

# STUDY GUIDE

## ***CLASSIC YOGA – BODY, SELF AND LIBERATION***

**Organised by**  
**Karlstad University**

1. IDENTIFYING DATA.		
· Course Name.	Classic Yoga – Body, Self and Liberation 26-27 S1	
· Coordinating University.	Karlstad University	
· Partner Universities Involved.	N/A	
· Course Field(s).	Religious Studies	
· Related Study Programme.	N/A	
· ISCED Code.	0221 Religion and Theology	
· SDG.	Good health and well-being (3), Quality education (4), Gender equality (5)	
· Study Level.	B	
· EUNICE Key Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green – strongly</li> <li>• Orange - moderately</li> <li>• Red – partially</li> <li>• Blank cell - not at all</li> </ul>	
	Problem solving	
	Teamworking	
	Communication	
	Self-management	
	Cognitive flexibility	
	Digital competence	
	Technical competence	
	Global intercultural competence	

· Number of ECTS credits allocated.	7.5
· Mode of Delivery.	Online live, Online self-study
· Language of Instruction.	English
· Course Dates.	31/08/2026 – 15/01/2027
· Precise Schedule of the Lectures.	One two-hours meeting every two weeks
· Key Words.	Yoga, meditation, well-being, Indian philosophy and religion
· Catchy Phrase.	<i>Anima sana in corpore sano</i> / “A healthy soul in a healthy body”

· Prerequisites and co-requisites.	English B2 level
· Number of EUNICE students that can attend the Course.	15
· Number of EUNICE students that can attend the course per institution	1-2
· Course inscription procedure(s).	-

## 2. CONTACT DETAILS.

Department of Political, Historical, Religious and Cultural Studies	Department of Political, Historical, Religious and Cultural Studies
· Name of Lecturer.	Pawel Odyniec
· E-mail.	<a href="mailto:pawel.odyniec@kau.se">pawel.odyniec@kau.se</a>
· Other Lecturers.	N/A

## 3. COURSE CONTENT.

The course covers the historical development of classic yoga from the 300s to the 1600s from the perspective of religious history, highlighting the sociocultural and religious background in South Asia and its influence on the different expressions of yoga. The fundamental classic definitions of yoga and its forms are presented. Religious, philosophical, and therapeutic aspects of classic yoga are covered and related to the tantric and non-tantric forms of yoga. Through an overview of the South Asian history of yoga, the course also contributes to critical reflection upon the use of history that characterises the contemporary transnational yoga movement.

#### 4. LEARNING OUTCOMES.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

1. give an account of the historical, cultural, and religious contexts in which classic yoga emerged and developed in South Asia,
2. give an account of different classic definitions of yoga, its parts and main forms,
3. give an account of the philosophical, religious, and therapeutic foundations of classic yoga and its approach to the body,
4. identify the main ascetic and tantric trends of development in classic yoga, and
5. reflect upon the use of history in the contemporary transnational context of yoga.

#### 5. OBJECTIVES.

Students are expected to become acquainted with the historical and cultural background that shaped the main forms of classical yoga and to be able to account for the different definitions of classical yoga. In addition, students are expected to be able to explain the philosophical and religious underpinnings of classical yoga as well as its outlook on the human body. Finally, students will learn to identify ascetic and tantric forms of classical yoga and will reflect upon the use of history of classical yoga in contemporary transnational yoga movement.

#### 6. COURSE ORGANISATION.

##### UNITS

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|----|--|
| 1. | Historical, Cultural, and Religious Context of Classical Yoga                  |
| 2. | Foundational Yoga Texts I: <i>Bhagavadgītā</i>                                 |
| 3. | Foundational Yoga Texts II: <i>Yogasūtra</i> of Patañjali                      |
| 4. | Foundational Yoga Texts III: The <i>Yoga Upaniṣads</i> and <i>Yogavāsiṣṭha</i> |
| 5. | Yoga in Tantric Traditions: The Yogic Body in Tantric Sources                  |
| 6. | Haṭhayoga and the <i>Goraṅśāṭaka</i>   |
| 7. | Rājayoga and Its History   |
| 8. | Yoganidrā: Past, Present, and Future   |

##### LEARNING RESOURCES AND TOOLS.

Moodle, Padlet, KAU Play

##### PLANNED LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING METHODS.

Instruction is in the form of lectures and mandatory seminars in which the main course content and digital course materials are analysed and discussed among teachers and students.

## 7. ASSESSMENT METHODS, CRITERIA AND PERIOD.

Learning outcomes 1-4: Assessment is based on individual written hand-in assignments.  
Learning outcome 5: Assessment is based on oral presentations in seminars.

One of the grades Distinction (VG), Pass (G), or Fail (U) is awarded in the examination of the course.

### OBSERVATIONS.

N/A

## 8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND TEACHING MATERIALS.

### Books

Bronkhorst, Johannes (2011). Karma. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press

Mallinson, James, Singleton, Mark (2017). Roots of yoga. [London] UK: Penguin Books

Sarbacker, Stuart Ray (2021). Tracing the path of Yoga : the history and philosophy of Indian mind-body discipline. Albany: State University of New York Press :

<https://login.bibproxy.kau.se/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2558376&lang=sv&site=eds-live>

White, David Gordon (2014). The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: a biography. Princeton: Princeton University Press

White, David Gordon (2011). Yoga in practice. Princeton: Princeton University Press I

Birch, Jason (2018). Proliferation of Asana-s in Late-Medieval Yoga Texts. In Baier, Karl, Maas, Philipp A. & Preisendanz, Karin (Editor). Yoga in Transformation (p. 101-180)

Vienna: Vienna University <https://doi.org/10.14220/9783737008624.101>

Maas, A. Philipp (2018). Sthirasukam Asanam: Posture and Performance in Classical Yoga and Beyond. In Baier, Karl, Maas, Philipp A. & Preisendanz, Karin (Editor). Yoga in Transformation (p. 49-100) Vienna: Vienna University Press

<https://doi.org/10.14220/9783737008624.49>

### Articles

Birch, Jason (2014). Rajayoga: The Reincarnations of the King of All Yogas. International Journal of Hindu Studies, 17 (3), p. 401-444.

Birch, Jason and Hargreaves, Jacqueline (2015). Yoganidra: An Understanding of the History and the Context. The Luminescent.

<http://theluminescent.blogspot.co.uk/2015/01/yoganidra.html>

Mallinson, James (2011). Hatha Yoga. Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism, 3. 770-781.