

# 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 (120 credits) consists of [Core Curriculum](#) (30 credits) and at least one [major](#) (36–60 credits), as well as [minors](#) and/or elective courses of the student's choosing.

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 the transformative teachings of yogic traditions 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 traditions of yoga, 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 Naropa 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

Traditional Eastern Arts Certificate – 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: The Energetic Body](#) (3)
- TRA333 [Yoga III: Synthesis](#) (3)
- TRA453 [Yoga History, Theory, and Philosophy](#) (3)

- TRA463 [Meditation in Yogic and Tantric Traditions: A Practicum](#) (3)

Anatomy

**Choose 3 Credits**

- PAR101 [Experiential Anatomy](#) (3)
- PSYB332 [Human Anatomy](#) (3)

Language

- REL355 [Introductory Sanskrit: The Language of the Gods](#) (3)

Enrichment Electives

**Choose 6 credits**

- PSYB304 [Somatic Intelligence: The Neuroscience of Our Body-Mind Connection](#) (3)
- REL210 [Religion & Mystical Experience](#) (3)
- REL247 [Embodying Sacred Wisdom: Modern Saints](#) (3)
- REL277 [Sanskrit I](#) (4)
- REL334 [Hindu Tantra](#) (3)
- REL351 [Theories of Alternative Spiritualities and New Religious Movements](#) (3)
- TRA100 [Shambhala Meditation Practicum](#) (3)
- TRA114 [Indian Devotional and Raga Singing](#) (3)
- TRA314 [Indian Devotional and Raga Singing II](#) (3)
- TRA499 [Independent Study \(0.5–4.0\)](#)

Capstone

- TRA433 [Yoga IV: Yoga Teacher Training](#) (3)
- TRA449 [Yoga V: Yoga Teacher Training](#) (3)
- TRA485 [BA Wisdom Traditions Retreat](#) (1)
- TRA489 [BA Wisdom Traditions Capstone](#) (2)

**Total Credits: 36**

## Yoga Studies Course Listings (TRA)

### 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 discovering the elegance and creativity of being human. Ikebana is also called "kado, the way of flowers" because it is a meditative practice as well as an art form. We study the classical and improvisational forms of the Sogetsu School of Ikebana, founded by Sofu Teshigahara, as well as Japanese culture. Ikebana teaches you that everyone has the gentleness and courage of artistic expression. 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. Cross-listed as TRA540.

### **TRA233**

#### **Yoga II: The Energetic Body (3.0)**

This course centers on the academic and experiential study of the energetic-body in the yoga traditions. Drawing from early Tantric literature and philosophy as well as both its antecedents and later developments, students will gain an understanding of the original views and functions of the chakra system, as well as how it was adapted through yoga's globalization. Utilizing asana, pranayama, meditation, and psychological inquiry, students will engage in an experiential exploration of their own energetic body. Prerequisite: TRA133 or by permission of instructor. Cross-listed as TRA535.

### **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.

### **TRA333**

#### **Yoga III: Synthesis (3.0)**

This course integrates the breadth of yoga practice. In addition to deepening the practice of asana, students study 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), Ayurveda, and more of yoga's rich literature and philosophy. Prerequisite: TRA233. Cross-listed as TRA555.

### **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.

### **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.

### **TRA453**

#### **Yoga History, Theory, and Philosophy (3.0)**

The course offers a broad and roughly chronological survey of the thought and practice of yoga in India. This will involve zooming in and out of some of India's most paramount and influential yogic traditions and considering their diverse range of answers to the following questions: what is yoga as both a goal and a practice, who is the ideal yogi, what are their most fundamental aims, and what kind of worlds do they inhabit? Text traditions examined will include select Vedic sources, early Buddhist texts, Epic literature, the Yogasutras of Patanjali and its commentaries, the Puranas, the Tantras, medieval Jain and Islamic texts, and the Hatha yoga text tradition.

### **TRA463**

#### **Meditation in Yogic and Tantric Traditions: A Practicum (3.0)**

This course will guide students through a comprehensive curriculum of meditative practice as formulated in Patanjali's Yogasutra. Patanjali's yogic system will constitute a foundation for the practicum and will introduce subtle refinements in posture, methods for working with the breath and the energy of the senses, and ways to harness the current of the mind, making space for the spontaneous unfolding of meditative awareness and the cultivation of self-mastery. This core curriculum will serve as staging for more fruitional modes of meditation revealed in tantric sources that involve visualization and creative acts of imagination. Teachings on meditative praxis will be supplemented by a study of the ways of seeing and knowing advances by the source traditions, i.e., the dynamism of their fundamental views as well as their articulations of the purpose and goal of meditation.

### **TRA485**

#### **BA Wisdom Traditions Retreat (1.0)**

This weekend retreat takes place at the beginning of each fall semester and prepares students for BA Wisdom Traditions Capstone in the spring 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. Introduction to the field of religious studies from the perspective of contemplative education, as well as to important thematic and analytic perspectives. Building community, forming friendships, and sharing our mutual journey is central to this retreat. Cross-listed with REL485. Course fee.

### **TRA489**

#### **BA Wisdom Traditions Capstone (2.0)**

The Capstone class gives students the opportunity to create and present a capstone project that demonstrates student learning and integration within their chosen concentrations. The range of possible capstone projects is broad and includes research papers, assistantships and internships, and original interactive projects. This course reviews religious studies as an academic discipline, with a special emphasis on applying religious studies methodology to religious traditions and phenomena encountered in their major

study. Special emphasis is placed on written and oral expression, integrative understanding, and the relationship between religious traditions and the personal spiritual understanding/journey. The principle that both outer and inner knowledge contribute to one's path, which was introduced at the beginning of the student's journey, is brought to fruition. The particular focus of the second half of the class is the final preparation and presentation of the senior project. Cross-listed with REL489.

### **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.