

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Department of Religious Studies

Spring 2022

Course: **REL 2011-U01: Preksha Meditation, Yoga and Therapy**

Instructor: **Prof. Samani Chaitanya Pragya**

Office: DM 320-C

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appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will analyze meditation and yoga from spiritual, scientific, and therapeutic points of view. Mankind has always been a prey to a variety of ills and diseases and therefore, healthcare has always been its one of the necessities. However, with explosive growth in population, hectic way of life, stress-producing situations, and highly polluted environment, needs of healthcare have taken a paramount importance in our life. An endless variety of health hazards relentlessly threatens our health almost every day. Congested and badly ventilated living conditions make matters still worse and sometime or other, we are sure to become victims of the deadly effects of a polluted or a pathogen. Technological development has brought supersonic speeds for travelling which make unprecedented demands on our physiological organs as well as mental equipment.

Today eminent doctors, specialists and general practitioners alike have realized that meditation is also a powerful therapy both for curing illness and maintaining good health. Irrefutable scientific proofs now available show that total relaxation and meditation can cure and prevent several psychosomatic diseases which are caused by stress and mental tension. Scientific investigations have provided evidence that regular practice of relaxation and meditation positively influence the controlling mechanism which is ultimately responsible for the homeostasis in the body. For instance, it produces a better equilibrium between the sympathetic and the parasympathetic components of the autonomic nervous system. Thus, a victim of hypertension can, by the practice of meditation, lower his blood-pressure.

Preksha is an uncomplicated, easy-to-learn technique of meditation. Relaxation is not the only benefit obtained by the practice of Preksha. Improvement of physical health and prevention of serious illness like hypertension, without drugs, are also achieved by it. Attitudinal change, behavioral modification and integrated development of personality are some of the objectives of the practice of Preksha. It is an apparatus for transmuting the instinct of irrational fear. Fear of a disease is much more dangerous than the diseases itself.

Regular practice of Preksha or any meditation is a potent remedy not only for relieving tension but also for common psychosomatic diseases of the modern times. No special qualification or aptitude is necessary to learn the technique of practicing meditation which is taught during this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The class format will include lectures, films and student presentations. Each student will have three class exams, a term paper and class presentation along with one Asian religious site visit or 3 Discussions. All written work must be typed and double-spaced using a 1" margin all around, a 12-point font letter size and a word count listed at the top of the page. PLEASE NOTE: The instructor will take off points if the above writing assignment requirements are not adhered to. All written work will need to be submitted through the online service www.turnitin.com. Please make sure to sign up or register on the site directly before your first assignment is due.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students should be able

1. To explore the world of meditation and know its physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual benefits.
2. To acknowledge the ancient meditational practices of Jain tradition with scientific studies.
3. To learn various physical exercise, breathing exercise and hand-postures along with varied meditational techniques.
4. To know how physical exercise, breathing exercise and hand-postures are very useful to detox body-system and to balance elements of our body.
5. To learn how to live a healthy and happy life by regular practice of meditation and yoga.
6. To develop the ability to protect oneself from the sickening effects of the environment, to prevent sickness and to remain healthy.
7. To develop awareness that the process for keeping fit and healthy is more a matter of common sense and self-discipline rather than hard work.
8. To get working knowledge of the functions of entire existence and to know the purpose of human life.

COURSE MATERIAL

- **Required Book:** *Preksha Meditation: Philosophy and Practice* (available on FIU Bookstore and also on [https://www.amazon.in \(Links to an external site.\)\dp\B08185CWF7](https://www.amazon.in/dp/B08185CWF7))
- **Recommended Book:** *Mirror of the Self* (available on [https://www.amazon.in \(Links to an external site.\)\dp\B0817QB47Ro](https://www.amazon.in/dp/B0817QB47Ro))

Additional study material will be posted on Canvas as per requirement. The students are recommended to read the concerned chapters of the books, articles and listen to the

video lectures fixed for the week before coming to the Live Discussion class. Reading improves the class participation, which will be graded.

COURSE POLICIES

I. ATTENDANCE and CLASS PARTICIPATION: It is key for students to attend **weekly Live Discussion Class** on Zoom to be successful in this course. If a student arrives late or leaves early, it is BOTH disruptive to the lecturer and students alike. Class participation is also important so that students can learn from each other. Dialogue is highly encouraged in this class. Attendance and class participation is vital to a university education and will make up 20% of the course grade.

II. PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is defined as “literally theft,” and will NOT be tolerated. Plagiarism, in forms some students may not be aware of may include: (1) A written work that is ENTIRELY stolen from another source (2) Using quotations from source without proper citation (3) Paraphrasing from a source without proper citation Students are expected to UNDERSTAND the definition of plagiarism. To view the University Code of Academic Integrity please visit <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm>. When all else fails; ASK the instructor for help. If you are found guilty you could receive a failing grade for the course which in some cases leads to dismissal from the course and in severe cases from the university.

III. POP QUIZZES: There may be random 10 pop quizzes given on the reading material. Be prepared for class, ESPECIALLY on days that a class discussion on an article is assigned. Quiz grades will be factored into the attendance and class participation grade, which is 10% of the final grade.

IV. LATE PAPERS: Late papers will be downgraded at the discretion of the instructor and is therefore, highly discouraged! No late submissions will be accepted with the commencement of Exam Week.

DESCRIPTION OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

I. In Class Exams: There will be only one class exam i.e. Final exam in this course. The format will include multiple choice, true/false, matching, essay, and short answer.

II. Term Paper and Class Presentation: Term paper has two options: one is based on theoretical or comparative study of meditational practices taught in the course, other is based on some experimental study.

1. In theoretical or comparative study, one can focus on any component of Preksha Meditation with research, study & your analysis on the same subject. More will be discussed in the class.

Or

2. In this option, the student is supposed to work on some research project. The project can be an experimental study on the effect of some physical exercise, breathing exercise or meditational technique. For the experimental research, students can choose some school, company, hospital, or meditation center and give meditation session following the scientific methods to measure the effect. The topic for the paper must receive the approval of the instructor before it is submitted. For that the students are supposed to submit a research proposal in one page giving outlines and sources of the research paper. The due date for the proposal is given in syllabus.

Choosing any one of the above options, write a detail research paper with references. The research paper must be minimum of 8-10 pages in length, excluding the bibliography or works' cited page and the cover page. The paper must be formal and typed, not hand-written, in Times New Roman, font size 12 and double spaced. The margins should be 1-inch on all sides. APA, MLA, and Chicago Manual Style will be accepted for citation. According to the style of choice, the student is advised to include footnotes or endnotes. A more thorough explanation of the term paper will be given during class.

III. Power-Point Presentation: At the end of the semester, students are supposed to give one live presentation based on their research paper or on any topic of their interest through power-point (containing at least ten slides apart from Title and Reference slides). There should be three to five citations in the presentation. If you miss the opportunity of presenting in class as per the schedule, pls contact right away to finalize the presentation date and time.

COURSE GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Attendance and Class-Participation - 20%

10 Home-Meditations - 20%

Exams (only one exam, Final) - 20%

Research Project/Term Paper - 30%

Power-point Presentation - 10 %

GRADING SCALE:

95-100 A

90-94 A-

87-89 B+

83-86 B

80-82 B-

77-79 C+

73-76 C

70-72 C-

65-69 D+

60-64 D

59 – 0 F

PLAGIARISM POLICY

The following is the definition of plagiarism in the University's **CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**:

Plagiarism: The deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is guilty of plagiarism. Any student helping another to plagiarize may be found guilty of academic misconduct (<http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/1acmisconductproc.htm>).

DAY	CLASS SCHEDULE
Week 1	Intro to Preksha Meditation
Week 2	Goal and Pre-Requisites of PM Practice of Mindfulness
Week 3	Mantra Meditation and Sound Therapy Practice of Mantras
Week 4	Physical Exercise/Asana Practice of Physical Exercises
Week 5	Breathing Exercise/ Pranayama Practice of Breathing Exercise
Week 6	Mudra: Postures Practice of Various Mudras

Week 7	Kayotsarga: Relaxation with Self-awareness Practice of Relaxation
Week 8	Antaryatra: Internal Trip Practice of Internal Trip
Week 9	Shwas Preksha: Breathing Perception Practice of Breathing Perception
Week 10	Sharira Preksha: Body Perception Practice of Body Perception (Proposal of Term Paper Due)
Week 11	Leshya Dhyana: Perception of Psychic Colours or Aura Practice of Leshya Dhyana
Week 12	Relaxation/ Kayotsarg Perception of Breathing / Shvas Preksha Practical Session
Week 13	Chaitanya Kendra Preksha: Perception of Psychic Center Practice of Psychic Centers
Week 14	Holistic health and Preksha Meditation (Term Paper Due)
Week 15	Anupreksha (Auto Suggestion & Contemplation): Therapeutic Thinking Practice of Various Anuprekshas (Power-Point Due)
Week 16	Final Exam

[Syllabus is subject to change]