

Intermediate Tibetan

TIBE 2003 - 2503 Online Course

(3 Credits)

Nepal: Tibetan Language

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

Tibetan language is an important tool of communication to study and understand Tibetan diaspora. Our online Intermediate Tibetan language course is tailored to fulfil the need to acquire intermediate Tibetan language skills in a short span of time. This course exposes students to intermediate colloquial Tibetan vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures, with an emphasis on enabling students to develop literate as well as oral proficiency. The students learn modern standard Lhasa dialect, which is customarily used (at least as a lingua franca) both by Tibetans within Tibet and in exile.

Having achieved intermediate level competence, this course will broaden colloquial language skills and the ability to understand the use of the language to express a range of ideas from religion to food to politics. Your obvious sincere efforts to learn Tibetan will be applauded by Tibetans who see this effort as a sign of profound respect and cultural sensitivity. You will approach a high level of colloquial proficiency and increasingly sophisticated skills in reading of literary and popular texts by the end of the three-week course.

Language classes will take place for 6 weeks online. All written materials are studied directly in Tibetan script and not in a phonetic system. Vocabularies, grammar, sentence structures and tenses are effectively introduced in lessons thoughtfully planned around topics most relevant to daily lives. Besides Tibetan script, students are expected to use Wylie (universally accepted system of Tibetan transliteration).

Resources for this course include video and audio lectures, live classes via video calls, one-on-one virtual language partner sessions, PDF handout material and prompt feedback on homework, quizzes and exams.

Through a combination of online formal class and oral training with Tibetan conversation partners, students can expect to achieve the necessary skills to carry on an intermediate level conversation in modern Tibetan. This course aims to prepare students to put their language skills to practical use during the J-term course in Nepal or other situations in Tibetan speaking communities.

The course is composed of 3 components: asynchronous ("recorded") class, synchronous ("live") class and conversational practice with language partners.

- **Asynchronous class** (1 hour/2 days a week): Native Tibetan speaking instructors teach selected points of grammar as well as expressions useful in daily life. From the very first day onwards the students will be introduced to the fascinating world of Tibetan grammar and Tibetan grammatical categories which are quite special (even unique). For example, in

the Tibetan language letters have genders, and verbs are conjugated depending on the presence or absence of volition, and whether one has direct versus inferential evidence, etc. Students memorize vocabulary lists in addition to submitting digital homework. Students are required to learn the grammatical structures in order to be able to take bi-weekly quizzes in which the new vocabulary and the grammar will be assessed.

- **Synchronous Class** (1 hour/2 days a week): Instructors review the grammar and vocabulary presented in the asynchronous class with students during a virtual class through a variety of web-based activities. Vocabulary reviews and sentence pattern drills revise previously introduced words and grammar structures through repeated application and usage. 'Mill and trade' and language games are designed for students to actively utilize their language learning through online interactions with other students and teachers.
- **Conversation Partner Class** (1 hour/3 days a week): A precious 1:1 online learning situation with trained native-speaker conversation partners allows the students to practice the material introduced in class as well as talk about topics of their individual interest. These classes, in which as little English as possible is used, will help the student to thoroughly train and digest the grammar as well as manifold vocabulary.

Language Levels and Placement

Students are placed into appropriate language course levels based on a Tibetan proficiency exam at the beginning of the program.

Learning Outcomes

The *Intermediate Tibetan* language course encompasses 45 academic hours (3 credits). Upon its completion, students should be able to:

- Understand and use intermediate grammatical structures necessary for conversation;
- Discuss research, politics, weather on an intermediate level;
- Negotiate social/commercial transactions (doctor, shopping, ordering a meal);
- Read short stories and media articles with simple grammar;
- Become proficient with a Tibetan dictionary;
- Gain cultural insight based on language usage.

Course Requirements

Methodology

Each week entails: 7 hours of teaching (grammar and vocabulary sessions, drills, and sessions with conversation partners). There will be a mid-term and final exam.

Useful Texts

- Oertle, Franziska. (2021). *The heart of tibetan language text book volume 1: A synthesis of indigenous grammar and contemporary learning methodology* (2nd ed.). Dharma Publishing.
- Esukhia. A1 Book 1 (colloquial Tibetan textbook). Unpublished textbook. <https://esukhia.online/PDF/A1-Book-1.pdf>
- *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*. (1993) Beijing: Nationalities Publishing House.
- Goldstein, Melvyn. (2001) *The New Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Available in Indian edition.
- Goldstein, Melvyn. (1984) *English-Tibetan Dictionary of Modern Tibetan*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Available in Indian edition.
- Tibetan & Himalayan Digital Library (THDL) Tibetan to English Translation Tool. <http://www.thlib.org/reference/dictionaries/tibetan-dictionary/translate.php>. For online usage, as well as instructions to download offline version.
- Tournadre, Nicholas & Sangda Dorje. (2003) *Manual of Standard Tibetan: Language and Civilization*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.

Daily Class Schedule

- The class consists of 15 asynchronous classes, 15 synchronous classes and 15 language partner sessions over the course of 6 weeks. Schedules will be set up depending on the time zones of enrolled students, prioritizing morning classes.
- Each class begins with a review session. Students are drilled and each and every student is invited for active participation, which ensures each student's attention in the class.
- Quiz is conducted bi-weekly for constant assessment of the level in which each student is. The following classes are then planned and structured accordingly.
- Students are given assignments after every class. They can request help from conversation partners and homestay families to complete the assignments. After assignments are submitted, students get them back the next day with feedback and corrections. As the pace of language class is pretty fast, prompt feedback ensures much needed prompt removal of any doubts or confusions to be able to move forward to new chapters.
- Teaching assistant is available online from Monday through Friday should the students have any question regarding Tibetan language.
- Students take a mid-term exam after three weeks and a final exam at the end of the course.

| Class འཛིན་གྲྭ་ | Grammar & Vocabulary བདེ་སྤྱོད་ & ཚིག་གསལ་ | Quiz/Exam ཡིག་ཚད། |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| དང་པོ། Class 1 | <p>བསྐྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་གྲྭ་ (recorded class): orientation (schedule, class expectations policies, SHSW), འཚམས་འདྲི་དང་ངོ་སྤྱོད། (greetings & introductions) & བོད་སྐད་རྒྱུ་རྩལ་གསལ་གནང་། ("please speak in Tibetan") ཚིག་གསལ་དང་པོ། vocabulary 1 (Esukhia A1 textbook pdf p. 2)</p> <p>ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་གྲྭ་ (live class): འཚམས་འདྲི་དང་ངོ་སྤྱོད།</p> | |
| གཉིས་པ། Class 2 | <p>བསྐྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: བསྐྱར་ཞིབ། (review)—གང་ཟག་གི་མང་ཚབ། (personal pronouns) & འབྲེལ་སྒྲ། (connective particle) བདག་གཞན། ("self & other"), ཇི་ཚིག་ (question words/particles) ཚིག་གསལ་གཉིས་པ། vocabulary 2 (pdf p. 10)</p> <p>ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: བསྐྱར་ཞིབ། (review)</p> | |
| གསུམ་པ། Class 3 | <p>བསྐྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: ཕྱགས་ཚིག་གསལ་གནང་། ("location words," aka postposition) ཅིག་ཞིག་གི་ཕྱག་ (definite/indefinite article), ཚིག་གསལ་གསུམ་པ། vocabulary 3 (pdf p. 20), ཚིག་གསལ་བཞི་པ། vocabulary 4 (pdf p. 29)</p> <p>ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: བསྐྱར་ཞིབ། (review)</p> | ཡིག་ཚད་ཚུང་ཚུང་། quiz |
| བཞི་པ། Class 4 | <p>བསྐྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: རྒྱུ་ཚིག་གི་སྒྲོམ། (about adjectives), རྒྱུ་ཚིག་གི་སྒྲོམ། (about clothing)</p> <p>ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: བསྐྱར་ཞིབ། (review), ཚིག་གསལ་ལྔ་པ། vocabulary 5 (pdf p. 38), ཚིག་གསལ་དྲུག་པ། vocabulary 6 (pdf p. 47)</p> | |
| ལྔ་པ། Class 5 | <p>བསྐྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: བསྐྱར་ཞིབ། (review)— དུས་གསུམ། (three tenses), བྱེད་སྒྲ། (the agentive particle), ཁ་ལག་ཐོ་ཡག་དང་ཟ་ཡག་ (cooking & eating), ཚིག་གསལ་བདུན་པ། vocabulary 7 (pdf p. 56)</p> <p>ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: བསྐྱར་ཞིབ། (review)</p> | ཡིག་ཚད་ཚུང་ཚུང་། quiz |
| དྲུག་པ། Class 6 | <p>བསྐྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: གཟུགས་པོ་དང་ནད་ན་ཚ། (body parts & sickness)</p> <p>ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: བསྐྱར་ཞིབ། (review)</p> | |
| བདུན་པ། Class 7 | <p>བསྐྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: བསྐྱར་སྤྱོད། (review)</p> <p>ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: སློབ་ཕྲུག་གི་རྩམ་བཞག་ (student presentation)</p> | ཡིག་ཚད། mid-term exam |
| བརྒྱུད་པ། Class 8 | <p>བསྐྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: གཞས་ (song)—མཉམ་དུ་འགྲོ་</p> <p>ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་གྲྭ་: བྱ་ཡངས་བསྐྱོད་ (open discussion) & གཞས་ (song)</p> | |

Motivation and Attitude (10%)

Students are expected to be positive and enthusiastic towards the host culture and language class, and to be positive, encouraging and helpful to their classmates as well.

Attendance (10%)

Students are expected to attend all classes. If students get sick, have an important appointment, or have network issues they need to inform the teacher or re-schedule the class.

Language Use during Conversation Partner & Drill Class (10%)

Students need to use Tibetan as much as possible during one-on-one sessions with conversation partners and interactive online drill activities.

Tibetan script (10%)

Reading and Writing/Typing.

Progress (20%)

Students' progress is evaluated based on homework, quizzes and exams.

Oral proficiency interviews are conducted at the end of the semester to provide a measurement of students' overall linguistic progress.

Grading Scale: The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

| | |
|----------|----|
| 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

Class attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will reduce the language grade (see attendance policies in the front matter of the syllabus). For online classes, this means being digitally present on the class platform promptly and for the entire duration of the class.

Show up prepared. Be online on time, have your assignments completed and points in mind for clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.

Have assignments completed on schedule and done according to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.

Ask questions in class. Teachers are highly respected in Nepal and among Tibetan and Himalayan peoples. Your polite and engaged behavior is expected.

Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).

Respect differences of opinion (classmates', teachers'). 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 handbook given to you at Orientation.

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