

WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Department of Philosophy

Undergraduate Course Outline 2026-27

PHILOSOP 2663

Philosophy of Yoga

Information including instructor contact details and course location can be found on the course Owl BrightSpace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

PREREQUISITE CHECKING

N/A

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the prerequisites for this course or have special permission to take the course without the prerequisites. [Student Responsibility for Course Selection](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a philosophical perspective on classical yoga (specifically Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*) and the rise of modern postural yoga. Through lectures, class discussions, and accessible guided practices, students will learn and experience how these yoga traditions offer rich sources of reflection on key philosophical notions such as freedom, reality, self, perception, ethics, language, and aesthetics.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The in-person portion of this course is entirely discussion-based and requires full and ongoing engagement from all students. Topics and readings will be briefly introduced during class, but there will be no lectures or formal academic presentations. Students are expected to have read the materials and should be ready to engage in structured, inclusive, and constructive discussions meant to push their reflection further. The practical dimension of this course will be online (synchronous). Students will need some basic equipment (listed below) to safely and successfully engage in accessible yoga practices.

IMPORTANT: Yoga comes with risks. A disclaimer must be signed by students during the first week of class (sample at the very end of the document).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyze the core philosophy presented in Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*.
- Explore classical philosophical themes from non-Western traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism).
- Prepare and lead structured and constructive group discussions.
- Gain a critical understanding of the evolution of Indian yogic traditions and reflect on how these ideas were integrated and transformed within European and American cultures at the turn of the 20th century.
- Embody yogic principles through accessible practices and reflect on how such experiences might translate into contemporary life.

TEXTS

- O'Brien-Kop, K. (Ed.). (2023). *The Philosophy of the Yogasūtra: An Introduction*. Bloomsbury Academic. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350286191>
- Singleton, M. (2010). *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice*. Oxford University Press. Available at: <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/2027/heb30676.0001.001>
- (Recommended) Feuerstein, G. (1989) *The Yogasutra of Patanjali, A New Translation and Commentary*. Rochester, Vermont: Inner traditions International.

Equipment for Online Classes

- Quiet and safe space
- Reliable internet connection
- Yoga mat
- A blanket
- Yoga blocks (2) – *Recommended*
- Bolster – *Recommended*
- Strap – *Recommended*

METHOD OF EVALUATION

- Mid-term Exam (35%)
- Final Exam (35%)
- Reflective Journal (10 entries) (10%)
- Preparation and participation in weekly class discussions (20%)

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html> . It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI

tools can serve as a starting point for exploration; however, students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism. Assignments should reflect the students' own thoughts and independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and allows them to produce original written contributions.

If plagiarism or unauthorized AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes and/or drafts of assignments after the assignment has been submitted. Students must keep all notes and first drafts until the assignment is returned to them.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

The Student Medical Certificate is available at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf.

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be "given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than **one week** prior to the writing of the test".

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends (24/7 availability).

GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Sample Yoga Teacher Release

Yoga Release And Waiver Of Liability

Name:

Student number:

I, [NAME], hereby agree to the following:

1. I am participating in online yoga classes (Activities) offered by Eric Desjardins (the Teacher) at Western University.

2. I recognize that I must be in adequate physical and mental health to participate in the Activities. I understand that the Activities may require physical exertion, and I represent and warrant that I am physically fit enough to participate, and I have no medical condition which would prevent my full participation in the Activities.

3. I recognize that the Activities may cause or aggravate a physical injury or medical condition. I understand that it is my responsibility to consult with a physician before my participation in the Activities. If I have done so, I have taken the physician's advice. I understand that the Teacher reserves the right to refuse my participation in any Activity on medical, fitness, or any other grounds.

4. I am aware that my participation in the Activities could result in high blood pressure, fainting, heartbeat disorders, physical injury, heart attack, or stroke and may aggravate pre-existing injuries. I understand that I could experience muscle, back, neck, and other injuries as a result of my participation in the Activities. I understand my physical limitations and I am sufficiently self-aware to stop or modify my participation in any Activity before I become injured or aggravate a pre-existing injury.

5. In consideration of being permitted to participate in the Activities, I agree to assume full responsibility for any risks, injuries or damages, known or unknown, which I might incur as a result of participating in the Activities, including those which may result from the negligence of the Teacher.

6. In further consideration of being permitted to participate in the Activities, I knowingly, voluntarily and expressly waive any "Claim" (as defined below) I may have against the Teacher and any of Teacher's employees that I may sustain as a result of participating in the Activities even if the Claim arises from the negligence of Released Party or anyone else. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless Released Party from any loss, cost, or liability incurred in defending any Claim made by me or anyone making a Claim on my behalf, even if the Claim is alleged to or did result from the negligence of Released Party or anyone else.

"Claim" includes but is not limited to any and all liabilities, claims, demands, expenses, fees, legal actions, rights of actions for damages, personal injury, mental suffering, and distress, or death that I may suffer, my spouse, children, or unborn child may suffer (including any legal fees or expenses) in connection with participation in any Activity.

7. I, my heirs or legal representatives forever release, waive, discharge, and covenant not to sue any Released Party for any Claim caused by any negligence or other acts of any Released Party.

8. This agreement shall be construed in accordance with, and governed by, the laws of the Province of Ontario and that all actions, suits, claims, and proceedings relating to this agreement shall be brought in a court of competent jurisdiction located in London, Ontario. In case any provision of this agreement shall be held invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, it shall not affect any other provision of this agreement, and this agreement shall be construed as if such

provision had never been contained herein.

I acknowledge that I have carefully read this agreement and fully understand its contents. I voluntarily and knowingly agree to the terms and conditions stated herein. I am aware that by signing this agreement, I am giving up substantial rights, including my right to sue and certain legal rights my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators, and assigns may have against any Released Party.

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

If participant is under 18: As legal guardian of [_____], I consent to the above Release and Waiver of Liability.

Signature of parent/guardian: : _____

Date: _____