Course Description:

HIST302W is a seminar-style capstone course for all history majors with each section addressing a different topic. The topic of this section of HIST302W tackles the complex issues of Tibet. Few places generate as much interest – or so much controversy – in the Western mind than Tibet. Tibet: Sacred Peoples, Places and Spaces provides an overview of Tibetan sacred practices solidly placed in a historical and cultural context. The main objective of this course is to provide an exposure to the broad variety of religious practices, beliefs, and texts present within Tibet over the past one thousand years. It will also engage the manner in which these beliefs shaped and directed Tibetan culture, society, and political thought.

Unlike the majority of the classes you have taken at Penn State, this course will be run in a seminar format. Typically, I will begin each seminar with some introductory remarks, but the bulk of the responsibility lies on you completing the weekly readings, writing (and being able to extrapolate upon) your papers, making (and actively listening to other) presentations and engaging in a courteous and intelligent conversation about the topics under discussion each week.

Required Readings:

**Title:** The Life of Milarepa  
**Author:** Lobsang P. Lhalungpa (trans.)  
**Publisher:** Penguin Compass  
**ISBN:** 0140193502

**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  
**Edition:** (September 1, 2004)  
**Publisher:** University of California Press  
**ISBN:** 0520241339

**Title:** A Tibetan Revolutionary : The Political Life and Times of Bapa Phuntso Wangye  
**Author:** Melvyn C. Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, William R. Siebenschu  
**Publisher:** University of California Press  
**ISBN:** 0520240898

* NOTE: All four books are available in the usual PSU locations, but you can often dramatically reduce your costs by buying used copies on line. A good starting point is http://www.addall.com
Grades:

100 pts - Attendance
200 pts - Discussion & Participation
400 pts - Book Review Papers (4 papers x 100 pts each)
100 pts - Weekly Assignments (5 x 20 pts)
200 pts - Final Exam
1000 pts - TOTAL

Readings:

As you have likely (happily?) discovered there is no massive (and expensive) textbook for this class. As a result, there are more than a few points during the semester where there will be an assigned reading available on-line. Instead of using e-reserves, I will be e-mailing these assignments during the course of the semester. It is your responsibility to check your e-mail in a consistent and timely manner (though I will generally indicate in the previous weeks class what I will be assigning and when you should look for it in your inbox).

This is all to say there is A LOT of reading in this course. In addition to FOUR books, there will be weekly readings (yes, plural).

The other facet of this course you will soon discover about this course is my reliance on videos. Tibet is likely an area only peripherally known to most of you so it is simply not 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 few of these videos are unbiased. As a result part of my expectation of you while watching these videos is to actively critique what you are seeing -- not passively accepting (or dismissing) all they say as (in)accurate.

As well I would like to peruse the New York Times (or any other form of media) for articles relating to China which will inform our discussions in class and, one would expect, all other work for this class.

Participation & Attendance:

Class attendance is an essential part of succeeding in this class. As a seminar, it is expected that 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 an essential element in achieving this ideal is to have those people enrolled in the course actually attend the course. As a result 10% of your grade (100pts) will depend simply on your physical presence in class.

Attendance will be taken at every class. Given that each meeting of this class represents a week's worth of class, those who miss more than one (1) days of class for reasons other than emergencies or university approved reasons will have their participation and attendance grade deducted 20 pts per unexcused absence.

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.

For the few individuals who suffer from the delusion that quantity equals 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 of the class discussions with 2-3 other students. A sign up sheet will be available in-class during the first session of class on-line. You may e-mail your request as well.

Leading a discussion requires that you have (prior to class) gotten together with your fellow discussion leaders (if there are any), discussed the text involved, created and circulated a list of questions to pose in class (due by 6 p.m. Sunday), as well as giving a short (5-10 minute) informed introduction to the text. Finding out who is scheduled to lead discussion and contacting them is ultimately part of YOUR responsibility. Failure to coordinate (or even contact) one another will affect the grades of all involved.
**Book Review Papers:**

There will be four book review papers – one for each book assigned in this course. The papers should NOT exceed 4 pages. All should be in 12 pt font (Arial or Times preferred) and must be e-mailed to me by noon on the day of class. The e-mail should have HIST302W as its subject and the word document file should be named with the AUTHOR’s surname followed by your PSU ID (e.g. HILTON_dga11).

Aside from exceptional circumstances (bodily dismemberment, coma, or a freak blow-dart accident) or by prior arrangement with the professor, papers are due by noon on the day of the class in which they are due. If you must miss a class it is your responsibility to inform the instructor prior to the absence.

**Final Exam:**

Instead of a final paper this class will have a take-home final exam that should conform to the same guidelines as the review papers. Instead of reviewing a book, however, the exam will ask you to write one or two short essays selected from a list of possible topics. The specific guidelines for this exam will be provided later in the semester explaining the writing task, length of essay(s) and topics to be covered.

**Incomplete Policy:**

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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1000 - 930 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>929 - 900 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>899 - 870 pts</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>869 - 830 pts</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>829 - 800 pts</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>699 - 600 pts</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>599 pts and below</td>
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**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’s on academic integrity and plagiarism.

**Disabilities:**

If you require accommodation for a disability, you must first identify yourself as disabled to the Office for Disability Services. This office will make a determination of your disability and accommodation(s) based on medical information and inform me of your classification.
LECTURE SCHEDULE

Unit I: Foundations of Tibet
- January 10 – Introduction to Tibet: Religion, Imagination and History
- January 17 – MLK Day (NO CLASS) – Assignment #1
- January 24 – Religious Foundations: Bon & Buddhism
- January 31 – A Living Saint (BOOK: Life of Milarepa)

Unit II: Sacred People
- February 7 – Dalai Lama & Rituals of Reincarnation
- February 14 – Lamas, Saints, and Living Bodisattvas
- February 21 – Power & Reincarnation (BOOK: In Search of the Panchen Lama)

Unit III: Sacred Places & Spaces
- February 28 – Lhasa & the Potala Palace
- March 7 – Spring Break (NO CLASS)
- March 14 – Pilgrimages and Sacred Mountains
- March 21 – Sacred Traditions in a Living Context (BOOK: Tibetan Diary)

Unit IV: Creating China’s Tibet
- March 28 – NO CLASS – Video Assignment
- April 4 – Tibet in Late Imperial and early 20th Century
- April 11 – Liberation of Tibet
- April 18 – Tibetan Freedom (BOOK: A Tibetan Revolutionary)
- April 25 – Tibet Today (Final Exam Topics)