

Call for Abstracts

Yoga & Philosophy: Stretch Your Mind

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Abstracts are sought for a prospective title in the Wiley-Blackwell series *Philosophy for Everyone*, under the general editorship of Fritz Allhoff. As with other titles in this Series—*Climbing & Philosophy*, *Wine & Philosophy*, *Running & Philosophy*—*Yoga & Philosophy* will unite the insights of philosophers, interdisciplinary academics (psychologists, religious studies scholars), and practicing yoginis and yogis. The abstracts and resulting selected papers should be written for an educated but non-specialized audience.

The scope of this volume includes all aspects of yoga: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Thus, essays may address, for example: analyses of the 8 Limbs of Yoga, stories of personal insight and personal transformation from the practice of yoga, accounts of the mind-body relationship in yoga (versus outside of yoga), explication of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, comparative explorations of Eastern and Western approaches to yoga, yoga's ancient history in India, and/or yoga's recent history in the US, etc.

Possible topic areas and issues include, but are not limited to:

Metaphysical/Spiritual. Many yoginis and yogis think of their own practice, and yoga in general, as a spiritual, or even religious, experience. Is yoga a religion? Is it different from organized religion? How? Is it spiritual? What does this mean?

Sport. 'Yoga as sport' is a fair way to describe much of the yoga that is practiced in the US, as exemplified by the wild popularity of core power yoga, hot yoga, and other physically strenuous subdivisions of yoga. Are these subdivisions of yoga missing the point of yoga? Or are they just the contemporary, Americanized type of yoga that people in the US want?

Competition. Should yoga be a competitive sport, such as those featured in the Olympics? If not, why not? Is yoga fundamentally different from swimming, figure skating, and shot put? How so? If yoga is truly non-competitive, why do we have yoga super stars such as Patricia Walden, Rodney Yee, John Friend, and Baron Baptiste?

Ethics. Are yoga teachers indebted to their students to give more than just asana (physical practice) instruction? Is selflessness a necessary component of a full yoga practice? Should contemporary yoginis and yogis adhere to the traditions of a vegetarian diet and abstinence from alcohol and other stimulants? Why? Do yoga studios have a responsibility to be green, or at least work toward being more green? Explain.

Psychological. Yoga is used by many as a kind of therapy to overcome all sorts of emotional, psychological, and personal challenges. Is yoga an effective therapy for personal problems? How so? The notion of yoga-as-therapy can give non-practitioners the impression that yoga is for 'damaged' or 'weak' people. Is this a problem? Why or why not?

Gender. It is common for yoga classes to be comprised of all women, or at least mostly women. Why is this the case? Why are the cover models for Yoga Journal always women? Many of the yoga super stars are men, for example, John Friend, Rodney Yee, Rod Stryker, and Richard Freeman, not to mention Pattabhi Jois and BKS Iyengar – so why are there far fewer men in our yoga studios?

Environmental. Is yoga green? What are some innovative ideas for helping old studios turn green, and new studios plan to be green? Think in terms of props (blankets, mats, blocks, straps, wedges, etc.) and also energy consumption (heating, lighting, plumbing, cleaning practices, etc.).

Cultural. Yoga studio culture and friendships; relationships developed in yoga trainings; East/West differences; home practice versus studio practice; yoga in the 1960's US versus yoga in today's US. Why is yoga more common in industrialized nations?

History of Philosophy. Which aspects in the history of philosophy—both Eastern and Western—resonate with your own experience, knowledge, and practice of yoga?

Aesthetic. What types of beautiful experiences are elicited in the practice of yoga? In what ways can yoga help us express and experience beauty? Is there a relationship between the 'perfect' Trikonasana pose one finds, and the beauty he sees in life all around him?

You are encouraged to be as creative as possible with your topic and please try and make your abstract and essay as lively and enlightening as possible. Please attend to the following guidelines:

- Abstract of paper (approximately 250 words) due by: February 1, 2010
- Accepted authors will receive notification by: March 1, 2010
- The submission deadline for accepted papers will be June 1, 2010

Final papers must be between 4000-5000 words and be aimed at a general, educated audience.

Abstracts should be submitted electronically to Liz Stillwaggon Swan at liz.swan@ucdenver.edu. Other proposals for series titles also are welcome; please direct those to Fritz Allhoff at fritz.allhoff@wmich.edu.