UNIVERSITY OF WELLNESS

Yoga Teacher Training

**Weekend One:** **YOGA 101**

**Description:**

This first module will cover foundational information and open up lines of discussion, and sources of contemplation about yoga’s concepts, precepts, principles, history, ethics; yoga as a profession, its benefits, and philosophies. A thorough, solid body of yoga related information will be presented on which the student will be encouraged to realize and articulate their own understanding of the broad subject of yoga along with certain pertinent specifics.

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will gain a basic understanding of a definition of and related concepts and theories of yoga. Its origins, development, history, and modern yoga, including a cursory discussion of the evolution of certain types and traditions, along with an introduction to styles of yoga, ethics, and an overview of yoga philosophy (including the *Eight Limb Path,* and the yamas and niyamas) will be introduced and/or reviewed; initial vocabulary will be presented, before these and other topics are presented in greater detail. Teaching skills will be touched on, also to be readdressed and expanded on throughout training.

Students will have an appreciation of the numerous variations and descriptions of themes (takes into account a ‘smattering’ of Sanskrit, religious and spiritual implications and derivations from Hindu, Buddhist, and other belief systems); the constant, continual, and inherent overlap and interplay between many yogic information and ideas (language: different words, categorizations, and organization for the same or similar things such as energetic and other conceptual groupings, etc.) Students will begin to familiarize with basic anatomy, yoga as a business, yoga for wellness, maintaining spiritual and energetic awareness, in addition to an introduction of creativity and yoga, with specifics of numerous benefits of each, and both combined.

**Getting Started**

The word YOGA may bring to mind many images and ideas from clichéd to universal and traditional, to those that take into consideration one’s own experience related to it. There are many things that yoga is. It is inclusive, simple, and as complex as anyone would like it to be depending on how far into its numerous layers one chooses to delve. Since you have decided to share your love and knowledge of yoga with others, it is important that you have a basic understanding of classic, technical definitions, along with refining, and perhaps modifying your own views and feelings on the subject as well as continuing to evolve your personal description so as not to lose sight of the essence of why you are here in this training and why you practice yoga.

**Yoga, a working definition:**

Technically, the Sanskrit word yoga is derived from the root word ‘yuj’, which means to yoke or to unite.  (Sanskrit is an ancient, beautiful-but-obsolete language which originated in India and is found in the realm of yoga about which you will be learning in this course).

The techniques involved in the art and science of yoga were discovered, designed, and developed by the first ancient yogis in their quest to achieve a greater spiritual awareness and connection to ‘the Divine’.  These insightful people realized that basically in order to be able to pray more effectively they first needed to care for and settle their bodies and minds.  They recognized that human beings often lacked awareness along with the ability to quietly observe, and sometimes let go.  True enlightenment and ultimately *liberation* were not possible without it.  The inherent and inevitable interplay, connection, and overlap between those facets – the physical, mental, spiritual, as well as the energetic and emotional parts of us all that continually interact and react to other parts was an idea that the first known yogis understood and began to articulate.  The original yogis had a sense that each of these important components needs to be accessed and addressed in order to achieve a calmer, healthier, more comfortable state, therefore a higher consciousness, a deeper self-awareness, and greater enlightenment.

Definitions and descriptions of the word yoga, and its premises and ideas are as ubiquitous and varied as its practitioners, and even then these tend to continue evolving and fluctuating, often in individualized and sometimes subjective ways.

Technically considered a passive martial art, yoga means many things to many people.  To some participants yoga is a way of life encompassing much more than physical postures, positions, and movements.  For some it is a goal to ‘live a yogic lifestyle’, including continued and increased mindful awareness of the body, mind, and especially spiritual, and other connections.  To be more mindful in general is the goal of many in the yoga community.  In addition to other considerations such as self-care practices, nutritional factors, many daily routines, ongoing and special occasion activities intended to create and enhance positivity for oneself and others are performed.

For many people yoga is nothing more than primarily a super-effective, workout program that can be quite routine, or infinitely modifiable.  Perhaps they focus solely on the physical stuff (called ‘asana’) that can be executed and enjoyed in some capacity by anyone, in any physical (or mental, emotional, etc.) condition from any walk of life.  But even practitioners who do yoga only occasionally with the sole intention of loosening up for a tennis match, all participants of any amount of whatever type of yoga are also directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly, experiencing spiritual (and mental, emotional, and energetic) effects as well.  With regular participation, many people find that yoga can improve mood, sleep, digestion, relaxation, etcetera, as well as detoxifying organs, increasing physical fitness markers like balance, stability, breath capacity, and of course flexibility and mobility, while reducing stress and helping to prevent injuries.  But it goes way beyond those loosened hamstrings, and improved race times.

Yoga has been around for millennia because sometimes even the ancient gurus and sages got stressed and felt disconnected.  Stressful current times and a corresponding growing interest in holistic, healthy activities and experiences have brought about the immense popularity of yoga, along with its growing number of participants.  Simply stated: *yoga is popular because it works*.

**More on Definition & Benefits**

Yoga is a practice, a meditation technique, a safe and peaceful place that is as challenging and/or relaxing as someone chooses for it to be.  It is a powerful tool in any fitness and wellness arsenal.  It can be any or all of these things and more – depending on who you ask and when.  Asana practice can be fantastic ‘me time’, but can also be a positive social activity.  Sometimes referred to as a path to enlightenment, yoga can be simplistic, complex, specific, singular and individual, but at the same time it is expansive, expressive, inclusive, huge and encompassing as well.  It embodies and exemplifies yin and yang. Yoga provides connection and balance of many different kinds… And one of the coolest things about yoga is that it is as immediately-accessible as your next breath.

The Principles and Practices of Yoga in Health Care call yoga a multicomponent practice that is inherently multifaceted in nature. There are numerous styles of yoga-based practices representing various schools and lineages of yoga, that typically involve a combination of specific postures or movement sequences, breath regulation, deep relaxation, and meditative techniques (page 49). The authors go on to state that “It can be hypothesized that yoga-based practices may promote increased connectivity within, and dynamic shifting between, motor, cognitive, and emotional circuits, with potential beneficial effects for mind-body integration and self-regulation.” (Pages 51.) On page 58 they describe how Yoga Practices including postures, breathing, relaxation, and meditation affect Mind-Body Awareness (mindfulness, attention, and other cognitive awareness, etc.), Self-Regulation (dealing with stress, emotions, promoting resilience, etc.), and Physical Fitness (flexibility, strength, balance, physical confidence, etc.) to improve Behaviors, Mental State, Health, and Performance.

Yoga 101

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF YOGA?

**In class Assignment 1.: WHAT  IS  YOGA? (Write your own working definition on separate paper.)**

Remember, this is a start of an ongoing discussion and development of your understanding of universally-accepted and expected principles, traditional and key concepts and techniques along with your own expanding, evolving, and unique perspective on this simple, yet virtually–limitless subject.

**Additional Definitions:**

Asana -

Pranayama (also pranayam) –

**Notes:**

HISTORY OF YOGA

Yoga was developed over 6000 years ago in the far East, with earliest documentation of its existence being mentioned in the ancient sacred texts of India, including the ‘Bhagivad Gita’, the ‘Rig Vedas’, and other historical written works.  Other important texts that influenced yoga’s origins include the Sutras and the Upanishads. Patanjali, a renowned philosopher and historic figure in India is largely credited for putting ‘yoga’ into words, his focus remaining centered on yoga as a path to enlightenment and righteousness.  Yoga became enmeshed in Indian culture as a way of life, the specific practice of which touched on and was touched by religions at that time (namely Hinduism and later Buddhism).  Yoga’s popularity has waxed and waned, but has grown exponentially in recent decades, including in Western civilizations, having morphed into an assortment of styles and related disciplines.

**More about Patanjali**

Often referred to as the Father of Yoga, Patanjali was also one of the first and most famous practitioners of the earliest stages of this positive activity and concept.  He was one of the most significant, lasting contributors to yoga’s staying power, indeed its current and continually-increasing popularity.  Not much is known about Patanjali, some scholars speculate that he may not have even been one individual person but that there were in fact two Patanjalis who are credited with having begun to document yoga.  It is thought that the most ancient yogis were perhaps more concerned with their practice, and connecting to their version of ‘the Divine’ than taking credit for yoga’s development.

One of the most significant aspects of yoga that is widely-credited to Patanjali is what is known as the *Eight Limbs of Yoga* or the *Eight Limb Path*.  These are basic categories of parts of life, and the self set up in a hierarchy, which he felt need to be acknowledged and addressed in order to realize a righteous, full, and open existence.

**Please describe the history of yoga in your own words:**

**Questions/Reflection:**

**(Questions, thoughts, or reflections you have up until this point.)**

The eight limbs of Astanga Yoga (and/or Raja Yoga) as codified by Patañjali in the Yoga Sutras:

1. YAMA - Restraints, moral disciplines or moral vows 2. NIYAMA - Positive duties or observances 3. ASANA - Postures 4. PRANAYAMA – Energetic breathing techniques 5. PRATYAHARA - Sense withdrawal 6. DHARANA - Focused concentration 7. DHYANA - Meditative absorption 8. SAMADHI - Bliss or enlightenment

**Notes:**

Yoga 101 **LIFESTYLE & ETHICS: Dharma, Karma, & Seva**

Dharma is a concept of central importance in Indian philosophy and religion. Like yoga, it has multiple meanings in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism (a less popular religion in India). It is difficult to provide a single concise definition for dharma, as the word has a long and varied history and straddles a complex set of meanings and interpretations. There is no equivalent single-word synonym for dharma in western languages but is often loosely described as being akin to destiny.

Dharma Yoga is a challenging form of yoga based on Sri Dharma Mittra’s practice of classical yoga.

 ·  Hinduism - dharma signifies behaviors that are considered to be in accord with Rta, the order that makes life and universe possible; includes duties, rights, laws, conduct, virtues and “right way of living”

·  Buddhism – dharma refers to “cosmic law and order”

· Jainism – dharma refers to the teachings of Jina and the body of doctrine pertaining to the purification and moral transformation of human beings

·  Sikhs - the path of righteousness and proper religious practice.

Karma and Seva can also be interpreted in many different ways, but are similar to each other conceptually. Simply put, karma and lesser known seva represent the idea that actions have effects in the future. This is where in some religions and belief systems the concept of past and future lives comes in. Karma yoga - also called Karma Marga, is one of the several spiritual paths in Hinduism, one based on the “yoga of action”. Karma yoga is the path of dedicated work: renouncing the results of our actions as a spiritual offering rather than hoarding the results for ourselves. It teaches that a spiritual seeker should act according to dharma, without being attached to the fruits or personal consequences.

LIFESTYLE & ETHICS: **What is dharma?**

**What is karma?**

**What is seva?**

**Notes:**

Yoga 101 ETHICS

**Example Yoga Code of Ethics:**

The Yoga Alliance Code of Conduct is a declaration of acceptable ethical and professional behavior by which all registrants agree to conduct the teaching and business of yoga. It is not intended to supersede the ethics of any school or tradition but is intended to be a basis for yoga principles. As a Registered Yoga Teacher, a YACEP, or representative of a Registered Yoga Schools, I agree to uphold the following ethical principles:

· Conduct myself in a professional and conscientious manner. This includes but is not limited to, ensuring that I live up to any commitments I make to my students or to the public, and ensuring that my practices and behavior conform to the representations I make about myself in holding myself out as a yoga practitioner who adheres to certain precepts.

· Acknowledge the limitations of my skills and scope of practice and where appropriate, refer students to seek alternative instruction, advice, treatment or direction.

· Create and maintain a safe, clean and comfortable environment for the practice of yoga.

· Encourage diversity by respecting all students regardless of age, physical limitations, race, creed, gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

· Respect the rights, dignity and privacy of all students.

· Avoid words and actions that constitute sexual harassment or harassment based on other legal protected characteristics.

· Adhere to the traditional yoga principles as written in the yamas and niyamas.

· Follow all local government and national laws that pertain to my yoga teaching and

business.

I understand that Yoga Alliance may revoke my right to use its Registry Marks for cause, including failure to uphold the Standards set forth in the Code of Conduct or failure to comply with Yoga Alliance’s Yoga Therapy Policy. Prior to revoking my right to use a Registry Mark, Yoga Alliance will provide me notice of the basis for the potential revocation and an opportunity to respond in writing. After review of the evidence, Yoga Alliance will issue a decision as to whether to revoke my credentials, based on its reasonable judgment of the evidence before it. I agree to hold Yoga Alliance harmless for any losses or damage I may incur as a consequence of the revocation of my credentials.

Referenced from: https://www.yogaalliance.org/AboutYA/OurPolicies/CodeofConduct

SPECIFICS ABOUT TYPES OF YOGA

**Hatha vs.Vinyasa**

Hatha Yoga is essentially a ‘Westernized’ blend of traditional styles of yoga largely geared toward physical components and considerations.  Sometimes thought of as part of a more encompassing, overlying categorization known as Raja Yoga, Hatha emphasizes the asana and pranayama parts of the practice, before delving deeper into other less tangible topics and study.  Bhumi’s Yoga and Wellness Center, Ohio, Teacher Training states that;

“Hatha is the yoga of physical well-being.  The Sanskrit root ha means ‘sun’, or positive aspect, and tha means ‘moon’ or negative aspect.  Yoga means to yoke or to bring together, consequently Hatha Yoga is that part of yoga that seeks to unite our polarities and conflicts into a state of harmony.  Through its related series of exercises for both body and mind, Hatha Yoga techniques are intended to rejuvenate and bring into proper balance all aspects of the body: endocrine, vascular, nervous, circulatory, respiratory, and musculoskeletal systems.”

Attention in this course will also be paid to Vinyasa style yoga, which takes the poses and positions of Hatha and other types of yoga, linking them together with conscious breathing, into continual dynamic movements, or ‘flow’.  Most people benefit from a combination of sustained, longer-held postures (which improve strength and flexibility) as well as continually moving exercises and practices to enhance mobility, range of motion, and coordination differently.

Various types of yoga affect the systems of the body (especially those regions of the body responsible for key bodily functions) differently, just as the broader aspects of the self (physical, mental, emotional, energetic, spiritual), are also intertwined, balanced, and strengthened, with all systems harmoniously working together for optimal well-being.

**What is Hatha Yoga?**

**What is the purpose of Hatha Yoga? What are its benefits?**

Have you practiced Hatha Yoga? Your thoughts about it?

**What is Vinyasa Yoga? What are its benefits?**

Have you practiced Vinyasa Yoga? Your thoughts about it?

**Notes:**

**More on Styles of Yoga**

Most yoga styles share certain elements including attention to breathing, conscientious stretching and forming alignment-based postures, along with the culmination of a calmer, more focused and/or relaxed state of awareness.

There are currently around 80 officially recognized types of yoga in the United States, not including various combinations of yoga and related activities, themes, and so on (yoga and Pilates, yoga with goats!)  Some of the better-known styles include; Acro, Ananda, Ashram, Ashtanga, Ayurvedic, Bikrim, Chair, Dharma, Gentle, Hot, Iyengar, Karma, Kundalini, Yoga Nidra, Pool, Power, Restorative, Tantric, Yin, Yoga dance, yoga for special populations like prenatal, kids’, senior yoga, yoga for recovery, many types of sport-specific yoga, therapeutic yoga, and more.

We will focus primarily on Hatha Yoga with a foray into other well-known in addition to lesser-known types of yoga.

**Modern Yoga**

As stated yoga has been around for so long, and is so popular because it works.  It’s easily accessible, and extremely diverse in a plethora of situations, and as far as its potential participants, which pretty much includes any and every one. In recent decades, since yoga’s introduction to the attention of Americans, it has undergone several incarnations and transitions.

Many aspects of old school calisthenics, classical dance styles such as ballet, modern, and jazz, gymnastics, and even other martial arts were influenced by and still demonstrate much foundational yoga in its content.  Conversely, some of these activities have also influenced modern yoga’s design and development. By the 1960’s and ‘70’s, yoga was being embraced by a fringe group of free spirits, and what might have been considered avant garde partakers who may have been thought of as somewhat eccentric.  Hippies, intellectuals, musicians and poets replaced the more physical, posture-geared previous practices bringing back and introducing to Western civilization the spiritual and holistic facets of yoga and meditation.

So the primitive (especially in the USA) physical parts of yoga have grown and evolved.  Although still progressive, even timeless as is evident by the fact that its influence is permeating – today, everything from yoga pants, to yoga celebrities, film, TV, online information, advertising, food, and vacation destinations are touched by yoga.  At the same time, there was always an undercurrent of practitioners who remained entrenched in the more spiritual, traditional realms of yoga.  Many of the most popular types of yoga are geared toward fitness and stress-reduction.  Gyms and fitness centers abound with a variety of flow and other yoga classes and programming largely attended by their members who are there to workout.

As mentioned, since yoga asana can positively affect peoples’ other physical pursuits, prevent injuries, and decrease anxiety, classes began to fill.  But again, whether the participants were even aware or not, they were being positively affected in other ways too, including spiritually, psychologically, and so on.

What also started to occur beginning in the 1980’s, is that yoga’s other proponents, perhaps less mainstream than those from fitness center franchises or typical gym-goers, started to increase in number.  Fields like mental health and physical therapy, rehabilitation, and recovery of many types exploded, along with the daily stress levels of typical Americans.  The need for yoga for a large population of humanity was becoming clear.  With that realization came a whole related subculture, which is coming into its own as a recognized field itself.  Homeopathic medicine, holistic well-being, etcetera are now considered increasingly mainstream with every passing day, with a trend toward a ‘macro’ instead of a ‘micro’ approach to health and wellness, which means the person is considered as a whole, with lifestyle aspects, predispositions, and propensities, body type, even socioeconomic implications and more taken into consideration when treating people for a variety of imbalances and conditions. This shift back to macro care and treatment from micro, which involves treating disease rather than the whole patient, often providing a ‘band aid’ for symptoms and issues instead of addressing underlying causes. This is where *Ayurvedic principles* may be applicable, and the idea that said lifestyle elements, such as sleep and nutritional habits, skin, hair, and other physicality is considered when treating or preventing ailments.

Currently the yoga industry features numerous options for fitness professionals along with participants.  Jobs in yoga include instructors for gyms, studios, private clients, personal trainings, and more in a multitude of venues with attention to a wide assortment of specific clientele.  Organizers, owners, and administrators of retreats, special events, workshops, travel and tourism, non-profit organizations, and even in the food and beverage industries each offer potential situations for trained yoga professionals.  And of course the healthcare field is wide open for the inclusion of numerous things yoga, which is being embraced more and more all the time.  Abundant opportunities exist for creative yoga providers to design and develop their own niche as far as venue, content, scheduling, and preferred demographics with whom to work, while it remains a common possibility to pop into the local church basement once a week to lead a class, get a bit of exercise, and spend some time with positive, like-minded folks.

The field of yoga has also become increasingly competitive, which can sometimes make for challenging circumstances, but opportunities are out there in spades.  The good news is that the trajectory of yoga’s popularity, which does not appear to be ebbing anytime soon, seems like it will continue to expand to the masses.  Although the business aspects of yoga, or yoga as a business might present a set of unique issues, for example, ethical and financial concerns, yoga remains largely a field known to be positive, with those involved mostly ‘practicing what they preach’, and those who do not, at least continuing to practice yoga and presumably trying to live by at least some of its precepts (remember, everyone gets spiritual benefits even if they do not realize it).  “In my humble opinion, the world would be a much healthier and happier place if more people did yoga.” (Christina Lee)  Let’s just hope that anyone who uses yoga solely for personal gain, especially if they do so at the expense of others, that its universal, time-honored messages of positivity eventually sink in.  And if that does not happen, at very least, may we encounter these individuals after we have all participated in a delightful asana practice, complete with a nice long meditation in savasana.

**What are your favorite styles of yoga thus far?** (It's okay if you don't know yet!)

**How has yoga evolved? What are some modern yoga styles or ideas?**

**What are your biggest take-aways this weekend? What have you learned so far?**

**In class Assignment 2.: What do you hope to glean from this yoga teacher training? (List and/or describe at least three things on same paper as your yoga definition.)**

**Weekend One Assignment 1A.** **What does yoga mean to you?** (Please describe in a few sentences what yoga means to you presently.  What do you already know and love about it? Anything about which you are not crazy regarding yoga? What might you be curious to learn more about yoga and/or anything related to it, and why?)

**Assignment 1B.** Begin to sketch in an idea of which aspects of yoga, the science, art, and constantly-evolving practice might you like to share with others at some point, and why.  Also possibly touch on how you might convey these to others (any ideas on what you think might be your teaching style(s), including any brainstorms about whom you may like to teach and/or work with as far as potential clientele, teaching venues, further studies, and so on).

*This Assignment (1A and B) is due at the beginning of November’s training weekend and will be revisited occasionally so please submit a copy.*

**Assignment 2.**  Your first teaching assignment will be to prepare cuing, demonstration, and any applicable modifications and/or adjustments for two or three basic poses, along with the transition(s) between the two.  Choose poses from at least two of the following categories: standing, seated, kneeling, lying, balanced, and simple inversions.  Keep it basic with core, well-known positions; write down if you wish.

*This will be shared and critiqued during November’s training weekend.*

**Assignment 3A.**  Please read: Part One of The Key Poses of Yoga, by Ray Long, MD, FRCSC.

**Assignment 3B.** Familiarize yourself with or review the seven main chakras.