

The History of the Silk Road

HIS207-03

T/Th 9:30-10:45
Dr. Susan W. Thomas
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Bryan 122

MHRA2114

Office Hours: T/Th 2:00-4:00, or by appt.

Required Materials

Alpers, Edward. *The Indian Ocean in World History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Liu, Xinru. *The Silk Road in World History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. This will be listed on your syllabus as **Liu Text**.

_____. *The Silk Roads: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2012. This will be listed on your syllabus as **Liu Reader**

Rossabi, Morris. *The Mongols in Global History*. New York: WW Norton Publishing, 2011.

Course Description

This course will examine the intersection of trade and tribute in patterns of foreign relations China conducted with its neighbors along the Silk Road, beginning with its early development and ending with 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-centered,” we will also explore the ways in which people coexisted in the region as they fought 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, China’s relations with various southern maritime kingdoms, and pre-modern Chinese frontier management. Through our investigation of the sources, we will determine for ourselves the impact that global trade patterns had on the historical development of this important region of the world.

Learning Goals

By the end of this semester, students in this course should have the ability to:

- Construct persuasive written arguments concerned with a historical topic.
- Explain the fundamental historical developments that shaped China during the years of the Silk Road.
- Grasp the role of human agency and the contingency of historical events.
- Make clear connections between the past and the modern world.

Student Responsibilities/Classroom Decorum

Each student bears the responsibility to attend class regularly and complete all assignments on time. We will frequently discuss events and ideas and I expect open and respectful dialogue.

Check your iSpartan email account regularly. This is the system I will be using to contact you, should the need arise. My email address is at the top of the syllabus for your reference.

A Note on Email Etiquette

Students often correspond with professors as they do with their friends. For example:

Subject: question
hey can i meet u tues 2 discuss the assignment?
No name given

One of the purposes of higher education is to prepare students to present themselves in a courteous and professional manner in communication with others. This applies to email correspondence between you and me. Please follow the guidelines below when emailing me regarding the class.

- ✓ **Subject:** FMS160-02
 - I have several classes (including another FMS class) so this will let me know immediately which class you are enrolled in.
- ✓ **Heading:** Address me as Dr./Prof./ Ms. Thomas
 - No first names, don't just start off saying 'hey' or go directly into the email message.
- ✓ **Body:**
 - Use correct grammar, not texting/chatting shorthand. This means use complete sentences, capitalization, and punctuation.

Special Needs and Accessibility Concerns

UNCG is committed to meeting the needs of all students and providing options for persons with documented special needs. If you require accommodations, it is your responsibility to communicate your needs to me as soon as possible. You can find further information about available resources here: [Office of Accessibility Resources and Services](#) .

*****Academic Integrity and Plagiarism*****

In all assignments, students are expected to do their own work and abide by the Honor Code. With current technology it can be tempting to find, copy, and paste someone else's work and pass it off as your own. Remember, if you can find it, so can I.

Plagiarism is a serious offense that could result not only in failure for the particular assignment, but also in failure for the entire course. For complete information on the University Honor Code, follow this link: [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Course Requirements

There will be six in-class "half-hourly" quizzes (including an ungraded skills quiz), one "think piece" paper, and a take-home final exam . You will also have occasional Discussion Board assignments, including a Web-based exercise the first week of class. The grades for any discussion board work will comprise half of your participation grade. Below is an explanation of these components, with the weight for each.

***Note: All written assignments are to be submitted in class, not via email. If you are absent from class without a documented excuse, your paper will be counted as late thereafter. If you are not sick enough to go to the doctor, then bring your paper to class to avoid the penalty.**

Quizzes and Film Worksheets: 25%

The quizzes will cover materials from the assigned readings, lectures, film, and any other class related materials. To do well on the quizzes, you need to pay attention and take notes as we discuss the assigned readings during in class.

***There are no make-up quizzes**, but you will be allowed to drop one of your grades **only** if you have taken the skills quiz at the beginning of the semester. Once you have missed one quiz, all quizzes missed thereafter will be graded at zero.

Think Piece Paper: 25%

This assignment will be a 5-7 page paper (1500-2000 words typed, double spaced, 1" margins, 12 pt. Times New Roman font) in response to assigned topics from the required texts. It will be based on your readings, class lectures, and our discussions. This will not be a research paper, therefore no outside reading will be necessary. I will grade these papers on the quality of your writing as well as the clarity and persuasiveness of your argument. (If writing is a concern for you, take advantage of the Writing Center and allow plenty of time to work on the paper.) **Late papers will be penalized 5 pts per day for being submitted any later than the class period of the due date.**

Take Home Final Exam: 25%

The final exam will be a 6-8 pages (2000 or more words, typed, double spaced, 1" margins, 12 pt. Times New Roman font). I will distribute 3-4 questions on the last day of the course and you will be required to construct an essay that clearly answers two of these questions based on the primary and secondary sources provided for the class. Again, no outside sources are to be used. **The exams will be due in my office (MHRA 2114) no later than 11:00 a.m. Th Dec 6. Late papers will be penalized 10 pts for being submitted any later than that time, so plan accordingly.**

Participation: 25%

Students will be graded both on class participation and discussion board contributions. This means you need to have read the texts and thought about what they had to say. I will call on students to respond to questions in class occasionally but will expect you to be engaged in the learning process over the course of the semester.

Grading Range:

A+ (97 and above), A (93-96), A- (90-92); B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82); C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72); D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62); F (less than 60, unacceptable work)

Course Schedule

All documents and any other supplementary materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Readings are listed under the dates we will cover the material in class, which means you are required to read the assigned material for each date prior to coming to class.

Week 1: Trade and Tribute

T/Aug 19: Introduction to class.

Th/Aug 21: Reading: "Cross-cultural contacts and exchanges" and "Things You Don't Give or Sell but Which you Keep"

***Web based exercise on BB due by 11:59 p.m. Sun Aug 24**

Week 2: Chinese Culture

T/Aug 26: "Early Chinese Cosmopolitanism" and "The Biography of General Li Kuang"

Th/Aug 28: "Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order"

***Practice Skills/Map Quiz**

Week 3: The Rise of Silk Road Trade (206 BCE-220 CE)

T/Sept 2: Liu, *The Silk Road in World History* (Hereinafter referred to as Liu Text), Ch. 1, 1-19; and "The Silk Road in Gansu and Ningxia"

Th/Sept 4: Film: *A Thousand Kilometers Beyond the Yellow River*, **Film Worksheet due Monday**

Week 4: Silk Road Trade Goods

T/Sept 9: Film Worksheet

Liu, *The Silk Roads: A Brief History with Documents* (Hereinafter referred to as Liu Reader), 37-43 and 47-50. Liu Text, Ch. 2: 20-41.

***Quiz 1**

Th/Sept 11: *The Art Gallery in the Desert*, **Film Worksheet Due Mon**

Week 5: The Mediterranean Terminus

T/Sept 16: Film Worksheet

Liu Text Ch. 2

Th/Sept 18: Liu Reader 59-73

Week 6: Religions of the Silk Road

T/Sept 23: Liu Text Ch. 3 and "The Spiritual Identity of the Silk Road"

Th/Sept 25: No Class

Week 7: Religions of the Silk Road

T/Sept 30: Liu Reader, 133-139 and "Monasteries and Monarchs"

Th/Oct 2: Liu Text 87-106, Liu Reader 144-151, and "Caliph and Caravan"

***Quiz 3**

Week 8: The Southern Silk Road

T/Oct 7: "China's Southwestern Silk Road in World History"

Th/Oct 9: "Central Eurasia Ascendant" and "Xinjian: China's Pre-and Post-Modern Crossroad"

Week 9: FALL BREAK...NO CLASSES THIS WEEK

Week 10: Contests for Power on the Silk Road

T/Oct 20: Liu Text 107-126 and Rossabi, 1-24

Th/Oct 22: *The Dark Castle*, **Film Worksheet Due Monday**

Week 11: Caravans and Conquest—Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, and Kublai Khan

T/Oct 27: Film Worksheet

“Nobles and Notables: Ibn Battuta, 1324-1356” and Rossabi, 25-42

***“Think Piece” Paper due in class.**

Th/Oct 29: Rossabi, 84-115

Week 12: Indian Ocean Trade and Exchange

T/Nov 4: Rossabi 128-141 and Alpers, Ch 1-2

***Quiz 4**

Th/Nov 6: *1421: When China Discovered America?* **Film Worksheet Due Monday**

Week 13: The Maritime Trade and the Silk Road

T/Nov 11: Film Worksheet

Alpers, Ch 3

Th/Nov 13: No Class

Week 14: The Twilight of the Trade

T/Nov 18: Alpers Ch. 4 and 6

***Quiz 5**

Th/Nov 20: Film: *Spice Island Saga*, **Film Worksheet Due Monday**

Week 15: Wrap up and Review

T/Nov 25: Film Worksheet

“The Asian world, 500-1500 CE”

DEC 6: Final Exam due to my office (MHRA 2114) by 11:00 a.m. NO EMAILED EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

The syllabus is a guide that is subject to change. If changes are made, I will announce them in advance and incorporate them into the online syllabus.