



# Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

## Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

# Yoga, Business and Leadership

Course Code	G_BATRSAL036
Credits	6
Period	P2
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	dr. P.K. Bindlish
Examiner	dr. P.K. Bindlish
Teaching Staff	dr. P.K. Bindlish
Teaching method(s)	Seminar, Lecture

## Course Objective

After finishing this course, the student:

- has gained knowledge on the intellectual, psychological and practical aspects of Yoga;
- is able to define Yoga, articulate the purpose of Yoga, analyze different perspectives to Yoga, and understand its importance in our life;
- is able to understand the history of Yoga;
- has acquired knowledge and understanding of the complex content, conceptual development and religious role and significance of yoga philosophy;
- has acquired an analytical insight into the positioning of Yoga within the Hindu tradition and other Indian philosophical schools of thinking;
- is able to develop their conceptualization of Ashtanga Yoga through Patanjali Yoga sutras tradition and further, will be able to apply it towards an individual's developmental purposes;
- has demonstrated analytic understanding of the concept of body and mind derived from the Yoga philosophy and compare it with the conceptualization of mind in psychological terms and ideas in the westerns context;
- has acquired practical embodied knowledge and skills on Yoga by practicing it during the course in a regular way to understand its impact first hand;
- has acquired knowledge and understanding of how to apply yogic principles in the context of leadership and entrepreneurship;
- is able to apply the gained knowledge and insight to trace personal intellectual and spiritual development. Further adopt moral leadership (among others in business);
- has acquired knowledge and understanding of the way in which yoga impacted the West
- is able to communicate the newly acquired knowledge, insight and applications in the form of academically adequate writing and presentation.

## Course Content

**Introduction:** The Fourth Industrial Revolution creates several possibilities and challenges which require us to rethink who we are as human beings. The science of yoga has the potential to guide us in this process. This course is developed to make course participants familiar with the potential of yoga as a philosophy and practice. This will be done through acquiring knowledge about yoga's main concepts by analysing and applying them in the context of business (entrepreneurship) and leadership through reflections for own practice of self-awareness. This course extends the self-reflexive study of traditions to cognate Indic systems of practice and thought, which sit behind comparable Indic cultural horizons and, for instance, engage similar cosmologies and conceptualizations of body and mind.

**Background:** The changes this revolution will generate are disruptive in many ways and they will influence all our life domains and one can feel overwhelmed. The potential of Mixed Reality devices, Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Computing is expected to be huge. Current technological advancements are already being felt as highly-VUCA (Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity). VUCA influences individual's experiences of well-being at the workplace as new

techniques can be felt as highly volatile. People can feel very uncertain about the sustainability of methods that they learn now and get used to. Building networks with people across the globe gives us the possibility to experience the wealth of diversity of worldviews and religions but it can be experienced as highly complex as well. Understanding people from different backgrounds is important in the business context and in different types of leadership positions in both

religious or non-religious contexts. More scholars argue the relevance of a transformational leadership where employees feel more engaged in the work they do. However, the world is becoming more international day by day and not being equipped with knowledge about other traditions may lead to ambiguous interpretations of activities or aims. Rapid globalization is requiring leaders to work faster to keep up with an increasingly fast moving market and competition. Managers and entrepreneurs often face the constant demands of the outer world to satisfy the stakeholders, employees and the market demands, without

focusing inwards on their personal, human needs. In this course the international business landscape of VUCA and the Fourth Industrial Revolution will be positioned as a context where course participants have to reflect on the role of Yoga for the theme of leadership and entrepreneurship.

**General aim:** The science of Yoga can give insight and future directions for solutions both at individual level as well as at leadership and corporation level. Several multinational companies and companies in the West seem to be open for spiritual practices such as Yoga. Due to the International day of Yoga recognized by the United Nations, more people are becoming aware of its practical importance in many fields of professional life. It is often seen as spiritual practice from the east

and there is a main focus on the practical exercises. But yoga has more to offer. It is a whole philosophy in itself. This course is developed to make students familiar with Yoga as a philosophy and practice through acquiring knowledge about Yoga, understanding its main concepts, analysing them, and applying them in

the context of business (entrepreneurship) and leadership and reflections for their own practice of self-awareness. This course extends the self-reflexive study of Indic and Asian Buddhist traditions to similar Indic systems of practice and thought. Buddhist mindfulness and Hindu Yoga share many characteristics in their reception history outside Asia, particularly at present when they have become mainstream phenomena, and therefore deserve to be studies in tandem. The course

will make the student familiar with several aspects of yoga and its potential application in dimensions of leadership and entrepreneurship.

In this course we will therefore focus on the following **themes:**

Unit 1: Yoga: Definition, its Purpose and Importance in Hindu Worldview

- Definitions/ Meaning, Purpose, Importance (Health - Physical/Mental, Spiritual, Social, Economic, Ethical), Introduction to Major Types: Knowledge (Gyan Yoga), Action (Karma Yoga), Devotion (Bhakti Yoga)

Unit 2: History of Yoga - Origins, Vedic Period, Upanishadic Period, During Periods of Other Philosophical Traditions, Hatha Yoga and Bhakti Periods, Contemporary Period

Unit 3: Perspectives to Yoga: Review of Main schools of thought (Yoga in Srimad Bhagavad Gita, HathYoga scriptures)

Unit 4: Ashtanga Yoga or The Eight Fold Conceptualization of Yoga

Unit 5: Patanjali's Yoga Sutra: Introduction, Review of Four Pad (Chapters) (Samadhi Pad, Sadhana Pad, Vibhuti Pad, Kaivalya Pad), Yogic Epistemology, Yogic Concept of Body, Yogic Concept of Antahakaran Chatushtya or the Mind alongside Western Psychology,

Unit 6: Applications of Yoga: Micro Level - Intrinsic Well Being (Physical, Mental, Spiritual, Intelligence), Extrinsic Aspects (Social, Economic, Ethical, Learning or Educational), Nurturing or Development (Intelligence, Entrepreneurial decision making, Leadership)

Unit 7: Application of Yoga: Macro Level - Frameworks of Integrative Thinking towards sustainable innovations, VUCA Context coping strategies

Unit 8: Importance of Self Realization, Experiential and Yogic Practices in Living Traditions of Yoga: Exploring student's self-awareness based on Yogic practice, Practical experiential part, course participants' reflection and progress diagnostic through a yogic diary on their own developmental process.

## Additional Information Teaching Methods

The methodology used is a combination of reading texts, interpretation of text, videos, discussions and experiential practices. The course participants will do self-study, interact with each other, learn by practicing, demonstrate their understanding of concepts through assignments, presentations and a term paper.

### KEY POINTS -

The whole course stretches over 7 weeks. Every week comprises two sessions of interaction between students and teachers. The participants are preferably supposed to follow all the sessions in order not to miss out on opportunities for personal learning and growth.

- All supplementary information is disseminated through the Canvas page. To benefit optimally from the sessions, it is strongly advised to read the materials beforehand.

- The sessions will be interactive as much as possible. Q&A are a must during the sessions. This means that the participants need to familiarize themselves adequately with the prescribed readings before a session starts.

- Detailed questions should be posed in the Canvas discussion forum. The students are expected to discuss online (either through Canvas discussion forum or any other form digital interaction) what they have learned and how this reflects in their own personal (professional) lives.

- The participants are required to study the prescribed literature before every session. They may be asked to make presentations of what they have read and discuss the content in groups and / or in the whole group (this will depend on the size of the group that takes this class).

- The participants are also required to collectively and privately practice some simple forms of yoga as will be taught in special sessions

## Method of Assessment

- Group Presentation (20%)

- Individual Term Paper (80%)

Knowledge, insight and communicating are tested in the end of term paper. Applying the practice in personal situations can also form part of the end of term paper but will also become visible through the presentations. Developing intellectual and psychological skills are tested through the presentations.

## Literature

Selected pages/chapters from the following literature will be referred to in the class. Some materials, where copyrights permit, will be later made available through Canvas:

Scholar oriented literature:

- Baba, B. (1976). The Yogasutra of Patanjali: With Commentary of Vyasa. Motilal Banarsidass.

- Flood, Gavin & Charles Martin trsl. eds. 2015. *The Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation, Contexts, Criticism*. New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company
- Hartranft, Chip. 2019. *The Yoga-Sūtra of Patañjali: A New Translation with Commentary*. Boulder: Shambhala.
- Iyengar, B.K.S. 2002. *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*. London: Thorsons Imprint of Harpercollins Publishers.
- Mallinson, James & Mark Singleton. 2017. *Roots of Yoga: Translated and Edited with an Introduction*. UK | USA: Penguin Books.
- Swarupananda, S. (2016). *Srimad bhagavad gita*. Advaita Ashrama (A publication branch of Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math).
- White, David Gordon. 2019. *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: A Biography*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- White, David Gordon.ed. 2012. *Yoga in Practice*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

#### Practitioner oriented literature:

- Saraswati, S. N. (2006). *Four chapters on freedom: Commentary on the yoga sutras of Patanjali*. Yoga Publications Trust.
- Muktibodhananda, S. (2012). *Hatha yoga pradipika*. Sri Satguru Publications.,
- Saraswati, N. Swami, 1997. *Gherand Samhita*. Bihar Yoga Bharati. Munger, Bihar.
- Gita Press (2008). *Srimad Bhagavadgita: with English Translation/Transliteration # 1411*, Gita Press.

#### Articles regarding application context

- Bijlert, Victor A. van. Unpublished syllabus. *Sociological Model of Hinduism*.
- Bindlish, P. K., & Nandram, S. (2017). *Leadership and Authenticity: The Case of Buurtzorg Nederland*. In *Leadership Today* (pp. 89-109). Springer, Cham.
- Mulla, Z. R., & Krishnan, V. R. (2009). *Do Karma-Yogis make better leaders? Exploring the relationship between the leader's Karma-Yoga and transformational leadership*. *Journal of Human Values*, 15(2), 167-183. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/097168581001500207>
- Nandram, S. S. (2010). *Synchronizing leadership style with integral transformational yoga principles*. In *Spirituality and Business* (pp. 183-203). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.
- Nandram, S. S. (2016b). *How do spirituality, intuition and entrepreneurship go together? Philosophy of Management*, 15(1), 65-82.
- Nandram, S. (2019). *Integrative spirituality in the fourth industrial revolution: from how we do things to why we exist*.
- Nandram, S. S., Mourmont, G., Norlyk Smith, E., Heaton, D. P., & Bindlish, P. K. (2018). *Understanding entrepreneurial decision-making by objectivizing subtle cues*. *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, 15(5), 398-423.
- Nandram, S. S., Mourmant, G., Bindlish, P. K., & Sandra, D. (2019). *Integrating Reason and Intuition: An Integrative Approach to Objectivizing Subtle Cues*. *Developing Informed Intuition for Decision-Making*, 115.
- Nayak, A. K. (2018). *Effective leadership traits from Bhagavad Gita*. *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, 16(1), 1-18.
- Sharma, S. (1999). *Corporate Gita: lessons for management, administration and leadership*. *Journal of Human Values*, 5(2), 103-123. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/097168589900500203>

#### Useful Reading (Optional)

- Bryant, Edwin F. 2009. *The Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali: A New Edition, Translation, and Commentary*. New York: North Point Press A division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

- Burley, Mikel. 2007. *Classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga: An Indian metaphysics of experience*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Cope, Stephen. 2007. *The Wisdom of Yoga: A Seeker's Guide to Extraordinary Living*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Desikachar, T.K.V. 1995. *The Heart of Yoga: Developing a personal practice*. Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International.
- Gokhale, Pradeep P. 2020. *The Yogasūtra of Patañjali: A New Introduction to the Buddhist Roots of the Yoga System*. Abingdon Oxon & New York: Routledge.
- Harris, Annaka. 2019. *Conscious: A Brief Guide to the Fundamental Mystery of the Mind*. New York: Harper
- Harris, Sam. 2015. *Waking Up: Searching for spirituality without religion*. London: Black Swan.
- Singleton, Mark. 2010. *Yoga Body: The origins of modern posture practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

#### Hindu Worldview related - Useful Reading (Optional)

- Aiyer, S. (1935). *Evolution of Hindu moral ideals*. Calcutta University.  
<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.237098>
- Bhawuk, D. (2011). *Spirituality and Indian Psychology: Lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Board of Trustees (1916). *Sanātana Dharma: An Elementary Text-book of Hindu Religion and Ethics.*, Central Hindu College. <https://archive.org/details/dli.csl.8138>
- Bindlish, P. K., Nandram, S. S., & Joshi, A. (2017). Integrativeness through pursuing integrative intelligence as the way forward. In *Managing VUCA through integrative self-management* (pp. 321-330). Springer, Cham.
- Bindlish, P. K., & Nandram, S. S. (2019). Manifestation of worldview in a metaphor. *International Journal of Business and Globalisation*, 23(3), 464-474.
- Epistemology in Classical Indian Philosophy - <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-india/>
- Flood, G. D., & Flood, G. D. F. (1996). *An Introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge University Press. pp 1-4
- Flood, G. (Ed.). (2008). *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Galewicz, C. (2006). Fourteen Strongholds of Knowledge: On Scholarly Commentaries, Authority, and Power in XIV Century India. *Texts of Power, The Power of the Text: Readings in Textual Authority Across History and Cultures*, 141-164.
- Klostermaier, K. K. (2007). *A survey of Hinduism*. Suny Press.
- Nandram, S. S., Bindlish, P. K., Keizer W., *Understanding Integrative Intelligence: Praan Uitgeverij, Amsterdam, (2017), ISBN-978-9-491-55107-9*
- Nandram, S. S., Bindlish, P. K., Purohit, H., Joshi, A., & Hingorani, P. (2019). Foundations for Social Entrepreneurship: An Integrative Indian Perspective. In *Servant Leadership, Social Entrepreneurship and the Will to Serve* (pp. 161-186). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Vidal, C. (2008). What is a worldview?. In *De wetenschappen en het creatieve aspect van de werkelijkheid*.

#### Additional Information Target Audience

In addition to the students who ave opted for the minor(s) in which this course is included, students from following discipline may find this course useful:

- Religious studies & Theology
- Psychology
- Business
- Students who have followed the previous modules of the Minor on *Buddhism, Yoga and Spirituality or related minor(s)*

## Explanation Canvas

- Some reading material which is free from copyrights will be made available through Canvas.
- The students are encouraged to use the discussion forum of Canvas for posing questions and for interaction with the teacher and with each other.
- Presentations must be uploaded on the Canvas before presenting in the class.

## Recommended background knowledge

It may help to study some introduction to Buddhism and to Hinduism.