

Yoga Studies Major (BA)

"The technique of a world-changing yoga has to be as uniform, sinuous, patient, all-including as the world itself. If it does not deal with all the difficulties or possibilities and carefully deal with each necessary element, does it have any chance of success?"—Sri Aurobindo

A Bachelor of Arts Degree consists of 30 credits of [Core Curriculum](#) and at least one [Major](#) (36–60 credits), for a total of 120 credits.

Naropa University's Yoga Studies program is dedicated to the education, preservation, and application of the vast teachings of yoga. The program offers a comprehensive study of yoga's history, theory, and philosophy, as well as providing an in-depth immersion and training in its practice and methodologies. Balancing cognitive understanding with experiential learning, students study these ancient teachings for transformation while gaining the necessary knowledge and skills to safely and effectively teach yoga.

The curriculum systematically covers the rich and diverse history, literature, and philosophies of the yoga tradition, while immersing students in the methodologies of Hatha yoga, including asana, pranayama, and meditation. In addition, students study Sanskrit, Ayurveda, anatomy, yoga therapy, Hinduism, Tantra, and Buddhism, all while engaging in an intensive teacher training curriculum. This major trains and encourages students to develop practice as a way of life, one that informs livelihood, health, creative expression, and service to community.

Upon completion, students earn both a bachelor's degree and a 1,000-hour certificate in Yoga Teacher Training, which meets and exceeds the 500-hour requirement of Yoga Alliance. All graduates are eligible to become Registered Yoga Teachers (RYT500) with Yoga Alliance.

Certificate Program

Yoga Studies with a Concentration in Yoga Teacher Training

Naropa University also offers a certificate program in Yoga Teacher Training for non-degree-seeking students. [Learn more about the program.](#)

Yoga Studies Major Requirements

Required Courses

Gateway

- TRA133 [Yoga I: Foundations](#) (3)

Milestone

- TRA233 [Yoga II: Psychology of the Chakras](#) (3)
- TRA333 [Yoga III: Integral Practice](#) (3)
- TRA453 [Yoga History, Theory, and Philosophy](#) (3)
- TRA463 [Yoga Meditation Practicum](#) (3)

- **Anatomy**

Choose 3 credits

- PAR101 [Experiential Anatomy](#) (3)
- PSYB100 [Anatomy](#) (3)

- **Language**

Choose 3 credits:

- REL277 [Sanskrit I](#) (4)
- REL355 [Sanskrit in the Sacred Traditions of India](#) (3)

- **Enrichment Electives**

Choose 6 credits (5 credits if REL277 is taken)

- PSYB304 [Somatic Intelligence: The Neuroscience of Our Body-Mind Connection](#) (3)
- REL210 [Religion & Mystical Experience](#) (3)
- REL330 [Contemplative Hinduism](#) (3)
- REL334 [Hindu Yoga-Tantra](#) (3)
- TRA100 [Shambhala Meditation Practicum](#) (3)
- TRA114 [Indian Devotional and Raga Singing](#) (3)
- TRA499 [Independent Study](#) (0.5–4.0)

Capstone

- TRA433 [Yoga IV: Teacher Training](#) (3)
- TRA449 [Yoga V: Teacher Training](#) (3)
- TRA485 [Senior Retreat](#) (1)
- TRA489 [Senior Colloquium](#) (2)

Total Credits 36

Course Listings

TRA100

Shambhala Meditation Practicum (3.0)

The Shambhala tradition, taught by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, is a secular path of spiritual training. Students learn sitting meditation and study the principles of Shambhala Warriorship, which involves developing personal courage and social responsibility. The class combines meditation, writing, and a variety of exercises to give direct experience of mindfulness and our own senses. The connection between the arts and meditation is also explored and would be of interest to anyone exploring their own creative process. A slogan of the class is "Notice what you notice" (a phrase Allen Ginsberg coined). Cross-listed as TRA500.

TRA105

Taijiquan I (T'ai Chi Ch'uan): Beginning Form (3.0)

Students are introduced to the short Yang style of taijiquan developed by Grandmaster Cheng Manching. The first section of the form is taught. Students are introduced to the philosophy and theory of taijiquan. Students develop a personal practice based on the principles of relaxation, separation of yin and yang, moving from the center, maintaining an upright body, and developing sensitive hands. Cross-listed as TRA505.

TRA110**Aikido I (3.0)**

We begin with centering ourselves and bringing that awareness to the situation of "conflict." We simultaneously practice the kata of clean, powerful attacks and harmonious defense responses, and ukemi, the art of falling. We emphasize extending energy and transforming the encounter to one of excitement and harmony. Bokken-aikido sword is introduced. We establish links to the aikido lineage and training communities. We support our embodied experience by reading and reporting on texts of aikido history, philosophy, and technique. We study other contemporary sensei through video and visits to seminars. We journal our practice and write reflection papers. Cross-listed as TRA510.

TRA114**Indian Devotional and Raga Singing (3.0)**

Singing, first of sixty-four traditional Indian arts, is an ancient system of yoga. Students learn to sing om; chants that consist of naming and manifesting god; svaras seven goddess tones, the notes from which all traditional scales are derived; and ragas crystals of pure sound. We study sonic transformation, or the means of transforming consciousness and awareness using sound, such as Shabda Brahma (word is god), Nada Brahma (sound is god), etc. All students play the tambura, a stringed drone instrument. Cross-listed as TRA514.

TRA120**Ikebana/Kado I (3.0)**

Ikebana is the Japanese art of flower arranging, stemming from a love of nature and a delight in developing the elegance and creativity of being human. Ikebana is also called "kado, the way of flowers" because it is a contemplative practice (a "dharma art") as well as an art form. We study the classical and improvisational forms of the Sogetsu school. Ikebana teaches you that everyone has the gentleness and courage of artistic talent. Materials Fee. Cross-listed as TRA520.

TRA133**Yoga I (3.0)**

An introduction to the vast tradition of yoga. Students gain both an understanding of yoga in its historical and philosophical context and an experience of its methods, which constitute an in-depth exploration of breath, movement, and consciousness. Students engage with the practices of asana (postures designed to generate sensate awareness, alignment, strength, and ease), pranayama (breath awareness and control), and dharana and dhyana (meditation practices). Cross-listed as TRA515.

TRA205**Taijiquan II: Completion of Form (3.0)**

Students complete learning the full form of the short Yang style of taijiquan developed by Grandmaster Cheng Manching. The first section of the form is refined and the remainder of the form is taught. Students develop a deeper understanding of taijiquan principles and the practice of embodying them. Prerequisite: TRA105. Cross-listed as TRA525.

TRA210**Aikido II (3.0)**

This class continues to build directly on the basic aikido teachings and philosophy to create a more centered and calm response to conflict in a martial encounter or in our everyday personal lives. Relaxed, nonaggressive learning is emphasized. Greater stamina of body and attention is developed. We support our embodied experience by reading and reporting on texts of aikido history, philosophy, and technique. We study the practice and ideas of other contemporary sensei on video and visits to seminars. We write papers and journals to enhance our mental reflection and insight on the complexity of our training experience. Prerequisite: TRA110. Cross-listed as TRA530.

TRA220**Ikebana/Kado II (3.0)**

This class offers further exploration and in-depth study of ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arranging. Prerequisite: TRA120. Materials fee. Cross-listed as TRA540.

TRA233**Yoga II: Psychology of the Chakras (3.0)**

Students begin exploring the psychology of the self through the lens of the "subtle body," namely the chakra system. Drawing from both classical and contemporary yoga, students engage in both an academic and experiential study, utilizing asana, pranayama, meditation, and a variety of psychological approaches. This class continues the study of yoga's rich literature and philosophy. Prerequisite: TRA133. Cross-listed as TRA535.

TRA252**Daoism and Chinese Traditions: Religious, Cultural, and Philosophical Foundations (3.0)**

This course provides a window into the religious, cultural, and philosophical landscape of China out of which the great practice traditions of East Asia developed. We look at the interplay, including mutual borrowing and sometimes fierce conflict, between the major schools in China—Daoism, Confucianism, and Chinese Buddhism—as well as underlying folk religions and traditions and literati philosophical traditions. At the heart of the worldview expressed in these traditions is a fundamentally aesthetic and relationship-based conception of ethics and the Way. The course features extensive reading of primary and secondary sources, including the Daodejing, Zhuangzi, Confucian Analects, Sunzi's Art of War, and Journey to the West. We look at modern works, including art and video, and appreciate current realizations of these ancient threads. Students learn how this worldview influences traditional and modern practices and are able to place their practice traditions within this context. Cross-listed as TRA552.

TRA260**Mudra Space Awareness (3.0)**

Space can seem hostile, benevolent, seductive, or enriching. Our perceptions are colored by neurosis and are heightened by openness, depending on whether we struggle against or work creatively with obstacles. Students learn acting exercises designed

by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the maitri practice of the Buddha families, and experiments with space and form by selected Western directors. Class exercises help students develop an appreciation of themselves and others in the context of alive, ever-changing space. A studio class, some outside rehearsal, attendance, and willingness are the primary course requirements. Materials fee. Cross-listed as TRA560.

TRA305

Taijiquan III: Form Refinement and Internal Development (3.0)

Once students have completed learning the form, the next step is to truly internalize the principles and begin applying them to life beyond solo practice. In this course, students refine and deepen their understanding of the empty-handed taijiquan form. Students are introduced to neigong (internal development) practices that lead to qi (chi) development and internal skills, as well as interactive partner work and the basic choreography of tui shou (push hands). Prerequisite: TRA205. Cross-listed as TRA545.

TRA310

Aikido III (3.0)

Calm confidence and grace emerge naturally with the continued and consistent study of aikido movement. Bodies and concentration strengthen. One becomes more comfortable with the "confusion," the unknowing that precedes knowing. Becoming more relaxed under pressure, speed, complexity, simplicity, and open-heartedness begin to enter the martial engagements. One begins to understand how practice might become a lifetime commitment. Bokken and tanto kata are added to intensify the empty hand practice. Readings, reflective writing, and attending seminars are required to further the student's development. Prerequisite: TRA210. Cross-listed as TRA550.

TRA314

Indian Devotional and Raga Singing II (3.0)

This course is a continuation of TRA114, Indian Devotional and Raga Singing. Sing your way to god. We enter two paths of devotion: praising divine forms and the mysteries of music. How does devotion hold us in the chaos and opportunity of the present? We master scales and sing deeper into raga melody meditations. We learn to read music symbols in Sanskrit and to accurately pronounce the Indian consonant matrix. We read the Bhakti Sutras of Narada, and sing and read the texts of songs from the myriad saint singers: Mirabai, Kabirdas, Dadu. Daily home practice required. Prerequisite TRA114 or permission of instructor.

TRA320

Ikebana/Kado III (3.0)

This class offers further exploration and in-depth study of ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arranging. Prerequisite: TRA220. Materials fee. Cross-listed as TRA564.

TRA333

Yoga III: Integral Practice (3.0)

This class integrates the breadth of yoga practice. In addition to deepening the practice of asana, students learn advanced breathing practices (pranayama), bandhas and mudras (gestures that direct the current of life-force), concentration practices (dharana), yogic methods of physical purification, meditation (dhyana), internal and vocal sound (mantra), and more of yoga's rich literature and philosophy. A regular home practice is required. Prerequisite: TRA235. Cross-listed as TRA555.

TRA350

Internal Martial Arts: History, Theory, and Philosophy (3.0)

This class uses classical texts, modern writings, and videos to explore the history, theory, and philosophy of taijiquan and aikido in the context of the broad field of martial arts. We study the overall principles of internal martial arts, grounded in reading the taiji classics, and examine how the themes in the classics apply to taijiquan, aikido, and everyday life. We then focus in depth on specific theoretical and philosophical texts of the taiji, aikido, and internal practice traditions. Prerequisites: Two of the following courses: TRA105, TRA110, TRA133, TRA205, TRA210, TRA233.

TRA405

Taijiquan IV: Push-Hands and Sword (3.0)

Students refine and deepen their understanding of tui shou (push hands) and learn the taiji sword form. Together with the empty-handed form, these practices complete the foundation of the art. Push hands helps students apply taiji principles in interaction with others and the sword introduces extending one's qi (chi) through an inanimate object. These practices are key in enabling students to apply taiji principles in daily life. Please contact the Department for further details. Prerequisite: TRA305. Cross-listed as TRA565.

TRA410

Aikido IV (2.0-3.0)

Further progress in aikido study is pursued at the nationally reputed Boulder Aikikai, under the tutorship of Naropa's aikido faculty. Students deepen their understanding, skill, and strength in ukemi and execution of basic and advanced techniques, and participate in bokken, jo, tanto training, and randori practice. Readings, discussions, and reflective writing are required during weekly off-mat meetings. Students are also required to keep a daily practice journal. This upper-level martial arts course is available for variable credit (2-3). Please contact the Department for further details. Cross-listed as TRA570.

TRA433

Yoga IV: Yoga Teacher Training (3.0)

This course continues the study of an integral yoga practice, which combines asana, pranayama, concentration, and meditation. In addition, this class serves as an introduction to Yoga Teacher Training, intended to complement and conjoin Yoga V. Students continue their study of anatomy, yoga therapy, alignment, yoga philosophy, as well as the fundamentals of designating a yoga

practice according to an individual's physical and psychological constitution. Prerequisite: TRA333. Cross-listed as TRA561.

TRA437

Aikido Seminar: Ikeda Sensei (0.5)

Each weekend seminar provides students with teachings and trainings with world class teachers, and opportunities to train with advanced students from around the country. Topics and faculty vary from year to year. Cross-listed as TRA537.

TRA447

Aikido Seminar: Saotome Sensei (0.5)

Each weekend seminar provides students with teachings and trainings with world class teachers, and opportunities to train with advanced students from around the country. Topics and faculty vary from year to year. Cross-listed as TRA547.

TRA449

Yoga V: Yoga Teacher Training (3.0)

Yoga V, in conjunction with Yoga IV, is designed to provide the foundation and training needed for students who aspire to teach yoga. This class examines the various topics essential to being a skilled yoga teacher, including yoga therapy; how to safely and effectively teach asana and pranayama; the principles of effective speech; ethics; alignment; how to make adjustments; the sequencing of postures; knowledge of the yoga tradition and philosophy; and the cultivation of one's authentic self-expression. Students also gain regular practice and experience in teaching yoga. Prerequisite: TRA333. Cross-listed as TRA574. TRA433 must be taken simultaneously.

TRA450

Aikido V (3.0)

Further progress in aikido study is pursued at the nationally reputed Boulder Aikikai, under the tutorship of Naropa's aikido faculty. Students deepen their understanding, skill, and strength in ukemi and execution of basic and advanced techniques, and participate in bokken, jo, tanto training, and randori practice. Readings, discussions, and reflective writing are required during weekly off-mat meetings. Students are also required to keep a daily practice journal. This upper-level martial arts course is available for variable credit (2-3). Please contact the Department for further details. Prerequisite: TRA410. Cross-listed as TRA573.

TRA453

Yoga History, Theory, and Philosophy (3.0)

Yoga is one of the six classical "outlooks on the nature of being" (Shat Darshana) of Hinduism. Yoga has a five-thousand-year history, its teachings passed from one generation to the next through a written and oral tradition. All yoga traditions, though varied and diverse, share a fundamental aspiration: self-realization. This class surveys the fascinating history of yoga and explores the theories and philosophies underlying its practices, from asana (poses) to dhyana (meditation), from tapas (discipline) to santosha (contentment). This class examines the main schools of yogic philosophy, reviews its main epochs of development, and

delves into some of its most influential texts, including the Vedas, Upanishads, Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Bhagavad-gita, and select texts from the Tantras. Open to second-, third-, and fourth-year students only.

TRA455

Taijiquan V: Practice Capstone (3.0)

Level V is a capstone course for students completing their Naropa taijiquan education. Students revisit the three major practice components (empty-handed form, push hands, and sword) in depth to achieve the next level of roundness, balance, and harmonization. Students who complete level V are prepared to begin more advanced internal studies and to enter a senior student/assistant track for lineage-based certification. Please contact the Department for further details. Prerequisite: TRA405. Cross-listed as TRA585.

TRA460

Taijiquan Teaching Apprenticeship (3.0)

This course provides mentored teaching experience for students who intend to teach taijiquan following graduation. Students work closely with instructors to develop the foundation and skills needed to begin teaching. This course further deepens one's personal practice; covers the methodology and theory behind introducing choreography and making corrections; and fosters the cultivation of one's authentic self-expression. Co-requisite or Prerequisite: TRA455.

TRA463

Yoga Meditation Practicum (3.0)

Meditation, though often neglected in modern-day yoga, has long been the central practice in yoga traditions. Asana, pranayama, and concentration are stepping stones, which provide a foundation from which meditation can effortlessly emerge. We embark on a journey into the meditative traditions and practices of yoga, drawn from both classical yoga and Tantra. This includes the study and practice of concentration techniques (dharana), formless meditation (dhyana), self-inquiry (atma vichara), dream and sleep yoga (yoga nidra), and the philosophical premises behind these practices. Cross-listed as TRA512. Open to juniors and seniors.

TRA485

Senior Retreat (1.0)

This weekend retreat takes place at the beginning of each fall semester and prepares students for TRA Senior Colloquium the following semester. Engaging in contemplative practices together connects students to Naropa's spiritual and cultural roots, instills a sense of community with faculty and peers, and restores energy and balance for the new academic year. This weekend intensive experience creates a space for dialogue and reflection about students' evolving interdisciplinary studies program. During the retreat, students begin planning for their final projects. TRA students also meet once more at the end of the semester to present and review their final project proposals. This retreat is a pre-requisite for TRA489 Senior Colloquium. Course fee.

TRA487**Aikido VI (2.0-3.0)**

Further progress in aikido study is pursued at the nationally reputed Boulder Aikikai, under the tutorship of Naropa's aikido faculty. Students deepen their understanding, skill, and strength in ukemi and execution of basic and advanced techniques, and participate in bokken, jo, tanto training, and randori practice. Readings, discussions, and reflective writing are required during weekly off-mat meetings. Students are also required to keep a daily practice journal. This upper-level martial arts course is available for variable credit (2-3). Please contact the Department for further details. Prerequisite: TRA450. Cross-listed as TRA587.

TRA489**Senior Colloquium (2.0)**

The Senior Colloquium gives students the opportunity to create and present a capstone project that demonstrates student learning and integration within their chosen concentration. The range of possible capstone projects is as wide as the range of interests of TRA students and includes research papers, assistantships and internships, and original interactive projects. Throughout the semester, students share progress and work together to understand and address issues arising during the course of their projects. Students also prepare for some of the steps they may take on their path after graduation. In addition to the project itself, each student creates a presentation of the project using online tools. For Contemplative Martial Arts students only. Pre-requisite: TRA485

TRA490**Taijiquan VI (3.0)**

In level VI, students refine their understanding and practice of Taijiquan. Students focus on one or more of the major components (empty-handed solo form, sword form, and push-hands) of the taiji curriculum. For those components, students advance and deepen their practice from the introductory approach of levels I through V, which focus on choreography and overview, to the next level, which is characterized by a focus on roundness, balance, and harmonization. Please contact the Department for further details. Prerequisites: TRA405 and TRA455.

TRA491**Aikido VII (2.0-3.0)**

Further progress in aikido study is pursued at the nationally reputed Boulder Aikikai, under the tutorship of Naropa's aikido faculty. Students deepen their understanding, skill, and strength in ukemi and execution of basic and advanced techniques, and participate in bokken, jo, tanto training, and randori practice. Readings, discussions, and reflective writing are required during weekly off-mat meetings. Students are also required to keep a daily practice journal. This upper-level martial arts course is available for variable credit (2-3). Please contact the Department for further details. Prerequisite: TRA487.

TRA494**Aikido VIII (2.0-3.0)**

Further progress in aikido study is pursued at the nationally reputed Boulder Aikikai, under the tutorship of Naropa's aikido faculty. Students deepen their understanding, skill, and strength in ukemi and execution of basic and advanced techniques, and participate in bokken, jo, tanto training, and randori practice. Readings, discussions, and reflective writing are required during weekly off-mat meetings. Students are also required to keep a daily practice journal. This upper-level martial arts course is available for variable credit (2-3). Please contact the Department for further details. Prerequisite: TRA491.

TRA499**Independent Study: Traditional Eastern Arts (0.5-4.0)**

This course offering is an opportunity for students to engage in in-depth, concentrated study with a particular faculty member for a semester. The design of study and course work are decided upon by the student and faculty member. Independent Studies will count for a standard 3 credits. If a variable credit (0.5-4 credits) Independent Study is desired, a student must receive additional approval. See the Independent Study Application for further details.