A. DETAILED COURSE DESCRIPTION

Yoga invites us to slow and deepen the breath, and guides us in coordinating breath with movement. When we add sound we intensify the healing & integrating effects of breath in the body. Sound can deepen our connection to what we feel and where we feel it, and release chronic tension at deeper levels. Sound can be used to calm and soothe or energize the nervous system.

Yoga invites awareness, compassion, presence, and acceptance, supporting us to “tune in” and be with whatever is without judgment. Yoga and sound practices can help foster clearer thinking, emotional equilibrium, a greater sense of peace and well-being, and more balance, flow and ease navigating in the world. Yoga nurtures internal processes and a sense of feeling at home in your body while fostering a sense of community and belonging, greater empathy that deepens interpersonal communication.

This course provides introductions to both yoga and to the healing science of sound. While learning basic alignment principles and core poses of yoga, students will experience first-hand yoga’s physical health benefits (improving balance, strength and flexibility), as well as its healing and transformative potential, and its ability to integrate mind-body-spirit. We will also investigate and experience the physical properties, physiological effects, and integrative possibilities of sound/music, from principles of entrainment and resonance to the neurobiology of healing. Through the yoga of sound we experience the effects of vibration and various frequencies on different parts of brain and energy centers (chakras) in the body. Yoga and sound can help release trauma which is stored in the physiology from areas of the body.

Each class begins with an hour-long yoga and sound practice, employing various breath (pranayama), sound (mantra), movement (asana), and hand gesture (mudra) sequences. This is followed by a half hour of journaling and creative reflection. In the final hour we discuss the readings/listening/videos for the week, engaging interviews with impassioned creative artists and brilliant scientists sharing their own inspirational healing journeys and life’s work.

B. STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To experience and understand the healing benefits of yoga and sound on mind, body, and spirit.
2. To increase your capacity to “tune in” more deeply to your own internal landscape and be present with whatever you find
3. To increase your capacity for self-compassion and empathy for others
4. To develop a creative personal practice custom-suited for your needs (make sure it works and is manageable for you)
5. To grasp the basic alignment principles & core poses of yoga along with the fundamental concepts, techniques & properties of sound healing
C. OUTLINE OF TOPICS (includes core readings)

Healing at the Speed of Sound: Science of Healing; Science of Sound
VIDEOS: The Music Instinct: Science & Song; The Living Matrix: The New Science of Healing; The Biology of Belief; Reading/Listening: Interviews w/ Alex Theory & Joshua Leeds

Entrainment and Resonance: Entraining Brain & Body through Breath & Sound
Reading/Listening: Jeffrey Thompson, David Ison Interviews

Music Medicine : The Science & Spirit of Healing Yourself with Sound
Reading/Listening: Christine Stevens Interview, Music Medicine excerpts

Toning & Tuning the Chakras; Lifeforce Yoga Chakra Clearing with Mantras, Mudras & Breath Practices; Reading/Listening: Jonathan Goldman; Amy Weintraub

Naked Voice, Singing Field: Presence, Embodiment, Sound & Silence;
Reading/Listening: Chloe Goodchild Interview

Free Your Voice: Awaken to Life Through Singing
Reading/Listening: Silvia Nakkach Interview

Vocal Yoga: The Joy of Breathing, Singing, Sounding
Listening/Reading: Heather Lyle

The Yoga of Sound: Healing through Sacred Practice of Mantra
VIDEO: Sound Yoga/Nada Yoga: Healing Power of Sacred Sound (Shanti Shivani)
Reading/Listening: Russill Paul

Yoga of the Voice: Mantras, Chanting, Kirtan
Reading/Listening: Interviews w/ Deva Premal, Jai Uttal

Healing Mantras in Kundalini Yoga
Reading/Listening: Interview w/ Snatam Kaur

Vibrational Sound Healing: Singing Bowls, Tuning Forks, Gongs
Reading/Listening: Beaulieu, McKusick, Gerber, Jensen & de Ruiter

Healing Flutes
Reading/Listening: DeMaria Interview

Healing Power of Drums & Drumming
Reading/Listening: Christine Stevens; Craig Kohland of Shaman’s Dream
D. READINGS & AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS [required + additional resources]


E. LEARNING EXPERIENCES, PROJECTS, ASSIGNMENTS

Creative Journal (150 pts)
Your journal is a place to 1) reflect on your experience of the weekly yoga and sound practices 2) document your experimentation with relevant creative practices outside of class, 3) respond to the readings/listening/videos, and 4) gather source materials & develop ideas for your individual project. You are expected to 1) make entries each WEEK, 2) periodically share selections with me & the class, and 3) submit the journal at the end of the semester.

Individual Projects (150 pts)
Custom-designed & developed around your unique background, interests, passions & goals, the special project is a semester-long process of creative experiential & scholarly exploration, a piece of which will be shared both orally & in “written” form with the class and instructor. Innovative topics, interdisciplinary approaches, engaged/participatory & multiple/mixed media formats are welcome & encouraged.

Attendance/Participation (150 pts)
Commitment to Regular Attendance & Participation Required! The class is designed to be experiential & interactive and your attendance & participation are important to the success of the class.

*Each class begins with an hour-long yoga + sound practice [described in section A.]
F. HOW THE COURSE PROVIDES A UNIQUE HONORS EXPERIENCE

As detailed above, this course challenges the student not only to think (and experience) across disciplinary divides but also to integrate the creative and the scholarly, the embodied practices of yoga and sound with the scientific principles and concepts behind them. Students learn both through “hands-on” embodied experience (the experiential) and from inspirational creative artist-scientists sharing their own healing journeys and life’s work.