

**BARNARD COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

**YOGA AND MEDITATION
PHED 1696**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will incorporate yoga postures and meditation practice. Hatha Yoga (the physical practice of yoga poses) often exclusively practiced by those primarily interested in physical fitness, strength and beauty can be successfully incorporated into a more intellectual and indrawn practice of concentration and meditation.

The mindful practice of yoga postures will be used to prepare the physical and mental body for sitting meditation. Different concentration techniques will be taught to help focus the mind.

By awakening a witnessing faculty within each individual, whether actively practicing a Hatha Yoga pose or lying or sitting still we seek mastery over the mind including feelings.

Stress and fatigue are common complaints expressed by students. Studies have shown that inherent in these yoga practices is the ability to alleviate such conditions.

Basic Course Outline:

- The 50 minute class will include beginning level postures particularly designed to prepare the body for at least a 10-15 minute silent period of time for concentration/meditation.
- There will be time spent working with different meditation techniques with the emphasis on mindfulness during asana practice leading to a "still point."
- The techniques taught will include breath awareness, mantra repetition, visualization, deep relaxation, concentration and relaxation involving music.

- The students will be taught yoga postures but the attention will always be focused on the Art of Meditation.
- The Art of Meditation includes an in depth understanding of the posture of meditation, so how one sits in meditation will be an integral component and an ongoing investigation.
- So within this meditation framework the students will have the opportunity to work with the body to maintain physical fitness and to work more specifically with the mind.

Frank Jude Boccio, author of *Mindfulness Yoga*: "The witnessing consciousness and the compassionate heart are fundamental features of all integrative forms of genuine yoga. Together they make us whole."

Overall Breakdown of Class

The posture class will basically comprise 40 minutes of the class where the students will be actively practicing beginning level Hatha yoga poses.

Within the context of the more active practice I will be teaching, as in any of the Yoga classes, principles of alignment and awareness of breath. The posture practice will be leading to a 5 and ultimately to a 10 minute meditation. The length of the meditations will gradually increase.

So the class will proceed pretty much as follows:

- Centering with breath and OM
- Short warm-up – 3-5 minutes
- Sun Salutations – 7-10 minutes
- Standing and/or floor postures – 15-20 minutes
- Breathing practices – 5 minutes
- Meditation including theory and practice for remaining time

This format is general as I will sometimes begin the class with meditation especially as we move further into the semester. And as was explained in the first part of this document the type of meditation will vary – sometimes sitting, sometimes lying down, sometimes standing.