

Teaching Methods

Module Details



Integrated Holistic Teaching Methods: Tailoring Yoga Instruction for Healthcare Settings

Syllabus

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May 29, 2025 from 1p-6p; May 30 – 31, 2025 from 9a-6p; June 1, 2025 – 9a-4p

Target Audience and Instructional Level

This 4-day in-person workshop at the Stanford University campus offers an in-depth exploration of advanced teaching strategies in the lineage of integrated holistic yoga, including guidance related to verbal cuing and physical touch, for yoga in healthcare settings. It provides 30 hours of didactics, discussions, practice teaching, and personal exploration. This is an intermediate-level course geared to trainees in the YogaX 300-hour Therapeutic Yoga Program (TYP300) and/or the YogaX +YTT300, emphasizing focus on:

- Health, mental, and other allied healthcare providers interested in bringing advanced therapeutic yogic teaching principles and strategies into their extant healthcare or clinical practice.
- Health, mental health, and allied health-program students in graduate or medical programs interested in bringing advanced therapeutic yogic teaching principles and strategies into their supervised clinical practice.
- Yoga teachers interested in offering advanced therapeutic yogic teaching principles and strategies, especially to students/clients in healthcare settings.
- Yoga therapists providing offering advanced therapeutic yogic teaching principles and strategies, especially to students, clients, and patients in healthcare settings.

Training Pragmatics

- Cost: \$800 tuition for this 30-hour workshop **or** YogaX TYP300 prepaid enrollment
- This training is delivered as an in-person retreat at the Stanford University campus with fulltime contact with the lead instructor and possibly other YogaX teachers
- (see Training Format below for specific details of training delivery)
- Participation implies that you have read and agreed to the Stanford Assumptions of Risk, Release of Claims, and Hold Harmless Agreement at <https://www.yogaxteam.com/healthandsafetyinformation>
- YogaX Refund and Payment Policy is available at https://3de0fc17-ea21-4854-87c7-777a583c02cf.filesusr.com/ugd/37469f_73d3c9e8ebb14214a60e11d8b08baba1.pdf
- YogaX has no commercial support for this event and there are no disclosable conflicts of interest.
- No online options is offered for this workshop.

Lead Instructor

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Clinical Professor and Director of YogaX

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More information at <https://profiles.stanford.edu/christiane-brems>

Training Content Summary

This advanced teaching methods training focuses on supporting seasoned teachers to embrace a holistic and integrated model of teaching with deep intention and a collaborative, student-centered approach. It emphasizes empowerment, self-agency, and self-efficacy of students to create a yoga practice of safety and meaning. It focuses on helping teacher design classes and foster interactions that consider the whole of the student, including their bigger context and building the practice around student needs.

The integrated holistic vision of yoga is one of inclusiveness, access, diversity, health, wellbeing, and resilience for all. **It is a practice of and for community; it honors our interdependence and co-regulation.** It is a yoga of wholism that honors the mind as much as the body, the breath as much as the calming of the nervous system, the individual as much as the collective, stillness as much as movement, and effort as much as ease. It looks at and addresses the needs and resources of whole people at all their layers: body, breath, mind, heart, and spirit – grounded in community and a complex interpersonal setting of biological, psychological, social, and cultural influences. It is particularly suited to applications in healthcare settings.

This advanced teaching methods training focuses on supporting seasoned teachers and healthcare providers to embrace a holistic and integrated model of tailored yogic teaching with deep intention and a collaborative, student-centered approach. It emphasizes empowerment, self-agency, and self-efficacy of students to create a yoga practice of safety and meaning. The training focuses on the following priorities, *particularly as they apply in healthcare settings*:

- intentionality in teaching
- sequencing for safety and meaning
- variations and adaptations to empower students
- respectful cuing and demonstration
- verbal and physical assisting
- partnered practices
- and other teaching supports

Safe and meaningful sequencing integrates the creation of a theme and/or intention, attention to the integration of all eight limbs, and development of a class arc that expresses the theme or intention and the integrative function of a complete yoga class. Integration of all limbs with a greater purpose results in the creation of a class of balance, beauty, and joy. In demonstrating, observing, assisting, and supporting, teachers or assistants pay attention to these principles – embodying them in demonstrations, assessing them in observation, giving feedback about them in response to observation, and using them to verbally and physically support students.

The training emphasizes that well-sequenced classes are rounded out by appropriate demonstrations by the teacher and mutual observation by teacher of student and student of teacher. Important demonstration considerations have to do with decision about which version of a pose to demonstrate, purpose of the demonstration (with care not to let ego of the teacher result in extreme versions of postures), and needs and skills of the students in the room. The latter is guided by in-the-moment observation of students, their skill level, striving, and capacity for self-regulation and self-guided adaptations and variations. This core competency invites future teachers to offer choices and options, teaching students from the very beginning that they are in charge of their chosen expression of any practice. All options, whether variations, adaptations, or alternatives rely on ample use of yoga props.

Safety in teaching is fostered by proper demonstration and the offering of adaptations, variations, and props. It also arises from appropriate choices for student supports or guidance. Supports may be verbal or physical, with the safest default being verbal supports offered to the entire student body based on in-the-moment observation. Supports are not offered randomly, but rather address a need in the moment either by an individual student or

several students. Thus, supports are predicated on teachers' observational skills, student needs, and informed choices about the least intrusive level of intervention to support students toward more healthful alignment, balanced breath, less dysregulated presentation, and emotional resilience. Supports offer safe biomechanics, clear intentions, enhanced healthfulness of embodied practice, and increased stability and flexibility (adaptability) in body, breath, and mind.

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective #1

1. Identify and apply principles of anatomically and thematically cohesive sequencing of an overall yoga class, through understanding and applying the following:
 - a. Opening centering and intention-setting
 - b. Warm-up sequencing
 - c. Preparatory practices
 - d. Peak of the class
 - e. Restorative or counter practices
 - f. Closing meditation
 - g. Expression of gratitude

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #1

- Develop an opening centering that incorporates a clear theme for the class overall
- Design a warm-up sequence that is consistent with the class theme and the peak practice
- Sequence a series of practices that anatomically, physiologically, and energetically prepares the student for the peak practice, while being consistent and integrated with the chosen theme
- Design a cool-down or restoration that makes energetic and anatomical sense
- Sequence a closing meditation and closing comments that tie in with the theme and peak practice

Learning Objective #2

2. Understand, analyze, and demonstrate essential teaching competencies, in the following realms:
 - a. demonstrated understanding the integration of effort and ease
 - b. appropriate planning to integrate the scaffolding of all koshas
 - c. accurately analyzing, selecting, and applying alignment principles (e.g., balancing effort-ease, strong foundation – grounding, engaged core – stability, lines of energy – expansion, healthful body mechanics – attending to discomfort versus pain, integration of yamas, assuring safety)
 - d. accurately read students for collapse, excessive gripping, and resilience
 - e. proper cuing for mindfulness in all realms (body, breath/energy, mind, intuition, community)
 - f. proper cuing for neuroception, interoception, proprioception, and exteroception

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #2

- teach an asana with focus on effort and ease, as well as creating grounding, expansion, and stability
- teach a class based on observations of and cuing for collapse, bracing, and creating resilience
- teach a class what integrates very explicitly cuing for all koshas, scaffolded logically and in a manner tailored to students
- teach an integrated class with explicit integration of cuing for the four -ceptions
- teach with explicit language and instruction that helps students discern discomfort from pain

Learning Objective #3

3. Identify and skillfully apply principles of cuing, demonstration, and observation, through understanding and applying the following:
 - a. language choices from a variety of perspectives, including connotations of words and phrases, implications of various grammatical choices, and ways to language agency, empowerment, and choice
 - b. cuing and demonstration from the perspective of inviting adaptation, variation, and individual tailoring, clearly empowering students to make auspicious choices for their own body, breath, mind, emotions, and overall needs in all koshas
 - c. trauma-informed yoga principles as applied in cuing, demonstration, and observation
 - d. skillful choices about use of props, pose modifications, and pose adaptations tailored to class themes and student needs

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #3

- design a brief flow into and out of a yoga posture using sensitive language, demonstration applied based on observations of the students
- design and teach a breathing practice that is appropriate for an individual who presents with a trauma history, evidencing a tendency toward hyperarousal (toward rajas or sympathetic nervous system dysregulation)
- choose a single yoga posture and demonstrate at least five variations incorporating a variety of props (e.g., blocks, blankets, straps, bolsters, and more)

Learning Objective #4

4. Identify and skillfully apply principles of cuing, assisting, and correcting, through understanding, defining, and applying the following teaching interventions:
 - a. alignment cuing, safety cuing, corrective cuing
 - b. verbal adjustment
 - c. physical cuing and physical assisting
 - d. physical adjustment with proper collection of freely-given, revokable informed consent
 - e. physical corrective action with clear understanding of need for debriefing with the student

Evaluation Method for Learning Objective #4

- teach a yoga posture to at least four students and apply all types of cuing, assisting, and correcting
- be able to explain cuing choices
- be able to justify physical assists and adjustments
- demonstrate proper ongoing collection of freely-given, revokable informed consent

Schedule and Educational Hours by IAYT and YA Category

Thursday May 30, 2024 1p-6p (plus 1 hour of individual work)*						
Time	Topic					
1p – 3p	SANKALPA: Teaching integrated holistic yoga with intention – teaching spiderweb of honoring context and student needs for health and safety					
3p – 4p	<i>Teaching principles:</i> integration of effort and ease; scaffolding through the koshas; grounding, expansion (cuing lines of energy), and stabilization					
4p – 6p	<i>Experiential work:</i> Teach for safety, cuing effort and ease; scaffolding of koshas; and grounding, expansion, and stabilization					
6p – 7p	<i>Individual work:</i> Understanding trauma-informed principles					
Friday May 31, 2024 9a-6p (plus 2 hours of individual work)*						
Time	Topic					
9a – 10a	<i>Teaching principles:</i> Trauma-informed yoga – definitions; implications for environment, cuing, and pedagogy					
10a – 12p	<i>Experiential practice:</i> Considerations and applications of TIY principles in asana, pranayama, and interior practices					
12p – 1p	Lunch break					
1p – 3p	<i>Teaching principles:</i> Understanding discomfort versus pain (– <i>What Stops Me?</i> –) in all koshas					
3p – 5p	<i>Teaching principles:</i> Recognizing and working with collapsing versus contracting and creating resilience					
5p – 6p	<i>Experiential work:</i> Observing, recognizing, and working with collapsing, contracting, and resilience; cuing action					
7p – 9p	<i>Individual work:</i> Understanding collapsing, contracting, and resilience combined with prop use					
Saturday June 1, 2024 9a-6p (plus 2 hours of individual work)*						
Time	Topic					
8a – 10a	<i>Teaching principles:</i> Reasons for and applications of prop use in asana, pranayama, and interior practices					
10a – 12p	<i>Experiential work:</i> Using and offering props to support healthful alignment, energy, and awareness in all koshas					
12p – 1p	Lunch break					
1p – 3p	<i>Teaching principles:</i> The <i>What, Why, How, and When</i> of cuing, demonstrating, adjusting, assisting, and modifying					
3p – 5p	<i>Experiential work:</i> Application of cuing, demonstrating, adjusting, assisting, and modifying – non-touch emphasis					
5p – 6p	<i>Teaching principles:</i> Understanding the complexities of using physical touch – ethical and clinical issues, collecting ongoing informed consent					
7p – 9p	<i>Individual work:</i> Understanding the complexities of using physical touch					
Sunday June 2, 2024 9a-4p						
Time	Topic					
8a – 10p	<i>Teaching principles:</i> Physical (i.e., touch-based) adjustment and correction – observation and skillful intervention					
10a – 12p	<i>Experiential work:</i> Application of assisting, adjusting, and modifying – physical emphasis with use of physical assists and physical touch					
12p – 1p	Lunch break					
1p – 3p	<i>Experiential work:</i> Application of assisting, adjusting, and modifying – physical emphasis with use of physical assists and physical touch					
3p – 4p	Integration of advanced teaching methods via discussion; closing ceremony					

*Can be completed prior to arrival on May 30

30 hours of training total – Yoga Alliance categories:	TTP	TM	AP	YH	Prc	Spc
TTP=Techniques, Training, and Practice; TM=Teaching Methodology; AP=Anatomy and Physiology; YH=Yoga Humanities; Prac=Practicum; Spc=area of program specialization	5	12	7	0	6	30

30 hours of training total – IAYT categories:	YF	BPF	TT	Prc	PP
YF=Yoga Foundations; BPF=Biomedical and Psychological Foundations; TT=Yoga Therapy Tools and Therapeutic Skills; Prc=Practicum; PP=Professional Practice	3	7	13	6	1

Provided Handouts

Several handouts for the workshop will be provided to registered and paid enrollees on the day of the workshop. These materials are provided with the understanding that students will not duplicate, distribute, or otherwise publicly use these materials without express permission and proper attribution and referencing.

Trainees receive access to the following materials in their Google Classroom at least one week prior to the training. Trainees who want hard copies during the workshop are responsible for printing the e-delivered materials.

- *Content Manual for the IHY Teaching Methods Module*
- *Content Manual for the 200hr YTT – which includes helpful graphics and related tables*
 - *Integrated Holistic Yoga – Koshas, Limbs, Biopsychosociocultural Context*
 - *BioPsychoSocioCultural Model*
 - *Eight Limbs of Yoga*
 - *Gunas –Fundamental Expressions of Nature*
 - *Interaction of the Kleshas and Vrittis*
 - *Pathways of Sensory Processing Engaged in Integrated Holistic Yoga*
 - *Principles of Trauma-Informed Yoga*
 - *SANKALPA – Teaching with Intention*
 - *Sample Cuing for Grounding, Expansion, and Stabilization*
 - *Guide to Observing and Assessing Yoga Professionals*
 - *Synonyms for Talking about Collapse, Contraction, and Resilience*



*I learned some time ago that a teacher is always teaching himself.
As you think through things for your students,
you deepen your own understanding.
You can only explain effectively for others
what you are willing to experience yourself.
Robert Thurman and Tad Wise, 1999, Circling the Sacred Mountain, p. 11.*

Suggested Readings and Practices

It will be helpful to **have independently taught at least 10 hours of yoga** prior to attendance, but it is not required.

It is recommended that in preparation for the workshop you **read all YogaX blogs**, especially the following:

<https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/why-bring-yoga-into-healthcare>

<https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/blogbreath>

<https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/physicallimbs>

<https://www.yogaxteam.com/blog/polyvagaltheory>

The following readings will be helpful as you deepen your journey once you have completed the workshop.

Biel, A., & Dorn, R. (2019). *Trail guide to the body (6th ed.)*. Boulder, CO: Books of Discovery.

Bondy, D. (2020). *Yoga where you are: Customize your practice for your body and your life*. Boulder, CO: Shambala.

Bowman, K. (2017). *Move your DNA: Restore your health through natural movement*. Propriometrics Press.

Farhi, D. (2006). *Teaching yoga*. Berkeley, CA: Rodmell Press.

Feuerstein, G. (2013). *The psychology of yoga: Integrating eastern and western approaches for understanding the mind*. Boston: Shambala.

Hanson-Lasater, J. (2020). *Yoga myths*. Boulder, CO: Shambala.

Heyman, J. (2019). *Accessible yoga: Poses and practices for every body*. Boulder, CO: Shambala.

Mitchell, J. (2019). *Yoga biomechanics*. East Lothian, Scotland: Handspring Publishing.

Porter, K. (2013). *Natural posture for pain-free living*. Rochester, VA: Healing Arts Press.

Rothenberg, R. (2020). *Restoring prana*. Philadelphia: Singing Dragon.

Stanley, J. (2017). *Every body yoga*. New York: Workman Publishing Company.

Stephens, M (2010). *Teaching yoga: Essential foundations and techniques*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.

Swanson, A. (2019). *Science of yoga: Understand the anatomy and physiology to perfect your practice*. New York: DK.

Also, peruse YogaX webpage resources and **try out some of the offered free practices** (asana, pranayama, meditation, and more) at yogaXteam.com and on the YogaX Team YouTube channel.

If you close your eyes and feel carefully, you won't feel a "body." Body is only a word, the idea or concept level.

What you will actually feel are areas of hardness and softness, of pressure, heaviness, and textures such as rough and smooth. This is the earth element.

You will also feel areas of warmth and coolness. This is the fire or temperature element.

You feel areas of vibrations and stillness. This is the air or vibratory element.

And you will feel cohesion and fluidity. This is the water element: you only need to blink your eyes or swallow to sense it.

Jack Kornfield, 2009, The Wise Heart, p. 119

Evaluation Requirements for Module Completion

Successful completion of the module is contingent on successful engagement in several assignments, described in detail below. Additionally, all requirements outlined in the overall Program Training Manual also apply (especially as related to ethics and professionalism).

Preparation

The content material for the module will ideally be reviewed prior to the training event. Time is provided in the training schedule on Thursday through Friday evenings for additional manual review and self-study. However, trainees are encouraged to do as much of this work prior to the event. The entire manual needs to be digested before engaging in the homework assignment to ensure adequate background knowledge to complete that assignment thoroughly and wisely. This assignment is on the honor system.

Attendance and Participation

In-person attendance is required for the entire 4-day workshop. There will be much small group work that relies and depends on the presence of all registered trainees as we are coordinating this event with a 200-hour yoga teacher training. The YTT students will serve as your clients or students for the experiential work. Any absences will affect the planning and coordination that makes this experiential work possible. Thank you so much for doing what you can to be fully present for all four days. 😊

Please review the YogaX Policy and Procedures Manual for more information about attendance (and other) policies. Also note that for successful completion of the module, trainees must be present for a minimum of 75% of all sessions and must be present for the first and last session with the Module Lead Teacher.

Unavoidable absences need to be excused prior to the session to be missed and make-up work will be assigned as appropriate. Most helpfully, at least 24 hours prior notice of absence is given, though it is understood that emergencies may not make this possible. No recordings will be made of this workshop. Make-up will be labor-intensive and will require practicum hours.

Reflection Assignment

The reflection assignment is an invitation to take stock of what you are learning and experiencing. Please reflect on the contents and applications that were explored in the training and ponder their impact on you, your life, and your work. As relevant, note the cultural, historical, or sociopolitical context of the teachings, as well as the conceptual links to the greater intention of the therapeutic yoga teacher training.

Please write reflective comments and ponderings throughout the 4-day event. Take ongoing notes of significant experiences or learnings. At the end of each day, please reflect on at least three important take-aways from the day and write out at least one question or follow-up that you have for the next day.

By June 5, please collate your most important thoughts and take-aways and submit one overall reflection for the training event. Address specific content areas and reflect deeply on the experiential work.

Homework Assignment – Tailored Healthcare Application

The homework involves two tasks: (1) teach or conduct a full-length yoga or (mock) clinical session applying the learnings from the training event; and (2) debrief the practical application of the materials in the session you conducted with the student/mock client and/or a colleague. Put some thoughts on paper, reflecting what was useful, what worked, what was difficult, and what additional learning would have been helpful.

Session Guidelines

Develop a session protocol for a particular type of student or client of your choice. Note the characteristics of the student/client and how you have addressed anticipated needs in your session preparation. Teach the session and apply the relevant principles that you learned in the training. Minimally, plan for and implement the following:

- Have a clear intention and theme, as well as an appropriate session arc
- Use props and be thoughtful about demonstrations and personal integration of props
- Ponder language choices in a variety of context, including trauma informed language, invitational language, and language that encourages agency and client/student empowerment
- At least one episode of hands-on adjustment
- At least three cues related to observation about bracing, collapsing, and resilience
- At least three cues related to the 'ceptions

Please submit all materials you developed to prepare for the session by June 10, 2024. Also provide a brief description of your student and how you contextualized and personalized the session for that individual.

Debrief

Please debrief the teaching experience with your student/client and reflect on your experience with teaching the class from an integrated holistic perspective. If a debrief with the student is not appropriate, please debrief with a colleague. Reflect on the debriefing in writing, focusing on what you learned about the theory and practice of IHY teaching. Provide your document no later than June 15, 2024

Summary of Module Completion Requirements

All work for this module needs to be completed by the specific deadlines. Late work needs prior approval and requires a newly agreed-upon deadline.

The module is complete once all of the following assignments and tasks have been completed and submitted via the module's Google classroom:

- The entire content manual was perused, read, digested, and applied. ☺
- The entire in-person workshop was attended live and all experiential work was completed within the assigned small groups.
- All individual work assigned during the event was completed by June 5, 2024.
- The reflection assignment was completed and submitted in its entirety by June 5, 2024.
- Session materials for the homework task are completed and submitted in their entirety by June 10, 2024.
- Written document about the homework task is completed and submitted in its entirety by June 15, 2024.

*In the alchemical yoga that turns the heart from muscle to light,
I discovered that renunciation actually meant doing all you can as well as you can
and then letting go of attachment to results, to the fruits of your labors.*

Renunciation meant trusting the process.

Stephen Levine, 2002, Turning Toward the Mystery, p. 39

Training Format

The workshop 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. 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.

- Stanford University requires that you sign the release form (link above) to be able to participate in the activities that are part of this workshop. It assumed that you have agreed to this document when you pay or use the provided zoom link for the workshop.
- Required training activities start promptly. 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.
- Participants provide their own props for the 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.
- 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.
- Please ask questions – 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.
- 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 me aware of any medical conditions that may affect your yoga practice. It is helpful for me to know if you are modifying practices 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.
- Thank you for keeping your cameras on during virtual sessions to the degree possible and appropriate.

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.