Course Summary

This course aims to introduce students to the religions and culture of Tibet from a loosely historical perspective. The first third of the course provides some background in Indian Buddhism. So we begin with two books that focus on gender and sexuality in Buddhist India, one on the construction of maleness, the other on the construction of sexuality. Each of these books provides both historical and doctrinal background that are useful to the understanding of Tibetan Buddhism. We then turn to Tibet’s imperial period, and read one of the most important histories of this epoch, the Bazhé. The course then turns to an examination of the schools of Tibetan Buddhism as found in Tuken’s Crystal Mirror, one of the great classics of Tibetan religious literature. We conclude the course with a more in depth examination of one of these schools: the Geluk. Here we contrast the viewpoints of a traditional scholar (Tuken) and a contemporary one (Ary).

Texts


2. Jose Cabezon, Buddhism and Sexuality (Xerox of ms.)


Schedule of Classes and Readings

January 5: Introduction to the course.


January 19: Cabezon: Buddhism and Sexuality, chaps. 1-5
January 26: Cabezon: Buddhism and Sexuality: chaps. 6-8

February 2: Early Tibetan History. Reading: dBa’ bzhed.


March 2: The role of biography in the creation of Geluk orthodoxy. Reading, Elijah Ary, Logic, Lives and Lineage.

March 9: Students present brief overviews of their papers.

**Course Requirements**

1. Come to class, come prepared, having done all of the reading, and having critically reflected on its content.

2. Write a 10-15 page paper on any topic of your choosing related to Tibetan religion.