

COURSE OUTLINE

PHIL-141

The Philosophy and Practice of Yoga
3 Semester Hours

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Description

This introductory course in Yogic philosophy is unique in that it interweaves the intellectual and the experiential, so that the ancient yet timely truths and principles of Yoga are studied, explored, and practiced through Yoga postures, breath, awareness, reflection, writing, discussion, meditation, and action. (4 hours weekly) NOTE: Also listed as HEED-141.

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- I. Understand and discuss the basic philosophic principles of Yoga, including:
 - A. The meaning of Yoga
 - B. The forms of Yoga
 - C. The nature of Reality
 - D. The nature of Truth
 - E. Knowledge, wisdom, and ways of knowing
 - F. Karma (moral law of the cosmos)
 - G. Energy, prana, and the charkas
 - H. The 8-fold path of Yoga according to Patanjali
 - I. The nature of Spirit
 - J. Reincarnation
 - K. Enlightenment or self-realization

- II. Have a basic understanding of the major Yogic texts and be able to explain the principles and concepts contained in them.

- III. Apply those principles (see I & II above) on the Yoga mat and in their lives.
 - A. Demonstrate techniques to align, stretch, strengthen, and honor their individual bodies by using various Yoga warm-ups and Yoga postures (asanas).
 - B. Use the breath properly and effectively in accordance with the natural structure of the body (pranayama).
 - C. Demonstrate the ability to focus the mind and to concentrate for longer periods of time through centering and meditation techniques, breathing, and Yoga postures.
 - D. Develop a sense of calm, centeredness, peace, and well-being through Yoga and meditation.
 - E. Identify and work with the emotions, sensations, and thoughts that accompany a Yoga posture, and that accompany life and its experiences.
 - F. Know the value of first looking deeply (being present, reflecting, meditating) and then responding (thinking, speaking, acting) from this place of greater wisdom.
 - G. Build inner strength and resources to stay centered amidst life's problems, stresses, and challenges.
 - H. Use the framework of Yoga to explore and develop their own values and beliefs and ultimately to live those values and beliefs.
 - I. Be present to and open to life, moment to moment as it unfolds, and therefore come to life more fully.

- J. Appreciate the yearning for connection, and then strengthen their own connection to self, to others, and to the universal oneness of all things.
 - K. Discover, explore, appreciate, value and love themselves with their own unique gifts, talents, challenges, and strengths.
 - L. Develop a more accepting and loving relationship with themselves in all the ways they show up.
- IV. Create personal goals and appraise achievement of them.

Major Topics

- I. The meaning of Yoga
- II. Forms of Yoga: Hatha, Bhakti, Jnana, Raja, Karm
- III. Nature of Reality
 - A. Relative reality - the changing reality of everyday life
 - B. Absolute or eternal reality – the changeless
- IV. Truth
 - A. The Yogic perspective
 - B. Self knowledge
- V. Wisdom, knowledge, and knowing
 - A. Exploration of knowledge and wisdom
 - B. Ways of knowing
- VI. Karma (moral law of the cosmos)
 - A. Classical and current definitions
 - B. Responsibility and choice
 - C. Reincarnation
- VII. Energy
 - A. Prana
 - B. The Chakra system
- VIII. The 8-fold path of Yoga according to Patanjali (The path toward enlightenment/union)
 - A. Yamas - Yogic principles ethical restraints
 - B. Niyamas - Yogic principles ethical observances
 - C. Asana
 - D. Pranayama
 - E. Pratyahara - sense withdrawal - from external world toward inner focus
 - F. Dharana - concentration
 - G. Dhyana- Meditation
 - H. Samadhi – Enlightenment, Self-realization
- IX. Duality and non-duality
- X. Ayurveda, the medical branch of Yoga
- XI. Study of selected Yogic texts: *Yoga Sutras, Upanishads, Vedas, Bhagavad Gita*
- XII. Application of Yogic principles in everyday life

Course Requirements

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include: attendance and participation, individual oral and written work (2 individual oral presentations/readings, self-reflection journal, comprehension of texts), group project, classic Yoga techniques (pranayama, asana, relaxation, meditation).

Other Course Information

This course is a Humanities and an Arts and Science elective.