

Advanced Tibetan

TIBE 3003 - 3503 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 the Tibetan diaspora and Tibetans in Tibet, as well as Himalayans along the Tibetan borderlands. Our online Advanced Tibetan language course is tailored to fulfil the need to acquire advanced Tibetan language skills in a short span of time. This course exposes students to advanced literary as well as to 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) by both Tibetans within Tibet and in exile, as well as by the many Himalayan peoples who have had a Tibetan-language education.

Having achieved advanced level competence, this course will broaden literary and 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 advanced deployment of Tibetan will be applauded by Tibetan speakers who see this achievement as a sign of particularly profound respect and cultural sensitivity. You will attain 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.

Classes are delivered via an e-learning environment and live video calls with instructors and conversation partners. Resources include video and audio lectures, live classes via video calls, PDF handout material, invitations to participate in online discussion boards, and prompt feedback on 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 advanced level conversation in modern Tibetan. This course aims to prepare students to put their language skills to advanced practical use during the January term (J-Term) course in Nepal, and/or in other situations in Tibetan speaking communities.

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

- Understand and use a broad Tibetan vocabulary to manage an academically developed range of formal and colloquial conversational topics;
- Write and read both Uchen (*dbu-can*) and Umé (*dbu-med*) scripts with some proficiency;
- Speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics;
- Develop advanced level vocabulary for reading and writing essays;
- Read with contemporary Tibetan literature, political, poetic and/or religious;
- Describe topics related to the program theme;
- Discuss special fields of competence and interest with ease;
- Support opinions and hypothesize on a broad range of concrete and abstract topics, including both popular and specialized.

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. A2 Book 1 & 2 (colloquial Tibetan textbook). Unpublished textbook. <https://esukhia.online/PDF/A2-Book-1.pdf> <https://esukhia.online/PDF/A2-Book-2.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 12 asynchronous classes, 12 synchronous classes and 21 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་ཁྱ	Grammar & Vocabulary བད་སྟོན་ & ཚིག་གསར་	Quiz/Exam ཡིག་ཚད་
དང་པོ། Class 1	བསྟར་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཁྱ (recorded class): orientation (schedule, class expectations policies, SHSW), བསྟར་ཞིབ། (review)— འཚམས་འདྲི་དང་དོ་སྟོན། (greetings & introductions); Esukhia Tibetan language–Level A2 (གནས་ཚད་དང་པོ། ༠༢) ཚིག་གསར་དང་པོ། (Vocabulary #1, p. 2); ས་ག་ལྷ་བའི་སྟོར། (about Saga Dawa) བད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཁྱ (live class): འཚམས་འདྲི་དང་དོ་སྟོན།	
གཉིས་པ། Class 2	བསྟར་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཁྱ: བསྟར་ཞིབ། (review)— དུས་གསུམ། (three tenses), བྱེད་སྒྲ། (the agentive particle) བད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཁྱ: བྱ་ཚིག་གི་བསྟར་སྟོན། (review of verbs)	
གསུམ་པ། Class 3	བསྟར་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཁྱ: དུས། སྐབས་ལ། སྐབས་ལ་འདྲུབ་པ་ལ། འོ་ལ། འོ་ལ། (simultaneous action); Esukhia ཚིག་གཉིས་པ། (p. 11) བད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཁྱ: ཚིག་གསར་དང་ཚིག་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་བསྟར་སྟོན། (vocabulary review)	ཡིག་ཚད་མུང་མུང་། quiz
བཞི་པ། Class 4	བསྟར་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཁྱ: སྟོན་ཁྱུང་མེད་སྟོན་ཁྱུང་ཚིག་གསར་ (different types of reported speech); Esukhia ཚིག་གསར་གསུམ་པ་དང་བཞི་པ། (p. 20, 29) བད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཁྱ: བསྟར་ཞིབ། (review)	

ལྷ་པ། Class 5	བསྒྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཟླ: བསྒྱུར་སྤྱོད་། (review) ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཟླ: འི་ལེན། (Q&A session)	ཡིག་ཚད། mid-term exam
རྒྱལ་པ། Class 6	བསྒྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཟླ: གཞུང་—དང་པོ་ནང་ནས་ཡོང་དུས། (Tenzin Kunsel) ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཟླ: གཞུང་དང་གྲུ་ཡངས་བཞུགས་ཐོག་གི་ (song & open discussion)	
བདུན་པ། Class 7	བསྒྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཟླ: ས་ བ་ འཁན་ལ་སོགས་པ། (nominalizers); Esukhia ཆོག་གསར་ལྷ་པ། (p. 38) ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཟླ: ཆོག་གསར་དང་ཆོག་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་བསྒྱུར་སྤྱོད་། (vocabulary review)	ཡིག་ཚད་ཚུང་ཚུང་། quiz
བརྒྱད་པ། Class 8	བསྒྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཟླ: Esukhia ཆོག་གསར་རྒྱལ་པ། (p. 47) སྤྱད་དེ། (story book)—ང་བཟོ་ཤིས་ཡིན། ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཟླ: སྤྱད་དེ་གྱི་བཞུགས་ཐོག་ (story book discussion)	
དགུ་པ། Class 9	བསྒྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཟླ: ལམ་ཁའི་སྐོར། (asking directions/telling directions); Esukhia ཆོག་གསར་དགུ་པ་དང་བརྒྱུ་པ། (p. 76, 85) ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཟླ: བསྒྱུར་ཞིབ། (review)	ཡིག་ཚད་ཚུང་ཚུང་། quiz
བརྒྱུ་པ། Class 10	བསྒྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཟླ: བོད་པའི་གཏམ་དཔེ་དང་སྒྲུབ་པ། (Tibetan proverbs and poetry) ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཟླ: བསྒྱུར་ཞིབ། (review)	
བརྒྱུ་པ་ཅིག་པ། Class 11	བསྒྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཟླ: Esukhia ཆོག་གསར་བརྒྱུ་པ་ཅིག་པ། (p. 94) དང་ ཡུལ་སྐོར་གྱི་སྐོར། (about traveling) ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཟླ: བསྒྱུར་ཞིབ། (review)	ཡིག་ཚད་ཚུང་ཚུང་། quiz
བརྒྱུ་པ་ཉིས་པ། Class 12	བསྒྱུ་འཇུག་འཛིན་ཟླ: བསྒྱུར་སྤྱོད་། (review) ཐད་གཏོང་འཛིན་ཟླ: འི་ལེན། (Q&A session)	ཡིག་ཚད། final exam

*Lessons are subject to change—students will always be notified about changes to the schedule.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Instructors evaluate each student's performance based on following criteria. Final grades are assigned by the Academic Director in consultation with the language instructors on the basis of each instructor's evaluation, each student's own self-evaluation and the Academic Director's observation of each student.

Methods of Evaluation

Grammar (10%)

Grammar is an integral part of any language. It governs the composition of word order, conjugation, tenses etc. Grammar is evaluated by going through students' homework, test papers and speech.

Vocabulary (10%)

New vocabularies are introduced with the introduction of every new lesson. Some vocabularies are given more importance than others based on how often the vocabularies are used in daily lives and in the class. Students are also expected to acquire more vocabularies from conversation partners, homestay families and books and practice them.

Comprehension (10%)

Students are graded based on their ability to comprehend statements or questions and to answer or carry on the conversation accordingly.

Pronunciation and Fluency (10%)

Native pronunciation is not expected. However students' pronunciation should be clear and comprehensible to classmates and others. Fluency is also taken into consideration.

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.

Disability Services: For information about and support from Disability Services (DS) to facilitate an accessible educational experience, please contact SIT Disability services at disabilityservices@sit.edu. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services can be found on the DS website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.