



## Religious Change in Tibet and the Himalayas

ASIA 3010 (3 credits/45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Nepal: Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples

**PLEASE NOTE:** This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

### Course Description

This course explores religious preferences among the diverse Himalayan populations. Tibetan Buddhism is examined in relation to broader Tibetan civilization, the Tibetan [-oid/-ish] cultural sphere, including but not limited to the realms of politics and ritual. The course goes beyond the typical exclusive focus on the Tibetan Buddhist characteristics of Himalayan cultures, and instead investigates a multitude of beliefs and practices, amongst different groups. E.g. other Buddhism [s] such as that of the Newars, the sole surviving continuous tradition of Indian Buddhism; Indian tantra; Hinduism in the Kathmandu Valley; Islam in Tibet and South Asia; and Bön and pre-Buddhist Himalayan traditions. Furthermore, the determining role across the region of emerging systems such as secularism and spiritual materialism, whether or not sprung from Communist ideologies, will be evaluated.

We will emphasize the involved—and often fluid—interactions and interchanges between tradition, ritual and religious doctrine. One way we will transcend the synchronicity cum timelessness often associated with religion is through the study of etymology and the change of meanings within religious terminology. This course will further lay stress on the melding and divergence of traditions given a multitude of political and other contingent circumstances as well as the manifestations of such developments in individuals' worldviews and daily activities.

Whereas religion is often understood, in American or European contexts and in academic departments, to be a phenomenon easily delineated and isolated, we will find that cleavages and overlaps exist between doctrinal belief and everyday practice. Furthermore, we will explore how, precisely because it informs worldview and perspective, religion affects a society on all levels, including but not limited to politically, economically, architecturally, spatially—and culturally.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify the major regional religious issues at global, national and local scales;
- Describe the basic myths, principles and practices of Buddhism, Hinduism and other religious traditions present in the Himalayan context;

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- Compare and contrast the manifestation of religions in everyday life, urban and rural, in Kathmandu and beyond;
- Illustrate religious change across the Central Himalayas;
- Analyze challenges in religious identity formation, representation and the bottom line in the context of exile;
- Apply transdisciplinarity to the religious change of Tibet and the Himalayas in a formal research paper.

### Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, including readings in English, but students will be exposed to Tibetan (and Bhutanese, Nepali and Sanskrit) vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of political change and borders through on-site expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales. Students will be simultaneously learning Tibetan (and optionally also Nepali) and expected to engage community members in this language (to the best of their abilities) when the opportunity arises.

### Course Requirements

#### Course Schedule

\*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module		contact hours
1	Religious change in the Nepal Himalayas	8.5
2	Religious change in Tibetan exile	4
3 Seminar	Critical concepts in context	11
4 Group discussion	Synthesis and debrief	4.5
5 Minor excursion	Religious change in Tatopani	2.5
6 Major excursion	Religious change in Spiti and Dharamsala	13.5
7 Final session	Concluding synthesis and analysis of course themes	1

#### Module 1: Religious change in the Nepal Himalayas (8.5 contact hours)

Session 1 Lecture & visit: Buddhism in context: Pharping (i/iii)—Hubert Decler  
1.5-hour lecture followed by 1.5-hour tour on foot with discussion

*Required Reading:*

“Buddhist Holy Sites of Nepal: Pharping.” *Voices of the Rigpa Shedra*.

<http://shedratalk.blogspot.com/2011/03/buddhist-holy-sites-of-nepal-pharping.html>.

Kapstein, Matthew. *Tibetan Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. OUP 2013.

Session 2 Lecture & visit: Buddhism in context: Boudha (ii/iii)—Hubert Decler  
1.5-hour lecture followed by 1.5-hour tour on foot with discussion

*Required Readings:*

Dowman, Keith. “Introduction” and “Boudhanath” in *Power Places of Kathmandu: Hindu and Buddhist Holy Sites in the Sacred Valley of Nepal*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1995. 1–23, 30–35.

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Dowman, Keith. "Boudhanath" in *A Buddhist Guide to the Power Places of the Kathmandu Valley*. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications, 2007. 55–59.

"Brief History of the Stupa" in *History of Great Stupa Jarung Khashor*. Kathmandu: Samtenling Monastery, 2005. 83–94

Session 3 Lecture & visit: Buddhism in context: Swayambhu (iii/iii)—Hubert Decler  
1.5-hour lecture followed by 1.5-hour tour on foot with discussion

*Required Readings:*

Maitland, Padme Dorje. "A Structure for Veneration." In *Light of the Valley: Renewing the Sacred Art and Traditions of Swayambhu*. Edited by Tsering Palmo Gellek and Padme Dorje Maitland. Cazadero, CA: Dharma Publishing, 2011. 24–31.

Parker, Anne Z. and Dominiuqe Susani. "The Sacred Landscape and Geomancy of Swayambhu." *Ibid.* 286–287.

Session 4 Visit: Patan Museum

1.5-hour tour on foot with discussion

*Required Reading:*

Hagmueller, Goetz. "Introduction" in *Patan Museum: The Transformation of a Royal Palace in Nepal*.

London: Serindia, 2001. <http://www.asianart.com/associations/patan-museum/report/page1.html>.

## **Module 2: Religious change in Tibetan exile (4 contact hours)**

Session 1 Group discussion and presentations: "Buddhism observed" (Peter Moran)  
2-hour seminar

*Required Readings:*

Moran, Peter. "Introduction" and "Chapter 3: Commodities, Identities and the aura of the Other" in *Buddhism Observed: Travelers, Exiles and Tibetan Dharma in Kathmandu*. New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004. 1–13, 34–57.

Session 2: Meditation & everyday life (& academic discourse)—Wayne Amtzis  
2-hour lecture with practicum

*Required Reading:*

Amtzis, Wayne. "Dharma Poems." *Wayne Amtzis: Photos & Poems from Kathmandu*. Last modified 8 Feb, 2013. <http://www.photo-poems.com/files/dharmapoems.html>.

## **Module 3 Seminar: Critical concepts in context (11 contact hours)** (30 minutes x 22, see assignment below)

### **Group 1: Religious change in the Nepal Himalayas**

Newar Buddhism

Nepalese Hinduism

*Suggested Readings:*

Allen, Michael. "Buddhism without Monks: The Vajrayana religion of the Newars of Kathmandu Valley." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 3, no. 1 (1973): 1–14.

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- Gellner, David. *The Anthropology of Buddhism and Hinduism: Weberian Themes*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Gellner, David. *Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest: Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Hutt, Michael. *Nepal: A Guide to the Art & Architecture of the Kathmandu Valley*. New Delhi: Adroit Publishers, 2010.
- Shakya, Rashmila. *From Goddess to Mortal: The True-Life Story of a Former Royal Kumari*. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications, 2007.

## **Group 2: Religious change in Tibet**

Bon  
 Guru Rinpoche / Padmasambhava  
 Nyingma  
 Sakya  
 Milarepa  
 Kagyu  
 Rinchen Zangpo  
 Gelukpa  
 Mount Kailash  
 Islam in Tibet

### *Suggested Readings:*

- Behl, Benoy K. "Monasteries of Rinchen Zangpo." *India International Centre Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2008): 49–69.
- Dorje, Gyurme and Dudjom, Rinpoche. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: its Fundamentals and History*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 1991.
- Douglas, Nik and Meryl White, ed. *Karmapa the Black Hat Lama of Tibet*. London: Luzac & Company Ltd., 1976.
- Dreyfus, Georges B. J. *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Gibbons, Bob, and Sian Pritchard-Jones. *Kailash and Guge: Land of the Tantric Mountain*. New Delhi: Pilgrim Publishing, 2006.
- Karmay, Samten G. *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals, and Beliefs in Tibet*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 2009.
- Kværne, Per. *The Bon Religion of Tibet: The Iconography of a Living Tradition*. London: Serindia Publications, 1995.
- Lopez, Donald Jr. *The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to its History and Teachings*. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 2001.
- Nadwi, Dr. Abu Baker-uddin. *Tibet and Tibetan Muslims*. Trans. by Prof. Parmananda Sharma. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2005.
- Norbu, Chögyal Namkhai. *Dzogchen: The Self Perfected State*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1996.
- Powers, John. *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1995.
- Quintman, Andrew. *The Life of Milarepa*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2010.
- Tsogyal, Yeshe. *The Lotus-Born: The life Story of Padmasambhava*. Boston: Shambhala Dragon Editions, 1993.

## **Group 3: Religious change in Buddhism**

Theravada  
 Mahayana  
 Tantra / Vajrayana

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Chorten / Stupa  
Buddhist pilgrimage  
Buddhist cosmology  
Chenrezig / Avalokiteshvara  
Tara  
Buddhist women

*Suggested Readings:*

- Beer, Robert. *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs*. Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2004.
- Findly, Ellison Banks, ed. *Women's Buddhism, Buddhism's Women: Tradition, Revision, Renewal*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2000.
- White, David Gordon, ed. *Tantra in Practice*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2001.
- Gutschow, Kim. *Being a Buddhist Nun: The Struggle for Enlightenment in the Himalayas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Kapstein, Matthew. *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Levine, Sarah and David N. Gellner. *Rebuilding Buddhism: The Theravada Movement in Twentieth-Century Nepal*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2008.
- Samuel, Geoffrey. *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Huber, Toni. *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage & The Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Zangpo, Ngawang. *Sacred Ground: Jamgon Kongtrul on "Pilgrimage and Sacred Geography"*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2001.
- Tsomo, Karma Lekshe. *Sisters in Solitude: Two Traditions of Buddhist Monastic Ethics for Women*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1997.
- Willis, Janice, ed. *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1987.
- Young, Serinity. *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.

**Group 4: Religious change in Bhutan**

Bhutanese Buddhism

*Suggested Readings:*

- Phuntsho, Karma. *The History of Bhutan*. New Delhi: Random House India, 2013.
- Pommaret, Françoise. *Bhutan: Himalayan Mountain Kingdom*. New Delhi: Timeless Books, 2003.

**Group 5: Religious change beyond Tibet and the Himalayas**

Chinese Buddhism

*Suggested Readings:*

- Kapstein, Matthew, ed. *Buddhism Between China and Tibet*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2009.
- Saunders, Kenneth J. "Buddhism in China: A Historical Sketch." *The Journal of Religion* 3, no. 2 (1923): 157–169.
- Strong, Sarah and John Strong. "A Post-Cultural Revolution Look at Buddhism." *The China Quarterly* 54 (1973): 321–330.

**Module 4 Group discussion: synthesis and debrief (4.5 contact hours)**

(45 minutes x 6, see assignment below)

Group 1: Religious change in the Nepal Himalayas

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- Group 2: Religious change in Tibet
- Group 3: Religious change in Tibetan exile
- Group 4: Minor Excursion: Religious change in Tatopani
- Group 5: Major Excursion: Religious change in Spiti
- Group 6: Major Excursion: Religious change in Dharamsala

### **Module 5 Minor excursion: Religious change in Tatopani (2.5 contact hours)**

Session 1: Tibetan Buddhist Practice in a Drukpa Kagyü Nunnery—*Ani Ngawang Dechen*, Bagkahang Dhondupling Nunnery  
1.5 hour lecture and discussion

*Required Reading:*

Tsomo, Karma Lekshe, “Tibetan Nuns and Nunneries.” In *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet*, edited by Janice D. Willis. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1987. 96–134.  
Willis, Janice, “Tibetan Ani-s: The Nun’s Life in Tibet.” *Ibid.* 76–95.

Session 2 Visit: Visit to Liping Monastery  
2 hour visit on foot and discussion

*Required Reading:*

Tsang-Nyön, Heruka. “Beating the Jealous Debaters by Miraculous Display and Magic Intervention.”  
In *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Majestic Lord Mila*.

### **Module 6 Major excursion: Religious change in Spiti and Dharamsala (13.5 contact hours)**

Session 1 Visit: Western Tibetan Art at Tabo monastery  
2-hour tour on foot and discussion

*Required Reading:*

Klimburg-Salter, Deborah. *Tabo Monastery, Art and History*. Wien 2006.  
Van Ham, Peter. Tabo Monastery. [http://www.petervanham.com/Pages/Tabo\\_Monastery.html](http://www.petervanham.com/Pages/Tabo_Monastery.html)

Session 2: The Revitalization of Traditional Spitian Music and Composition in Modern India  
2-hour performance and discussion

*Required Reading:*

Norbu, Jamyang. “The Role of the Performing Arts in Old Tibetan Society.” In *Zlos-Gar*. Edited by Jamyang Norbu. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1986. 1–6.

Session 3: Spitian Language and Nyingma Buddhism—*Monk at Gungri Gompa*  
1.5-hour lecture and discussion

*Required Reading:*

“Language Vitality and Endangerment.” *United Nations ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages*.  
March 2003. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001836/183699E.pdf>.

Session 4: Buchen Life, history, and performances—*Buchens of Pin Valley*  
2-hour lecture and discussion, 4-hour performance

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*Required Readings:*

Dollfus, Pascale. "The Great Sons of Thang stong rgyal po: the Bu chen of the Pin valley, Spiti." *The Tibet Journal* 29, no.1 (2004): 9–32.  
Roerich, Georges De. "The Ceremony of Breaking the Stone." *Urusvati* 2 (1932): 25–51

Session 5: Politics and religion at Key Gompa—*Lochen Rinpoche*

1.5-hour lecture and discussion, and 1 hour visit

*Required Readings:*

Tashi Tsering and Vitali, Roberto. *A Short Guide to Key Gompa*. Key Monastery, Distt. Lahaul and Spiti 2000.  
Hamond, Robert. "Through Western Tibet in 1939." *The Geographic Journal* 99, no. 1 (1942): 1–12.  
Klimburg-Slater, Deborah. "Tucci Himalayan Archives Report, I: The 1989 Expedition to the Western Himalayas, and a Retrospective View of the 1933 Tucci Expedition." *East and West* 40, no 1/4 (1990): 145–171.

Session 6: Buddhism in Practice—*Khenpo at Deer Park Institute*

1.5-hour lecture and discussion

*Required Reading:*

Khyentse, Dzongsar Jamyang. "Introduction" and "Conclusion." In *What Makes You Not a Buddhist*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2007. 1–6, 107–126.

Session 8: Environmental Protection and the Arts in Buddhist Thought and Practice—*H.H. the 17th Karmapa, Ugyen Trinley Dorjee Head of the Karma Kagyü school*

1.5-hour lecture and discussion

*Required Readings:*

Dorje, Ogyen Trinley. "Social Action," "Environmental Protection," and "Food Justice." In *The Heart is Noble: Changing the World from the Inside Out*. Boston: Shambhala South Asian Editions, 2013. 72–124.  
"Gyalwang Karmapa Shares His Thoughts on the Environment and Bhikshuni Ordination at International Buddhist Confederation." *Kagyü Office*. 14 September 2013. <http://kagyoffice.org/gyalwang-karmapa-shares-his-thoughts-on-the-environment-and-bhikshuni-ordination-at-international-buddhist-confederation/>.

Session 9 Visit: Norbulingka Institute

1-hour tour with discussion

*Required Reading:*

"About Norbulingka" *Norbulingka Institute*. 2010. <http://www.norbulingka.org/>.

Session 10: Buddhist Women on the move: The Geshema Degree and Bhikkshuni Ordination, Tibetan Nuns Project Dolmaling Monastery, Tibetan Nuns Project, women in Buddhism—*Rinchen Khandro Choegyal, Founder*

1.5-hour lecture with discussion

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### Required Readings:

Doepke, Michael. "Interview with the Dalai Lama about the Full Ordination of Women" Buddhism Aktuell. January 2011.

[http://info-buddhism.com/Interview\\_Dalai\\_Lama\\_about\\_the\\_Full\\_Ordination\\_of\\_Women.html](http://info-buddhism.com/Interview_Dalai_Lama_about_the_Full_Ordination_of_Women.html).

Gyatso, Tenzin. "Ordination in the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition." Office of HH the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama of Tibet. <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/buddhism/ordination-in-the-tibetan-tradition>.

## Module 7 Final Session: Concluding synthesis and analysis of course themes (1 contact hour)

### Evaluation and Grading Criteria

#### Assessment and timing of assignments

Module 2	Boudha/"Buddhism observed" presentation & paper	10%	2 <sup>nd</sup> week
Module 3	CCC seminar paper & presentation	15%	One session per student
Module 4	Facilitation: synthesis and debrief	15%	One week per student
Module 5	Minor excursion study project	20%	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday after minor excursion
Module 6	Major excursion study project	25%	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday after major excursion
Module 7	Final reflection paper	5%	Final Friday
<i>passim</i>	Contribution to group learning	10%	<i>passim</i>
		(100%)	

#### Assignments

### Module 2: Boudha["Buddhism"] observed (presentation & paper)

#### Objectives

To deconstruct misconceptions about Tibetan Buddhism, both popular and personal.

#### How it works

Having read the Peter Moran text ("Buddhism Observed: Travellers, Exiles and Tibetan Dharma in Kathmandu" (2004), Introduction and Chapter 3, *Commodities, Identities and the aura of the Other*) you will spend a minimum of one hour making observations at Boudha stupa. Your observations can focus on a particular interaction or on a group of people at the stupa. In tandem with describing your observations, please suggest interpretations for what you have observed. You will bring five such pairings (observation/"what?" plus interpretation/"so what?") to present in class. You will also have one key insight from Moran's text. You will submit in writing your five pairings and one key quote/insight.

#### Grading

Of the total 10% grade for the assignment, 5% will be for the presentation and group discussion and 5% for the written submission.

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### **Module 3: Critical concept in context (seminar paper & presentation)**

#### **Objectives**

The “critical concepts in context” are designed to demonstrate the wealth of primary resources at hand in experiential education and to deploy those resources in the analysis and synthesis of core thematic concepts.

#### **How it works**

You will choose (or be assigned) a keyword central to the “Religion/Change” course. You will prepare an engaging ten-minute presentation of your keyword and its significance, especially within the thematic seminar. On the due date, before your presentation, you will submit a 1,000-word write-up of your “critical concept in context”. You will present material from three kinds of sources or evidence: visual, oral [/aural] and written: a textual source, a picture/image, and the fruits of an encounter, i.e. an interview, e.g. a discussion with your homestay family and/or other Tibetan (or Nepali) friends and acquaintances. You do not need to show your visual evidence when we present outside of the program centre, but you must submit it as part of your assignment, and describe the image wherever you make your presentation. You will be able to name and assess your sources. Where appropriate, you will spell your words in Tibetan (in Tibetan script and/or Wylie transliteration).

#### **Grading**

Of the total 15% grade for the “critical concept in context”, 7.5% will be for the written paper and 7.5% for the seminar presentation.

### **Module 4: Facilitation: synthesis and debrief**

#### **Objectives**

- To enable the group to reflect on what we have learnt from various parts of the course, to integrate knowledge gained from a variety of sources, including field trips, and to share insights;
- To provide a forum for discussion of course readings;
- To give you practice at facilitating discussions and making presentations.

#### **How it works**

At the end of orientation you will be assigned to one of six groups. Each group will be assigned one group discussion to facilitate during the semester. These discussions will be guided by faculty but run by students. The group discussions will last for 90 minutes and will **foster debate or discussion** about what we have learnt in “Religion/Change” since the previous meeting and will integrate what we have learnt that week in workshops, lectures, **field trips** and **readings** with what we have previously covered in the semester.

When it is your turn to facilitate a discussion, you need as a group, to identify **the most important topics (check the learning goals) that are suitable for class discussion** (don’t pick so many topics that there isn’t adequate time to discuss them all). At the meeting, the facilitators should first identify the topics to be covered in the meeting. They should then encourage and direct group discussion of the topics. Facilitators should talk with the relevant faculty member prior to starting their preparation for their meeting in order to review the topics to be discussed, and then again, after you have met, to review the questions you will put to the group. We reserve the right to include critical questions or topics if they are absent from your list. **It is important to allow sufficient time for discussion of the readings.**

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## Grading

Synthesis and debrief discussions make up 15% of the course grade. The quality of your contribution to the discussions throughout the semester is worth 7.5% and your facilitation of your session is worth another 7.5%. As a participant, you should come to group discussions with notes from the readings including a sentence summarizing the author's main message. You should contribute to the discussions but not dominate them, your contributions should **be informed** and you should respect other's opinions but not be afraid to disagree.

The criteria for evaluating the facilitators are:

- Your introduction identifying the topics to be discussed (5%)
- Your identification and framing of the important issues to be discussed from lectures, workshops, fieldtrips, etc., and the quality of the questions and prompts you used to initiate and direct the discussion (40%)
- Your identification of the important issues contained in the readings and your facilitation of the discussion of those readings (35%)
- Your facilitation of the group discussion (did you get everyone involved in and enthused about the discussion? Did you use any innovative approaches? Were you able to control the discussion and get it back on track when it wandered off the topic? Did you manage the time well – so that all topics were covered?) (20%)

## Modules 5 & 6: Excursion study projects (major & minor)

### Objectives

The fieldwork papers are designed to help you to reflect upon, **analyze and synthesize** what you are learning from excursions, field trips, lectures, seminars, readings, formal and informal discussions and your own observations.

### How it works

After each of the semester excursions, the major and the minor excursion, you will be asked to reflect in an essay on aspects of the fieldwork you have just carried out and **to relate this to what you have previously learnt and observed** in both the "Religion/Change" and "Politics/Borders" courses. There will be two essays in total. They need to be succinct, well organized and to show that you are thinking about what you are experiencing and that you are synthesizing what you learn from disparate sources.

The first paper, resulting from the minor excursion will be a group study project. This will entail a 1,200 word **minimum** contribution to a paper prepared in collaboration with program peers.

The major excursion study project will be a 1,600 word minimum.

### Grading

The essays will comprise **20% and 25% respectively of your "Religion/Change" grade**. Each essay will have a different objective and therefore detailed instructions and grading criteria will be given at the time they are assigned.

Students should note that topics for papers as well as their field study journal are open. Students should not feel they are limited only to topics concerning politics/borders but should feel free to use each paper to explore a variety of topics. To reinforce and emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of these Study Project assignments, the weight given in evaluating the papers will be split equally between the two core courses, Politics/Borders and Religion/Change.

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## **Module 7: Final reflection paper**

### **Objectives**

1. Reflect on your understanding of Religious Change in Tibet and the Himalayas and how your engagement may have changed as a result of your experiences in Nepal and India and/or Bhutan.
2. Reflect on what are the most important things you have learnt from the Religion/Change course in general.

### **How it works**

Before the end of the program write a 1,000 word (minimum) essay covering the following topics:

*Your understanding of Religious Change in Tibet and the Himalayas:*

How have your experiences in Nepal and India and/or Bhutan affected your personal understanding of the politics of borders in Tibet and the Himalayas? If your understanding of religious change has not changed, why do you think this is so?

*Your general learning experience:*

What are the most important things you have learnt from the Religion/Change course in general? Have you gained insights into US culture as a result of your last four months in Nepal and India and/or Bhutan? If so, please discuss how these insights have shed light on particular aspects of US culture.

### **Grading**

This reflection counts for 5% of your NPT grade and is due the final Friday of the semester. You will be graded on the quality of your answers to the above questions.

### **Passim: Contribution to group learning**

In this seminar, great emphasis is placed on the students' active participation in their own education. This element is worth **10% of your Religion/Change grade**. Your grade is allocated on an assessment of your timely attendance and informed participation in all activities, including field trips; your adherence to codes of conduct and conditions of participation; and your general contribution to the maintenance of a positive learning environment throughout the course.

### Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

### **Expectations and Policies**

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.

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- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.

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