<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>TSTD 201/301/401</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Advanced Studies in Buddhist Philosophy and Hermeneutics I, III, V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester, Year</td>
<td>Fall, 2024</td>
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</table>
| Schedule: class day & time | **Online:** Monday – Friday, 11:30am – 1:00 pm  
Review: Tuesday & Thursday 5:00-6:00pm  
  
**On-campus:** Monday – Friday, 11:30am – 1:00 pm  
Review: Tuesday & Thursday 5:00-6:00pm  
Note: all times in NPT |
Ju Mipham Rinpoche. *Nges shes rin po che’i sgron me*. |
Khenpo Kunpal, *nges shes rin po che’i sgron me’i tshig gi don gsal ba’i ’grel chung blo gros snang ba’i sgo ’byed*.  
Khenpo Nüden, *nges shes rin po che’i sgron me’i ’grel chung zab don snang ba’i ’char sgo yid dpyod tshig gi me long*.  
Troshul Jamdor, *rnam bshad ’od zer dri med*.  
Khenpo Jamyang Drubpé Lodrö, *nges shes rin po che’i sgron me’i rnam par bshad pa nges don sprin dkar glal ba’i* |
Course Description

This semester we will study *The Beacon of Certainty* (Tib. གེས་ཤེས་སོན་མེ་, Ngeshé Drönmé; Wyl. nges shes sgron me) by Ju Mipham Rinpoche (1846–1912). The text consists of answers to the following seven questions:

1. According to which of the two negations do you explain the view?
2. Do arhats realize both types of selflessness?
3. Does meditation involve grasping at an object?
4. Should we do analytical meditation or settling meditation?
5. Which of the two truths is most important?
6. What is the common object of disparate perceptions?
7. Does Madhyamaka have a position or not?

Because of its thoroughness in addressing the foundations of the Nyingma tradition, from Madhyamika philosophy to the view of Dzogchen, it is a key text studied in virtually all Nyingma shedras. The text can also be considered a bridge between sutra and tantra. You can read more about this pivotal text here.

Khenpo will give a word-by-word oral commentary on the text, while also allowing time for questions and answers with students. Students are thus expected to prepare for class daily by reading the text covered in the previous day’s class.

In addition to the Khenpo’s class, there will also be a review and discussion class led by the translator, which meets once a week for one hour. This discussion is a required part of the course itself and is intended to clarify and support the material covered in the Khenpo’s section of the class. The discussion provides a forum for students to ask questions about topics covered in the Khenpo’s class that they either did not get the chance to ask the Khenpo or would prefer to discuss with other students or have clarified by the discussion leader. In the review class we will also discuss the material covered in the Khenpo’s class from different perspectives, as well as hold discussions on related topics that will expand and round our understanding of what we are learning from the Khenpo. Attendance at the review class is a required part of the course.

Learning Outcomes

- Building a thorough knowledge and ability to discuss key ideas of the text, *The Beacon of Certainty*.
- Refining one’s understanding of the various tenet systems in general and the Prasangika Madhyamika in particular.
- Developing an understanding of the definitive and expedient meanings, as presented in the Nyingma tradition.
- Developing the ability to critically engage with complex Buddhist ideas through different approaches (lectures, discussions, readings, written assignments, exams).
- Improving academic writing, logical argumentation, and the practice of scholarly citation through writing short and long essays related to the course material.
- Gaining familiarity with the Tibetan Buddhist shedra system of Buddhist exegesis.

Course Requirements
### How do I succeed in the course?

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<tr>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Class participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>2. Quizzes and presentations</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Short papers</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>4. Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>5. Final Assessment [may consist of different parts, for example, final paper and final exam, each worth 25%]</td>
<td>50%</td>
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