

Prof. Lola Williamson

Lola Williamson is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of Peace and Justice Studies at Millsaps College in Jackson, MS. She holds a Ph.D. in Languages and Cultures of Asia from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Williamson's research centers on Hinduism in North America with an emphasis on yoga and meditation movements.



She founded the North America Hinduism Consultation of the American Academy of Religion in 2006. Her book, *Transcendent in America: Hindu-Inspired Meditation Movements as New Religion* (New York University Press, 2010), uses Self-Realization Fellowship, Transcendental Meditation, and Siddha Yoga as case studies to argue that these and similar groups form a distinct category of new religion. Her edited volume with Ann Gleig, *Homegrown Gurus: From Hinduism in America to American Hinduism* (SUNY Press, 2014), examines the role of American-born teachers and gurus in creating a new hybrid "American Hinduism." Williamson is currently researching developments in the transmission of non-dual Kashmir Shaivism to North America. [Further information](#) can be found at her institutional website.

Relevant Publications

Books

Transcendent in America: Hindu-Inspired Meditation Movements as New Religion. New York: New York University Press, 2010.

Co-edited with Ann Gleig. *Homegrown Gurus: From Hinduism in America to American Hinduism*. Albany, New York: State

University of New York Press, 2013.

Chapters

Forthcoming. "Modern Yoga and Tantra" in *Hinduism in the Modern World*, edited by Brian A. Hatcher. New York: Routledge Press.

"Stretching toward the Sacred: John Friend and Anusara Yoga," in *Gurus of Modern Yoga*, edited by Mark Singleton and Ellen Goldberg. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

"Swamis, Scholars, and Gurus: Siddha Yoga's American Legacy" in *Homegrown Gurus: From Hinduism in America to American Hinduism*, edited by Ann Gleig and Lola Williamson. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2013.

Co-authored with Devparna Roy: "The Changing Face of Indian Hindu Identity in Mississippi" in *Ethnic Heritage in Mississippi*, edited by Shana Walton. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2012.

"Death is Not Final: Attitudes toward Dying, Death and Medicalization among American Hindus" in *Religion, Death, and Dying in America*, edited by Lucy Bregman. New York: Praeger Press, 2009.

"The Perfectibility of Perfection: Siddha Yoga as a Global Movement" in *Gurus in America*, edited by Thomas Forsthoefel and Cynthia Humes. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005.

Encyclopedia articles

"Hindus in the United States" in *Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, and Political History*, edited by Xiojian Zhao. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013.

"Hinduism and New Age Spirituality" in Brill's *Encyclopedia of*

Hinduism, edited by Knut Axel Jacobsen. Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2012.

Web publication

“Anusara Yoga.” The World Religions and Spirituality Project (WRSP), Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013. Available at <http://www.has.vcu.edu/wrs/profiles/Anusara.htm>