

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

HIS 207/IGS 223-18: Silks and Spices: History of the Silk Road in China Fall Semester 2009

MWF 1:00pm-1:50pm MCVR 28

Instructor: James A. Anderson

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Course web site: <http://www.uncg.edu/~jaander2/HIS207>

Office Hours: MW 10:00-10:50 a.m., and by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Karen Hawkins, E-mail: kemedlin@uncg.edu

Discussion Sections: HIS 207-02 (W 12:00-12:50pm) in MHRA 2207, HIS 207-04 (W 1:00-1:50pm) in MHRA 2207

John Kaiser, E-mail: jjkaiser@uncg.edu

Discussion Sections: HIS 207-01 (W 12:00-12:50pm) in BRYN 112, HIS 207-03/IGS 223-18 (W 1:00-1:50pm) in BRYN 132

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. While remaining “China-focused,” we will also explore the ways in which the various peoples have existed in the region for over two thousand years, fighting during much of this time for both political autonomy and cultural self-identity. Some of the secondary topics we will explore include the fluid, border-less nature of the frontier between South China and northern Southeast Asia, a study of Late Imperial China’s “Southern Silk Road,” China’s tribute relations with various southern maritime kingdoms, and a broad study of pre-modern Chinese frontier management throughout the empire. 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 concerned with an historical topic.
- Utilize the latest methods of Web-based technology to communicate with fellow students.
- Learn of the fundamental historical developments in China from earliest times to ca. 1800.
- 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

There will be a take-home final exam, six in-class “half-hourly” quizzes (including a skills quiz), and one 5-7 page (12-point font *Times New Roman* font, double-spaced, 1” margins, paginated) “think piece” paper. The paper will be due in class on **Friday, November 20th**. The schedule for the six in-class quizzes is noted in the lecture schedule. The take-home final exam will be handed out in class on **Monday, December 7th** and it must be turned in to me no later than 3 p.m. on **Monday, December 14th**. Attendance at all lecture and discussion sections is expected. Moreover, the completion of all required written assignments is necessary for a passing grade.

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

Skills Quiz	<i>Ungraded</i>
5 Graded Quizzes	30% (6% each)
Class Participation (film responses, group discussion, general participation)	30%
*Film Responses	(10%)
*Blackboard Discussion Questions <u>and</u> Reflections	(15%)
*General Participation	(5%)
Paper	20%
Final Exam	20%

“Half-hourly” Quizzes

The quizzes will cover materials from the assigned readings, lectures, films, and other in-class presentations. I will go over all assigned readings, either during lectures or during discussion sections. You are responsible for anything that is covered in class, whether or not you were present for a given class period.

No Make-up Quizzes

No make-up quizzes will be offered for this class. Instead, you may drop one of your five graded quizzes, only if you have taken the ungraded skills quiz at the beginning of the semester. Once you have missed one quiz, all subsequent missed quizzes will be graded at 0% credit.

Final Take-home Examination

There is a 6-8 page, typed take-home exam. I will distribute three or four questions on the last day of the course, and you will be required to construct an essay that clearly answers two of these questions while using the primary and secondary sources provided for the class. **The exams will be due in my office (2111 MHRA) no later than 3pm on Monday, December 14th**. We’ll talk more about this exam later in the course.

BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENTS

Weeks Featuring Films:

Five in-class film screenings will take place throughout the semester. Films will almost always be screened on Fridays. Written responses will always be due the Sunday evening at 11:59pm following the film. (Example. For the film shown on Friday, September 18, the written response

is due Sunday, September 20 by 11:59pm.) Prior to each screening, you will receive a film-guide handout featuring questions which address the film in terms of weekly course readings. You are expected to prepare a well-written and thoughtful response to each film guide, taking care to thoroughly answer all questions. A thorough response requires a minimum of one well-developed paragraph for each question. These responses must be posted to the appropriate forum on Blackboard. These due dates are listed on the Blackboard forums themselves. Film Responses will be evaluated by the Teaching Assistants. **Late film responses will be penalized half a letter grade for each day beyond the original due date. All film responses are required assignments.**

*If you miss an in-class film screening, the films are located on closed reserve at the Teaching and Learning Center in the McIver Building (334-5078).

* Several times during the semester, students will have both film responses and reading responses due.

Weeks Featuring Readings:

Each Wednesday you will splinter into several smaller classes with your Teaching Assistants to discuss primary sources and articles illustrative of themes in this course. In preparation for these activities, you are expected to read the assigned sources and prepare two well-considered discussion questions for presentation in class. **These questions must be posted to the appropriate forum on Blackboard by the preceding Tuesday at 11:59pm. Print and bring these questions with you to present the following morning in your discussion section.**

Following each discussion you are responsible for submitting a one-paragraph (3-5 sentences) discussion reflection or summary. **These reflections must be posted to the appropriate forum on Blackboard by the following Sunday at 11:59pm.** Were there points in the text that you wish had been discussed or elaborated upon in greater depth? Have you come to a new understanding of the text since the Wednesday meeting? If so, please feel free to note those points here.

Discussion Questions and Reflections will be evaluated together as one assignment by the Teaching Assistants. **Late submissions will receive no credit. You are required to submit at least 10 (ten) Discussion Questions and Reflections during the semester to receive a passing grade.**

*If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard, it is your responsibility to learn to use this online learning tool.

The written exercises will be graded on a check, check-plus, or check-minus scale. If you receive straight “checks” for all exercises, you will have earned a “B” for this part of the course. To earn a “check-plus” you need to demonstrate that you have thought imaginatively about the question and have put some genuine effort into your answer. The purpose of these exercises is to gain experience in writing, and they should therefore help prepare you for the paper and the take-home exam.

Classroom Discussions:

Students will be graded both on their spoken and written contributions to class discussions. 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 may submit your questions before each class in writing.

“Think Piece” Paper

The “Think Piece” Paper, a response to assigned topics from the required text *When Asia Was the World* and the *Tracing the Silk Roads* CD-ROM, will be based on your readings, section discussions, and the lectures. This paper is not a research paper; therefore, no outside reading is required. However, the quality of your writing, particularly the clarity and persuasiveness of your argument, will factor into the final grading. The “Think Piece” Paper will be evaluated by the Teaching Assistants. **Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade for each day beyond the original due date.**

Web-site

This class is served by a companion Blackboard site, through which you may access all the on-line e-reserves. I also have created a web site for this classroom, which I will continue to expand as the quarter progresses. Here students 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. Please refer to the class site periodically for such materials.

Web-based exercise

During the first week of class I ask you to visit the web site *Sacred Sites of Asia* at the URL <http://www.sacredsites.com/explore/asia.htm>. Please choose a sacred site from this list that is located on the network of travel routes collectively represented as the Silk Road. A map of the Silk Road region may be found on the Silk Road Project’s web site at URL: <http://www.silkroadproject.org/tabid/177/default.aspx> In a short three-sentence response please describe the kind of pilgrim that might visit this site. Send your response to the appropriate forum on Blackboard.

Required Books

1. Liu, Xinru, and Lynda Shaffer. *Connections Across Eurasia: Transportation, Communication, and Cultural Exchange on the Silk Roads*. Explorations in world history. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2007. ISBN: 9780072843514.
2. Gilbert, Erik, and Jonathan T. Reynolds. *Trading Tastes: Commodity and Culture Exchange to 1750*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson / Prentice Hall, 2006. ISBN: 9780131900073.
3. Gordon, Stewart. *When Asia Was the World*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2008. ISBN: 9780306815560.
4. *After the Fact Interactive: Tracing the Silk Roads*. (CD-ROM) New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003. ISBN: 0072818433 9780072818437.

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

Lecture Schedule

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
TRADE & TRIBUTE: A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION	
<p>August 24-28: Course introduction. The Various Dimensions to Tribute and Trade.</p>	<p>Reading: Liu & Shaffer, 1-15.</p> <p>Gilbert & Reynolds, 1-22.</p> <p>Bentley, "Cross-cultural contacts and exchanges" (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Discussion: Godelier "Things You Don't Give or Sell but Which You Keep" (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Web-based exercise <u>due</u> by Sunday (8/30) at 11:59pm (see p. 3 of syllabus for instructions)</p>
EAST ASIA: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT	
<p>August 31- September 4: Chinese Culture. Characteristics of the Chinese Imperial Court. Importance of Central Asia.</p>	<p>Reading: Waley-Cohen, "Early Chinese Cosmopolitanism" (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Yang, "Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order" (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Discussion: Birch, "The Biography of General Li Kuang" (on e-reserve)</p>
"Practice" Skills/Map Quiz, Monday 8/31	
THE SILK ROAD	
<p>September 9- 11: The Rise of the Silk Road Trade in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE- 220 CE). Xiongnu and Roman Empires.</p>	<p>Reading: Liu & Shaffer, 17-39.</p> <p>Juliano & Lerner, The Silk Road in Gansu and Ningxia" (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Discussion: "Tracing the Silk Roads" CD-ROM: "Wenji's Scroll (195-207)"</p>
Monday September 7th , Labor Day Holiday	
<p>September 14-18: Silk and Society Across Eurasia in Ancient Times.</p>	<p>Reading: Liu & Shaffer, 72-101.</p> <p>Gilbert & Reynolds, 112-133.</p> <p>Film: <i>A Thousand Kilometers Beyond The Yellow River</i></p>

	Discussion: “Tracing the Silk Roads” CD-ROM: “The Silk Princess (140 BCE)”
GRADED QUIZ #1, Monday 9/14	
September 21-25: Religions along the Silk Road: Buddhism. The Cave Paintings of the Dunhuang Oasis.	Readings: Liu & Shaffer, 41-71. Zekrgoo, <i>The Spiritual Identity of the Silk Roads</i> ” (on e-reserve) Film: <i>The Art Gallery in the Desert</i> Discussion: Gordon, <i>When Asia Was the World</i> , Chapter 1, “Monasteries and Monarchs.”
September 28- October 2: Religions along the Silk Road: Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, and Manichaeism.	Reading: Liu & Shaffer, 102-143. Foltz, <i>Religions of the Silk Road</i> , 61-87. (on e-reserve) Discussion: “Tracing the Silk Roads” CD-ROM: “Nestorian Stele” (781 CE)
GRADED QUIZ #2, Monday 9/28	
October 5-9: Tibet, Sichuan and the Southern Silk Road.	Reading: Anderson, “China’s Southwestern Silk Road in World History” at http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/6.1/anderson.html Discussion: “Tracing the Silk Roads” CD-ROM: “Tibetan Map (N.D.)” and “Hedin’s Tibet Map (1909)”

FALL BREAK: October 9, Friday - Instruction Ends for Fall Break 6:00 p.m

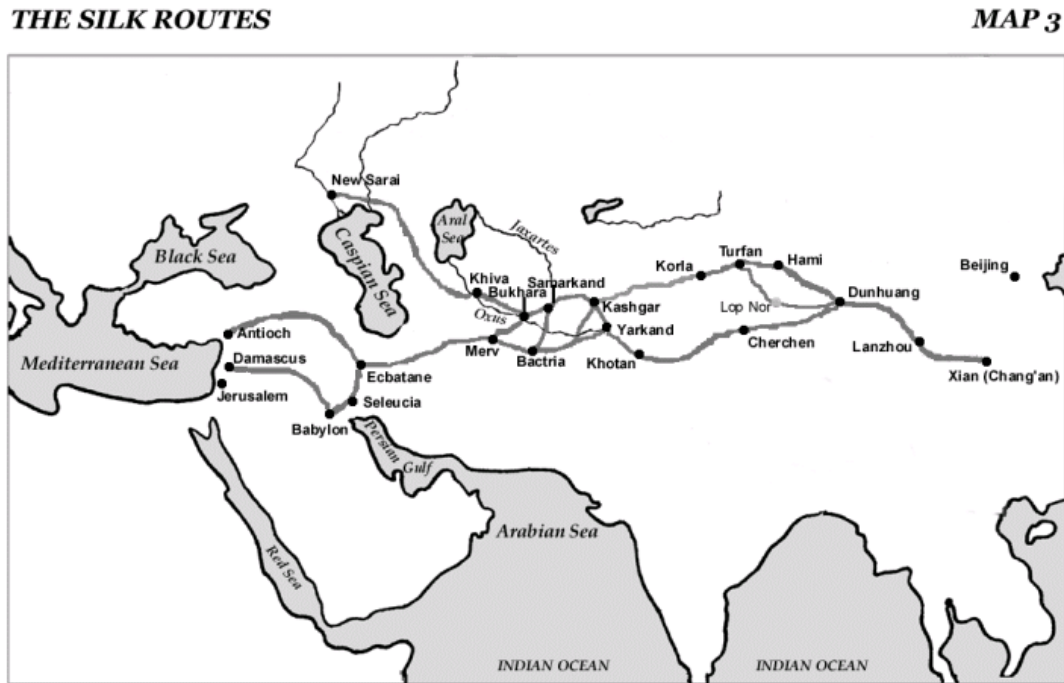
October 14, Wednesday - Classes resume after Fall Break 8:00 a.m

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
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<p>October 14-16: The Sogdians, the Uighurs and Xinjiang's Role in Central Asian History</p>	<p>Reading: Millward, "Central Eurasia Ascendant" (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Gladney, "Xinjiang: China's Pre- and Post-Modern Crossroad" http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/newsletter/vol3num1/2_xinjiang.php</p> <p>Discussion: "Tracing the Silk Roads" CD-ROM: "Sogdian Merchant (700s)"</p>
<p>October 19-23: The Islamization of the Silk Road region.</p>	<p>Reading: Liu & Shaffer, 144-179.</p> <p>Gordon, <i>When Asia Was the World</i>, Chapter 2, "Caliph and Caravan."</p> <p>Discussion: "Tracing the Silk Roads" CD-ROM: "Tabari's History (714-23)"</p>
<p>GRADED QUIZ #3, Monday 10/19</p>	
<p>October 26-30: Caravans and Conquest: Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, and Kublai Khan</p>	<p>Reading: Liu & Shaffer, 219-253.</p> <p>Film: <i>The Dark Castle</i></p> <p>Discussion: "Tracing the Silk Roads" CD-ROM: Polo on Tartars (1271-4)"</p>
<p>THE SPICE TRADE</p>	
<p>November 2-6: The Fall of the Silk Road & the Rise of the Spice Trade.</p>	<p>Reading: Liu & Shaffer, 181-218.</p> <p>Gilbert & Reynolds, 23-43.</p> <p>Discussion: Gilbert & Reynolds, 44-54.</p>
<p>GRADED QUIZ #4, Monday 11/2</p>	
<p>November 9-13: What was the true nature of Zheng He's Voyages?</p>	<p>Reading: Gordon, <i>When Asia Was the World</i>, Chapter 7, "Treasure and Treaty"</p> <p>Film: <i>1421: When China Discovered America? (Part One)</i></p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gavin Menzies's official website

	http://www.gavinmenzies.net/pages/evidence-1421/index.asp 2. The “1421 Myth Exposed” web-site: http://www.1421exposed.com/
November 16-20: Pre-colonial Indian Ocean Trade and Exchange	<p>Reading: Hall, “Multi-Dimensional Networking: Fifteenth-Century Indian Ocean Maritime Diaspora” (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Film: <i>Spice Island Saga</i></p> <p>Discussion: Gordon, <i>When Asia Was the World</i>, Chapter 6, “Nobles and Notables”</p>
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20th	THINK PIECE PAPER DUE
November 23: Pre-colonial Indian Ocean Trade and Exchange (cont.)	No additional readings for Monday’s class.
GRADED QUIZ #5, Monday 11/23	
NOVEMBER 25TH- NOVEMBER 29th	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
November 30- December 4: Early Europeans along the Spice Routes	<p>Readings: Irwin, “Malacca Fort” (on e-reserve) Plumb, “Shipping and Spices in Asian Seas” (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Discussion: Gordon, <i>When Asia Was the World</i>, Chapter 9, “Medicines and Misunderstandings”</p>
December 7: Concluding Points and Review	
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7th	TAKE HOME EXAM QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7th	LAST DAY OF HIS 207 CLASSES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 14th	TAKE HOME EXAM DUE BY 3PM in MHRA 2111

Map



Map from *The China Project* lesson plan “Was the Silk Road the Internet Highway of the Ancient World?” URL www.globaled.org/chinaproject/silkRoad/docs/mapSilkRoad.html



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XPEDITIONS
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