SECTION ONE: 300-Hour Teacher Training Pragmatics

- Basic Information
- Information about Who We Are
- Training Description
- Training Prerequisites and Requested Preparation
- Training Experiences
- Assessment, Attendance, and Participation
- Required and Recommended Readings

Land Acknowledgement

YogaX’s home base in the School Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral at Stanford University sits on the territory of the Ramaytush Ohlone people. You can learn more about their conservation efforts that continue to this day at https://www.amahmutsunlandtrust.org.
Please consider a donation.
YogaX Training Manual
300-Hour YogaX Teacher Training Pragmatics

Space for Trainee Personal Notes
Basic Information

Lead Trainers:
- Christiane Brems, PhD, ABPP, E-RYT500, C-IAYT – YogaX Director
- Heather Freeman, PsyD, ERYT500 – YogaX Manager
- Lauren Justice, PhD, ERYT500 – YogaX Founding Team Member

Additional Small Group Leaders (as needed):
- Alex Schmidt, PsyD, RYT200 – YogaX Founding Team Member
- Greg Arbo, PsyD, RYT200 – YogaX Founding Team Member
- Nina Hidalgo, PsyD, RYT200 – YogaX Founding Team Member

Contact Information:
- Phone: 301.801.3193 (Heather)
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- Address: YogaX, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences
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Training Dates (also see Training Schedules for individual modules)
- Trainings take place via ten 30-hour modules with four formats for module scheduling, each to be
determined per module (based on content, pedagogy, and lead teacher availability).
- Two formats are offered on weekends; two utilize a weekly session, multi-week format.
- Trainees can take modules in any order.
- Trainees can spread the modules out across time, though it is recommended to plan on completing
  the YTT300 within two years.
- Specific training dates and formats are announced as modules are scheduled.
- A separate syllabus and training schedule will be provided for each module, along with a content
  manual.

Training Location:
- YogaX virtual synchronous zoom meetings

Cost:
- $6,000 for the full 300-hour training (paid in two installments of $3,000 each).
- Additional tuition, payment, and refund policies are contained in the YogaX Policies and
- NOTE: Tuition cost does not include transportation, room, or board for retreat-based training.
Information about Who We Are

YogaX Mission, Vision, and Values:

YogaX is committed to the integration of science and soul in service of individual and communal health. Our work is grounded in modern neuroscience and psychology research, as well as in the ancient philosophy and psychology of yoga. Yoga as a lifestyle and integrated, holistic healthcare practice has many empirically validated health and mental health benefits and is sought after by a growing number of individuals as a form of integrative healthcare, psychological or emotional support, or physical practice. Our strong focus is to bring our form of therapeutic yoga (namely, integrated, holistic yoga) into healthcare, including allied healthcare and mental health care.

We are dedicated to inviting as many people as possible into the practice – especially those who have not typically been drawn to it because of perceived and real barriers to access. Our own research has revealed media and other biases that suggests that yoga is only for certain segments of our population. We strongly disagree with this bias and are dedicated to bringing yoga to everyone. Our own work has invited individuals with mental health and physical challenges; individuals in correctional settings and inpatient mental health settings; first responders and care providers at risk for secondary trauma; and many more. We teach accessible, integrated holistic yoga that models inclusiveness, prioritized equity, and honors diversity and individuality.

YogaX approaches yoga training and services as the science and practice of personal and collective transformation and change. All YogaX work is developed to inspire personal and societal self-assessment, growth, and betterment. All offerings are grounded in and defined by the following values to which we are deeply committed:

Scholarships

We offer two types of scholarships: one is dedicated to supporting teachers who plan to bring yoga to underserved communities and represent diverse, oppressive, and under-resourced peoples; the other is dedicated to Stanford post-graduate trainees. Application materials are available on the YogaXteam.com website.
Lead Trainers’ Backgrounds

We acknowledge that the lead trainers are white, cis-gender women, with class and educational privilege. We uplift yoga teachers of color through incorporating BIPOC teachers’ work into our reading and resource list for trainees, providing scholarships to students who seek to serve under-resourced communities and those who have decreased access to yoga spaces. We encourage our trainees to seek out additional support and training from individuals who may better represent the populations they seek to teach or represent.

We encourage our trainees to embody their inner power, practice with autonomy and self-determination, and embrace the process of unlearning in becoming more aware of the intersection of identities and respecting diversity. We are committed to ongoing personal growth as related to DEI and seek to be open-hearted and open-minded about feedback, input, and challenging conversations. We look forward to sharing this commitment with all trainees.

- **Christiane Brems, PhD, ABPP, E-RYT500, C-IAYT; Clinical Professor, YogaX Director**
  
  Dr. Brems integrates yoga, mindfulness, holistic interventions, and self-care in her work as a psychologist, teacher, researcher, mentor, supervisor, consultant, author, administrator, and service provider. As an integrated holistic yoga teacher and therapist, she is committed to creating accessibility for all, honoring the complex biopsychosociocultural backgrounds of students and teachers, and incorporating all eight limbs of yoga in her practice, teachings, and therapeutics.

  She grounds her work in yoga psychology based on ancient and modern texts, as well as in current research, especially in psychology, neuroscience, and interpersonal neurobiology. She honors trauma-sensitive teaching practices and cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and humility. She encourages individual tailoring of yoga to contexts and needs of each practitioner, offering variations and adaptations that make yoga accessible to all.

- **Heather Freeman, PsyD, E-RYT500; YogaX Manager**

  Dr. Freeman has extensive yoga and clinical experience in college counseling, primary care, and community mental health. She has led yoga classes, workshops, and trainings in studios, community centers, community mental health settings, on college campuses, in a psychiatric hospital, and a prison. She has a keen interest in yoga psychology and philosophy with a great affinity for the yoga sutras. She also brings strong clinical interests to her yoga practice and teachings.

  She synthesizes the ancient wisdom of the teachings of yoga with modern psychology and neuroscience to make the teachings accessible. Her therapy and teaching styles aim to help individuals cultivate curiosity and radically accept what it is to be constantly changing, growing, and evolving human beings.
Lauren, PhD, E-RYT500; YogaX Founding Team Member

Dr. Justice is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Hood River, Oregon, where she offers individual and couples counseling along with therapeutic yoga classes. It is her continuous joy to share with others the many ways through which yoga can foster community and a sense of contentment within ourselves. Dr. Justice has worked in a range of integrative and primary care clinics as a behavioral health specialist, counselor, clinical supervisor, and yoga instructor.

Dr. Justice’s passion is the integration of yoga and mindfulness to facilitate growth and inspire transformation. Her work draws from psychological treatment approaches and utilizes yoga therapy and mindfulness techniques. She guides individuals and couples interested in finding the best way to overcome difficult relationship patterns, health-related problems, anxiety, depression, and trauma. She combines her background in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), yoga philosophy, and person-centered therapy, to treat a range of behavioral health issues.
Training Description

This 300-hour yoga teacher certification training (YTT300) program seeks to become registered with Yoga Alliance (YA) and is patterned to integrate the criteria of YA as a 300-hour yoga teacher training. In compliance with Yoga Alliance requirements, across the ten 30-hour modules, the curriculum integrated wisdom and experiences across five areas of study, all contextualized for providing yoga services within healthcare settings (broadly defined):

- Yoga humanities, including history, philosophy, and ethics for yoga teachers
- Anatomy and physiology, with attention to application to movement science
- Professional essentials, including teaching methodology and professional development
- Techniques, focused on analytical training as well as experiential practice
- Practicum experience, including mentored lead teaching

The YogaX YTT300 is based in a deeply scientific, as well culturally and historically appreciative curriculum that covers the above-listed areas, drawing on traditional and modern yoga philosophy, ancient yoga psychologies, modern psychological research and principles, evidence-based practices, neuroscience, and social science. The curriculum is taught by well-versed teachers with many years of teaching experience, qualified and experienced to teach teachers and clinicians, and registered with Yoga Alliance. All teachers have advanced credentials as related to teaching yoga (i.e., a minimum of E-RYT500) as well as a healthcare specialization with an advanced degree.

The curriculum is taught with a focus on depth in the foundational disciplines within yoga. It integrates deliberate foci on:

- preparing teachers for applying yoga practices in healthcare and allied healthcare settings,
- making yoga accessible to diverse student groups,
- honoring yoga and other wisdom traditions with deep cultural appreciation and humility,
- drawing on modern science – especially as related to the application of yoga in healthcare settings, and
- integrating all eight limbs of yoga, from ethics and disciplined lifestyles, to movement and breathing practices, to sense guarding, concentration, meditation, and joyful union with a greater purpose. It is dedicated to the principles of ahimsa (non-violence, do no harm) and satya (honesty and truthfulness).

The YTT300 is delivered in ten 30-hour training modules, each of which deepens a particular area of study and applies it to healthcare and allied healthcare settings. A total of 300 contact hours is required, almost all of which is delivered in direct contact with E-RYT500-qualified lead trainers. The modules are as follows (and are described in detail later in the training manual):

- Advanced Adaptive Holistic Yoga: Theory and Practice of Making Yoga Accessible
- Advanced Pranayama: Healthcare and Self-Care through Freeing the Breath
- Advanced Teaching Methods: Creating Intention for Yoga Instruction
- Contemporary Topics in Yoga: Therapeutics in Healthcare
- Creating Healing Relationships: Ethics and Skills of Yoga Teachers
- Interior Practices of Yoga: Moving into Awareness, Compassion, and Insight
- Trauma-Informed Yoga: Conceptualization and Application
- Yoga for Eating Disorders Recovery
- Yoga for Health and Resilience
- Yoga for Mental Health Care Applications: Assessment, Etiology, and Intervention Planning
Training Prerequisites and Requested Preparations

Prerequisites/Requirements:

- **Prerequisite #1: Successful completion of a 200-hour yoga teacher training**, as evidenced by one of the following options:
  - **Option 1**: YogaX YTT200 certification
  - **Option 2**: A successfully completed YTT200 registered with Yoga Alliance – applicant must provide the training syllabus for review to show that all prerequisite information was covered in the YTT200; any information that was not adequately covered in the original training program may need to be made up with additional readings or recordings to be determined by the YogaX YTT300 lead teachers
  - **Option 3**: A successfully completed YTT200 certification program (not registered with YA) – applicant must provide the training syllabus for review to show that all prerequisite information was covered in the YTT200; any information that was not adequately covered in the original training program may need to be made up with additional readings or recordings to be determined by the YogaX YTT300 lead teachers -- NOTE: without a YA-registered YTT200, graduates from the YTT300 will NOT be able to register as yoga teachers with Yoga Alliance

- **Prerequisite #2: Proven commitment to healthcare, allied healthcare, or mental health care applications of yoga**, as evidenced by one of the following options:
  - **Option 1**: Proof of an advanced degree in a medical, allied healthcare, or mental health care field (minimum of a master’s degree)
  - **Option 2**: Proof of current enrolment in an advanced degree program in a medical, allied healthcare, or mental health care field (minimum of a master’s degree)
  - **Option 3**: Proof of an undergraduate degree in a medical, allied healthcare, mental health care, or related field with a clearly outlined intention for how to use this undergraduate education in combination with the yoga credentials to bring yoga into healthcare within an appropriate scope of practice

- **Prerequisite #3: Formal Informed Consent**, as evidenced via signature on the Stanford University School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science Assumption of Risk, Release of Claims and Hold Harmless Agreement:

  Because of the experiential components and, at times, personal nature of this training, Stanford University requires that trainees sign the Assumption of Risk, Release of Claims and Hold Harmless Agreement (see Section 3 of the Training Manual) to be able to participate in the activities that are part of the YogaX YTT300. The signed consent form has to be received prior to the first training session for trainees to be able to attend and participate.

Required and Recommended Preparations:

- **Required Yoga Practice**
  - Attend and fully complete each session in the 10-session therapy yoga series developed by Brems (2015). If you do not have live access, access the recorded series for free at the YogaX Team YouTube channel – use the Yoga for Health and Resilience playlist: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzvkZpUGjwILgkDNAwc79nBp309sdWt5](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzvkZpUGjwILgkDNAwc79nBp309sdWt5)
• **Recommended Yoga Practices**
  o 15-20 minutes of daily integrated asana and/or pranayama practice (free full-length classes are available on the YogaX Team YouTube channel)
  o 5-10 minutes of daily seated meditation practice (free meditations sessions are available on the YogaXteam.com website)
  o daily mindfulness moments of the body (available on the YogaXteam.com website)
  o daily mindfulness moments of the breath (available on the YogaXteam.com website)

• **Required Pre-Training Readings**
  o review the enclosed syllabus for the training and jot down any questions you may have for the first training session
  o read all blogs on the yogaxteam.com website, with special attention to the blogs about the koshas and the limbs of yoga
  o carefully peruse the YogaXteam.com website and use some of the practice resources

• **Recommended Pre-Training Readings**
  o review a source of the yoga sutras (do not worry if these do not make sense to you now, that is what the training is for…)
  o choose a text that covers the eight limbs of yoga
  o using the most recent edition of the Trail Guide to the Body, begin to review human anatomy
  o peruse the YogaX Code of Conduct (Section 4 of the Training Manual)

*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes, but in having new eyes.*

   Marcel Proust
Training Experiences

The YogaX YTT300 uses mixed pedagogical methods, ranging from didactics/lectures to discussion to experiential work, including small group activities. Lecture/didactic time invites discussion throughout and is accented by experiential exercises and activities. The experiential work is yoga-based and includes asana, pranayama, meditation, and guided imagery. Different modules involve different activities and have different training timing formats. Please read the Important Safety Information Handout is Section 3.

Training Timing Formats

Training experiences are spread across ten 30-hour modules, using four timing formats (approximate times shown below in Pacific Coast time). Different modules will utilize different timing formats, depending on content, pedagogy, and lead teacher availability. Please be sure to review the training schedule for each module to glean which format is used for any given module. You are responsible for having perused and understood the information provided in this document, module syllabi, and training schedules. Feel free to ask us lots of questions if you are unclear about anything.

- **Module Timing Format 1**: One weekend retreat consisting of a Friday to Saturday, 8a – 9:30p (10 hours of instruction per day for three consecutive days)
- **Module Timing Format 2**: Two weekend retreats consisting of four days – two Saturdays and Sundays, 9a – 6p (7.5 hours of instruction per day) – spread across two months
- **Module Timing Format 3**: A six-week series of experiences meeting one 5-hour afternoon per week (either Saturday or Sunday) from 12:30p – 6p (5 hours of instruction per day)
- **Module Timing Format 4**: A ten-week series of experiences meeting one evening per week from 6p – 9p (3 hours of instruction per day) NOTE: this module timing option will be used only for the Contemporary Topics module

Training Pragmatics

To make sure that everyone can enjoy the yoga-based activities safely and with maximum comfort, please note the following (more personal) thoughts and requests.

- **Required training activities start promptly every session.** To make sure that we can start on time and that you have ample opportunity to get settled or ask questions, it would be lovely if you could arrive as much as 10 minutes early.

- **YogaX provides all necessary props during onsite training sessions.** If you do have your own mat, feel very welcome to bring it. We like to have our own mat because we appreciate its feel and like the particular surface that we chose. Note, we like to use two mats for all but balancing poses. Please do what is best for you.

- **Participants have to provide their own props for virtual training sessions.** Minimum prop equipment includes 2 yoga blocks, 1 yoga strap (10 feet is preferable), 1 yoga bolster, 1-2 blankets, and a yoga mat. Access to a clear wall space is extremely helpful (a closed door works). Prop substitutes are fine (e.g., a stack of books instead of blocks; a scarf instead of a strap; sofa cushions instead of a bolster, etc.). Please have all props at the ready for each training session.

- **We recommend you also have a large and a small towel available.** We use them (not for sopping up sweat – it’s not that kind of a yoga training) when we place our faces on bolsters and mats as you may be more comfortable spreading a towel first. We may also use them as props under our feet, neck, or head in a variety of poses.
• Yoga is best practiced on a relatively empty stomach but not starving. A sustaining but light meal prior to class will help you maintain your energy without having a full belly that makes bending and twisting difficult. You are well served to have a personal water bottle. If you need snacks, please bring what you need outside of breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

• Please ask questions about anything we do – before class, after class, and during class. If you are wondering about something – whether it’s the reason for a particular shape or movement, an alignment question, or a more healthful way of doing something – someone else is likely to ponder the same thing.

• We are active yoga teachers in that we demonstrate and walk through (onsite) class to offer assists. All hands-on assisting is optional, very light, and respectful; it is provided only with your explicit verbal consent. We never force you into a shape or alignment. If you prefer not to be touched, we open-heartedly honor that choice. We can offer verbal assists that do not require hands on your body. Please know that offered assists are never given in a spirit of criticism but always in a spirit of support and inviting a more healthful way. There is no wrong way to do yoga unless you force or misalign. Our assists are offered as gentle reminders to relinquish attachment to a particular outer shape or as supports to explore something new. In all assists our outmost concern is ahimsa and satya, as well as the facilitation of interoception and personal agency.

• Always honor your own intuition and body wisdom – if something feels wrong, do NOT do it. We are all anatomically unique and we all express the same yoga shape, breath, or practice in different ways. What works for us, your teachers, or the person next to you, may not be optimal for you. Allow yourself the joy of using props and variations based on the feedback from your own body, breath, and mind. We offer both freely and demonstrate their use throughout.

• Yoga practiced in a group is inspirational. It is never competitive. Work within your own body limits and preferences; give yourself permission not to strive to do what others are doing. Delight in the pleasure of expressing each pose or breath in uniquely your way. If something comes easily, celebrate this state of pure joy; if something is a struggle, embrace the moment of learning.

• Thank you in advance for making us aware of any medical conditions that may affect your yoga practice. It is helpful for us to know if you are modifying shapes for a particular reason or if you would like to have help in working with a particular concern.

• Thank for turning off all cell phones, beepers, or other noise-making or distracting devices before you settle in for any given training session.

A good traveler has no plan and is not intent on arriving.

Lao-Tzu
Assessment, Attendance, and Participation

Graduation from the YogaX YTT requires successful completion of all ten modules. Within each module several assignments are required. Requirements that cut across all modules are listed here and detailed below. Module-specific requirements are outlined in the module-specific syllabus that will be available once a given module has been scheduled.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance of all training sessions is required. Absences need to be excused prior to the training session to be missed and make-up work will be assigned as appropriate (typically consisting of watching the video of missed class time and writing a comprehensive reflection about the material). We do record online training sessions and you can make up missed sessions by viewing the video. We nevertheless encourage you to attend in person whenever possible. Unexcused absences or too many absences from live sessions may result in delayed graduation and extra tuition cost. Please review the YogaX Policy and Procedures Manual for more information about our attendance (and other) policies. The Manual is provided in Section 4 of this Training Manual.

Participation is expected and can vary widely from student to student given personality, context, background, and other personal or collective factors. Assessment is based on quality, not quantity, of contributions. Minimally, the following factors are considered:

- Relevance and insightfulness of contributions, especially as related to personal differences, matters of diversity, topic or content, and context
- Appropriateness of contributions given topic, activity, context, diversity, and situation
- Professionalism and ethics in behavior and communication, with consideration of others, diversity, and context
- Cultural awareness, sensitivity, skills, and attitudes expressed through all contributions
- Capacity for critical and integrative thought that shows depth and insight
- Evidence of having engaged in required readings ahead of the training session
- Evidence of having made up content of missed training sessions

Adherence to Yoga Ethics and Life Choices for Purposeful Living

In addition to the above, all trainees assessed on whether they demonstrate yoga values in their interpersonal relationships as noted during training sessions and small group activities. Most relevant is adherence to the ethics and lifestyle disciplines of yoga philosophy (Limbs 1 and 2). Participants evidence success if they demonstrate the behavioral expression of the yoga yamas and niyamas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yamas</th>
<th>Niyamas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Nonharming</em> – nonviolence and peacefulness toward self, other, and everything</td>
<td><em>Purity</em> – simplicity and authenticity in action, speech, and thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Truthfulness</em> – honesty with oneself and in all relationships and contexts to create authenticity and integrity in day-to-day life</td>
<td><em>Contentment</em> – meeting every moment from a peaceable center that allows for discernment about how to take calm, appropriate action</td>
</tr>
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| *Non-stealing* – not taking what is not freely offered                 | *Disciplined use of energy* – leading an impassioned life of determined  
                                                                         | effort and engaged practice                                               |
| *Moderation* – wise use of personal life energy                       | *Self-reflection* – exploring personal reactions, habits, motivations, and intentions to guide toward self-knowledge, insight, and growth |
| *Non-possessiveness* – not being greedy about possessions, relationships, actions, and other aspects of life | *Devotion to a greater good* – creating meaning for self and others through wise discernment |
Reflection Papers – Exploring and Integrating Content and Meaning

During all modules, students reflect on offered content via personal reflection papers and the discussion of these reflections in small groups. Reflections are requested to support the deepening and internalization of covered contents. There will be two reflections per module; for one the topic will be assigned, for the other the trainees choose on what to reflect.

- Instructions for the assigned-topic reflection assignment are provided on the first training day of the given module. Due date for this reflection is half-way through the module.
- Personal-topic reflections are due within 24 hours of the end of the training.
- Each reflection has to be completed by the due date in the training schedule to be passed.

Students are asked to write about contents explored, impact on the student, cultural context, and conceptual links to the greater YogaX YTT300. Reflection papers do not have to be typed; they do need to be legible. They do not have to be terribly long – a page or two. They are evaluated on relevance to session content, depth of introspection, insightfulness about personal process, and relevance to the application of yoga in healthcare settings. For some reflections, it may be acceptable to use art, poetry, or other means of self-reflection in addition to writing. This is noted in the instructions for assigned-topic reflections.

Reflections serve as the basis for small group discussions. It is ideal to have your reflections conceptualized, if not written, before small group meetings so that you are ready to discuss the content of your reflection and apply the learning in that small group in discussion and applied practices. Small groups are self-led, although a YogaX mentor will be present for at least some of the time. The YogaX mentor is present for Q&A, guidance, support, and any needed didactic content. The process of the small group, however, is in the hands of the small group members.

Homework Assignments – Guidance Toward Becoming a Lead Teacher in Healthcare Settings

All modules require homework assignments designed to guide trainees (individually or as small groups) toward becoming increasingly experienced lead teachers in healthcare settings. Details about homework assignments are provided in each module-specific training. Due dates are provided in the module-specific training schedules.

Homework assignments require a range of activities, including but not limited to class design, posture sequencing, class theme development, eight-limbs-based class sequencing, teaching in healthcare, and more. Homework assignments are designed to give trainees opportunity to practice and apply concepts and teaching principles on their own and in real-life small groups settings. Each module requires at least one homework assignment; some modules may require more. Written instructions for the homework assignments are provided on the first day of each module training.

Some homework assignments are the basis for live supervised teaching. The trainee listed is responsible not only for the development of the class as outlined in the homework assignment, but is the lead teacher for the specific class on a specific date.

- Each homework assignment must be completed by the due dates provided during the training for each module to be considered passed.
- More information about supervised teaching, including responsibilities and guidance, is provided on the next pages.
Practical Experiences – Personal Transformation Through Observation and Providing Feedback

Personal transformation through application that requires class attendance, observation, and feedback is demonstrated via successful completion of the following requirements:

- **Year 1 in the YTT300:** During the first year in the YTT300, trainees are required to take and debrief 10 full-length (at least 45-minute) yoga classes taught by one of the YogaX Lead Teachers. A range of classes is available for this purpose on the YogaX Team YouTube channel. Trainees are asked to write a summary of each class, along with a critique of the teaching methods used, an account of the effect of the class on the student, and comments about what the student/trainee may have done the same as or differently than the teacher who was observed.

- **Year 2 in the YTT300:** During the second year in the YTT300, trainees are required to take and evaluate 10 full-length (at least 45-minute) non-YogaX yoga classes at a location of their choice to observe the teacher. They are asked to write a summary of each class, along with a critique of the teaching methods used by the teacher, an account of the effect of the class on the student, and comments about what the student themselves may have done the same as or differently than the teacher they observed.

A Guide to Observing and Assessing Yoga Professionals for class observations and feedback is appended in Section Three of the Training Manual, along with three Sample Observations Papers. Please make sure to peruse these materials and follow their guidance. All yoga classes, no matter how experienced the teacher, can benefit from ongoing feedback and consultation. Giving and collecting feedback is a crucial skill for yoga teachers who are committed to ongoing learning, growth, and evolution.

Feedback is given in the spirit of the yamas – it is truthful, kind, necessary, non-harming, and constructive. From this perspective of continuous improvement and honesty, giving feedback include addressing the good, the bad, and the ugly with discernments, compassion, and positive intention. It is very useful for teachers to hear what was appreciated about their teaching; it is equally instructive to learn what was perceived as less than optimal or perhaps simply confusing. One rule of thumb that tends to invite open-heartedness and non-defensiveness in the feedback recipient is to make a feedback sandwich: start with something that resonated very well or was appreciated; then move to more constructive and formative comments; end with an overall summary that is positive, appreciative, and encouraging.

To summarize the Guide (see Section 3), trainees observe and provide feedback related to:

- the level of integration and holism in the yoga class,
- the appropriateness and atmosphere of the physical space, and
- their personal response to the attended practice
Within the three categories shown in the handout, students integrate attention and comments related to the seven aspects of the *SANKALPA: Teaching with Intention* teaching methodology spiderweb. Minimally trainees need to explore and comment on the following:

**S** = *student variables* – Were student needs and biopsychosociocultural backgrounds considered? Were individual and group needs honored and addressed?

**A** = *aim or intention* – Was there a clear purpose, theme, or intention that carried throughout the class and that was made explicit?

**N** = *new learning* – Was the teacher able and willing to bring in new learning? For example, did the teacher reference research findings to support their teachings? Did the teacher seem up-to-date on yoga teaching strategies across all the limbs?

**K** = *koshas* – Were all the koshas integrated into the practice? Was there attention not just to body and breath, but also to mind, emotion, wisdom, joy, clarity of mind, and so on?

**A** = *applied psychology* – Were principles of yoga psychology integrated? For example, were there reference to the gunas, kleshas, vrittis, samskaras, ethics, and more? Was Sanskrit used or not convey these principles? How did use of Sanskrit resonate with the class?

**L** = *limbs of yoga* – Were all limbs of yoga attended to – either implicitly or explicitly? What, if anything, was left out or felt neglected?

**P** = *pedagogy or practice principles* – Did the teacher apply sound teaching principles, creating physical, psychological, emotional safety? Was there creativity and authenticity?

**A** = *affiliation* – Was the teacher committed to creating relationship? Was there clarity about roles and expectations? Were ethics and boundaries evident?

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**Practical Experiences – Professional Transformation through Five Hours of Lead Teaching**

Yoga Alliance requires that each trainee in a YTT300 must spend a minimum of five contact hours actively practice teaching as the lead instructor. These hours may include the time during which the trainee is receiving feedback on his/her teaching. Time spent assisting, observing others teaching, or giving feedback to others is excluded from these hours.

Professional transformation through lead teaching is demonstrated via successful completion of **five hours of lead teaching, with at least two classes observed by fellow trainees and a YogaX lead teacher/mentor**. Each enrolled trainee will have multiple opportunities and options for being a supervised or mentored lead teacher:

- **Required Observed Lead Teaching – Module-based**: Within almost all modules, trainees are afforded the opportunity to lead teach class segments. Trainees need to accumulate three hours of such lead teaching across the ten modules. After each teaching segment, trainees who were lead teachers receive immediate verbal feedback from the YogaX instructor and their peers for their
required lead teaching activities. They are asked to respond to the feedback in the moment to demonstrate what they learned from input they received and how it will transform their practice and self-definition as a teacher.

Responsibilities related to observed module-based teaching:

- **Session Outline**: The trainee develops a written outline for the segment to be led. This segment will be developed in small group work with the intention of interleaving several segments into an overall class (when relevant to the assignment). It is recommended that the segment outlines be revised based on feedback that will be received after teaching.

- **Class Leadership**: The trainee takes full responsibility for all aspects of teaching the assigned segment, yet clearly and intentionally interleaving it with related segments to be taught by others (if relevant to the assignment).

- **Class Verbal Feedback**: The YogaX instructor/observer takes responsibility for guiding the verbal feedback session with class participants after completion of the teaching assignment. The trainee demonstrates the ability to take feedback non-defensively (see Guidance above).

- **Required Observed Lead Teaching – Scheduled**: Trainees provide at least two full-length classes as a lead teacher, instructing fellow trainees and at least one YogaX lead teacher/mentor. After the session, trainees who are lead teachers receive immediate verbal feedback from the YogaX instructor and their peers for their required lead teaching activities. They are asked to respond to the feedback in the moment to demonstrate what they learned from input they received and how it will transform their practice and self-definition as a teacher.

Responsibilities and assignments:

- **Scheduling the Class**: The trainee is responsible for initiating a collaboration with the YogaX manager to schedule the classes and feedback sessions (i.e., at least a 2-hour block of time per class), set up the Zoom session, and disseminate information about scheduling to fellow students and others who may be interested in attending.

- **Session Outline**: The trainee develops a written session outline before the class is led. The trainee submits the written outline – no later than on the day the class is taught – to the YogaX instructor who will observe the class. A revised outline may be requested by the YogaX trainer after the class has been taught if deemed necessary.

- **Class Leadership**: The trainee takes full responsibility for all aspects of teaching the full-length class, from opening to closing the class and transitioning into the feedback session.

- **Class Verbal Feedback**: The trainee takes full responsibility for guiding the verbal feedback session with class participants and the YogaX instructor/observer. The trainee demonstrates the ability to solicit and take in feedback non-defensively (see Guidance below).

- **Lead Teaching – Recorded**: Trainees who did not accumulated the required three lead teaching hours within the modules will need to provide recordings or live sessions of three full-length classes as a lead teacher, instructing fellow trainees or others yoga teachers who can give constructive observational feedback. For these sessions, lead teachers request verbal or written feedback, right after the session, from attendees about their required lead teaching activities. They are asked to respond to the feedback in a written self-assessment to demonstrate what they learned from input they received and how it will transform their practice and self-definition as a teacher.
Scheduling the Class: The trainee is responsible for initiating a collaboration with the YogaX manager to schedule live classes and feedback sessions (i.e., at least a 90-minute block of time), set up the Zoom session, and disseminate information about scheduling to fellow students and others who may be interested in attending. For recorded sessions, the trainees make all arrangements and recordings on their own.

Session Outline: The trainee develops a written session outline before the class is led. The trainee submits the written outline – no later than on the day the class is taught – to the YogaX instructor who will observe the live or recorded class. A revised outline may be requested by the YogaX trainer after the class has been taught if deemed necessary.

Class Leadership: The trainee takes full responsibility for all aspects of teaching the full-length class, from opening to closing the class and transitioning into the feedback session.

Class Feedback: The trainee takes full responsibility for guiding the verbal or written feedback activities with class participants and the YogaX instructor/observer. The trainee demonstrates the ability to take in feedback non-defensively in a written document for recorded classes (see Guidance below).

Additional Guidance for these Practicum Experiences

Session Outlines: Through lead teaching and observation, trainees develop skills to construct full-length session outlines that reflect core competencies, address all koshas, and integrate all aspects of the YogaX teaching methodology spiderweb. By the end of the training, all trainees will have developed at least five full-length session outlines, integrating asana, breathing techniques, and interior practices via an overarching session theme and intention.

Receiving and Incorporating Feedback. Students will receive feedback from the YogaX YTT300 lead teachers and their peers for their required lead teaching activities. They will be asked to respond to the feedback provided to show what they learned from a given comment and how it may transform their practice as a teacher. Through this experience, trainees learn how to receive feedback in a manner that allows for integration of input, non-defensiveness, and transformation of attitudes, skills, and knowledge.

Adherence to YogaX and Yoga Alliance Codes of Conduct and Scopes of Practice. Students will adhere to all policies and procedures as established by YogaX and Yoga Alliance in all of their practice interactions, observations, and feedback. It is expected that students will continue to do so once they graduate from the YogaX Program.
Required and Recommended Readings

Required Texts


Yoga Alliance Code of Conduct (Handout provided in Section 3) or check the Yoga Alliance website

Yoga Alliance Scope of Practice (Handout provided in Section 3) or check the Yoga Alliance website

YogaX Policy and Procedures Manual (Handout provided in Section 4)

Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Many translations exist and you can choose one. Several are available for free online ([http://www.swamij.com/yoga-sutras.htm](http://www.swamij.com/yoga-sutras.htm) and [http://www.arlingtoncenter.org/Sanskrit-English.pdf](http://www.arlingtoncenter.org/Sanskrit-English.pdf)).

Recommended Books


Wilber, K. (2016). *Integral meditation: Mindfulness as a path to grow up, wake up, and show up in your life*. Boston: Shambala.

*Change is at the very core of the brain’s nature.*

Simpkins & Simpkins, 2010, p. 93
Rather than listing specific articles in the overall training syllabus, here we are offering you a selection of journals that are of particular utility to yoga teachers who work in healthcare settings. Additionally, specific references related to module content will be provided in each module-specific syllabus.

We encourage you to read widely and read often. 😊

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Fun Food-for-Thought Readings


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*Great knowledge grasps the whole; small knowledge only a part.* Zhung Zi (Daoist sage)