



The City, the River, the Sacred

CLTR 280: *Culture in Practice - Yoga & Yoga Theory*

Course Description

Praised as the city of “Enlightenment”, Varanasi represents a perfect traditional context in which to study yoga. Through a concentrated practice of postures, meditation techniques, and breath control, as well the study and application of yoga theory both on and off the mat, students engage with the system of yoga through questioning and analysis. The course further introduces students to the fundamental concepts and spiritual principles which constitute the system’s theoretical basis, and gives significance to the practical exercises of yoga. Practical classes are drawn from the hatha yoga system.

Learning Objectives

1. Promotion of physical, mental and spiritual health
2. Development of understanding and awareness of yoga as a philosophy, and as a way of life
3. Enhancement of physical skill and conditioning through increased flexibility, strength, coordination, endurance, and breath control
4. Increase of powers of concentration, focus, and awareness
5. Development of consciousness towards a harmonious lifestyle of contentment and peaceful living

Course Schedule

Class meets twice a week, for a one hour and half- session of yoga practice and once a week, for a one-hour session of yoga theory.

Session 01-11 Basics of Yoga

- Overview of the course
- Start to the discussion “what is yoga?” and review of definitions and explanations of yoga from ancient classic yoga texts, including the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Patanjali Yoga Sutras* and the *Gheranda Samhita*.

- Readings:
Iyengar, B. K.S. (1976). *Light on yoga*. New York, USA: George Allen Unwin Publishers Limited. (pp. 19-53).

Session 02-11 Depth of Asanas

- An examination of the purpose of asana practice.
- Students will explore the practice with greater awareness and consider various different poses – standing, sitting, prone, and supine as well as cautions, hints and modifications for our *asana* practice.

Readings:

Swami Satyananda Saraswati. (1989). *A systematic course in the ancient tantric techniques of yoga and kriya*. Munger, India: Yoga Publications Trust. (pp. 35-37 and 387-388)

Iyengar, B. K.S. (1998). *The tree of yoga*. New Delhi, India: Thomson Press. (pp. 39-49)

Session 03-11 Pranayama

- Pranayama is both an art and a science. It consists of knowledge and control of prana (the vital force).
- In this class students discuss the importance and relevance of breath synchronization with movement and why breath awareness is necessary.
- Also covered: hints and cautions for pranayama.

Readings:

Swami Satyananda Saraswati. (2008). *Asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha*. Munger, India: Yoga Publications Trust. (pp. 369-377)

Swami Satyananda Saraswati. (1989). *A systematic course in the ancient tantric techniques of yoga and kriya*. Munger, India: Yoga Publications Trust. (pp. 18-22 and 88-91)

Session 04-11 Concentration and Meditation

- How do we develop concentration? What is meditation? Why should we meditate? What is the difference between concentration and meditation?
- Discussion of different meditation techniques and meditation itself as a process of cleansing within.

Readings:

Iyengar, B. K.S. (1998). The tree of yoga. New Delhi, India: Thomson Press. (pp. 128-140)

Session 05-11 Patanjali Yoga Sutras

- Yoga as discipline and why we need discipline, as illuminated through Patanjali Sutras.
- The two wings on path of success are constant practice and detachment.
- Why is constant practice necessary?

Readings:

Iyengar, B. K.S. (1997). Light on the yoga sutras of Patanjali. New Delhi, India: HarperCollins India. (pp. 1-40 selected sections)

Assignments:

Take Home Assignment (reply to a question set by the teacher) due on class 8.

Session 06-11 Mudras & Bandhas

- What are the three bandhas (locks) and what is the ‘sealing’ of prana (vital force)
- Discussion of mudras (gestures): their effects, and how they channelize energy.

Readings:

Swami Satyananda Saraswati. (2008). Asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha. Munger, India: Yoga Publications Trust. (pp. 421-424 NS 471-472)

Swami Muktibodhananda. (1998). Hatha yoga pradipika. Munger, India: Bihar School of Yoga. (pp. 286-297).

Session 07-11 Streams of Yoga

- Glimpse of four streams of yoga – Raja, Bhakti, Karma, and Jnana yoga
- Discussion “The Paths are different but the Goal is same.”

Readings:

Swami Satyananda Saraswati. (1989). A systematic course in the ancient tantric techniques of yoga and kriya. Munger, India: Yoga Publications Trust. (pp. 272-278, 376-383, 664-667).

**Session 08 and 09-11 Outing to Yoga Sadhana Kendra and Institute of Medicine
Studies, Banaras Hindu University**

Session 10-11 Chakras and Kundalini energy

- A look into the more subtle forms of yoga practice: energy

Readings:

Herring, B. K. Asanas for the Chakra System. Yoga journal. Retrieved from <http://www.yogajournal.com/basics/898>

Swami Satyamurti Saraswati. (October, 1979). The Chakras. Yogamag.net. Retrieved from <http://www.yogamag.net/archives/1979/joct79/chakras.shtml>

Swami Satyamurti Saraswati. (May, 1982). Awakening the Chakras. Yogamag.net. Retrieved from <http://www.yogamag.net/archives/1982/emay82/awake582.shtml>

Swami Shankardevananda Saraswati. (November, 1983). Does Kundalini Exist? Yogamag.net. Retrieved from <http://www.yogamag.net/archives/1983/knov83/doeske.shtml>

Session 11-11 In-Class Test

Evaluation

Class Participation	60%
Take-home Short Essay	20%
In-Class Test	20%

Assessment Criteria

Class Participation

Students will be assessed on attendance, punctuality, class participation, concentration, attitude/effort, and skills acquisition in both theory and practical classes. To optimize the outcomes of the course, each student is expected to do a minimum of 3 times per week of self-practice outside the regular class schedule.

Take home assignment

Students will reply to a question set by the teacher (1000 words) and will be assessed on their ability to connect the theoretical framework got in the classes with their practical experience. Arguments supported with information from bibliographic resources will receive higher marks than those supported with observation or general supposition. Student are requested to use at least two outside sources, in addition to the course materials provided.

In-class test

Will cover material from all 10 theory class sessions. Students will be graded on their answers to short answer and short-essay questions. Students should demonstrate familiarity with material covered in class meetings and assigned readings. Knowledge of original technical terms in Hindi
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is required. Arguments supported with information from readings and supplemental course materials will receive higher marks than those supported with observation or general supposition.

Grading

Alliance programs utilize the follow standard grading policy well accepted by most US institutions.

Excellent	A	93-100%	Good	B+	87-89%	Acceptable	C+	77-79%	
	A-	90-92%		B	83-86%		C	73-76%	
				B-	80-82%		C-	70-72%	
						Unsatisfactory	D+	67-69%	
							D	63-66%	
							D-	60-62%	
							Failing	F	<60%

Course Policies

Exams and Assignments

Students are required to take all regularly scheduled exams in courses for which they are registered, and to submit all assignments on time. Any compelling academic, personal, or medical reason that might justify a rescheduled exam or assignment must be brought up to the Resident Director, not program faculty. Failure to take scheduled exams or submit the requisite assignments for a course will adversely affect your grade as per the stated grading criteria for each course.

Classroom Conduct

Student punctuality is extremely important in China and India. Please do not be late for classes or other activities, as it is considered impolite to do so. It is improper to eat in class, to engage in other activities such as texting, or to slump or nap. Students are expected to be alert and engaged as a sign of respect for their professors.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory. It is essential that the students participate fully in the coursework and all required academic activities. Authorized absences may only be approved by the Resident Director, and students are expected to make up any missed work. Unauthorized absences will adversely affect a student's grades.