



Yoga Studies Summer School

Kraków, 13th-26th July 2020

Syllabus



JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY
IN KRAKÓW

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Jason Birch & Jacqueline Hargreaves

Physical Philology: New insights into Premodern Yoga Practices

Lecture & Practical Sessions. Eight 90-minute sessions



Lecture:

If modern yoga is the outcome of a revivalist movement in early twentieth-century India that was shaped by nationalist, colonial, and cultural dynamics, then what was premodern yoga? How was it practised and by whom? And what was its role in the formation of modern yoga? The gurus who transmitted yoga to international audiences have created narratives around two thousand years of yoga's history, but what historical insights emerge from examining the textual and material evidence itself?

Birch and Hargreaves will present an overview of the history of physical yoga, in particular, its development over the centuries leading up to colonialism. Textual and visual evidence will be used to reconstruct premodern practices of *prāṇāyāma* and complex *āsanas*. This method of "physical philology" will enable students to experience first hand the different world of premodern yoga and understand the limitations of the available evidence. The broader aims and theory behind the practices and some of the social and religious contexts of premodern yoga will be explored. The classes will be informal, and students will be encouraged to ask questions and discuss the issues raised.

Practical sessions:

Hathābhyāsapaddhati: A Precursor of Modern Yoga

In premodern India, complex *āsanas* were part of *Haṭhayoga* as documented in the extraordinary text, the eighteenth-century *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati*, 'a manual on the practice of *Haṭhayoga*'. This segment of the programme will present the history and practice of the only sequential *āsana* routine that has been preserved in a premodern manuscript. The *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati* contains descriptions of one hundred and twelve *āsanas*, many of which remain unknown to modern yoga practitioners.

The first session will introduce the *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati* with a general lecture on the practice it teaches and its place within the broader history of yoga. The text's contribution to the traditions of yoga at the Mysore Palace and its influence on Krishnamacharya will be discussed.

The interactive session will guide participants through a practice based on a truncated sequence of some of the more accessible *āsanas* in the *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati*. The Sanskrit descriptions and some nineteenth-century illustrations will be presented and each student invited to explore the various possibilities for each *āsana*. The poses will be taught safely with options to make the practice accessible for most people.

The Yogic Breath: Special instructions in Medieval Yoga for the proper technique of *Prāṇāyāma*

Yogic breathing (*prāṇāyāma*) has a long and diverse history in the religious traditions of India. Its purpose and practice have been documented at great length throughout the second millennium, thus providing a valuable source of information for teachers and students of yoga.

In this segment of the programme, a brief history of *prāṇāyāma* will be outlined. It will cover the underlying rationale, theory, and methods that inform the sophisticated application of breathing exercises in late-medieval *Haṭhayoga*.

The fundamental method of *prāṇāyāma* in the 15th-century *Haṭhapradīpikā* will be the central focus of the practical sessions. Through demonstration and experimentation, the bellows breath (*bhastrikā*) and alternate

nostril breathing with and without retentions (*kumbhaka*) will be discussed and practised, with a view to understanding how these methods can simultaneously invigorate and relax to bring about a meditative state.

To conclude, several suggestions will be made on how *prāṇāyāma* techniques can be integrated with other components of yoga, such as postural practice and meditation, to meet the needs of contemporary practitioners and its therapeutic application in modern times.

The programme will include the reading of primary sources in Sanskrit (in English translation) accompanied by illustrated manuscripts, photographs, visual demonstrations, and practical experiments.

Further reading:

Birch, J. And Singleton, M. 2019. 'The Yoga of the *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati*. *Haṭhayoga on the Cusp of Modernity*'. *Journal of Yoga Studies* 2: 3-70. **(See also the paper's bibliography for further references)**

About the lecturers:

Jason Birch (SOAS, London)

After completing a first-class honours degree in Sanskrit and Hindi at the University of Sydney, Jason Birch was awarded a DPhil in Oriental Studies (2013) at the University of Oxford, under the supervision of Prof. Alexis Sanderson. His dissertation focused on a seminal *Rājayoga* text called the *Amanaska*, and he has published on the early history and meanings of *Haṭhayoga*. In 2015, Dr Birch was invited to join the AyurYog Project at the University of Vienna, for which he published a foundational paper on the shared history of yoga and *āyurveda*.

He is currently a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at SOAS University of London on the Hatha Yoga Project. Through extensive fieldwork in India and the reconstruction of primary sources, dr Birch's research has identified the earliest text to teach a system of *Haṭhayoga* and *Rājayoga* and defined a corpus of Sanskrit and vernacular texts that emerged during *Haṭhayoga's* floruit, the period in which it thrived on the eve of colonialism. He is the principal editor and translator of six Sanskrit texts that will be primary outputs of the project.

His published articles are available on academia.edu and The Luminescent.

Jacqueline Hargreaves, (Independent researcher; BE (Hons), E-RYT 500 and YACEP)

She researches the contemporary meeting place between historical Yoga practices and their application in the modern world. She has travelled throughout India for research fieldwork and studied meditation extensively, including a year of intensive practice in a remote part of Japan. Jacqueline is a founding member of the *Journal of Yoga Studies*, a peer-reviewed academic journal, and the founder of *The Luminescent*, an independent open-access educational platform for publishing cutting-edge, original research from primary sources. She collaborates with scholars, artists, and scientists to publish research on both premodern and modern facets of Yoga, and curated the exhibition Embodied Liberation at the Brunei Gallery, London, in collaboration with the Hatha Yoga Project. She is currently producing a documentary film, which aims to bring to life the unique content of the postural practice preserved in an eighteenth-century Sanskrit yoga text, *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati*, through a visual reconstruction of its extraordinary section on *āsana*. Two segments of this film are on display in the exhibition. In collaboration with the AyurYog Project (University of Vienna), Jacqueline is designing a web-based visual and textual timeline for premodern yoga and *āyurveda*, which will form part of an art exhibition in mid-May, 2020.

Lucy May Constantini

Encountering the Martial Body: Between Kalarippayattu and Yoga

Lecture with Practical Elements. Five 90-minute sessions



This course will provide an overview of the South Indian martial art, kalarippayattu (*kaḷarippayarr̥*) and investigate its similarities to and distinctions from the yoga traditions. Kalarippayattu is practised in a ritualised, sometimes devotional environment and, like yoga, it is understood to be a physical practice that accesses a more subtle level of experience. Focussing on “northern style” Malabar kalarippayattu, we will cover: the history and context of kalarippayattu, its conception of the body and the stages of training, the foundational principles of “feet, stance, movement” (*cuvatt̃, nila, nīkkam̃*), the role of the inner body, an introduction to its medical system, and issues of pedagogy and transmission. There will be practical as well as theoretical sessions, to give us a chance to embody the principles we will be discussing, and to compare our introduction to this martial art with our various experiences of *yogāsana*.

Further reading:

Zarrilli, P.B. 1998. *When the Body Becomes All Eyes: Paradigms, Discourses, and Practices of Power in Kalarippayattu, a South Indian Martial Art*. Delhi, New York: Oxford University Press.

On the medical system of a related (but different) martial art, see:

Sieler, R. 2015. *Lethal Spots, Vital Secrets: Medicine and Martial Arts in South India*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

About the lecturer:

Lucy May Constantini (Open University UK)

She encountered the South Indian martial art kalarippayattu in 2002 and has been actively training in and researching it since 2010. She is an AHRC-funded doctoral researcher at The Open University, UK, investigating the relationship between the form’s texts and practices. She has presented on *vaṭiṽ* (posture) in kalarippayattu at the Haṭha Yoga Project’s workshop on Indian Physical Disciplines at SOAS in London, and will give a paper on its medical system at the AyurYog conference in Vienna next May. Her previous work was as an independent dance artist specialising in somatic techniques and focussing on the meeting place of her practices of martial arts, yoga and postmodern dance. Her most recent choreography, *Fighting Like A Girl and What It Taught Me*, examined the body’s processing of violence and was supported by the Arts Council of Wales. She began formal yoga practice in 1992 and has taught it since the early 2000s.

Finnian M.M. Gerety

This Whole World is OM: Yoga and Sacred Sound

Lecture: Five 90-minute sessions. Practical session: One 90-minute session



Sacred sound is a crucial—although sometimes neglected—feature of the history of Yoga, from its roots up through the present day. Taking the supreme syllable “OM” as our central case study, this course explores the history of sacred sound in Indian religions, with particular attention to the mantra cultures of Veda, Yoga, and Tantra. Drawing on primary sources and cutting-edge scholarship, we will examine the ideologies of sound, speech, and silence found in the Vedas, foundational Yoga texts, and Tantric *mantraśāstra*; learn about dozens of ways to chant and meditate on OM in these traditions; examine the genealogy of interpreting the syllable as A-U-M; and understand OM’s connection to the *gāyatrī* mantra and other core practices of recitation. Additionally, the course will take stock of more recent developments in the history of OM, including representations of the syllable in manuscripts, visual culture, yoga studios, and social media.

The course will also feature a workshop session where we consider the questions: What are the sonic practices codified and discussed in our primary texts? How can we creatively and experientially engage these traditions in our own bodies? Treating scholarship itself as a form of practice, we will experiment with “embodied philology” to reconstruct practices of chanting and meditation based on ancient paradigms from a range of Sanskrit sources.

Lecture 1: Intro to Vedic Traditions: Mantras and Sacrifice

Lecture 2: Chanting OM: the Emergence of the Sacred Syllable in the Vedas

Lecture 3: Meditating on OM: Between Sound and Silence in Early Yoga

Lecture 4: Visualizing OM: Subtle Sound and Script in Yoga and Tantra

Lecture 5: Modernizing OM: Iconography, Yoga Studios, and Social Media

Workshop: Deep Listening: Experiential Approaches to Yoga as Sacred Sound

Further reading:

Padoux, A. 1990. “Early Speculations about the Significance and the Powers of the Word.” In *Vāc, the Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras*, 1-29. The SUNY Series in the Shaiva Traditions of Kashmir. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gerety, F.M.M. 2016. “Melody, Mantra, and Meaninglessness: Towards a History of OM.” In *On Mantras and Meaning: Essays in Honor of Frits Staal*, edited by George Thompson and Richard Payne, 185-225. Moraga, CA: Institute of Buddhist Studies and BDK America.

Gerety, F.M.M. 2017. “The Amplified Sacrifice: Sound, Technology, and Participation in Modern Vedic Ritual.” *Journal of South Asian History and Culture* 8(4).

Gerety, F.M.M. 2019. “OM’s Early History: Mind, Mantra, and Multiformity.” *Pushpam* 4: 20-27.

Gerety, F.M.M. “Between Sound and Silence: Meditation on OM at the Moment of Death in Early Yoga.” Unpublished PDF.

Gerety, F.M.M. “Sound and Yoga.” In *Routledge Handbook of Yoga and Meditation Studies*, edited by Suzanne Newcombe and Karen O’Brien-Kop, Routledge (forthcoming).

White, D/G. Gordon. 2009. "Embodied Ascent, Meditation, and Yogic suicide." In *Sinister Yogis*, 83-99. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wilke, A. 2014. "Sonic Perception and Acoustic Communication in Hindu India." In *Exploring the Senses. South Asian and European Perspectives on Rituals and Performativity*, Axel Michaels and Christoph Wulf, eds., 120-144. London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

About the lecturer:

Finnian M.M. Gerety (Brown University)

He is a historian of Indian religions focusing on sound and mantra. After earning a PhD in South Asian Studies from Harvard University, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Yale University Institute of Sacred Music. Gerety is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, the Contemplative Studies Program, and the Center for Contemporary South Asia at Brown University, where he teaches courses on mantra, yoga, ritual, and the senses. Integrating the study of premodern texts with insights from fieldwork in contemporary south India, Gerety's research explores how sound has shaped religious doctrines and practices on the subcontinent from the late Bronze Age up through today. His current book project for Oxford University Press, *This Whole World is OM: A History of the Sacred Syllable in India*, is the first-ever monograph on OM, the preeminent mantra and ubiquitous sacred syllable of Indian religions.

Amanda Lucia

Permeable Bodies and Sexual Abuse in the Guru-Disciple Relationship

Lecture: Three 90-minute sessions



The purpose of this course is to provide a broad understanding of the context in which sexual abuse in guru-disciple relationships occurs. It begins by laying the foundation of the body and ritual purity/pollution in the context of Indic religions, particularly Hinduism. It then builds on this with a discussion of the guru-disciple relationship and the haptic logics that govern physical relations between guru and disciple. It concludes with a critical inquiry into some of the most famous sexual scandals in contemporary guru movements and provides tools for analyzing and contending with the unfortunate ubiquity of sexual abuse in guru-led movements.

Lecture 1: Theories of purity and pollution in Hinduism

Lecture 2: The bodily guru: haptic logics of the guru-disciple relationship

Lecture 3: Sexual abuse in guru-led movements: contemporary cases

Further reading:

Shah, A.M. 2007. "Purity, Impurity, Untouchability: Then and Now." *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 56, No. 3, September-December, pp. 355-368.

Lucia, A. 2018. "Guru Sex: Charisma, Proxemic Desire, and the Haptic Logics of the Guru-Disciple Relationship." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, December, Vol. 86, No. 4, pp. 953-988.

Srinivas, T. 2010. "Secrecy, Ambiguity, Truth, and Power: The Global Sai Organization and the Anti-Sai Network," pp. 232-281 in *Winged Faith: Rethinking Globalization and Religious Pluralism through the Sathya Sai Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Urban, H. 2015. "'From Sex to Superconsciousness': Sexuality, Tantra, and Liberation in 1970s India," pp. 76-100 in *Zorba the Buddha: Sex, Spirituality, and Capitalism in the Global Osho Movement*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Wolf, D. 2004. "Child Abuse and the Hare Krishnas: History and Response," pp. 321-344 in *The Hare Krishna Movement: The Postcharismatic Fate of a Religious Transplant*, edited by Edwin F. Bryant and Maria L. Ekstrand. New York: Columbia University Press.

About the lecturer:

Amanda Lucia (University of California-Riverside)

She is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at University of California-Riverside. Her current research focuses on sexual abuse in guru-led religious communities, with emphasis on guru celebrity and media discourse. Her forthcoming book, *White Utopias: The Religious Exoticism of Transformational Festivals*, uses in-depth ethnography to investigate the intersections of whiteness and religious exoticism among "spiritual, but not religious" (SBNR) communities in transformational festivals, such as Bhakti Fest, Wanderlust, Lightning in a Bottle, and Burning Man. Her first book, *Reflections of Amma: Devotees in a Global Embrace* (2014) focused on transnationalism and gender in a global guru movement. Broadly, her research engages modern, global Hinduism by focusing on religious migrations, movements, and adaptations in the dialogical exchange between North America and India. Her articles have been published top ranking journals, including the Journal of the American Academy of Religions, History of Religions, the International Journal of Hindu Studies, and CrossCurrents.

Matthew Remski

Centering Survivors: Researching Modern Yoga Community Abuse Histories Using Cultic Studies Resources and Survivor Testimony

Lecture: Five 90-minute sessions



In contemporary transnational yoga and its intersecting spiritualities, the #metoo movement has pried the lid from a Pandora's box of institutional and intergenerational abuse. Historically, the application of cultic studies as an explanatory framework has been complicated in academic discourse by emic/etic concerns and, possibly, by the commitments of scholar practitioners. This course will re-examine the utility of cultic studies in light of survivor-centered research and reporting techniques, using primary source evidence from recent Ashtanga, Iyengar, Sivananda, and Shambhala International histories. Attention will be paid to the notions of deception, undue influence, and disorganized attachment in high-demand group settings and how these interrogate the basic scholarly premise that devotees are voluntary and agented participants in these religious spaces. We'll look at several examples of modern scholarship that, in failing to engage with these concepts, have arguably enhanced a propaganada of legitimacy around certain abusive organizations. A model for yoga scholars, service providers, and administrators will be proposed to help protect against this liability.

Like the figure of Hope, who remains at the bottom of Pandora's box, the survivor's voice remains embedded in institutional histories, but can be heard and nurtured through listening and study to become the locus of reform.

Further reading:

- Berila, B et al.** 2016. *Yoga, the Body, and Embodied Social Change: An Intersectional Feminist Analysis*. Lexington Books. 2016.
- Cooke, J. and Rain, K.** 2019. "How to Respond to Sexual Abuse Within a Yoga or Spiritual Community With Competency and Accountability". *Yoga International*. <https://yogainternational.com/article/view/how-to-respond-to-sexual-abuse-within-a-yoga-or-spiritual-community>
- Eldershaw, L.P.** 2007. "Collective Identity and the Postcharismatic Fate of Shambhala International". *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 10(4): 72–102. doi: 10.1525/nr.2007.10.4.72
- Freyd, J.J.** 2018. "When sexual assault victims speak out, their institutions often betray them". *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/when-sexual-assault-victims-speak-out-their-institutions-often-betray-them-87050>.
- Gayley, H.** 2018. "Revisiting the 'Secret Consort' (gsang yum) in Tibetan Buddhism". *Religions* 9(6).
- Lalich, J. and Tobias, M.** L. 2006. *Take back your life: recovering from cults and abusive relationships*. Bay Tree Pub.
- Lalich, J.** 2018. *Escaping Utopia: growing up in a cult, getting out, and starting over*. New York: Routledge.
- Lucia, A.** 2018. "Guru Sex: Charisma, Proxemic Desire, and the Haptic Logics of the Guru-Disciple Relationship". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 86(4): 953–988.
- Pankhania, J. and J. Hargreaves.** 2017. "Culture of Silence: Satyananda Yoga". *The Luminescent*. <http://theluminescent.blogspot.com/2017/12/a-culture-of-silence-satyananda-yoga.html>.
- Shaw, EJ.** n.d. 'Seizing the Whip: B.K.S. Iyengar and the Making of Modern Yoga'. *Academia*. http://www.academia.edu/21443879/Portal_Pages_to_Seizing_the_Whip_B._K._S._Iyengar_and_the_Making_of_Modern_Yoga.
- Singleton, M and Goldberg, E.** 2014. *Gurus of modern yoga*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, C. P., and Freyd, J.J.** 2013. "Dangerous Safe Havens: Institutional Betrayal Exacerbates Sexual Trauma". *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 26(1): 119–124.

Stein, A. 2017. *Terror, love and brainwashing: attachment in cults and totalitarian systems*. London, New York: Routledge, Taylor et Francis Group.

About the lecturer:

Matthew Remski (Independent researcher, author)

He is a cult survivor and survivor's advocate. His investigative work into cultic dynamics in modern yoga and Buddhism has appeared on major media platforms and in an acclaimed 2019 book, *Practice and All is Coming: Abuse, Cult Dynamics and Healing in Yoga and Beyond*.

Julian Strube

The Reception of Yoga as 'Occultism' and 'Esotericism' in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Lecture: Three 90-minute sessions



In the second half of the nineteenth century, adherents of the recently emerged current of 'occultism' became increasingly convinced that the origin of esoteric truth could be discovered in India. This viewpoint was predominant within the Theosophical Society, which was established in 1875 and relocated to India in 1879. The course will trace the historical development up to that point and focus on the complex and deeply ambiguous exchanges between 'Western' Theosophists and their Indian interlocutors. Special attention will be paid to an initiative that was taken by Bengali *tantrikas* in the 1880s to transform negative perceptions of tantra. Presenting the latter as 'occult science' and the esoteric core of 'Aryan' wisdom, these Bengalis exerted a lasting influence on the global perception of yogic practice. Making extensive use of primary sources, the course will explore debates revolving around the relationship between science and religion, colonialism, and national or Hindu identities. The participants will discuss fundamental issues of global history, postcolonial studies, and notions such as cultural appropriation or authenticity.

Lecture 1: The Theosophical Society and the Question of 'Esotericism'

Lecture 2: The 'Bengali Intervention' and Its Historical Background

Lecture 3: Arthur Avalon, Indian Agency, and the Contested Issue of Global Yoga

Further reading:

TBA

About the lecturer:

Julian Strube (University of Münster)

He is post-doctoral research fellow at the Cluster of Excellence "Religion and Politics" at the University of Münster, Germany. He focuses on esotericism, social reform movements, political radicalism, and the relationship between religion and science from the perspective of global history. His upcoming monograph explores the context of tantra in nineteenth-century Bengal and its manifestation in the work of Arthur Avalon.



The main purpose of the course is to draw students' attention to the social, religious and spiritual significance of guru as well as the specific relationship that binds *śiṣya* (disciple) with his spiritual master – both in the Hindu tradition and in the process of change in the globalised world. The participants of the course will analyse the nature of strategies of spiritual direction applied by gurus as well as their (assumed) effects. At the same time the attempt will be made to capture the characteristics of the modern institution of the guru to show the expectations placed on spiritual master, how they are met as well as how both the role and the social status of the guru has changed.

All of these phenomena will be illustrated with examples - citing a variety of contemporary gurus operating in India and / or the West.

Lecture 1: Who is guru? Social, religious and spiritual significance of guru and guru-ship.

Lecture 2: How does guru work? Strategies of spiritual direction.

Lecture 3: Is guru crazy? Transgressive (ecstatic?) ways of guru-ship.

Lecture 4: Guru, gurvi, gurani? Female gurus and challenging social conventions.

Lecture 5: Globalisation (westernisation) of guru-ship.

Further reading:

Mlecko J. 1982. *"The Guru in Hindu Tradition"*. *Numen* 29 (1): 31-61.

Babb L., 1986. *Redemptive Encounters. Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Charpentier M. 2010. *Indian Female Gurus in Contemporary Hinduism. A Study of Central Aspects and Expressions of Their Religious Leadership*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press.

Copeman J. and Ikegame A. 2012. *"Guru Logics"*. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2(1): 289–336.

Urban H. 2003. *Tantra, Sex, Secrecy, Politics, and Power in the Study of Religion*, Berkeley: University of California Press

White D. G. 1989. *"Why gurus are heavy"*. *Numen* 31(1): 40-73.

About the Lecturer:

Agata Świerzowska (Jagiellonian University)

She is an assistant professor in the Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Her primary field of interest covers the theory of religion, modern and traditional forms of spirituality and the tradition of yoga with the special focus on its modern transformations. Her current research concentrates on the history of yoga in Poland. She authored, among others, books *Joga w Polsce od końca XIX wieku do 1939 roku: konteksty ezoteryczne i inetrpretacje* [Yoga in Poland from the late 19th century to 1939: Esoteric Contexts and Interpretations] (2019) and *Guru. Między tradycją, a współczesnością* [Guru. Between tradition and modernity] (2013).

Agi Wittich

Yoga and Women: Historical and Contemporary Aspects

Lecture: Five 90-minute sessions



This course will trace back women-yoga-practitioners' her-story by first providing an overview of textual evidence of women who were regarded as yoga practitioners, i.e. *yoginīs*, along women saints and sages. The characteristics of the *yoginī* will be explored, beginning with a survey of early Indian literature, e.g. the *Upaniṣads*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, as well as later writings of mystic poetesses, e.g. Karaikal Ammaiyar, Akka Mahadevi, and Lallā Yogishwari. Then, the course will examine the popularization of yoga among Indian and 'Western' women since the 20th century. The feminization of yoga will also be discussed, using theories of Gender studies with particular regards to women-only yoga classes and specific yoga disciplines and techniques targeted for women. Contemporary issues regarding Gender and yoga will also be addressed, such as the women empowerment and safe spaces, yoga body in the media and self-esteem, accessibility and commercialization, trauma, and sexual abuse.

Lecture 1: Yoginis in Early Classical texts

Lecture 2: Yoginis, Poetesses and Women Sages in India 6th-20th century

Lecture 3: Popularization of Yoga among Women since the 20th century

Lecture 4: Feminizing Contemporary Yoga, Women-Only Yoga, and Women's Yoga

Lecture 5: Contemporary Issues of Gender and Yoga

Further reading:

TBA

About the Lecturer:

Agi Wittich (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

She focused on Women-oriented Iyengar Yoga practices in her Ph.D. dissertation, at the Department of Comparative Religions, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her research comprised of Anthropological methodologies and her findings were based on Gender Studies theories. Her MA thesis focused on the living practicing tradition of the Thirumandiram in South India.

She chairs a study group titled "Womanhood in Religious Spheres: Experience, Presence, and Representation" at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2018-2020).

In 2012 and in 2018 she received Sir Sigmund and Lady Hazel Sternberg Prize for Interfaith Understanding. She participated in academic study groups and workshops, including "Yoga and Gender" at the center of Yoga Studies, SOA University of London (2019), "Central Ideas in Feminist Theory – Contemporary Views" at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute (2018), "Women, Feminism and Religion in Israel" at the Bar Ilan University, and the Tel Aviv University (2019).