

Borders, Politics, and Identity among Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples

ASIA 3015 (3 Credits)

Nepal: Borders, Identity, and Community Resilience

This syllabus is representative of a typical term. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from term to term.

Course Description

This course traces Tibetan and Himalayan history from current political dynamics back to ancient times. It will challenge the prevalent analysis of Tibetan[-oid/-ish] politics synchronically and in emic terms, disconnected from change, larger dynamics and regional events. Students examine local political systems such as the Tibetan Government in Exile and the birth throes of the Nepalese constitution. Students also investigate the politics inherent in everyday life in an exile community, such as around our Boudha program site, themes like individual articulations of identity, as well as the politics of language and of religious practice.

Students will review regional politics, both current and as they have evolved over time. Students will examine politics on the geo-political scale, including the significance of various regions in the Himalayas as well as the maneuvering between Asia's giants, India and China, whose adjacency renders Nepal "a yam between two boulders". Through examination of current conditions in Tibet, students will be asked to reflect on and re-conceptualize ideas of power, autonomy, authority and vulnerability on individual, group and state levels. Economic forces to be considered include migratory strategies (Nepalis to the Gulf; Tibetans from TAR & PRC into exile; Tibetans from Nepal to India or beyond) and environmental changes, valuable non-renewable resources and national endeavors in mining, dam-construction, sustainable farming practices and tourism. Students will be asked to question what limits are entailed in each context. Who imposes these limits, how are they created and in what framework do they exist?

The course consists of a series of lectures and seminars, a series of one-day field trips in the Kathmandu Valley, and two extended field trips in Nepal and India (a first one-week excursion and a second two-week excursion).

Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify the major regional political issues at global, national and local scales;
- Describe the last 100 years of Chinese administrative intervention in Tibetan regions: prior to 1959, the Cultural Revolution, subsequent reforms, and post-2008;

- Compare and contrast the process of democratic governance in Nepal and Tibetan exile;
- Illustrate social and environmental changes across the Central Himalayas;
- Analyze challenges in identity formation, representation and the bottom line in the context of exile;
- Apply trans-disciplinarity to the politics of Tibetan and Himalayan borders 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 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.

Modules	
1	The politics of borders in the Nepal Himalayas
2	The politics of borders in Tibet
3 seminar	Critical concepts in context
4 group discussion	Synthesis and debrief
5 first excursion	The politics of borders in Mundgod
6 second excursion	The politics of borders in Rasuwa
7 final session	Concluding synthesis and analysis of course themes

Module 1: The politics of borders in the Nepal Himalayas

Session 1 lecture: Understanding the Himalaya & placing its issues in the global context—*Anil Chitrakar*

required reading:

Chitrakar, Anil. "Karma and Fatalism" in *Take The Lead: Nepal's Future Has Begun*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Kathalaya Publications, 2013. 43–54.

Session 2 lecture: The People's War and Media in Nepal—*Kunda Dixit*

required reading:

Dixit, Kunda. "A New Himalayan Game." *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Vol. 34:1 Winter 2010.

Dixit, Kunda. *People After War: Nepalis Live with Legacy of Conflict*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Publication Nepa-Laya, 2009.

Session 3 visit: A walk through time: understanding the historical town of Patan—*Anil Chitrakar*

required reading:

“Introduction—Patan,” *Nepal Government Department of Archaeology*.

<http://www.doa.gov.np/content.php?id=265>.

Session 4 lecture: Language through the lens of human capability in Nepal—*Lhamo Yangchen*

required readings:

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. New York: First Anchor Books, 2000.

Session 5 lecture: democracy and development at the edge of the state: borderland lives between Nepal and China—*Nadine Plachta*

required readings:

Saxer, Martin 2016. Pathways. A Concept, Field Site and Methodological Approach to Study Remoteness and Connectivity. *Himalaya* 26 (2): 104-19.

Saxer, Martin and Juang Zhang 2017. Neighboring in the Borderworlds along China’s Frontiers. In Martin Saxer and Juang Zhang (eds), *The Art of Neighboring. Making Relations Across China’s Borders*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, pp. 11-29.

Shneiderman, Sara 2013. Himalayan Border Citizens. Sovereignty and Mobility in the Nepal-Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of China Border Zone. *Political Geography* 35: 25-36

Module 2: The politics of borders in Tibet

Session 1 lecture: Aspects of the Tibetan Issue (i/iii): The legal status of Tibetans in Nepal & India—Iona Liddell

required readings:

Human Rights Watch (HRW). *Under China’s Shadow: Mistreatment of Tibetans in Nepal*.

2014. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2014/04/01/under-china-s-shadow>

International Campaign for Tibet (ICT). *Dangerous Crossing: Conditions impacting the flight of Tibetan Refugees, 2009 Update*. Washington DC: ICT, 2009

Falcone, Jessica, and Wangchuk, Tsering. “We’re not Home: Tibetan refugees in India in the Twenty-First Century.” *India Review*. Vol 7, Iss. 3 (2008).

Liddell, Iona. *March 10 Speech—how you can support Tibet*.

<http://www.tibetjustice.org/?p=482>

Session 2 lecture: Aspects of the Tibetan Issue (ii/iii): a Tibetan in media in Nepal—*Tsering Dolker Gurung*

required readings:

Gurung, Tsering Dolkar. “Déjà vu for Tibet’s refugees.” *Nepali Times*. 22-28 May 2015.

<http://archive.nepalitimes.com/page/earthquake-brings-back-memories-of-camps-for-tibetan-refugees>

Shakya, Tsering. "Twice removed: Tibetans in North America." *Himal Southasian*. 27 October 2017. <https://himalmag.com/twice-removed-tibetans-in-north-america/>

Tenzin Dickie, ed. "Introduction" & "Winter in Patlikuhl" *Old Demons New Deities: twenty-one short stories from Tibet*. New York: OR Books, 2017.

Session 3 lecture: Aspects of the Tibetan Issue (iii/iii): Snow Lion Foundation, Nepal—Tsering Topgyal

Houston, Serin & Richard Wright. "Making and remaking Tibetan diasporic identities." *Social and Cultural Geography* 4, no. 2 (2003), 217-232.

"Snowlion Foundation." *Sherig: Tibetan Children's Educational & Welfare Fund*.
<http://sherig.org/en/schools/snowlion-foundation/#>

Session 4 group discussion and presentations: "Prisoners of Shangri-La" (Donald Lopez)

required readings:

Lopez, Donald. Jr. "Introduction" in *Prisoners of Shangri-la*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. 1–13.

Shakya, Tsering. "Who Are the Prisoners?" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 69 (2001): 183–190.

Thurman, R.A.F. "Critical Reflections on Donald S. Lopez Jr.'s Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West." *ibid*: 191–202.

Norbu, Jamyang. "Behind the Lost Horizon: Demystifying Tibet." *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies*. Edited by Thierry Dodin & Heinz Räther. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001.

Lopez, Donald Jr. "Jailbreak: Author's Response." *ibid*: 203–213.

Lopez, Donald Jr. *7 Things You Didn't Know About Tibet*. University of Chicago Press.
<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/493105.html>

Module 3: Critical concepts in context

(20 minutes x 6 see assignment below)

Group 1: The politics of borders in the Nepal Himalayas

Newar/Tamang

Nepal/Tibet Border

suggested readings:

Constitution of Nepal [Nepal], 2015 (2072.6.3), 20 September 2015, available at:

<http://constitution.org.np/userfiles/draft-constitution-En.pdf>

Cowan, Sam. "The curious case of the Mustang incident." *The Record Nepal*, January 17, 2016.
<http://recordnepal.com/wire/curious-case-mustang-incident>

Gellner, David N., Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, and John Whelpton. *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal*. Amsterdam: Harwood, 1997.

- Gellner, David. "Caste, Ethnicity and Inequality in Nepal." *Economic and Political Weekly*. May 19, 2007. https://www.academia.edu/925707/Caste_Ethnicity_and_Inequality_in_Nepal
- Holmberg, David H. *Order in Paradox: Myth, Ritual and Exchange among Nepal's Tamang*. Cornell University Press, 1989.
- Kukuczka, A. (2011). "Negotiating ethnic identity in the Himalaya—the Tamang in Nepal". FORUM.
- Pradhan, R. "Ethnicity, Caste and a Pluralist Society." Dixit, K.M. and Ramchandaran, S. (2002). In *State of Nepal*, pp.1–21. Kathmandu: Himal Books.
- Ramble, Charles. "Tibetan Pride of Place: Or, Why Bhotiyas are not an Ethnic Group." In *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics and Culture of Contemporary Nepal*. Ed. By D. Gellner, J. Pfaff-Czarnecka, J. Whelpton. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Saxer, Martin and Juan Zhang (ed.). *The Art of Neighbouring: Making Relations Across China's Borders*. Amsterdam University Press, 2014.
- Sharkey, Gregory, "Buddhist Daily Ritual: The Nitya Puja in Kathmandu Valley Shrines", Bangkok, Orchid Press, 2001.
- Sharkey, Gregory. "Scholar of the Newars: The Life and Work of John K. Locke." *Studies in Nepalese History and Society* 2009 14(c): 423-440.
- Toffin, G. "The Politics of Hinduism and Secularism in Nepal". *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Dec 2006. pp. 219–240.
- Whelpton, John. *A History of Nepal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Group 2: The politics of borders in Tibetan exile

2008 uprising

The 15th Dalai Lama?

suggested readings:

- Dzongzhar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche. "Time for a Radical Change in How We Raise our Tulkus." *Tricycle* (22 August 2016). <http://tricycle.org/trikedaily/time-for-radical-change-in-how-we-raise-our-tulkus/>
- Human Rights Watch. "I saw it with my own eyes": Abuses by Chinese security forces in Tibet, 2008-2010. New York: Human Rights Watch: 2010. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/tibet0710webwcover_0.pdf
- International Campaign for Tibet. "Like Gold that Fears no Fire: New Writing from Tibet." Washington DC: International Campaign for Tibet. <https://www.savetibet.org/like-gold-that-fears-no-fire-new-writing-from-tibet/>
- Shakya, Tsering. *Dragon in the Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*. New York: Random House, 2012.
- Smith, Warren W. *Tibet's Last Stand? The Tibetan Uprising of 2008 and China's Response*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc: 2010.
- Tenzin Gyatso. *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1990.
- Tenzin Gyatso. *His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama: Collected Statements, Interviews & Articles*. Dharamsala: The Information Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1986.
- Tenzin Gyatso. "Reincarnation" *His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet*. 24 September 2011. <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/statement-of-his-holiness-the-fourteenth-dalai-lama-tenzinyatso-on-the-issue-of-his-reincarnation>

Tshering Chonzom. "The Dalai Lama's Reincarnation Debate: Unravelling Hype, Identifying Interests." *China Report* 51:3(2015), 258-269.

Tulku Thondup. *Incarnation: The History and Mysticism of the Tulku Tradition of Tibet*. Boston: Shambhala, 2011.

Wang Furen and Suo Wenqing. *Highlights of Tibetan History*. Beijing: New World Press, 1984.

Woesser. "Discussing the Reasons why Tibetans are destroying their Knives and other Weapons." *High Peaks Pure Earth*. 24 July 2014.

<https://highpeakspureearth.com/2014/discussing-the-reasons-why-tibetans-are-destroying-their-knives-and-other-weapons-by-woesser/>

Woesser. "A great 'civil disobedience' spreading throughout all of Tibet." *High Peaks Pure Earth*. 19 February 2009. <https://highpeakspureearth.com/2009/a-great-civil-disobedience-spreading-throughout-all-of-tibet-by-woesser/>

Group 3: The politics of borders in the Himalayas

India/China border[s]

Zomia

suggested readings:

McGranahan, Carole & Elliot Sperling. "Introduction: Tibet, India & China." *India Review* 7, no. 3 (2008): 161-163.

Shneiderman, Sara. "Are the Central Himalayas in Zomia? Some Scholarly and Political Considerations Across Time and Space." *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010): 289–312.

<http://www.ii.umich.edu/UMICH/cseas/Academics/Conferences/Sara%20Schneiderman%202010.pdf>

Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.

Sperling, Eliot. "The politics of History and the Indo-Tibetan Border (1987-88)." *India Review*. Vol 7, Iss. 3 (2008).

Varagur, Krithika. "Communal Tensions Rattle an Indian Himalayan Region." *Voice of America News*. <https://www.voanews.com/a/inter-faith-marriages-create-tensions-in-india/4329930.html>

Module 4 Group discussion: Synthesis and debrief

(20 minutes x 5, see assignment below)

Group 1: The politics of borders of Nepal: Tibetan & Himalayan peoples

Group 2: The politics of borders of Tibetan exile

Group 3: first excursion: The politics of borders in Mundgod

Group 5: second excursion: The politics of borders in Rasuwa

Group 6: The politics of borders in the Himalayas

Module 5 first excursion: The politics of borders of Mundgod

Session 1 visits & field work: visit to the Tibetan market at Calangute, Goa

selected readings:

Choedup, Namgyal. "From Tibetan refugees to transmigrants: negotiating cultural continuity and economic mobility through migration." PhD diss., Washington University in St. Louis, 2015. https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/art_sci_etds/643/

Gilpin, Lilian. *A new nomadism: exiled Tibetan seasonal migrant workers in Goa, India*. ISP, Spring 2017.

Nilofer. "Sustaining national identity in exile: a study of Tibetan refugees in Goa." *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* 3, no. 12. December, 2015. <http://theijhss.com/2015-2/december-15>

Session 2 field work: Goa field work

selected readings:

Lortie, Molly. "Tibetan advocates protest Xi, fly 'Free Tibet' banner over Goa coast." *The Tibet Post International*. October 17, 2016. <http://www.thetibetpost.com/en/news/exile/5229-tibetan-advocates-protest-xi-fly-free-tibet-banner-over-go-a-coast>

Session 3 lecture & discussion: Doeguling settlement—CTA settlement representative

selected readings:

CTA. "Doeguling Tibetan settlement, Mundgod." *Department of Home: Central Tibetan Administration*. 2015. <http://centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/doh/settlements/india/south/doeguling.html>

CTA. "Tibet in exile." <http://tibet.net/about-cta/tibet-in-exile/>

Tibet Justice Center. "Tibet's stateless nationals III: the status of Tibetan refugees in India." June 2016. www.tibetjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/TJCIndiaReport2016.pdf

Session 4 homestays & field work: Mundgod fieldwork

selected readings:

McKown, Colleen. "Mundgod Tibetan settlement in focus (parts one–seven)." *The Tibet Post International*. September–October 2011. <http://www.thetibetpost.com/features/education-and-society/2087-mundgod-tibetan-settlement-in-focus>

Palakshappa, T.C. "Process of change." *Tibetans in India: a case study of Mundgod Tibetans*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1978.

Shonu, Jamphel. "Mundgod Tibetan settlement becomes first in South India to sign lease agreement." *Central Tibetan Administration*. December 22, 2016. <http://tibet.net/2016/12/mundgod-tibetan-settlement-becomes-first-in-south-india-to-sign-lease-agreement/>

Additional readings will be provided in our "Mundgod Sampler" prior to departure.

Module 6 second excursion: The politics of borders in Rasuwa

Session I lecture: Pepchyak: understanding the earthquake resilient feature of vernacular architecture of the Himalayan region (experiences from rebuilding in Tsum and Nubri, Gorkha)—*Sonam Lama*

selected reading:

Herrle, Peter & Anna Wozniak. Tibetan Houses: Vernacular Architecture of the Himalayas and Environs. Basel, Switzerland: Birkhauser, 2017.

Session 2 village home stay & field work: fieldwork in Rasuwa

selected readings:

The Way of the Road. Directed by Ben Campbell. University of Cambridge, 2016.

<https://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/2156744>

Ghale, Shiradha. "The Heart of the matter, parts 1, 2, 3." *The Record*. September 10, 23, 29

2015. <https://www.recordnepal.com/perspective/the-heart-of-the-matter/>,

<https://www.recordnepal.com/perspective/the-heart-of-the-matter-part-2/>,

<https://www.recordnepal.com/perspective/the-heart-of-the-matter-part-3/>

Kunwar, Ramesh Raj and Chadani Pandey. "Tamang Heritage Trail: a study of Gatlang village in Rasuwa district of Nepal." *The Gaze: Journal of Tourism and Hospitality* 6, 1-41.

<https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/GAZE/article/view/15113>

Lord, Austin and Galen Murton. "Becoming Rasuwa relief: practices of multiple engagement in post-earthquake Nepal." *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies* 37, no. 2, article 12.

<https://digitalcommons.maclester.edu/himalaya/vol37/iss2/12/>

Murton, Galen. "A Himalayan border trilogy: the political economies of transport infrastructure and disaster relief between China and Nepal." *Cross Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 18, March 2015. <http://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-18>

Additional readings will be provided in our "Rasuwa Sampler" prior to departure.

Module 7 Final session: Concluding synthesis and analysis of course themes

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assessment and timing of assignments

module			
2	"Prisoners of Shangri-la" position presentation & paper	10%	3 rd week
3	CCC seminar paper & presentation	15%	one session per student
4	facilitation: synthesis and debrief	15%	one week per student
5	first excursion study project	25%	1 st Sunday after minor excursion
6	second excursion study project	20%	1 st Monday after major excursion
7	final reflection paper	5%	final Friday
<i>passim</i>	contribution to group learning	10%	<i>passim</i>
		(100%)	

Assignments

Module 2: Prisoners of Shangri-la (position presentation & paper)

Objectives

To deconstruct myths about Tibet, both popular and personal.

How it works

You will be assigned one position to present in class, from the set of 4(/5) Lopez pieces. You will read the whole series and then analyze your position in relation to the others.

Furthermore, the same day, you will submit a written list of five “facts” or “beliefs” about Tibet/Tibetans, etc., facts or beliefs which you previously held and/or continue to hold and/or never held but believe others to have held. These five should include at least two which are not in Lopez’s list of “7 things...”. You will be able to name and assess your sources (textual, visual, oral etc.), including whether the source is unknown (folk wisdom, urban legend, etc.). Maximum 500 words.

Grading

Of the total 10% grade for the assignment, 7% will be for the presentation and group discussion and 4% for the written paper.

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 “Politics/Borders” course (and/or the “Religion/change,” and/or FME course). You will prepare an engaging five-minute presentation of your keyword and its significance, especially within the thematic seminar. On the due date, before your presentation, you will submit a 500-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.
- To engage critically with distinct threads from among the semester themes

How it works

At the end of orientation, you will be assigned to one of five 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 60 minutes and will **foster debate or discussion** about what we have learnt in synthesis in each of three components, “Politics/Borders,” “Religion/Change” and FME, 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. Each group will moreover be assigned a distinct thread from one of the semester themes, to be addressed in the discussion **but not as the theme of the entire discussion**.

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, ensuring that every member of the group is **given space to speak**, and indeed the **everyone does make a contribution**, however small. Facilitators are scheduled to **meet with a relevant faculty member** for the 15 minutes just prior to their session in order to review the questions you will put to the group. Please feel free to approach any faculty member already prior to starting your preparation for your own meeting in order to review the topics to be discussed. 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**.

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 (first/second)

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 the semester excursions, the major and the minor, 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. Your essay 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 first 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 second excursion study project will be a 1,600-word **minimum**.

Grading

These major and minor excursion study projects will comprise **20% and 25% of your “Politics/Borders” grade**, respectively.

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.

Module 7: Final reflection paper

Objectives

1. Reflect on your understanding of the Politics of Borders in Tibet & the Himalayas and how your engagement may have changed as a result of your experiences in Nepal and/or India.
2. Reflect on what are the most important things you have learnt from the Politics/Borders 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 the Politics of Borders in Tibet & the Himalayas:

How have your experiences in Nepal and/or India affected your personal understanding of the politics of borders in Tibet & the Himalayas? If your understanding of the politics of borders 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 Politics/Borders course in general. Have you gained insights into US culture as a result of your last four months in Nepal and/or India? 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 Politics/Borders 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.

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.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.