

RIGPA ONLINE COURSE FORMAT

Course Format:

Prior to the start of the course, you will be given a logon to online course software, where the week's assignment will be posted. This is a very flexible format that does not require you to participate at specific times, but allows you to study and make postings to the forum at your convenience.

The course manual and videos will be the basis for studying this course. The discussion forum will provide additional information as necessary. Every Friday, your instructors will post guidance on study, practice and integration for the coming week and a topic for the online discussion. It is recommended that you establish a routine of a weekly study session. At the end of this document you will find general advice for a study session that includes studying a teaching, reflection, practice, advice for integration. Each study session is designed to be completed in about 1 to 1 1/2 hours, and we recommend that you study each lesson in one or, at most, two sessions.

After completing your study, you will be invited to make postings on the discussion topic between Sunday and the following Tuesday evening.

We also strongly encourage you to establish a daily practice, if you have not already done so. Each week there will be advice on guidance on what practices to focus on.

Online Discussion

The following table gives an overview of the format of the online course:

	Instructors	Students
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post a wrap up for previous week's topic (except in week 1) - Post study advice for next week's topic - Respond to questions about this week's topic - Will still respond to emails from previous week's topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin to study this week's topic - Can still post comments on other participants emails from previous week
Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respond to questions about this week's topic - Will still respond to emails from previous week's topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study this week's lesson - Can still post comments on other participants emails from previous week
Sunday - Tuesday	Respond to postings on this week's topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study this week's lesson - Post homework on this week's topic by Tuesday evening.
Wednesday - Thursday	Respond to postings on this week's topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can post comments on other participants emails from this week

Advice for preparing your study sessions:

Plan about 60 to 90 minutes of uninterrupted time for studying each topic. Choose a suitable environment where you can sit and practice meditation and arrange for VCR/TV to be available for watching the course video. At some points you will also need a tape or CD player.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR A STUDY SESSION

Establishing the Motivation and Settling

Always begin your sessions by taking a moment to reflect on your motivation for practice and with some sitting practice to settle.

Review of previous topic

Take a few minutes to review the previous topic, for example by going over the main points. Read any new postings on this topic. If it is more practical to do this step at your computer, you can catch up on unread postings before you begin the study session.

Watch the video of the teaching

Before you begin watching the teaching video read the manual up to and not including the teaching summary. Take a moment to remember the advice on how to listen to the teachings. You may find it helpful to take notes of the teaching. The manual for this course presents summary points but no transcripts.

Brief sitting after the teaching

After you listen to the teaching sit quietly for a few minutes and allow the teaching to inspire and touch you.

Summary points of the teachings

Take about five minutes to identify the main points of the teaching and write them down. You can then compare them with the main points provided in the manual. Read the rest of the study section in the manual, for example explanations of terms and names (if applicable).

Questions for reflection

Reflect on the questions that are provided for each topic in the manual or as advised in the weekly study advice

Practice

Read through the practice section in the manual and as suggested in the general session outline spend some time practicing.

Integration and further study

Each session will present advice on further study for each topic, make suggestions for your daily practice and offer ideas on how to integrate the teachings into your life. Conclude your study session with reading this section and make a plan on how to apply the teaching during the week.

Dedication

Conclude your study session with a short sitting and a moment of dedication.

Posting your comments on the email forum

Take some time to write a brief email about your study and practice as suggested in the weekly study advice and post it to the email discussion forum.

Communicating with others

Take some time during the week to read postings by the instructors and other participants and respond as you feel inspired.

Study, practice and integration between sessions

You are encouraged to maintain a daily meditation practice between the study sessions, to work with applying the teachings and practice in your life and deepen your study by reading the additional materials suggested in each session. The manual provides pages for keeping a record of your study and practice and to write down your reflections and insights.