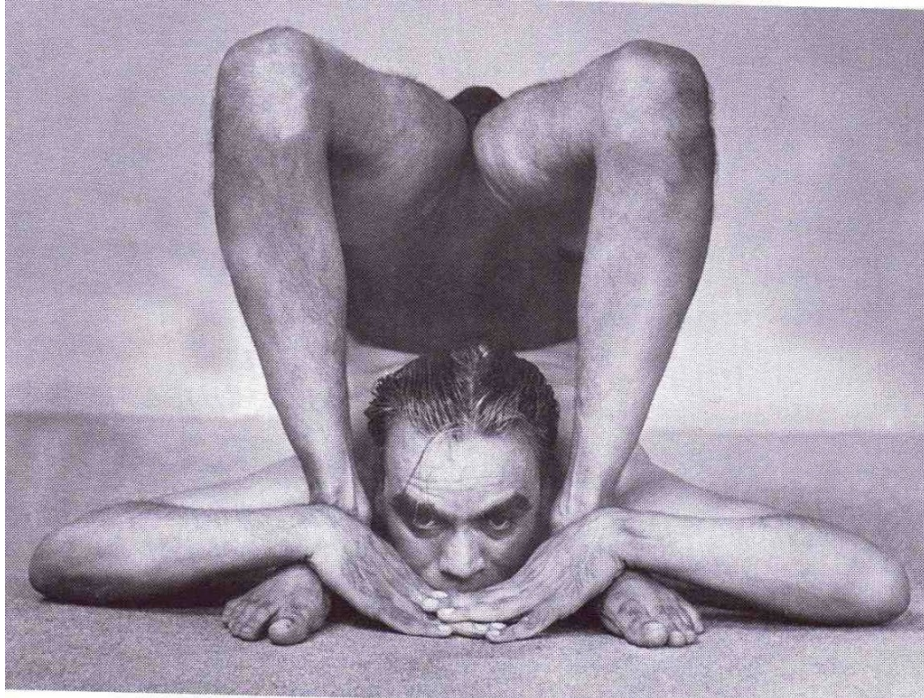


SEMINAR ON YOGA: HISTORY AND POLITICS

JSIS 485a and CHID 498f | AUTUMN 2014 | T 11:30-2:20 | LOCATION TBA



Professor Christian Lee Novetzke

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Email: NOVETZKE@UW.EDU

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-3:30 or by appointment

Course Description:

Yoga's long history in India reveals that this practice of imposing discipline on the body and mind was far more than a set of physical or meditative practices, but a means to reformulate the social, political, and cosmic worlds as well. Practiced by Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists, yoga transcends any given religion, yet links many religions. Yoga also exists independently of any religion at all, as simply a set of stretches and breathing techniques. Yoga is a practice that must be understood in a fundamentally social, historical, and political way. Over the two or more millennia that yoga has been practiced in myriad forms, it has reshaped the cultures where it has travelled from India to East and Southeast Asia, Europe, and America. And as it has travelled, yoga has often become a subject for political debate: Is yoga "Indian" or is a "religion"? What constitutes religion in relationship to yoga? How it should be used or adapted to new contexts? What is the relationship between yoga and capital accumulation?

In this seminar, we will study yoga from its first textual representations to its current status in the modern world. Along the way, we'll discuss the social, religious, historical, and political issues raised around the practice of yoga, even while we further hone the very definition of this word and practice in different contexts over centuries. Our goal in this course is to holistically understand the world-wide and transhistorical phenomenon of yoga.

Prerequisites: It is preferable that students will have taken at least one course on Indian religion, history, culture, or politics, or a course on non-Western religions and cultures that included a study of India. Students who do not have this background should contact me for appropriate preparatory reading.

Format: This is a seminar in which you are expected to complete all readings before class and come to class prepared to discuss the readings in a knowledgeable and provocative way. I will be looking not for mere summaries of the readings, but for insights and explorations of the readings. This is not a lecture course—we will all talk together about our subject. For these reasons, you must be prepared to speak in this class. This is not a class for passive participation.

Assignments:

Your grade for this course will be distributed evenly among these five components:

- **Participation and Discussion**—*This is a seminar course, not a lecture course. You will be required to vocally participate* in class discussion. You cannot pass this course unless you do so. This means you must do the reading before class, come to class prepared to talk about the reading extensively, and engage with the ideas of your classmates.
- **In Class Writing**—We will start each class with a few minutes reserved to write based on a prompt from me, which may involve a response to the readings for that class meeting or any other material. These are not quizzes but something more like intellectual warm-ups to get us started. This will be handwritten and turned in at the end of class.
- **Leading discussion**—Each student or a small group of students will be responsible for leading discussion on the material for the week at the beginning of Tuesday's class. The student or group of students should start with a brief overview and then proceed to discussion with the class. Please bring in some extra historical or cultural information about the week's subject and provoke discussion in class. Students who are presenting are responsible for providing an agenda for discussion and key ideas or questions to motivate debate in class for the entire class period.
- **Final paper**—Your final assignment will be a paper that engages some aspect of the subject of the course. Two weeks before the paper is due, you should talk to me about your subject and get my approval for it. I will accept drafts up to one week before the paper is due. For undergraduates, this paper should be 10-12 pages in length, double-spaced, one inch margins, 12 point font. For graduate students, a longer paper is required suitable to your subject. The paper should be sent to me via email as a MS Word attachment by midnight on December 14, and a hard copy placed in my mailbox (identical to the soft copy) the next morning by noon. Late papers will not be graded.

Extra Credit: Each student is eligible for extra credit if they enroll in and consistently attend a yoga course during the quarter. This course can be at UW's IMA or elsewhere. IMA has approximately nine courses available each quarter. See their website for information. In addition, there are several yoga studios around the University and throughout Seattle. To receive credit, your practice should involve at least one formal class a week, though two to three is preferable. You should keep an informal journal of your experience, which should be submitted to me at the end of the quarter. This is extra credit: I take no responsibility for any injuries, costs, and/or out-of-body experiences you may encounter.

Grading: I use the standard 4.0 grading system in use at the University of Washington.

Readings: Everything under "readings" listed on the syllabus is required. Books I have ordered to be available at the U Book Store are listed below under "texts for purchase." These books will also be on reserve at the library. Every other reading on the syllabus is available in a coursepack at Ave Copy on the Ave and also online at the course's catalyst site. ***You must bring readings to class.***

Online readings are at: TBA

Texts for Purchase:

- *Yoga: Discipline of Freedom*, Patanjali, translation by Barbara Stoler Miller.
- *The Bhagavad Gita*, translation by Barbara Stoler-Miller.
- *Yoga in Practice*, edited by David Gordon White
- Akers, Brian Dana, trans. 2002. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. Woodstock, NY: Yoga Vidya.
- *The Madhumalati*, trans. A. Behl and S. Weightman
- *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires* by William Pinch
- *Yoga in Modern India* by Joseph Alter
- *A History of Modern Yoga* by Elizabeth de Michelis.

Syllabus: I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any point, including the readings and assignments, as required. I would like to acknowledge the help and advice of Seth Powell in putting together this syllabus.

Etiquette in Seminar: In seminar, please, as a general rule, **do not use computers or other electronics in class**. If you must use a computer in class as a way to accommodate a disability, please talk to me before class begins and/or visit Disabled Student Services (see below). Please do not use iphones, mobile phones, ipods, gameboys, gadgets, doohickeys, thingamabobs or other devices in class. Use pen/pencil and paper to take notes and do writings; do not read other materials, like books, newspapers, magazines, letters, etc., in class; do not eat in class. Please come on time and stay for the entire class.

Absences: Please try to let me know if you'll be absent from class.

Academic Conduct: I will strictly enforce the University of Washington Student Conduct code, including the policy on plagiarism. For your reference, the entire code can be found at <http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>. If you are unsure of what plagiarism is, it is your responsibility to understand plagiarism. Ignorance of the definition of plagiarism will not excuse plagiarism in this class.

Disabled Students: If you would like to request accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz Hall, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you require accommodations, please present the letter to me as soon as possible so that I can make necessary arrangements.

SYLLABUS

1. Week I: Introduction 9/30

- a. Course Introduction

2. Week II: One Yoga: Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* 10/7

- a. *Yoga: The Discipline of Freedom* [Patanjali's Yoga Sutras], trans. Barbara Stoller Miller, entire.
- b. "Patanjali Yoga in Practice," by Gerald Larson in *Yoga in Practice*.

3. Week III: Three Yogas—The *Bhagavad Gita* 10/14

- a. *The Bhagavad Gita* by Barbara Stoler-Miller
- b. "Yoga Practices in the *Bhagavad Gita*," by Angelika Malinar and "Yoga in the *Yoga Upanishads*," by Jeffrey Ruff from *Yoga in Practice*

4. Week IV: Tantra and Yoga in Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism 10/21

- a. Section "Yoga in Jain, Buddhist, and Hindu Tantric Traditions" from *Yoga in Practice*
- b. "The Alchemical Body" by David Gordon White.

5. Week V: Hatha Yoga 10/28

- a. Translation of the *Hatha Pradipika*, translation by Akers, selections.
- b. James Mallinson, "Yoga: Hatha Yoga," from *Brill Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, Vol. 3, 2011.

6. Week VI: Sufi Yoga 11/4

- a. Selections from *The Madhumalati*, by Manjhan, translated by A. Behl and S. Weightman
- b. "A Fourteenth-Century Persian Account of Breath Control and Meditation," by Carl Ernst in *Yoga in Practice*.
- c. "Yogis in Mughal India," by Jim Mallinson from *Yoga: The Art of Transformation*.

Week VII: No Class Veterans' Day 11/11

7. Week VIII: Yoga in Colonial and Modern India 11/18

- a. *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires* by William Pinch.
- b. *Yoga in Modern India* by Joseph Alter.

Final Paper Topics Due

8. Week IX: Modern Yoga in the US 11/25

- a. *A History of Modern Yoga* by Elizabeth de Michelis.

9. Week X: Is Yoga Dangerous? Is it a Religion? 12/2

- a. “How Yoga Can Wreck Your Body” by William J Broad, *New York Times Magazine*, January 5, 2012.
- b. Packet of Documents from the Sedlock vs Baird Trial May 2013
- c. Take Back Yoga Campaign, the Hindu American Foundation:
<http://www.hafsite.org/media/pr/takeyogaback>.
- d. Shukla, Aseem. 2010. “The Theft of Yoga.” *The Washington Post*, April 18.
- e. Mark Driscoll, Yoga Lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhcoBLdM8CQ>.
- f. Andrew Nicholson. 2013. “Is Yoga Hindu? On the Fuzziness of Religious Boundaries.” *Common Knowledge* 19, no. 3 (September 21): 490–505.

Final Papers Due 2/14 at midnight