



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Classical Tibetan for Beginners - 35555

Last update 26-08-2023

HU Credits: 8

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Asian Studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: Yearly

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Alexander Zorin

Coordinator Email: aleksandr.v.zorin@gmail.com

Coordinator Office Hours: by appointment, generally before or after classes

Teaching Staff:

Prof Alexander Zorin

Course/Module description:

A basic introduction to classical Tibetan language. No prior experience is necessary. We will focus on developing the skills for reading and translating Tibetan literature, especially Buddhist teachings. You will also learn a few basic conversational principles, but modern colloquial Tibetan is rather different from the classical written language, used to translate scriptures, compose commentaries and treatises, and write history, biography, poetry, and other literary works.

Course/Module aims:

Learn the basic skills necessary for reading and translating classical Tibetan literature; prepare students for more advanced reading and humanistic study of Tibetan language and literature.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Master the Tibetan syllabary (pronunciation, transliteration, morphology, rules of spelling)
- read and pronounce simple words and phrases
- understand the main grammatical cases
- understand verb tenses and basic principles (transitivity, volitionality)
- understand ergativity as an essential feature of Tibetan
- understand main rules of syntax in complex and compound sentences
- use Tibetan-English dictionaries
- read simple Tibetan texts with a dictionary

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lectures and group reading

Course/Module Content:

Basic Tibetan script (dbu can) and pronunciation according to modern Lhasa dialect; traditional spelling rules; rules of transliteration; nouns, adjectives, pronouns; simple postpositions as an equivalent of case particles; ergativity; verbs: four roots, auxiliaries, passive and causative; compound postpositions and adverbs; syntax in compound and complex sentences; reading texts from various genres of classical Tibetan literature (hymns, hagiography, ritual texts, etc.).

Required Reading:

Duff, Tony. *The Great Living Tree Tibetan Grammars. Beginner's Level Tibetan Grammar Texts by Yangchen Drubpay Dorje*. Padma Karpo Translation Committee, 2009.

Y. Bendor, *A Classical Tibetan Reader: Selections from Renowned Works with Custom Glossaries Paperback*. Wisdom Publications, 2013.

All other handouts, worksheets, and lessons will be provided by the instructor.

Additional Reading Material:

Beyer, Stephan V. *The Classical Tibetan Language*. SUNY Press, 1992.

Bialek, Joanna. *A Textbook in Classical Tibetan*. London and New York: Routledge, 2022.

Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo. [The Great Tibetan-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary]. Alak Zenkar Rinpoche, et al. Vols. 1-3. Pe cin: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1993.

Dixon, R. M. W. *Ergativity*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Hackett, Paul G. *A Tibetan Verb Lexicon. Verbs, Classes, and Syntactic Frames*. Ithaca, New York, and Boulder, Colorado: Snow Lion Publications, 2003.

Hahn, Michael. *Lehrbuch der klassischen tibetischen Schriftsprache Siebte, korrigierte Auflage*. Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica Et Tibetica Verlag, 1996.

Kapstein, Matthew T. *The Tibetans*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006. (The Peoples of Asia.)

Magee, William A., and Elizabeth S. Napper. *Fluent Tibetan. A Proficiency Oriented Learning System. Novice and Intermediate Levels*. Jeffrey Hopkins, General Editor. Ithaca, New York, and Boulder, Colorado: Snow Lion Publications, 1993.

Tournadre, Nicolas and Sangda Dorje. *Manual of Standard Tibetan Language and Civilization Introduction to Standard Tibetan (Spoken and Written). Followed by an Appendix on Classical Literary Tibetan*. Translated by Charles Ramble. Foreword by Matthew Kapstein. Ithaca, New York, and Boulder, Colorado: Snow Lion Publications, 2003.

Tournadre, Nicolas. "The Classical Tibetan cases and their transcategoriality From sacred grammar to modern linguistics." *Himalayan Linguistics*, 9(2), 2010, pp. 87-125.

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 70 %

*Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports
/ Forum / Simulation / others 20 %*

Clinical Work / Lab Work / Practical Work / Workshops 10 %

Additional information: