



THREADS IN PATANJALI'S WISDOM

Online Course by Dr. Agi Wittich

8 sessions on Tuesdays 8am-9am UTC

between 2nd December 2025 – 20th January 2026

Course Description

The *Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali* are yoga's foundational guide to the mind, body, and spirit, yet their depth is often lost in contemporary practice. This course offers serious students a rare opportunity to engage with these classical teachings **through original Sanskrit, Iyengar's interpretive insight, and embodied application.**

Under the guidance of **Dr. Agi Wittich**, scholar of Indology and longtime Iyengar practitioner and teacher, participants will explore how Patanjali's sutras speak to both timeless philosophical truths and practical, transformative yoga practice. The course emphasizes an integrated approach: ethics, asana, breath, concentration, and meditation are studied as interconnected steps on the path to inner clarity and liberation.

We'll work directly with Patanjali's language, exploring key terms and structures, carefully explained for students with no prior Sanskrit knowledge. B.K.S. Iyengar's commentary bridges abstract philosophy and embodied practice. We study his insights from *Light on the Yoga Sūtras*, *Yoga Rahasya*, and other writings. Each session demonstrates how classical teachings illuminate modern life and practice, cultivating practical skills, ethical discernment, and meditative awareness.

Course Syllabus & Reading Guide

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION - ENTERING THE WISDOM OF PATAÑJALI

Date: December 3, 2024

Theme: Orientation, course structure, the invocation to Patanjali

Yoga Sutra I.2

SESSION 2: YOGA AND THE MIND

Date: December 10, 2024

Theme: What is yoga? Understanding citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ

Yoga Sutra I.2, I.4

Recommended Reading:

Iyengar, B. K. S. (1993). *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*. Sutra I.2: pp. 46-48, Sutra I.4: pp. 50-52.

Bryant, E. F. (2009). *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A new edition, translation, and commentary*. pp. 10-14, 17-19.

O'Brien-Kop, K. (2022). The nature of consciousness. In *The philosophy of the Yogasutra: An introduction* (pp. 57-60). Bloomsbury Academic.

SESSION 3: ABHYĀSA AND VAIRĀGYA - THE TWIN PILLARS

Date: December 17, 2024

Theme: Practice and detachment—the two wings of transformation

Yoga Sutra I.12-I.16

Recommended Reading:

Iyengar, B. K. S. (1993). *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*. pp. 64-76

Bryant, E. F. (2009). *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A new edition, translation, and commentary*. pp. 34-48.

Feuerstein, G. (1989). Abhyāsa: The practice of concentration. In *The Yoga-Sūtra of Patañjali: A new translation and commentary* (pp. 46-51). Inner Traditions International.

SESSION 4: ĀSANA AS PATH TO SAMĀDHI

Date: January 7, 2025

Theme: Steadiness and ease—the body as foundation for meditation

Yoga Sutra II.46 - II.48

Recommended Reading:

Iyengar, B. K. S. (1993). *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali*. pp. 157-161

Bryant, E. F. (2009). *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A new edition, translation, and commentary*. pp. 296-303.

Philip Maas, “Sthirasukham Aśanam”: Posture and Performance in Classical Yoga and Beyond in Baier, K., Maas, P. A., & Preisendanz, K. (2018). *Yoga in transformation: Historical and contemporary perspectives*. pg. 55-58.

SESSION 5: PRĀṆĀYĀMA - DOORWAY TO INNER LUMINOSITY

Date: January 14, 2025

Theme: Breath as bridge; removing the veil over clarity

Yoga Sutra II.49-II.53

Recommended Reading:

Iyengar, B. K. S. (1993). *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali*. pp. 163-169

Bryant, E. F. (2009). *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A new edition, translation, and commentary*. pp. 304-317

Bryant, E. F. (2009). *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A new edition, translation, and commentary*. pp. 378-287.

Bachman, N. (2015). *The path of the yoga sutras: A practical guide to the core of yoga*. St. Martin's Essentials.

SESSION 6: OBSTACLES AND INNER QUALITIES

Date: January 21, 2025

Theme: Working with afflictions (kleśas) and cultivating transformative attitudes

Yoga Sutra II.3-5, II.30-33

Recommended Reading:

Iyengar, B. K. S. (1993). *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali*. pp. 108-116, 134-145, pp. 75-76

Bryant, E. F. (2009). *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A new edition, translation, and commentary*. pp. 257-266

Whicher, I. (1998). *The integrity of the yoga darśana: A reconsideration of classical yoga*. State University of New York Press. pp. 110-116

SESSION 7: THE SEER AND THE SEEN

Date: January 28, 2025

Theme: Viveka (discrimination) and kaivalya (liberation)—who am I really?

Yoga Sutra II.17, II.20 - II.21, II.25

Recommended Reading:

Iyengar, B. K. S. (1993). *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. pp. 124-136

Bryant, E. F. (2009). *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A new edition, translation, and commentary*. pp. 243-260.

O'Brien-Kop, K. (2022). *The philosophy of the Yogasutra: An introduction* (pp. 25-34). Bloomsbury Academic.

SESSION 8: INTEGRATION AND THE PATH AHEAD

Date: February 4, 2025

Theme: Weaving the threads, reflecting on the journey, continuing practice

Strategy: Prioritize Iyengar + one scholarly excerpt; Vyāsa can be skimmed if time is tight.