

The Silk Road: A History of Cultural and Material Exchanges

16:214:511(?)

Fall 2013 (?)

Instructor: Jessey J.C. Choo (jessey.choo@rutgers.edu)

Course Description:

This course introduces the history of the Silk Road — a complex network of trade routes that connected China and Rome over land and sea — and examines the cultural and material exchanges among the peoples and cultures it connected. The course covers the period between 500 BCE- 1500 CE during which forces wielded by many peoples (e.g. Chinese, Greeks, Persians, Arabs, Turks, and Mongolians) shaped the geopolitical landscape of Asia. It explores the roles Silk Road played in the formations and transformations of cultural, ethnic, and religious identities of these people and their perceptions of one another. It highlights themes, such as conspicuous consumption, cultural diversity, religious pluralism, and nomadic migration, as well as the financial, judicial, religious, and social institutions that were the fruits of these extended exchanges. The course begins and ends with an analysis of the conceptualization of the “Silk Road” against the backdrop of the “Great Game” that played out in the late-19th century and early 20th century among various colonial powers and its legacies to these days.

Course Rationale

This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of different cultures and peoples who were active players in shaping the history of the Silk Road. The source materials (including recent archaeological finds) and topics covered in this course do not overlap with that of any existing courses offered by this or other departments and programs. The course is designed as a split-level course and can be easily converted into a graduate only course.

Course Requirements

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| Class Participation & Presentation | 20% |
| Map Quizzes | 10% |
| Weekly Reflection | 10% |
| Assignment I (Primary Source Analysis) | 20% |
| Assignment II (Book Review) | 20% |
| Assignment III (Review Article) | 20% |

Class Participation:

Students are required to attend all classes. Class participation encompasses: 1. attendance to lectures; 2. observation of classroom decorum (no chatting, texting, eating, gaming, or surfing the internet); 3. timely completion of reading assignments (**students** must bring a copy of the texts to class); 4. active participation in discussions. Students are to lead the seminar discussion in turn and present assigned materials. Each student is expected to lead one session on close reading of an assigned piece of primary text and one session on analyzing and critiquing an assigned piece in secondary scholarship. Everyone is required come prepared for discussion whether or not s/he is presenting. Any student who misses more than **2** classes will automatically fail the course.

Map Quizzes:

Students are expected to develop a firm knowledge of the general geography of Asia. There will be several map quizzes throughout the semester. The best way to prepare for them is to pay close attention to the maps included in assigned readings. I will also distribute a worksheet for practicing before each quiz.

Written Assignments:

All written assignments will be evaluated based on accurate factual presentation of the topic, the level of critical interpretation/reflection, and clear and logical development of the argument and thesis.

A) Weekly Reflections

The weekly analytical reflection shall be a close reading of one of the assigned primary sources. The students must demonstrate that they read the specific document carefully, that they are able to connect it with other assigned readings, and they can articulate intelligently what they understand to be the key

questions raised and/or addressed by it. An analytical reflection should not be a simple summary of the content. Each reflection must be between 200-300 words, typed, single spaced, and include a title and a word count. Each student must submit two per week. Only the highest marked twenty entries will be counted toward the final grade.

B) Paper Assignments

Students will be completing a primary source analysis, a book review, and a historiographical survey. See attached for details.

All citations must be done according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

Academic Integrity

Under no circumstance will behaviors that violate academic integrity be tolerated. These behaviors include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying fellow students access to information or material, helping others to violate academic integrity, or purchasing essays online or otherwise. All violations will automatically receive no grade and be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Please note that, in the case of plagiarism, ignorance of conventions of attribution and citation is not considered a mitigating circumstance.

Students with disabilities

It is the policy of Rutgers to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability and wish to request accommodations to complete your course requirements, please contact the Office of Disability Services and ask to speak with a Coordinator (848-445-6800 or dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu) about accommodations.

Course Materials Required:

There are two types of course materials, books to be purchased and individual articles and book chapters available for download at the course website. Students must bring a hard copy of the readings assigned for the particular class.

- Johan Elverskog. *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*. U Penn Press, 2010
- Richard C. Foltz. *Religions of the Silk Road: Premodern Patterns of Globalization*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. (Henceforth **Religions**)
- Richard N. Frye. *The Heritage of Central Asia*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008
- Valerie Hansen. *The Silk Road: A New History*. Oxford University Press, 2012. (Henceforth **Sites**)
- Peter Hopkirk. *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road: The Search for the Lost Treasures of Central Asia*. John Murray Publishers Ltd, 2006
- Xinru Liu. *The Silk Roads: A Brief History with Documents*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. (Henceforth **Documents**)
- Xinru Liu. *The Silk Road in World History*, Oxford University Press, 2010. (Henceforth **History**)
- Susan Whitfield. *Life Along the Silk Road*. John Murry, 1999. (Henceforth **Life**)
- Sally Hovey Wriggins. *The Silk Road Journey with Xuanzang*. Westview Press, 2004.
- Other assigned scholarly articles, book chapters, and primary sources are available on the course website via Sakai.

Office Hours: TBA

Course Schedule:

(Reading must be completed by the date indicated)

* = the item is on Sakai **and** required for all students

Part I: History of the Silk Road

Week 1: Introduction: The People, The Geology, and the Great Game

Sites, Introduction

Religions, Ch. 1: The Silk Road and Its Travelers

Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia*, Chs. 1-2

Hopkirk. *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, Prologue plus Chs. 1-4

*Liu, *Connections Across Eurasia*, Introduction

*Franck and Brownstone, Ch. 11: Cities in the Sand, pp. 263-280

*Boulnois, *Silk Road*, Ch. 2: The Land of Silk

Week 2: The Emergence of the Silk Road on the Eastern End

Documents, pp. 1-7; pieces #1-3 and 13

History, Ch. 1: China Looks West

Sites, Ch.1: The Kingdom of Kroraina

Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia*, Ch. 3

Hopkirk. *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, Prologue plus Chs. 5-8

*Boulnois, *Silk Road*, Ch. 3: Adventures of a Diploma-Explorer and Ch. 4: A Kingdom of Horses

Week 3: The Emergence of the Silk Road on the Western End

Documents, pp. 7-10; pieces #4-8

History, Ch. 2: Rome Looks East

Religions, Ch. 2: Religion and Trade in Ancient Eurasia

Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia*, Ch. 4-8

Hopkirk. *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, Prologue plus Chs. 9-12

*Boulnois, *Silk Road*, Ch. 6: The Geographer in Antiquity and Women's Extravagance and Ch. 7: Dangers in the Erythraean Sea

Week 4: Buddhism and the Silk Road

Map Quiz 1

Religions, Ch. 3: Buddhism and the Silk Road

Hopkirk, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, Chs. 12-16

**The World Religions Reader*, Document Sets: 5.1, 5.2 (pieces # 1 and 5), 5.3, 5.4

Week 5: The Lands and Peoples at the Center

Assignment I: Primary Source Analysis Due on Friday @ 11:59 PM

Documents, pp. 10-18; Pieces # 9, 12, 14

History, Ch. 3: The Kushan Empire and Buddhism

Sites, Ch.2: Kucha and the Caves of Kizil

Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia*, Chs. 9-11

**Afghanistan: Hidden Treasure from the National Museum, Kabul* (Website)

Week 6: Empire, Trade, and Religion (I): The Byzantium and Sassanid Empires

Documents, pp. 19-22; Pieces #19, 20, and 21

History, Ch. 4: The Golden Age Emerges

Garthwaite, *The Persians*, Ch. 4: The Sasanians

Week 7: Empire, Trade, and Religion (II): New Relationship Between Empire and Religion

Map Quiz 2

Religions, Ch. 4: Nestorians and Manichaeans on the Silk Road

*Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road*, Introduction: Mani and Manichaeism

*Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road*, Hymns on Cosmogony and Eschatology

*Liu, *Connections*, Ch. 4: Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Buddhism

*Anthology of World Scriptures, Ch. 9: Zoroastrianism

Week 8: Empire, Trade, and Religion (III): The Turks and The Sogdians

Documents, Pieces #18

Sites, Chs. 3: Turfan and 4: Samarkand and Sogdiana

Life, Introduction and the Merchant's Tale

Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia*, Chs. 12-13

Wriggins, *The Silk Road Journey with Xuanzang*, Chs. 1-4

*Golden, *Central Asian in World History*, Ch. 3: The Turks and Their Successors

*Boulnois, *Silk Road*, Ch. 12: Byzantium, Persia, the Turks and the Sogdians

Week 9: The Great Tang Empire (I)

Documents, Pieces #17, 22, 23

Sites, Ch. 5: Chang'an

Life, The Horseman's Tale, the Princess's Tale, and the Courtesan's Tale

Wriggins, *The Silk Road Journey with Xuanzang*, Chs. 5-8

*Sen, "The Travel Records of Chinese Pilgrims Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing"

(http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/travel_records.pdf)

*Faxian (Fa-Hsien): *A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms (394-414 CE)*

*Xuanzang: *Record of the Western Regions*

Week 10: The Great Tang Empire (II)

Sites, Ch. 6: Dunhuang Caves

Life, The Nun's Tale, The Widow's Tale, The Official's Tale, and The Artist's Tale

Wriggins, *The Silk Road Journey with Xuanzang*, Chs. 8-12

**Dunhuang: Caves of Faith* (website)

**The Silk Road Exhibition* (website)

Week 11: The Arab Conquests

Assignment II: Book Review Due on Friday @ 11:59 PM

Documents, Pieces #16

History, Ch. 5: Transformation of the Eurasian Silk Market

Sites, Ch. 7: Khotan

Life, The Solider's Tale and The Monk's Tale, and the Epilogue

Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia*, Chs. 14-16

*Golden, *Central Asian in World History*, Ch. 4: The Coming of Islam

**Islamic Central Asia: Historical Sources*, Part 1.A: Central Asia and Arab Conquests

Week 12: Islam and the Silk Road

Map Quiz 3

Documents, Pieces #25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31

Religions, Ch. 5: The Islamization of the Silk Road

Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, introduction

*Golden, *Central Asian in World History*, Ch. 5: Crescent Over Steppe

Silk Road

*Liu, *Connections*, Ch. 5: Trade and Communication Under the Muslim System and Ch. 6: Oceans and Seas, 900-1300," pp. 187-218.

Week 13: The Mongol Conquests

History, Ch. 6: The Mongols and the Twilight of the Silk Road

Religions, Ch. 6: Ecumenical Mischief

Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, chs. 1-2

**Islamic Central Asia: Historical Sources*, Part 3.A: Temujin and the Rise of Mongol Empire

Week 14: The Mongols and the Silk Road

Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, chs. 3-4

*Boulnois, *Silk Road*, Ch. 15: Oriente Poliano

*Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, in *Foundations of Anthropological Theory*, pp. 73-84

*Pegolotti's *Merchant Handbook*

**Islamic Central Asia: Historical Sources*, piece# 27

Week 15: The Silk Road in Twilight

Map Quiz 4

Assignment III: Historiography Paper Due on Friday @ 11:59 PM

Religions, Ch. 7: A Melting Pot No More

Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, chs. 5 and conclusion

*Golden, *Central Asian in World History*, Ch. 7: The Later Chinggisids

**Islamic Central Asia: Historical Sources*, Part 4.A: Timur's Rise and Rule

*Rassabi, "The 'Decline' of the Central Asian Caravan Trade"

*Boulnois, *Silk Road*, Ch. 19: Explores, Archaeologists and Reporters and Ch. 20: Tourism and Pipelines