promptly. Attendance will be taken at that time, and all who are not present will be marked absent. Attendance at all classes is a requirement. Students who know in advance that they will be late or absent must discuss their tardiness or absence with Professor Seidel.

   Students are expected to attend every class session unless very ill or family emergency. Each absence, no matter what the reason, affects the continuity of training and learning, and therefore will affect the student’s grade. Students who are unable to participate physically are expected to observe class and take notes on technical corrections and observations of the class pedagogy. Three late arrivals, three early departures, and/or three observations will result in one absence. The attendance policy is outlined below:

   0 absence = A+
   2 absences = A
   3 absences = A-
   4 absences = B+ etc...

   Students who register late will not be penalized during the drop-add period, however your late registration must appear on the official University role received each week by the faculty.

   Special arrangements can be made with the instructor in the event of illness, injury, or life commitments. If a sustained injury or illness prevents you from participating in class, a letter from your physician must be presented in order to be excused and observe. If unable to participate in class for two weeks or more, a meeting should be arranged with the instructor. An incomplete is only given if circumstances beyond your control prevent you from completing course requirements. An incomplete must be completed within two terms.

2. **PERSONAL GROWTH IN COMPETENCY RELATED TO PARTICIPATORY CLASS PEDAGOGY**

   Students are expected to work hard and focus in class. Evaluation is NOT based on preexisting skills but rather on individual progress and an ongoing demonstration of a disciplined, thoughtful...
approach to the course content throughout the semester. With proper self-discipline, progress should be steady and rewarding.

3. WRITTEN JOURNAL AND INDEPENDENT PRACTICE
The journal provides an opportunity for cultivating self-discipline, self-reflexivity, and personal analysis of one’s progress in yoga. Students are required to write in their journal a minimum of one page, 3 times per week (more is recommended) and practice yoga independently for 15-20 minutes per day, 2-3 times per week, either in conjunction with the journal or at a separate time. A student may determine the nature of his home practice. However, it is recommended that the practice regularly include 2 sets of Sun Salutation A and a closing meditation. The journal should focus on the assigned topic to promote an analysis of the practice, including areas of struggle, blocks that arise, and progress and breakthroughs made in both physical and mental aspects of the discipline. The journal should be kept in a bound notebook that is turned in to the instructor at mid-term and on the first day of the last week of class. Please identify your entries as Week I: Journal Entry 1, 2, and 3; Week II, Entry 1, 2, 3, etc. The professor’s intention in reading the journal is to provide guidelines and suggestions for enhancing and creating a more satisfactory practice. Please write legibly; typing is also welcome! If typed, the student may simply staple pages together.

4. EXAMS
The mid-term and final take-home exam will consist of the following essay topics based on class readings, as well as in-class instruction. Students are encouraged to engage in both independent and creative thinking as well as the process of research. All papers must be typed and checked for spelling and grammatical errors. Good writing skills are expected of all university students.

The exam questions are outlined below so that you may focus your reading throughout the semester on these questions. However, DO NOT complete the final exam question until at least ¾ of the way through the term. Be sure to answer each part of the question and pay careful attention to key terms such as describe, analyze, or compare and contrast.

A. MID-TERM EXAM QUESTION: (2 page recommendation):
Describe in detail the most significant experience in your life where you have glimpsed or felt a sense of unity and oneness. This may include a reflection of a journey to an inspiring place (mountaintop, lake, etc.), the rapture of music, poetry, dance, meditation, or love. How can this experience lead you to a fuller, deeper, and more consistent experience of unity and wholeness? Also, write one or two poems that express this experience. You may also include an optional drawing or illustration.

B. FINAL EXAM QUESTION: (5-6 pg. minimum recommendation): Discuss and analyze in detail the yogic path to enlightenment and self-realization with specific reference to all of the required texts, the terms listed below, and to the eight-limbs of yoga (astanga). Please cite your use of references in parenthesis at the end of direct quotes, etc. (e.g. Miller, p. 4). Be sure to include in your discussion a comprehensive definition of the following terms,
and please highlight in **bold italics** the terms in the sections where you incorporate your definitions.

- **Dharana and Dhyana**
- **Pranayama**
- **Klesas**
- **Purusha and prakriti**
- **Maya**

**IMPORTANT GENERAL CLASS INFORMATION AND TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

**Late Work:**
All late work, without prior approval by the professor, will lose 10 points for each day that it is late until the grade of 0 is reached. When the assignment is graded, the grading will start at the late grade.

**Class Attire:**
Comfortable workout clothes (sweat pants, warm-up pants, loose pants, etc.) Bare feet. No dangling jewelry or gum. Long hair should be tied back.

**General Advice:**
The most important thing to remember in this class is to stay focused and concentrated in class, be absolutely punctual and rigorous about attendance, and keep up with the assignments. If you fall behind, you will have problems catching up; however, if you budget your time you will have no problems. The second most important thing to remember is to talk to me if you are having problems. I am the one who can provide the answer to your questions. If you are having difficulties come talk to me **BEFORE** an assignment is due or if you have excessive absences. I cannot help you after you have turned in an assignment or have been chronically absent or tardy, but I can and will help you before the problems develop.

**Tips for Success:**
1. Keep up with readings and assignments.
2. Think about the exam questions throughout the term. Don't wait until the end!
3. Talk to me if you have problems or questions! Together we can work out the problems.
4. Participation, focus, effort, concentration, and attendance are the keys to success!

**E-mail:**
I check e-mail often. It is reasonable to expect a return message within 72 hours. Generally I return e-mail in a much shorter amount of time; however, sometimes life does not allow that. However, please review the syllabus often, as most of the answers can be found there.

Questions and comments should be sent to seidela@fiu.edu