



Instructor: David Atwill
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Office hours: 8-9 a.m. Wednesday

Required Readings:

Title: **The Life of Milarepa**
Author: Tsangnyon Heruka (trans.)
Publisher: Penguin Classics
ISBN: 9780143106227

Title: **In Search of the Panchen Lama**
Author: Isabel Hilton
Publisher: W.W. Norton & Company
ISBN: 0393321673

Title: **Tibetan Diary: From Birth to Death and Beyond in a Himalayan Valley of Nepal**
Author: Geoff Childs
Publisher: University of California Press
ISBN: 0520241339

Grades:

100 pts: Map Quiz
300 pts: Attendance, Discussion & Participation (3 units x 100 pts)
300 pts: Book Quiz (3 books x 100 pts each)
300 pts: Unit Quizzes (3 quizzes x 100 points)
1000 pts - TOTAL

Readings:

We will be exploring Tibet's past through a variety of lens. A central element of the course is to explore a mixture of Tibetan writings and scholarly writings to better understand the competing visions of Tibet's past and present. There are more than a few points during the semester where there will be an assigned reading available on-line (via e-reserves). While these readings will also be available via CANVAS I will also have them linked here (online) alongside the links for the lecture outlines.

In addition to the traditional readings, the class will rely heavily on visual sources (e.g. images and videos). Tibet is likely an area only peripherally known most of you so it is not simply enough to talk about it, rather we will need to SEE it as well. Yet, given the contentious debate over Tibet's place in the modern world each of the videos will have their own perspective. As a result, my expectation is that while watching these videos you will actively interrogate what you are seeing -- not passively accepting (or dismissing) all they say as (in)accurate.

Attendance, Discussion and Participation:

Class attendance, discussion and participation are an essential part of succeeding in this class. While the class meetings are generally divided up into sessions of primarily lecture or primarily discussion, we will be discussing our impressions, thoughts and interpretations of the readings on a daily basis. For us to be able to seriously discuss, share, and grapple with our ideas we need, as a group, to begin to build a base of common reference points, commonly read texts, and at least some sense of an *esprit de corps*. I have found over the years that daily attendance is an essential element in achieving this ideal.

Alas, to do well in this course one must do more than show up. The students who desire a B-grade or above need to display through ACTIVE discussion that one has done the reading and thoughtfully engaged the material. Quality discussion also will depend on the readings being discussed with one another and responding to each other rather than routing each and every query, thought, or idea through the professor.

Please do not mistake quantity for quality. Those who dominate the discussion with excessive comments that add little or nothing to the topic at hand will have their participation grade lowered.

A portion of your participation grade will be leading (at least) one day of class discussion with 1-2 other students. Generally I have set aside time on Fridays for discussion. A sign-up sheet will be available in-class during the first week of class or you may e-mail your request as well.

Unlike many classes where your attendance/discussion/participation grade remains an unknown entity until the very end of the class, I will provide each student with feedback and grade at the end of each unit.

Unit Quizzes:

Instead of a midterm and a final, there will be 3 non-cumulative unit quizzes. Each unit quiz is weighted equally (100 pts) and will contain questions ONLY on the unit just covered. It typically contains a matching section requiring you to identify themes, characters, literary terms discussed in class and one short (usually comparative) essay on the material covered in that unit.

No alternate (or "make-up") quizzes/exams will be offered. For all excusable absences (medical, sport-related, etc.), you must contact me **prior** to class. Alternate quizzes will only be given for [university approved reasons](#).

Book Quiz and Reflection:

There will be three book quizzes which will be administered on the day that each of the book is to be discussed. The short quiz will test your knowledge of the material (through matching or multiple choice questions and a short written response offering your own interpretation of the book). Prior to each quiz discussion terms and questions will be provided (on-line) to suggest some themes, ideas of inquiry and possible lines of interpretation.

Extended Absences & Incomplete Policy:

Extended Absences: During the semester, unforeseen challenges may arise. If you ever need to miss an extended amount of class in such a circumstance, please notify me so we can determine the best course of action to make up missed work. If your situation rises to a level of difficulty you cannot manage on your own with faculty support, reach out to the Student Care & Advocacy office by phone at (814-863-2020) or email them at StudentCare@psu.edu.

Incompletes: Incompletes are only given in instances of extraordinary circumstances (health, disability, bereavement) which prevent the completion of the course — not for low grades. In addition, a student must have successfully completed 75% of the course.

Grading Policy:

Adjustments to grades on exams are made only on the basis of demonstrable objective or mathematical errors. In accordance with university policies, grades may not be raised by means of "extra-credit" work. Anyone found cheating on an exam will receive a grade of "F" for that exam.

There is no 'extra credit' for this class unless you are already receiving an A (otherwise you should be spending your time on the class assignments NOT on extra credit). Nor do I curve the grades.

Final grades will be based according to the following breakdown:

A = 1000 - 930 pts	B+ = 899 - 870 pts	C+ = 799 - 770 pts	D = 699 - 600 pts	F = 599 pts and below
A- = 929 - 900 pts	B = 869 - 830 pts	C = 769 - 700 pts		
	B- = 829 - 800 pts			

Academic Honesty:

Any deliberate attempt to present knowledge, ideas or statements (verbatim or paraphrased) as your own when, in fact, it is gained from another source without proper citation will lead to an F grade on that assignment and could result in an F in the course. Ignorance of what constitutes cheating is not an excuse for dishonesty. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with Penn State's policy on [academic integrity](#).

Introduction

- August 20 – Syllabus Day
- August 22 – Introduction to Tibet
- August 24 – Visions of Shangri-la: Western Images of Tibet

Unit I: Foundations of Tibet

- August 27 – The Complicated Definitions of “Tibet”
- August 29 – The “Tibet Question”
- August 31 – **Discussion:** Defining “Tibet” [MAP QUIZ]

- September 3 – Labor Day (No Class)
- September 5 – Religious Foundations: Bon & Buddhism
- September 7 – **Book Quiz:** *The Life of Milarepa (Study Guide)*

- September 10 – Political Foundations: Kingdoms, Rulers & Neighbors
- September 12 – Tibet in Asia/Tibet in China
- September 15 – **Discussion:** Rise of Political Tibet

- September 17 – Amdo and Kham Tibet
- September 19 – Reconciling Imagined & Historical Tibet
- September 21 – **Unit I Quiz**

Unit II: Sacred People and Places

- September 24 – Reincarnation as a Political System
- September 26 – Fifth Dalai Lama
- September 28 – **Discussion:**

- October 1 – Political Intrigue and Dalai Lama Succession
- October 3 – Crazy Saints, Yogis, and Treasure Seekers
- October 5 – **Discussion:**

- October 8 – Panchen Lama Lineage
- October 10 – Tibetan Intersections: Mongolia and China
- October 12 – **Book Quiz:** *In Search of the Panchen Lama*

- October 15 – Dreams of Tibet
- October 17 – Lhasa & the Potala Palace
- October 19 – **Discussion:**

- October 22 – Sacred Mountains
- October 24 – Pilgrimages and Sacred Spaces
- October 26 – **Unit II Quiz**

Unit IV: 20th Century Tibet

- October 29 – Early 20th Century Tibet
- October 31 – Great Game Politics and Tibet
- November 2 – **Discussion:** Inside Tibet

- November 5 – Life in Tibet
- November 7 – Himalayan World
- November 9 – **Book Quiz:** *Tibetan Diary*

- November 12 – Tibet and the World
- November 14 – World War II and Tibet
- November 16 – **Discussion:**

- November 26 – China’s Tibet
- November 28 – The Shadow Circus: The CIA in Tibet
- November 30 – **Discussion:**

- December 3 – Tibet and the Cultural Revolution
- December 5 – Exiled Tibet and the Prisoners of Shangri-la
- December 7 – **Unit III Quiz**