

The Politics of Tibetan and Himalayan Borders

ASIA 3020 (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 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 8-day excursion and a second 12-day 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.

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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	
1	the politics of borders in the Nepal Himalayas
2	the politics of borders in Tibet
3 seminar	critical concepts in context in conversation
4 group discussion	synthesis and debrief
5 first excursion	the politics of borders in Mundgod
6 second excursion	the politics of borders in Tsum
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: Conflict, calamity, climate, and China—*Kunda Dixit*

required readings:

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: Nang che, "architecture within architecture:" earthquake resilient features of Himalayan houses—*Sonam Lama*

required readings:

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

Lama, Sonam. "Thanks to Open Land." In "Former Student Sonam Lama's Account of the earthquake and rebuilding efforts in Nepal." *Master of International Cooperation Sustainable Emergency Architecture—UIC Barcelona*. May 28, 2015.

<http://masteremergencyarchitecture.com/2015/05/28/former-student-sonam-lamas-account-of-the-earthquake-and-rebuilding-efforts-in-nepal/>

Lama, Sonam. "Re Building Tsum Nubri." Video. December 7, 2015.

5min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq_PtoZllJo&feature=youtu.be

Lama, Sonam. "Journey to Home during Earthquake." Video. June 7, 2015. 10

min. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PluUrIcJ4cg&feature=youtu.be>

Module 2: The politics of borders in Tibet

session 1 lecture: aspects of the Tibet issue (iii/iii): "All Roads Lead North"—*Amish Mulmi*

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required readings:

Mulmi, Amish. "Chapter 1: Traders on the Silk Road, Chapter 3: A fence in the Himalaya & Chapter 10: All Roads Lead North " In *All Roads Lead North: Nepal's Turn to China*. Context, 2021.

Mulmi, Amish. "Ways of Seeing, or Not Seeing, the Himalaya and Its People," *Himal Southasian*. March 1, 2023. <https://www.himalmag.com/himalaya-keay-fatland-douglas-western-narratives-indigenous-histories/>.

session 2 lecture: aspects of the Tibet 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 3 lecture: aspects of the Tibet issue (ii/iii): Snow Lion Foundation, Nepal—Tenzin Rabgyal

required readings:

"Snow Lion Foundation Schools (Nepal)." Shes rig las khungs (Department of Education). <https://sherig.org/en/schools/snowlion-foundation/#>

"Tibet in Exile." Bod mi'l sgrig 'dzugs (Central Tibetan Administration). <https://tibet.net/about-cta/tibet-in-exile/>

Mulmi, Amish. "Chapter 6: Ghosts: Tibetan exiles in Nepal." In *All Roads Lead North: Nepal's Turn to China*. Context, 2021. (attached)

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." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 69 (2001): 203–213.

Lopez, Donald Jr. *Prisoners of Shangri-la: Tibetan Buddhism and the West, Twentieth Anniversary Edition, with a new preface*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018, ix-xix.

Lopez, Donald Jr. *Prisoners of Shangri-la: Tibetan Buddhism and the West, Twentieth Anniversary Edition, with a new preface*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018, ix-xix.

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

Nepalese Maoism

Newar/Tamang

suggested readings:

Bhattarai, Kamal Dev. "Are the Maoists Rising Again in Nepal?" *The Diplomat*. March 13, 2019.

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/are-the-maoists-rising-again-in-nepal/>

Bista, Dor Bahadur. *People of Nepal*. Nepal: Ratna Pustak bhandar, 2015.

Campbell, Ben. *Living between Juniper and Palm: Nature, Culture, and Power in the Himalayas*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013.

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- Constitution of Nepal* [Nepal], 2015 (2072.6.3), 20 September 2015, available at: <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/np/np029en.pdf>
- Dixit, Kunda. *A People War: Images of the Nepal Conflict 1996-2006*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Publication Nepa-Laya, 2006.
- Dixit, Kunda. *People After War: Nepalis Live with Legacy of Conflict*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Publication Nepa-Laya, 2009.
- Dixit, Kunda. *Never Again: Testimonies from the Nepal Conflict 1996-2006*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Publication Nepa-Laya, 2009.
- 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*. I. paperback ed. Cornell Paperbacks. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Joshi, Madhav and T. David Mason. "Peasants, Patrons, and Parties: The Tension Between Clientelism and Democracy in Nepal." *International Studies Quarterly* 55, 1 (2011): 151–175.
- 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.
- 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.
- Thapa, Deepak. *Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2003.
- Whelpton, John. *A History of Nepal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Zharkevich, Ina. *Maoist People's War and the Revolution of Everyday Life in Nepal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

group 2: The politics of borders in Tibetan exile
 2008 uprising
 Nepal/Tibet Border

suggested readings:

- Boulnois, Lucette. "Chinese maps and prints on the Tibet–Gorkha war of 1788–92." *Kailash* 15, no. 1/2 (1989). http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/kailash/pdf/kailash_15_0102_03.pdf
- Cowan, Sam. "The curious case of the Mustang incident." *The Record Nepal*, January 17, 2016. <http://recordnepal.com/wire/curious-case-mustang-incident>
- Cowan, Sam. "All change at Rasuwa Garhi." *Himalaya* 33, no. 1 (Fall 2013): 97–102. <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol33/iss1/14/>
- 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/>
- 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* e-journal, no. 18 (March 2016) <https://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-18/murton>
- Saxer, Martin and Juan Zhang (ed.). *The Art of Neighbouring: Making Relations Across China's Borders*. Amsterdam University Press, 2014.
- Shakya, Tsering. *Dragon in the Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*. New York: Random House, 2012.
- 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
- Smith, Warren W. *Tibet's Last Stand? The Tibetan Uprising of 2008 and China's Response*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc: 2010.
- Upreti, Prem Raman. *Nepal-Tibet relations, 1850-1930 : years of hopes, challenges, and frustration*. Kathmandu: Puga Nara, 1980.
- 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->
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[destroying-their-knives-and-other-weapons-by-woeser/](#)

Woeser. "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-woeser/>

group 3: The politics of borders in the Himalayas
Zomia

suggested readings:

Hammond, Ruth. "The Battle over Zomia." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. September 4, 2011.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Battle-Over-Zomia/128845>

Magnusson, Jan. "Jellyfishing in the Postcolonial Nation State: Baltistan through the Zomia Lens." *Asian Ethnology* 80, no. 1 (January 2021): 57–91.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=151654023&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Michaud, Jean. "What's (Written) History for?: On James C. Scott's Zomia, Especially Chapter 6½." *Anthropology Today* 33, no. 1 (February 2017): 6–10. doi:10.1111/1467-8322.12322.

Magnusson, Jan. "Jellyfishing in the Postcolonial Nation State: Baltistan through the Zomia Lens." *Asian Ethnology* 80, no. 1 (January 2021): 57–91.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=151654023&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

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. <https://shneiderman-commons.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2015/02/AretheCentralHimalayasinZomia.pdf>

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

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 6, 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 (& Losar)

group 4: the politics of borders in Nepal

group 5: second excursion: the politics of borders in Tsum

group 6: the politics of borders of the Himalayas

Module 5 first excursion: The politics of borders of Mundgod

Session 1 visit: visit to Tibetan markets in Calangute

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/

Sid, 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>

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

Session 2 visit & lecture: the Doeguling settlement office—CTA settlement representative

selected readings:

Bloch, Natalia. "Boundary-Making and Political Activism in Protracted Exile: Second-Generation Tibetan Refugees in India." *Journal of Refugee Studies*, April 20, 2023, fead013.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fead013>. CTA. "Tibet in exile." <http://tibet.net/about-cta/tibet-in-exile/>

Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). "Doeguling Tibetan settlement, Mundgod." *Department of Home: Central*

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Tibetan Administration. 2015.

<http://centraltibetanreliefcommittee.org/doh/settlements/india/south/doeguling.html>

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

Session 3 field work: field work in Mundgod & Goa

selected readings:

Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). "Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile." <http://sherig.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Basic-Education-Policy.pdf>

Falcone, Jessica & Tsering Wangchuk. "We're not home": Tibetan refugees in India in the twenty-first century." *India Review*: Vol 7: No 3 (2008).

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

Pulman, Lynn. "Tibetans in Karnataka." *Kailash—a journal of Himalayan studies* 10, no. 1–2 (1983): 119–171.

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/TJCIIndiaReport2016.pdf

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

Module 6 second excursion: The politics of borders in Tsum

Session 1 film & discussion: *Raid into Tibet* (dir. Adrian Cowell, 1966, 28 minutes)

selected readings:

Cowan, Sam. "Raid into Tibet: New research reveals high-level tensions in Kathmandu after the 1964 Khampa raid against the Chinese." *The Record Nepal*. May 5, 2014. <https://www.recordnepal.com/raid-tibet>

Session 2 lecture: Shagya customary institution & rights-based conservation—*Pasang Dolma Sherpa*

selected readings:

Rai, Jailab Kumar, Nima Lama & Bas Verschuuren. "Sacred Tsum valley: improving biodiversity conservation with lessons for effective management of protected areas in Nepal" *Asian Sacred Natural Sites: Philosophy and Practice in protected Areas and Conservation*. London: Routledge, 2016, 121–138.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308650109_Sacred_Tsum_Valley_Improving_biodiversity_conservation_with_lessons_for_effective_management_of_protected_areas_in_Nepal

Weinreich, Ashira, "Biocultural Diversity of Medicine in Tsum Valley" (2023). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. 3729. https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/3729

Session 3 field work: village homestays & field work in Tsum

selected readings:

Childs, Geoff & Namgyal Choedup. *From a trickle to a torrent: education, migration, and social change in a Himalayan valley of Nepal*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2019, 1–19, 55–69, 152–175.

Lama, Sonam. "Great Himalayan trail: preparatory study of Tsum Valley, Gorkha District." Report. Kathmandu: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), 2008.

<http://lib.icimod.org/record/7914>

Nightingale, Andrea J., Lutgart Lenaerts, Ankita Shrestha, Pema Norbu Lama "Tsumpa" & Hemanta R. Ojha. "The material politics of citizenship: struggles over resources, authority and belonging in new Federal Republic of Nepal." *Journal of South Asian Studies* 28 August 2019.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2019.1639111>

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

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

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Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assessment and timing of assignments

module			
	orientation assignment	2.5%	first Monday
2	“Prisoners of Shangri-la” position presentation & paper	10%	5 rd week
3	CCCC seminar paper & presentation	15%	one session per student
4	facilitation: synthesis and debrief	15%	one week per student
5	first excursion study project	25%	2 nd Monday after first excursion
6	second excursion study project	20%	1 st Wednesday after second excursion
7	final reflection paper	2.5%	final Friday
<i>passim</i>	contribution to group learning	10%	<i>passim</i>
		(100%)	

Assignments

orientation assignment

Your text should include the following four components:

- I. Reminisce: recall a disparaging comment or an ironic question or an encouraging remark by an acquaintance, previous to your departure, about the possible use of this Study Abroad semester. Give your reply or your private thought at the time.
- II. Somehow connect this with a quotation or anecdote from Avedon’s or Kapstein’s books that set you thinking.
- III. Reminisce: the last time you traveled; and what’s different now.
- IV. End with another quote, either from Avedon or Kapstein again or (preferably) from one of the other titles; one that can function as a closing remark, without any comment.

Compose this piece as a publishable article, with a proper title. It is up to you what kind of publication you have in mind as the venue for your work. But write as a professional. As a colleague puts it, “fake it till you make it.” Your article should be serious with a light touch.

Include at least one illustration, whether a photograph of your own, a self-penned sketch, or image you’ve sourced by other means.

Sign your text with no reference other than a pen name, in order to sublimate the personal, to assist in the conceit that this is a publishable piece, and to exercise your imagination in selecting a pseudonym. But do please initial your piece so that we can in fact return it to the right author.

You will receive written and verbal feedback.

When you are writing, please double-check that you have followed these simple instructions.

Grading

The orientation assignment will make up 2.5% of your “Politics/Borders” grade.

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

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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 in conversation (seminar paper & presentation)

Objectives

The “critical concepts in context in conversation” 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. Additionally, you will ask an artificial intelligence technology or algorithm (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini) about your keyword and compare the result to information your other sources.

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. You will also attempt to spell your words in Tibetan or translate them into Tibetan idiom (in Tibetan script and/or Wylie transliteration).

Grading

Of the total 15% grade for the “critical concept in context in conversation”, 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

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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 two semester excursions 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 needs 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 first and second 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?

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

Your general learning experience:

What are the most important things you have learnt from *both* the Politics/borders *and* Religious change courses in general. Have you gained insights into US culture and/or your own cultural intersectionality as a result of your last four months in Nepal and India? If so, please discuss how these insights have shed light on particular aspects of US and/or your own culture(s).

Grading

This reflection counts for 2.5% of your “Politics/Borders” 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.

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.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at disabilityservices@sit.edu for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, is found on the Disability Services website at: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.

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