

University of North Carolina at Greensboro
East Asian History: Selected Topics - Silks and Spices: Exchanges Of Goods And Ideas Along
China's Frontier.

HIS 588: East Asian History Selected Topics

Fall Semester 2007

T 3:30 pm - 6:20 pm MHRA 1206

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Course web site: http://www.uncg.edu/his/docs/Anderson_index.html

Office Hours: TR 11:00-11:50am, and by appointment

Course Description

Following the prosperous Silk Road of the Northwest and the thriving spice trade of the South China Sea regions, imperial Chinese courts remained engaged in international exchanges of goods and ideas since ancient times. This course will examine the intersection of trade and tribute in patterns of foreign relations China conducted with its neighbors through the arrival of European powers in the 16th century. Material trade, and the socio-cultural exchanges accompanying it, will serve as the central theme in this course. Through a critical reading of recent scholarship on related topics, we will determine for ourselves the impact that global trade patterns had on the historical development of this very important region of the world.

Students taking this course should reach the following goals by the end of the semester:

- Construct persuasive written arguments regarding issues of historical interpretation.
- Utilize the latest methods of Web-based technology to communicate with fellow students.
- Understand better the effect the ancient past has had on the modern world.
- Exhibit self-motivation and self-expression by exploring and asking questions regarding historical topics beyond personal life experiences.

Course Requirements

PLEASE NOTE: This course will be conducted as an upper-level seminar with a strong emphasis on classroom discussion and student presentations. I expect all students to attend and participate in all discussion sections. Moreover, the completion of all written assignments is necessary for a passing grade. It is important to note that more than three (3) absences will result in a failing grade in this course. No further excuses, for any reason, will be permitted. I also wish to note that no "incompletes" will be given for this class. Please remember to plan ahead!

I will require that all students establish e-mail accounts with Internet access. This course will occasionally involve interaction between the instructor and students outside of the lecture period. Please set up these accounts as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Grading (Undergraduates)

Annotated bibliography (4-5 pages) 20%

Class presentation 10%

Historiographical essay (8-10 pages) 40%

Class participation 30%

Grading (Graduate students)

Historiographical essay (15-20 pages) 50%

Class presentation 20%

Class participation 30%

Annotated bibliography

All undergraduate students will produce short annotated bibliographies as their first written assignments. All graduate students will supply annotated bibliographies with their final historiographical essays. An annotated bibliography is a list of books, articles, and documents, in which each entry is followed by a brief description of the source itself. These descriptions, or annotations, are provided to advise the reader on the accuracy and usefulness of the materials you have cited in your bibliography. For a better sense of what it entails to create an annotated bibliography, I urge everyone to visit the Cornell University Library's web page "How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography" at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm> This page contains a very good overview of the process.

Web Site contributions

I have created a Web site for this classroom, which you and I will continue to expand as the semester progresses. Together we will discuss options for the expansion of the course web site during the first weeks of class. Students also can access course information, such as scheduled events (i.e. the syllabus you now hold in your hand), as well as terms mentioned in lecture. I will also list links to web sites of interest to our class. I urge everyone to visit the Jim Kapoun's web page on the Cornell Library site "Five Criteria for Evaluating Web Pages" (<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/webcrit.html>) before "surfing" through these on-line materials. Moreover, I December include additional materials on the library's Electronic Reserve list. Please refer to the class Web site periodically for such materials.

Class presentations

All students will be required to present to the class a short summary and salient points from their final essays. We will discuss the nature of these presentations later on in the course.

Historiographical Essay

An historiographical essay is a critical overview of a variety of historical interpretations of an oftentimes narrowly focused topic. Such essays can take different forms, and we will discuss these forms during this course. As an example, I will place one of my own historiographical essays from graduate student days on e-reserve at the library.

Please remember that the quality of your writing, particularly the clarity and persuasiveness of your argument, will factor into the final grading. Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade for each day beyond the original due date.

Classroom Discussions

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are very important components of this course. Everyone will be required to participate, and you should feel free to ask questions in every class. Each student will come to class having read the texts and prepared to discuss them. I will not hesitate to call on all students to participate. However, you should feel free to speak with me before class, if you find it difficult to speak in a public setting. In that case, you December submit your questions before each class in writing.

Required Reading

1. Xinru Liu and Lynda Norene Shaffer. *Connections Across Eurasia: Transportation, Communication, and Cultural Exchange on the Silk Roads*. New York: McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages; 1 edition (January 4, 2007) ISBN-10: 0072843519, ISBN-13: 978-0072843514.
2. Richard C. Foltz. *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000; ISBN: 0312233388.
3. John Key. *The Spice Route: A History (California Studies in Food and Culture)*. University of California Press; 1st edition (July 15, 2006). ISBN-10: 0520248961, ISBN-13: 978-0520248960.
4. Patricia Risso. *Merchants and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean (New Perspectives on Asian History)*. Westview Press (August 18, 2004) ISBN-10: 0813389119, ISBN-13: 978-0813389110.
5. John Hobson. *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*. Cambridge University Press (July 5, 2004). ISBN-10: 0521547245, ISBN-13: 978-0521547246.

For “background reading,” please consider the following sources:

1. A video in the collection at TLC, “Mandate of Heaven.”
2. Waley-Cohen, Johanna. *The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History*. New York: Norton, 1999.

All other materials for this course will be available on e-reserve (electronic reserve) at the library.

Reading Schedule

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
TRADE & TRIBUTE: A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION	
August 21: Course introduction.	Film: <i>A Thousand Miles Beyond the Yellow River</i>
THE SILK ROAD	
August 28: Agents of Exchange along the Silk Road	Reading: Liu/ Shaffer text Yang article (on e-reserve) Film excerpts: <i>Glories of Ancient Changan</i>
September 4: Agents of Exchange along the Silk Road (cont.)	Readings: Liu/ Shaffer text Polanyi article (on e-reserve) Bentley chapter (on e-reserve)
September 11: Trade and Cultural Diffusion along the Silk Road	Reading: Foltz text Film excerpts: <i>The Art Gallery in the Desert</i>
September 18: The Silk Road and the Tang Empire	Readings: Waley-Cohen article (on e-reserve) Adshead chapter, "China in Late Antiquity," Parts A&B (on e-reserve) Skaff chapter, "Survival in the Frontier Zone" (on e-reserve) Film: <i>The Soghdian Merchants</i> .
September 25: Rise of the East/ Rise of the West Debate	Reading: Hobson text
No class meeting on October 2nd	Day reserved for undergraduate student conferences regarding annotated bibliographies
October 9: Rise of the East/ Rise of the West Debate	Readings: Hobson text (Book review of other "East-West Rise debate" works)
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9th	UNDERGRADUATES' ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE IN CLASS

FALL BREAK: October 12, Friday - Instruction Ends for Fall Break 6:00 p.m

October 17, Wednesday - Classes resume after Fall Break 8:00 a.m

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
October 23: What was the true nature of Zheng He's Voyages?	Film: <i>1421: The Year China Discovered America?</i>
THE SPICE TRADE	
October 30: The Spice Trade	Readings: Key Text
November 6: The Spice Trade (cont.)	Readings: Key Text Film: <i>Spice Island Saga</i>
November 13: Pre-colonial and Early Colonial Indian Ocean Trade and Exchange	Readings: Risso text
November 20: Pre-colonial and Early Colonial Indian Ocean Trade and Exchange (cont.)	Readings: Risso text Film excerpts: <i>Columbus's World</i>
NOVEMBER 22nd - NOVEMBER 25th	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
November 27:	Class Presentations
December 4:	Class Presentations Final Discussion
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4th	GRADUATE ESSAYS DUE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4th	UNDERGRADUATE ESSAYS DUE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4th	Last Day Of His 588 Classes



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