KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES AT
RANGJUNG YESHE INSTITUTE

Web Syllabus

Course Code	ATSP 601
Course Title	Advanced Textual Study Primary I /V
Course Topic	Two options: 1. *Words of My Perfect Teacher, kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung* 2. *The Sword of Wisdom, Mipham Rinpoche, shes rab ral gris*
Semester, Year	Fall 2027
Credits	6
Course Delivery Mode	Daily textual studies lectures, monthly seminar meetings
Schedule: class day & time	One organizational meeting and three seminar meetings during the semester. Dates and times TBD.
Required texts	Depending on the chosen course: 1) Words of My Perfect Teacher, kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung 2) The Sword of Wisdom, Mipham Rinpoche, shes rab ral gris All additional required readings are distributed in Teams.
Optional Readings	TBD

Course Description

This course consists of two components: 1) The textual studies of a Tibetan philosophical treatise, and 2) the study of secondary academic literature on the topic.

1) The Textual Study

Option 1: This course develops the students' ability to actively participate in philosophical discourse and analysis in Tibetan. The instructor gives oral commentary in Tibetan on a classical philosophical text, in this case, *kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*. In this work, Patrul Rinpoche offers a deeply accessible and experiential guide to the preliminary practices (ngöndro) of the Nyingma tradition. Blending vivid stories, practical advice, and direct instruction, the text emphasizes devotion to the teacher, renunciation, compassion, and contemplation of impermanence and karma. Its purpose is to transform the practitioner's mindset, making the foundational practices a powerful gateway to genuine realization.

Option 2: This concise philosophical text by Mipham Rinpoche presents a clear and penetrating analysis of ultimate reality through the lens of Buddhist reasoning. Using the metaphor of a "sword," it describes wisdom (prajñā) as the tool that cuts through ignorance and mistaken views about the

nature of self and phenomena. The work systematically examines and refutes conceptual fabrications, demonstrating the emptiness (śūnyatā) of inherent existence while preserving the validity of conventional experience. Ultimately, it guides the reader toward a non-dual understanding in which clarity and emptiness are inseparable, encouraging direct insight rather than mere intellectual grasp.

2) The Academic Component

The MA academic component consists of academic research and seminar-style meetings. There will be three seminar meetings during the semester. The exact times and dates of these meetings will be decided at the start of the semester. Since the purpose of the course is to train students in academic methods in preparation for preparing their MA theses, there will be specialized readings assigned for each of the meetings. Students are required to come to the meetings with a reflection paper based on the readings. The course concludes with a research paper.

Learning Outcomes	
On successful completion of the course, students will have a solid grasp of the root text and the ability to navigate and use resources for Buddhist Studies research in the field of **Madhyamaka**.	
Course Requirements	
How do I succeed in the course?	**Class attendance of at least 80%,** active class participation (question and answer, in Tibetan), one mid-term exam and one final exam. The exams will be given in Tibetan. Come to class prepared to participate actively in class discussion; complete all written assignments on time, correctly, and with all components of the assignments intact.

Assessments	**Weight**
1. Assignments in the Textual Study Part consisting of	**50%**
• Midterm exam	• 25%
• Final exam (may consist of 2 elements)	• 25%

2. Assignments in the Academic Component consisting of	**50%**
• Reflection papers to be submitted before the monthly meetings (3)	• 20%
• Research paper: approximately 12-15 pages (3000-3750 words) on a topic related to the text under study. Paper topics should be discussed with the supervisor well in advance of exam week and must be approved.	• 30%