

THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

FSP 11108

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Hours: W 8-10 and by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW:

One of the major issues that both Western and Eastern philosophy tackle is the relationship of the mind to the body, and the inner perception of the world to the reality of what is or might be outside it. Which of these entities does or should take precedence in human life and the governing of human affairs? In both philosophies, the body is often devalued as a base and unreliable aspect of humanity, to be surpassed and dominated by the mind or spirit. In this course we will trace the history of this attitude at the same time as conducting our own experiment on the subject through the practices of yoga and meditation. In this way we will discover more deeply our own experience of the connection of our minds to our bodies and the ways in which it participates in and/or diverges from traditional philosophical attitudes.

GOALS:

1. To familiarize ourselves with some of the canonical texts that tackle this major issue in Western and Eastern philosophy.
2. To examine critically the ways in which our own attitudes have been shaped by these texts.
3. To study *asana* and meditation practices.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Journals	5%
Quizzes	10%
Midterm paper	20%
Final paper	25%
Response papers (3)	15%
Yoga presentation	15%
In-class work	10%

ASSESSMENT OF REQUIREMENTS:

Journals: You will keep a weekly journal in which you record your observations about your yoga, meditation practice, and reading. Please note that these are not “personal” journals in the sense that you write about your day-to-day activities. However it may be that some reflection on daily activities comes up during your practices, and you may include these where relevant.

You need not write a journal entry for every single day; rather your journal should reflect on particular experiences and thoughts about the reading and yoga practices. The journal is a good place to make quick summaries of the course readings and include detailed and critical observations about the texts, for example questions that they provoke, arguments you might have with what the author is saying, and similarities or differences with ideas that come up in other authors we are reading.

Please deposit journals in the Dropbox on SOCS EVERY FRIDAY by 5 p.m.

Please do take your journaling seriously, as these notes will be invaluable for 2 reasons:

1. when it comes to writing papers.
2. to better understand your progress in the physical and mental practices of yoga and meditation.

Each week should include 3-4 double-spaced pages of notes. Journals will be graded pass/fail, with a passing grade given to work that shows careful and thoughtful engagement both with the effects of the practice and with the overall theme of the course as it emerges through reading and discussion.

Quizzes: These will be short (no more than 10 min.) and will either ask for fact-based information or will require a short response to a more theoretical question.

Response papers (2 double-spaced pages): These should reflect your critical reading of the texts you choose to address and should contain:

1. a short summary (about a paragraph) of the main point of the text **IN YOUR OWN WORDS** (i.e. no quoting).
2. an assessment of the importance of the text for our inquiry. A good way to approach this is to think of what you found most interesting about the text and write about that, relating it also to the broader context of the class.

Papers: Midterm paper should be 5-7 double-spaced pages in length. The final paper should be 8-10 pages. I will assign paper topics, although you are free to choose your own after consultation with me. First-draft papers will be returned with an F-grade. Papers will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Does the paper address the topic clearly and coherently in the opening paragraph(s)? Is your argument clearly outlined?
- Does the paper's analysis progress logically? Does the paper have a clear and consistent overall organization that relates all the ideas of the paper together in support of the thesis with appropriate transitions to aid the reader (rather than simply a list of random similarities and differences without relation to one another or to the thesis)?
- Does the paper provide relevant, concrete evidence and logically persuasive reasons for every assertion?

- Is the writing in the paper clear, effective, correct (according to the norms of standard American English), and appropriate to an academic setting?

PLEASE NOTE! Papers are due on the date specified. Late papers will not be accepted unless a prior arrangement has been made with the instructor.

Yoga presentation: The super fun part! This will also be a group presentation. The final three sessions of the course will be yoga practices led by groups. Each group will choose an overall theme for the practice to which all members will contribute. Each student in the group will teach the class for approximately 15 minutes, not only calling out poses but also guiding the class through his/her interpretation of the significance and effects of the poses. Successful presentations will incorporate a knowledge of the technicalities of the poses and the relationship of asana practice to the overall yoga philosophy, will reflect upon both Eastern and Western Mind-Body traditions, and will creatively weave these aspects into the chosen theme.

Important: group members will be graded individually.

In-class work: Students will be evaluated on their familiarity with and level of preparation of the texts to be covered each class session. Evaluation may take the form of pop quizzes, short (paragraph-long) written assignments, and a notation by the instructor as to how often each student participates. The instructor will advise each student mid-semester as to his/her in-class work grade and suggest ways to improve performance.

ACCOMMODATIONS: The College of New Jersey prohibits discrimination against any student on the basis of physical or mental disability or perceived disability. The College will also provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations to enable students with disabilities to participate in the life of the campus community. Individuals with disabilities are responsible for reporting and supplying documentation verifying their disability, and requests for accommodations must be initiated through the Office of Differing Abilities Services (Eickhoff Hall 159). If you require special assistance, I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate your needs and to create an environment where your special abilities will be respected.

Please see the following link for additional information:

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~wellness/disability/facultyaccomodations.html>

Academic Integrity: Please note that all written work will be evaluated according to the College's standards for academic integrity. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with these standards. Please refer to the following website:

<http://www.tcnj.edu/%7Estudlife/judaff/academic.html>

Required Texts:

Easwaran, Eknath (trans. & ed.): *The Bhagavad Gita*.

—. *The Upanishads*.

Blackmore: *Conversations on Consciousness: What the Best Minds Think about the Brain, Free Will, and What It Means to be Human.*
 Descartes, René: *Meditations* (on SOCS).
 Gunaratana, Bhante: *Mindfulness in Plain English.*
 Iyengar, B.K.S.: *Light on Yoga.*
 Luckhurst, Nicola and Bowlby, Rachel: *Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer: Studies in Hysteria.*
 Plato: *Phaedo.*
 Sacks, Oliver. *An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales.*

In addition to our class yoga practice you will do at least one 1-hour yoga/meditation practice per week from the yogaglo website. I will specify which practice you should do.

Week	Date	Assignment
1	8/27 8/30	Introductions <i>Mindfulness</i> Ch. 1-3 YOGAGLO PRACTICE: SALLY KEMPTON, "INNER JOURNEY" (20 min.)
2	9/3 9/6	NO CLASS: MONDAY SCHEDULE <i>Mindfulness</i> Ch. 4-7; <i>Light on Yoga</i> p. 19-31 (to "Astanga Yoga—The Eight Limbs of Yoga"). JOURNALS DUE <u>EVERY FRIDAY</u> . YOGAGLO PRACTICE: SALLY KEMPTON, "THE ROLE OF FOCUS IN MEDITATION" (15 min); SIANNA SHERMAN, "BASIC FOUNDATIONAL POSTURES" (45 min.)
3	9/10 9/13	QUIZ; <i>Mindfulness</i> Ch. 8-10; <i>Light</i> p. 31-53. <i>Mindfulness</i> Ch. 11-13. YOGAGLO PRACTICE: SALLY KEMPTON, "SUBTLE BODY MEDITATION" (20 min.); KIA MILLER, "STAND TALL WITH GRACE AND EASE".
4	9/17 9/20	<i>The Upanishads: Katha and Taittiriya</i> <i>The Upanishads: Isha, Brihadaranyaka, Mandukya</i> YOGAGLO PRACTICE: SALLY KEMPTON, "COME INTO YOUR OWN AWARENESS" (20 min.); STEPHANIE SNYDER, "BEGINNER CHALLENGE FLOW".
5	9/24 9/27	Sanskrit Alphabet. Guest speaker: Sally Miller. YOGAGLO PRACTICE: SALLY KEMPTON, "DISCOVER THE SAGE AND GUIDE WHO LIVES WITHIN YOU" (15 min.); KIA MILLER, "ASANAS & NIYAMAS" (45 min.)

6	10/1 10/4	<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> Ch. 1-9 (minus the introductions to each chapter). <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> Ch. 10-14 YOGAGLO PRACTICE: STEPHEN ESPINOSA, "CHALLENGE YOURSELF AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF" (1 hr.)
7	10/8 10/11	<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> Ch. 15-18; <i>Mindfulness</i> Ch. 14-16. QUIZ YOGAGLO PRACTICE: from here till end of semester, yogi's choice, 15-20 min meditation; 45 min.-1 hr. yoga (any teacher for either).
8	10/15 10/18	MIDTERM PAPER DUE <i>Phaedo</i> , 57a-69e
9	10/22 10/25	Ayurveda: the science of yoga. Guest speaker: Sally Miller. <i>Phaedo</i> 69e-end
10	10/29 11/1	NO CLASS: FALL BREAK Descartes, <i>Meditations</i>
11	11/5 11/8	Freud, "Fraülein Anna O." and "Miss Lucy R." Freud, "Katharina" and "Fraülein Elisabeth von R."
12	11/12 11/15	Sacks, two case histories Ramachandran (SOCS)
13	11/19 11/22	Blackmore Blackmore
14	11/26 11/29	Student-led practice NO CLASS: HAPPY THANKSGIVING
15	12/3 12/6	Student-led practice Student-led practice