

**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: summer A 2015

Course Times: T TH 10:50-2:10 pm. Frost Art Museum classroom 107

Office Hours: TTH 9:30-10:40 or by appointment

Offices: Religious Studies

Email: [seidela@fiu.edu](mailto:seidela@fiu.edu)

**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](mailto: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), 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.

Your final grade will be based on the following:

- 25% -Final exam short essay
  - 25% -Written journal (typed) (12% mid-term; 13% final journal)
  - 25% mid-term exam (12% objective; 13% essay)
  - 25% -Attendance/active class participation (evaluation based on attendance record, punctuality, concentration, attitude/effort, progress, final practicum; short oral presentation)
- Percentages: group participation/oral presentation: 5%; in-class performance/final practicum: 5%; attendance/tardies: 15%)

### **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
- 90-92 A-
- 88-89 B+ “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.
- 83-87 B
- 80-82 B-
- 78-79 C+ “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.
- 73-77 C
- 70-72 C-
- 68-69 D+ “Ds” are awarded for barely passing to below average work, usually riddled with errors and seriously deficient in fulfilling the assignment.
- 63-67 D
- 60-62 D-
- Below 60 F “Fs” are awarded for unacceptable work.

### **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 (note: you might be able to get cheaper on amazon.com):**

Title: *Essential Spirituality: Seven Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind*

Author: Roger Walsh

Publisher: John Wiley and Sons, paperback

ISBN: 0-47139-216-2

Title: *The Path of Yoga: An Essential Guide to Its Principles and Practices* [Paperback]

Author: Georg Feuerstein

Publisher: Shambala Publications, Boston, MA

Edition: 1996, paperback

ISBN: 1-57062-142X

Title: *The Sivananda Companion to Yoga: A Complete Guide to the Physical Postures, Breathing Exercises, Diet, Relaxation, and Meditation Techniques of Yoga*

Author: Sivanda Yoga Vedanta Center

Publisher: 2000: Fireside Book, New York, NY : Simon and Schuster

ISBN: 0-684-87000-2

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

Attendance and punctuality in class are required. Tardiness is disruptive and will be noted, and regular, repeated tardiness will be counted towards a grade deduction. If you know you will be absent for any reason, please inform the professor *before* the class you will miss. Strive for perfect attendance!

EXTRA CREDIT is available to make up absences. It usually involves attending a special lecture or event and then writing a one-page synopsis and review. See the professor for more information and suggestions. 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**. 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. FIVE POINTS DEDUCTED FOR EACH ABSENCE (out of 100/ for 15% of weighted grade). EACH CLASS IS WORTH 2 ABSENCES (10 PTS DEDUCTED).

- One make-up absences possible with permission (attendance at Program for the Study of Spirituality lecture series etc) and extra credit (credit for missed class and three tardies) for active participation in *satsang*.

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. If injured or slightly ill, students may observe a limited number of classes.

### 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. It is recommended that students 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 typed. Please identify your entries as ***Week I: Journal Entry 1, 2, 3; Week II, Entry 1, 2, 3 etc.*** The point is for the professor to provide guidelines and suggestions for enhancing and creating a more satisfactory practice. ***Please type and turn it in on Blackboard to Turnitin.***

### 4. EXAMS

The mid-term and final exam will be based on class readings, as well as in-class instruction. 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  $\frac{3}{4}$  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 –multiple choice and short answer

**B. FINAL EXAM QUESTION:** (2 1/2 pg. minimum recommendation; 5 maximum): Discuss and analyze the yogic path to enlightenment and self-realization with **specific reference to Feurstein and Sivananda text, the terms listed below, part of the eight-limbs of yoga.** Please cite your use of references in parenthesis at the end of direct quotes, etc. (e.g. Feurstein, 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.

- *Klesas*
- *Purusha*
- *Prakrti*
- *Pratyahara*
- *Nijama*

### IMPORTANT GENERAL CLASS INFORMATION AND TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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**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](mailto:seidela@fiu.edu)

**YOGA AND THE ART OF MEDITATION  
COURSE OUTLINE**

**Note for Journal writing: You are required to write a minimum of three times per week in your journal. In most cases, exercises are specified. If unspecified, you may repeat a topic. Select three of the four journal options listed.**

**Important tips for Journal Exercises:**

1. Watch the thought.
2. Feel the emotion.

3. Observe your reaction; don't get caught up in the reaction
4. Write down journal exercises that require repetition throughout the day on a small piece of paper that you carry in your purse or pocket throughout the day. Look at it often.
5. Write down what happened. Reflect on what happened. Write what worked, did not work and why. Journal about what can you do to facilitate more growth and change through the exercise or by changing your behavior and reactions. The goal is to create more self-awareness of your thoughts and behaviors.
6. If you ABSOLUTELY cannot relate to an exercise (ie. can not practice or write about it), then select the following:  
*Repeat any prior exercise you like or write down any worries you have. Do some yogic breathing and visualize these worries drifting away. Write down what happened, your success, failure. Reflect on how you incorporate this strategy regularly.*

## **WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO YOGA AND PATANJALI'S YOGA SUTRAS**

### **Reading:**

Read Handout packet

Read Chapter 1, Introduction in Sivananda book

Chapter 1,2, in Walsh

Fill out: LIFE MASTER PLAN, PERSONAL GOALS, and BLISS LIST

Path of Yoga: Chapter 1, 2, 9

### **Journal Exercise 1: Cultivating a Sacred Ritual**

Create or engage in a sacred ritual of your own for 5-10 min. Record how this ritual makes you feel, how it invokes the sacred, minimizes the patterns of chaotic thought. *Perform this ritual every time you start to write in your journal.*

### **Journal 2: Cultivating Compassion and Empathy**

Try in the presence of someone with whom you might have some difficulty to just empathize with them. Say, "I know how that feels; that must have hurt; I had the same feeling of hurt; repeat back what they say. Record your experience and feelings as well as the reaction of the other person.

### **Journal Exercise 3: Contemplating the Natural World**

Try to cultivate a sense of oneness with something in nature: a pond, a lake, the ocean, a flower, a sunset, and the clouds. Be sure to go to a specific site. Meditate on your environmental object for 5 minutes and try to keep your mind from wandering so that you just enjoy the "beauty of the thing" e.g. observe the patterns of the waves, the flow of the water, the ripples the water with the innocence and joy of a child in total absorption. Record your experience. Did it calm your mind so that you could rest in "calm abiding?" Did chaotic other thoughts enter?

ALSO read/review Walsh, Chapter 23, Exercise 4 p. 188-"Find Beauty in This Moment" and Chapter 25, Exercise 8 "Open to the Sacred in Nature"

### **Journal Exercise 4: Yoga class self-reflexivity**

Journal about your experience in the practicum and/or lecture/discussion component, sensations, reactions, etc. What worked for you? What didn't? How might you refine/modify your goals from week 1?

## **WEEK 2: MANTRAS, PURUSHA, PRAKRITI, AND ATMAN, THE DIVINE SELF**

### **Reading:**

Walsh, Chapters 3, 4, 5,

Path of Yoga, chapters 3, 4, 5

Sivananda, review Basic Postures (pp. 28-64)

### **IMPORTANT KEY EXERCISE**

#### **Journal exercise 1 and 2 required: Yoga Class Goal Setting: Letter to Yourself**

Write a letter to yourself where you reflect honestly on your goals in the class, as well as the opportunities and challenges you foresee in meeting them. Clearly state your goals in the beginning of the letter, both in terms of the grade you imagine earning as well as the content you hope to learn. The bulk of your letter should explain how you

plan to meet your personal goals. First describe your strengths and weaknesses as a student. do you have habits, practices, mindsets, or skills that will serve you in this class? On the other hand, do you habitually face the same challenges as a student? Are there habits, practices, or mindsets that do not serve you? If so, is this the semester you will tackle them? How? Are there structural roadblocks to your success (do you work, commute, have heavy course load, fear of the material?) If so, how will you address your roadblocks? And finally, what are your plans for success? How will you use your time? When will you read for this course? When will you study and do your assignments? What is your plan if you get lost, if things get challenging? Introspect and be thorough!!! How does your sacred ritual help you with above? If the one you created didn't work, create a new one.

**Journal Exercise 3: Observing the Need to be Validated by the External World for External Qualities:**

Try to observe and describe a situation in which you felt the need to be validated for your beauty, intelligence, skill, or other external attribute by others. Describe why you think you need this "ego validation" or external validation of your self. Journal about how you might find your intrinsic sense of worth in the world from within.

**Journal 4: Cultivating Your Internal Beauty**

Focus today on all your "beautiful" internal qualities (e.g. generosity, thoughtfulness, sensitivity, honesty, etc.) Journal about this quality or qualities and try to find appreciation for this part of yourself. Do you feel that this internal quality is as valuable as the external qualities you seek? Why or why not?

**WEEK 3: EVOLUTION AND INVOLUTION**

**Reading:**

Walsh, chapters 6, 7, 8,  
Feurstein, Path of Yoga, Chapters 7,8  
Sivananda, pp. 66-74

**Journal Exercise 1: Cultivating the Warrior**

Identify an unpleasant situation or painful circumstance as it unfolds or is present in your mind. Determine to be courageous in the face of difficulty. Try to "let go" and surrender the problem to a "higher power" during your special ritual supplemented with a prayer. Record what happened, your success, failure, or struggle.

**Journal Exercise 2: Cultivating Karma Yoga**

Do a good deed of service or something thoughtful outside your normal activities for another person (friend, relative, and stranger). Describe your good deed. Record how you felt doing this act of service. How did the other person respond?

**Journal Exercise 3: Do Walsh exercise 9 "Recognize the Inner Light" pp. 202-203**

**Journal Exercise 4: Cultivating Serenity and Peace**

Practice for a day not letting anything disturbs your peace (traffic, loud noises, rude people, an exam) Your mantra for the day is "Nothing is worth disturbing my inner peace." Observe your mind and struggle to be peaceful without condemning yourself. Record how this "shifts your reality," fosters more calm, or if you were not successful, record how you realized the degree to which you are "not peaceful" throughout the day. Record how much of your day is spent in anxiety, frustration, anger, etc.

**WEEK 4: EIGHT LIMBS OF PRACTICE: ASANA, PRANAYAMA, YAMA, NIYAMA, DHARANA, DHYANA, SAMADHI, PRATYAHARA**

**Reading:**

Walsh, chapters 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22,  
Feurstein, Chapters 6, 10  
Sivananda, Meditation pp. 86-96

**Journal Exercise 1: Cultivating an awareness of wrong-doing to others**

Observe yourself during an act of wrongdoing. This may in the form of injury to another through harsh words, destructive behavior. Contemplate what you feel you did wrong. Confess to yourself. Ask for forgiveness. Give it up, release it to the Creator.



**Journal Exercise #2: Cultivating Tolerance/No judgment**

Practice and observe yourself practicing tolerance and patience with someone who usually annoys or irritates you. Try not to react either outwardly or inwardly or observe yourself “reacting silently, inwardly. Totally accept the other person without judgment.

**Journal Exercise 3 (REQUIRED as one of the three journals): Yoga Class reflexivity**

Journal about your experience and progress in yoga, including readings, practicum, lecture, or other aspects of the practice.

**Journal 4: Read and Do Walsh, Chapter 23, Exercise 6, pp. 190-194, “Mindfulness Meditation OR Walsh exercises 1 and 2, Chapter 23, pp. 184-187 *Eat Mindfully, Joy of Food and Mindful Music***

Journal about your experiences after doing the exercises.

**WEEK 5: SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHY: KARMA, KLESAS, THE FORCES OF CORRUPTION, SUFFERING/BONDAGE/DARKNESS (DUKHA)****Reading:**

Walsh, Chapters 9, 11, 12

Feurstein, Chapters, 11, 12

Sivananda, review Asanas and variations pp. 98 122

**Journal 1: Freedom from Negativity in the Past**

Focus on some painful or negative thoughts of the past. Repeat throughout the day, some or all of the following: “Freedom is my goal. I choose to release myself from past pain and suffering by living only in the immediate present.” “ The past is dead and over.”

**Journal 2: Do Walsh, Chapter 12, Exercises 5 “Recognize the Costs of Anger” OR Exercise 6 “Communicate about Anger”**

Journal about your experience.

**Exercise 3: Do Walsh, Chapter 12, Exercise 2 “Explore Fear” pp. 84-86. OR Cultivating an Awareness of Irrational Fears**

Try to identify a persistent fear of something that does not have basis in a present, physical reality. (i.e. does not put you in immediate danger like a snake about to bite you). Determine today to free yourself from this fearful thought by repeating throughout the day, “I am determined today that my thoughts will be free from fear” and “I can choose to change these fearful thoughts.”

Journal about your experience.

**Journal Exercise 4: Observing and Transforming Thoughts that Hurt**

Observe throughout the day hurtful thoughts against yourself. When a hurtful thought arises, repeat one of the following: “I can choose to let go of this hurtful thought and be loving to myself.” or I AM determined today to let go of my hurtful thoughts, to free myself from guilt or condemnation.” “ I can choose to change my thoughts that hurt.”

**WEEK 6: THE PATH TO FREEDOM: DHARMA, BHAKTI (LOVE), and JNANA (WISDOM)****Reading:**

Walsh, chapters 10, 13, 14

Feurstein, Chapter 13

Sivananda, Yoga and Health, pp. 176-192 and Diet, pp. 76-84

**Journal 1: Cultivating forgiveness from others**

Spend ½ hr. contemplating a person or group, past or present whom you desire to forgive you. List these persons or groups and recite a prayer that asks these persons or groups to forgive YOU. Did this shift your relationship with the person? If you were successful, record how this helped you cultivate patience, tolerance. Record how the experience of forgiving and letting go of the past may free you of the painful burdens you have carried into the present.

**Journal 2: Cultivating forgiveness for others that have hurt you**

Spend ½ hr. mentally forgiving a selected person, group, or organization, past or present that you are out of harmony with, angry with or are concerned about. “Give up” and release your negative emotions. List the persons which you forgive and recite a prayer of forgiveness to them with thanks to God that you are released of all sense of unforgiveness. Record your experience.

**Journal 2: Cultivating Joy**

Identify several actions that bring you joy. Dedicate one day in the week to being joyful by engaging in your most joyful activities (cooking or having a great meal; swimming or surfing in the ocean, etc. ) Repeat to yourself throughout the day: “ I came from joy; I move towards joy; I desire joy.”

Record the activities you participated in and how these and the above mantra affected your psyche and your day. How successful or unsuccessful were you in ‘creating a joyful day?’

**Journal 4: Yoga class reflections**

Journal about your progress/lack of progress in this yoga class, sensations, response to readings, lectures, what has worked or not worked for you.

**WEEK 7: THE PATH TO FREEDOM: DHARMA, BHAKTI (LOVE), and JNANA (WISDOM)**

**Reading:**

Walsh, Chapters 17, 18, 24, 25, 26  
Review Sivananda book, postures

**Journal Exercise 1: Cultivating Self-love**

Devise a mantra/saying that evokes Self-love of your higher, essential nature for you. Observe any negative feelings that arise to contradict this. Record how you feel at the end of the day. Record the conflicts of when you kept negating, condemning, and criticizing yourself and/or any new feelings of loving yourself more that arose that were positive.

**Journal 2: Cultivating Joy**

Identify several actions that bring you joy. Dedicate one day in the week to being joyful by engaging in your most joyful activities (cooking or having a great meal; swimming or surfing in the ocean, etc. ) Repeat to yourself throughout the day: “ I came from joy; I move towards joy; I desire joy.”

Record the activities you participated in and how these and the above mantra affected your psyche and your day. How successful or unsuccessful were you in ‘creating a joyful day?’

**Journal Exercise 3: Cultivating Serenity and Peace**

Practice for a day not letting anything disturbs your peace (traffic, loud noises, rude people, an exam) Your mantra for the day is “Nothing is worth disturbing my inner peace.” Observe your mind and struggle to be peaceful without condemning yourself. Record how this “shifts your reality,” fosters more calm, or if you were not successful, record how you realized the degree to which you are “not peaceful’ throughout the day. Record how much of your day is spent in anxiety, frustration, anger, etc.

**Journal Exercise 4: Repeat any exercise you wish**

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**Key Terms:**

OM= the original and most powerful mantra. It is the primal sound of the divine in its essential manifestation. In the beginning was the word and the word is OM  
OM SHANTIH SHANTIH SHANTIH = Om, Peace, Peace, Peace

