

Online Course Catalogue

<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Study Field</u>	<u>University</u>
Modern Yoga	Arts and Humanities	Abo Akademi University

CHARM priority field	Faculty	Number of credit points:
European values, culture and language;	Faculty of Arts, Psychology and Theology	5
	Department	
	The Open University at Åbo Akademi University	
Course code	Study Level:	Name of instructor(s):
RV00CV02	BA/BSc	Janne Kontala

Short description of the course

The course explores contemporary manifestations of yoga and raises questions about what counts as religion. While the ascetic strand of modern yoga is often organised in denominational, guru-centred movements that would legitimately fall under the category of New Religious Movements, the style of yoga related to physical culture that we might encounter in the local gym today would more likely be associated with the secular. This may partially be due to the emphasis on social organisation and theological systems as determinants of what counts as religion. However, an equally important dimension of religions has to do with practice, which for modern yoga, tends to emphasise physical exercise over prayer and study of sacred texts.

Full description of the course

This course explores the modern development of yoga. Modern yoga emerged from the meeting of the national movements of the colonial India with Western audiences and esoteric ideologies. It sprang forth from two distinct strands: that of an ashram-based mysticism and that of a world-affirming physical culture. Both were inspired by the emerging national sentiment in India. Another feature germane to modernity was the development of photography, which allowed for the first time detailed depictions of physical exercises. This came to influence first the public image of yoga, and concomitantly its internal self-understanding. The associations of yoga with internal mysticism were increasingly replaced by the external form of the practice, often depicted by physically skilled and impressive performances. The course explores contemporary manifestations of yoga and raises questions about what counts as religion. While the ascetic strand of modern yoga is often organised in denominational, guru-centred movements that would legitimately fall under the category of New Religious Movements, the style of yoga related to physical culture that we might encounter in the local gym today would more likely be associated with the secular. This may partially be due to the emphasis on social organisation and theological systems as determinants of what counts as religion. However, an equally important dimension of religions has to do with practice, which for modern yoga, tends to emphasise physical exercise

over prayer and study of sacred texts. Discussions related to the religiosity of yoga, cultural appropriation, and the logic of capitalism related to yoga are explored in this course together with the overview of its modern developments. This course also brings in a gender perspective, exploring the turn where a male dominated asceticism of medieval Hatha yoga has transformed to the modern female dominated practice.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, the learner will be able to -demonstrate understanding of the complexity of the interrelationships of the following concepts: Hinduism, Neo-Hinduism, Tantra, Neo-Tantra, Premodern yoga, Modern yoga -be able to critically discuss the interplay between colonial India and the West in the development of modern yoga -briefly summarize the contributions of at least five influential actors behind yoga in the West in the 20th century

Additional information

Course requirements

Preliminary qualifications for participation: Basic competences in verbal and written expression and presentation, the ability to study independently printed and online sources, and the ability to seek digital information relevant to the topics at hand.

Language of instruction

English

Start date of course:

9/25/2024

End date of course:

11/20/2024

Contact hours per week for the student:

0-2h

Specific regular weekly teaching day/time

Fully online at no specific time

Time zone

CET +1 (Finland)

Mode of delivery:

fully online (all students participating online), no specific time (=asynchronous)

Planned educational activities and teaching methods

Online lectures, individual work

Learning Management System

Moodle

Assessment methods

assignment

Certification

Transcript of records

Course literature (compulsory or recommended):

Available online in Moodle

Number of places available for CHARM students

No specific quota

Other relevant information

This course is suitable for both BA/BSc and MA/MSc

CHARM-EU