

Yoga Sutras

One of the reasons for these essays is to dig more deeply into the body of knowledge of yoga. One element of this is knowing and understanding the material in the texts. It is possible to do this purely academically with copious references and cross-references – academically sound, but sterile. However, another reason for the essays is to consider what your own beliefs are and how you incorporate this material into your belief structures, daily living and practice – much more meaningful.

Essays to be a minimum of 1000 words.

Essay grades will be either 'Pass' or 'referral'. Referral will mean that the essay will need to be reworked as indicated and resubmitted in order to get a 'Pass'.

Essays should answer all of the question, ideally making a sound case for any arguments and interpretations you make, supported by appropriate references. Obviously, when referring to your own beliefs and opinions, it is quite valid to say they are your beliefs and opinions.

Essay Questions

Your choice of essay will include an overview of the text, the history and its purpose
Name all of your sources adding references and a bibliography

1. Describe the Eight Limbs of Yoga [2:28-55]. Discuss the application of these limbs or steps in progressing on the road of yoga - paying particular attention to how this material relates to your own beliefs and how you can incorporate these principles into your life, practice and teaching.
2. Discuss the concept of thought-waves (*vritti*) [1:2], how they can be controlled [1:12] and the concept of '*samhadi*' - paying particular attention to how this material relates to your own beliefs and how you can incorporate these principles into your life, practice and teaching.
3. Discuss the obstacles to progress (*kleshas*) [2:2-3] and the concepts of *Purusha* / *Atman* / *Seer* [2:20] vs *prakriti* and the significance of ignorance (*avidya*) [2:3, 5, 23-24] - paying particular attention to how this material relates to your own beliefs and how you can incorporate these principles into your life, practice and teaching.

Guidelines for reading The Yoga Sutras - please choose your version of the text

Take an overview of the text looking at when it was written and the context

What is the purpose?

Research what is known of Patanjali.

Why do you think The Sutras are popular in modern times?

Over the weekend we will pick particular sutras to analyse as well as some terms and themes, including those that are in the essay questions.

There will also be a focus on The Eight Limbs which start in the second chapter and continue into the third. Again, see essay questions.

It will be interesting to hear everyone's thoughts about The Sutras and if you feel they are relevant to you, your practice and your teaching.

*The deadline for hand-in is **6th September***