UHON Course Proposal for Fall 2020
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Yoga for Harmonious Living

Course Description
Healing begins from a state of relaxation. This statement is deceptively simple and incredibly profound. As a society, we are far from relaxed. We normalize stress and glorify sleeping less; we value productivity over life quality and balance. When we consider “healing begins from a state of relaxation” and then consider the high-speed social context within which we live, it becomes clear why we are globally experiencing a crisis of dis-ease. Given these systemic norms, how do we participate in society, be successful students, and simultaneously be at our healthiest? In this course, we will foreground self-care, self-compassion, and loving kindness as we learn how to achieve moments of optimal harmony through states of relaxation. We will practice and study yoga postures and philosophies, including Hatha Yoga sequences for balance and renewal; The Yoga Sutras, emphasizing the Yamas (moral restraints) and the Niyamas (moral observances); and centering tools of breathing and meditation. Utilizing these modalities alongside critical self-reflexive journaling and dialogue, each student will become equipped with skills, awareness, and strategies needed to create an individualized practice of balancing and integrating the physical, mental, and subtle bodies to move through each day mindful, relaxed, and energized.

Student Learning Objectives

- Learn to deeply relax for integrated balance and well-being through the study and practice of Hatha yoga postures and philosophies, and Eastern anatomies, including emphasis on the yamas and niyamas, and meditation.
- Cultivate a daily practice of self-care and compassion for optimal harmony, utilizing the modalities we are learning in the course
- Enhance mindfulness and self-reflexivity through embodied awareness and journaling
- Participate in the creation of a safe learning environment emphasizing ethical communication, open dialogue, and respect for one another.
- Develop skills and strategies to sustain a life-time habit of healthy living and compassionate leadership

Five questions this course asks:

1. How can I relax when I’m so busy?
2. What is Yoga? Meditation? The Yamas and Niyamas?
3. Pranayama? Why do I need to learn how to breathe when I’m already breathing?
4. How can knowledge and practice of Yoga philosophy benefit me?
5. How do I incorporate strategies for living at my fullest?
Required Texts


The Yamas and Niyamas: Exploring Yoga’s Ethical Practice, by Deborah Adele ISBN 978-097447064-1


Additional Readings provided in class and/or on D2L

Required Materials

Yoga Mat
Journal or Notebook (the paper kind)

Schedule/Outline of Topics

Unit 1: Hatha Yoga Postures and Yoga Philosophy
In this unit students will study and practice yoga postures and yoga philosophies. The Yoga practice of postures, breathing, and meditation will continue beyond this unit, throughout the semester, at the beginning of each class.

Unit 2: The Yamas
In this unit, students will study the Sutras and practice the 5 moral restraints known as the Yamas: Ahimsa: nonviolence; Satya: truthfulness; Asteya: nonstealing; Aparigraha: nonattachment; and Brahmacharya: moderation.

Unit 3: The Niyamas
In this unit, students will study the Sutras and practice the 5 moral observances known as the Niyamas: Shaucha: Cleanliness; Santosa: Contentment; Tapas: Austerity; Swadhyaya: Study of Self and Scriptures; and Ishvara Pranidhana: Surrender to the Divine.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>160 (4 at 40 points each)</td>
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<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>180</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
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Final Grading Scale

90-100%  450-500=A
80-89%   400-449=B
70-79%   350-399=C
60-69%   300-349=D
0-60%    0-299=F

Assignment Descriptions

Participation

This course depends on the commitment and presence of each one of us. Your participation grade will reflect your contribution to fostering a positive learning environment both verbally and nonverbally. A good faith effort includes preparing for class by completing the readings and making notes of items to bring to discussion; respectful verbal and nonverbal participation in the discussions, and respectful listening to your classmates’ ideas and opinions. Informed contributions to the dialogue is required for a strong participation grade. Being “present”—that is being mindful, focused and attuned to your own body during the yoga practice, practicing self-awareness and awareness of others around you—is an essential element to positive participation in this course.

Attendance

This course is about being ‘present’—present in your body, in the presence of others, in the classroom. Simply put, you cannot be present if you are not attending. The learning that happens during each class is embodied, experiential, and dialogic and cannot be made up, replicated, or substituted outside of class. Therefore, attendance is valuable and essential to success in this class. Each student may miss one class without penalty. For every absence thereafter, 25 points per absence will be deducted from the student’s final overall grade. IMPORTANT: Three tardies equals one absence. Leaving class early will result in additional point deductions. I will take attendance every class. In the event of an emergency, contact me as soon as possible.

Basic classroom courtesies.

Please arrive on time. We will begin each class with meditation, so late arrivals will be very disruptive. Being tardy will impact both your participation and attendance grades. No Cell Phone Use. Please be sure your cell phones are silenced and put away before you enter the classroom. Cell phone use will result in a deduction of your participation grade.

Journal: To fulfill course requirements, you are required to keep a journal detailing self-reflections, embodied responses, and insights occurring during and from the yoga postures, readings, discussions, meditations, and practices of the yamas and niyamas. You are required to turn in four journal entries throughout the semester. I recommend you write daily or regularly during the week to track the readings and your progress. Journal Entries are due electronically on each due date before the start of class. No late journals will be accepted. No exceptions.
The journals will be graded on their attention to three primary components (listed here and detailed more fully below): 1.) Text Portion, which includes writing on the readings and the associated themes, 2.) Reflection on Practice, Growth, and Setbacks, requiring an in-depth and specific critical self-reflection, and 3.) Adherence to technical requirements such as word count. The Text Portion and Reflection portion do not necessarily need to be written as two separate sections if they emerge as organically integrated/mutually informing each other in your practice. Whether they are two sections or integrated as one, they must meet the following criteria:

1. **Text Portion.** Each journal assignment will be accompanied by themes/concepts specific to the readings. Your journal entry needs to address the theme(s) with specific examples and references to the readings, as you detail your critical reflections, insights, analysis, and interpretations. You must cite the texts and page numbers. If you do not address the themes and content of the readings, and if you do not cite your sources, you will receive significant point deductions. You must reference each of the readings assigned or points will be deducted.

2. **Self-Reflection.** This portion of your journal entry will consist of a critical self-reflection on your practice for each week, any growth, any observations, any new insights about yourself and your approach to the philosophies and practices of that week. You may incorporate into this journal entry (a typed version of) your handwritten journal insights that emerge in your journal sessions after our meditation and asana practice in class. Note that this handwritten journaling session is the *beginning* of your week’s practice and only a partial component of the entire week. By the end of the week, be sure you are noting any differences, contrasts, deepenings, set-backs, etc. that emerged during the week, and offer your reflections into why. Allow this segment of your writing be a method of inquiry. In other words, allow yourself to learn even more as you are writing. This segment is not just a “report” or “summary” of the week, but an integration of your insights and epiphanies that emerge through a combination of your embodied practice and your contemplative/academic study of the components of yoga of that week. You will be graded on your depth, specificity, detail of examples, and degree of critical self-reflection. Note that I have a very good eye for fluff and filler. Don’t do this. Be real, be honest and authentic with yourself, in your self-reflecting and in your writing. This is how we grow everyday into our best selves.

3. **Technical Requirements.** Each journal entry must be a minimum of 1000 words and must be typed. If your entries are less than 1000 words, you will receive automatic point deductions. (Note: You may have more than 1000 words.) Your writing must be University-level, proof-read, free of typos, and free of grammatical and mechanical errors.

**Final Essay:** You are required to write an 8-10 page double-spaced researched, critical self-reflection of your yoga journey, integrating insights and impacts of the course that arose through your practices of the postures and philosophies, and from the readings. The essay must cite and incorporate research, reference the readings and offer clear, concrete examples of how and what you learned. The essay must be organized around a particular theme, concept, practice, or philosophy from the readings and course content that may have emerged during your journey. For example, you may choose to focus to practice working on a single yama or niyama this semester. Your essay will detail that focus. The essay must contain a synthesis of your research, your embodied experience/practice, and critical self-reflexivity on your journey.
Course Calendar

The first half of every class will be comprised of Meditation/Centering followed by a group discussion based on the readings, themes and concepts assigned for that week. We will conclude with Yoga Practice and Savasana, followed by self-reflexive journaling if time permits.

Week 1: Introductions, Syllabus; What is Yoga

Week 2: The Eight Limbs of Yoga

Week 3: Introduction to the Yamas; Ahimsa: Nonviolence

Week 4: Ahimsa; Nonviolent Communication

Week 5: Satya: Truthfulness

Week 6: Satya; Nonviolent Communication

Week 7: Asteya: Nonstealing

Week 8: Brahmacharya: Moderation/Non-excess

Week 9: Aparigraha: Non-attachment/Non-greed

Week 10: Introduction to the Niyamas; Shaucha: Purity/Cleanliness

Week 11: Santosha: Contentment

Week 12: Tapas: Discipline & Austerity

Week 13: Swadhyaya: Study of Self and Texts

Week 14: Ishvara Pranidhana: Surrender

Week 15: Integration and Review

Week 16: Final Exam Period
Description of how this course provides a unique educational experience, appropriate for Honors students at SIUC

Part of SIUC’s mission is to “nurture student success” so students can become “future leaders” that “improve our communities, and transform lives.” My course, “Yoga for Harmonious Living” places particular emphasis on the word “nurture” as it teaches students how to restore and sustain life-balance and empowerment by learning how to relax and center. By teaching students how to nurture themselves so they can nurture others, they will emerge as compassionate leaders who “improve communities and transform lives” while also sustaining their own energy. To my knowledge, there are currently no courses being offered at SIUC that integrate rigorous scholarship, embodied awareness, and energetic balance undergirded by a theme of loving kindness, compassionate leadership and self-care grounded in a praxis of yoga. Yoga is an ancient practice and philosophy that has gained popularity in recent years as it has proven to reduce stress and promote well-being. A course on self-care is timely and necessary in the contemporary moment. In our increasingly polarized, fast-paced, and socially mediated world, elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depression are becoming normalized states of being for many college students, and high-achieving Honors students are certainly no exception. In the push to excel, bodies become depleted and the holistic self falls out of balance, creating conditions for physical and mental illness and a general negative spiral. Students need practical skills to remain simultaneously centered, relaxed, and energized. “Yoga for Harmonious Living” is designed to offer students a two-fold experience: 1) an embodied weekly yoga and meditation practice to restore balance and overall well-being that will be sustained throughout the semester, and 2) an invigorating study of yoga philosophies and healing modalities that students will engage through an in-depth reading, writing, discussion, and self-application process that will equip them with the skills, awareness, and strategies necessary to create an individualized, integrated and balanced daily way of well-being they can carry with them as leaders beyond the classroom into their future communities.