

University of North Carolina at Greensboro
HIS 382: Silks and Spices: A History of the Silk Road in China

MWF 10:00am-10:50am
MCVR 228

2006 Spring Semester

Instructor: James A. Anderson

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Course web site: <http://www.uncg.edu/~jaander2/HIS382>

Office Hours: MW 11:00-11:50 a.m., 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. 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 two 5-7 page (12-point font *Times New Roman* font, double-spaced, 1” margins, paginated) “think piece” papers. The first paper will be due in class on **Friday, March 3rd**. The second paper is due in class on **Friday, April 21st**. 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, May 1st** and it must be turned in to me no later than 3 p.m. on **Monday, May 8th**. 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

“Half-hourly” quizzes	40% (8% each)
Map Quiz	Ungraded "practice quiz"
Paper #1	15%
Paper #2	15%
Final Exam	15%
Class Participation	15%

“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 5 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 the question while using the primary sources provided for the class. **The exams will be due in my office (242 McIver) no later than 3pm on Monday, May 8th.** We'll talk more about this exam later in the course.

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 during lecture. When a film is shown in class, we will, if time allows, follow the presentation with a short discussion. Following each film you will submit responses to a set of film questions, due in the following class period.

Students will be graded on their contribution to the formal discussion groups and on their participation in informal 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.

Short Discussion Response Exercises

Following discussions led by student discussion groups, I will require that you submit a two (2)-paragraph response to the five questions posed by that week's discussion group. One (1) paragraph will be a response to one of the five questions submitted by the group. One (1) paragraph will be a personal reflection on the whole classroom discussion that week. Was anything left out of the general discussion? Do you have an observation that you wish to offer in

greater detail? These 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. Please include your name with each submission. You will be required to submit at least **five** (5) responses this semester.

Web-site

I have created a Web site for this classroom, which I will continue to expand as the semester progresses. 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. I will also include additional materials on the library's Electronic Reserve list. Please refer to the class Web site periodically for such materials.

“Think Piece” Paper

The “think piece” paper, to be written on assigned topics, will be based on your readings, section discussions, and the lectures. The first paper will be based on the Folz and Whitfield books, and the second paper will be based on the Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta books. These papers are not research papers; 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. Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade for each day beyond the original due date

Web-based exercise

During the first weeks of classes I will 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. In a short three-sentence response please describe the kind of pilgrim that might visit this site. Use the e-mail address you will most often access during the semester, and send the responses to jamie_anderson@uncg.edu

Required Books

1. Foltz, Richard C. *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000. ISBN: 0312233388.
2. Whitfield, Susan. *Life Along the Silk Road*. Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2000. ISBN: 0520232143.
3. Polo, Marco *The Travels of Marco Polo*. New York & London: Penguin Classics; Reissue edition, 1958. ISBN: 0140440577.
4. Ibn Battuta. *The Travels of Ibn Battuta: in the Near East, Asia and Africa, 1325-1354*. Samuel Lee, Trans. New York: Dover Publications, 2004. ISBN: 0486437655.
5. Levathes, Louise *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405-1433* Paperback Reprint edition. Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0195112075.

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

Lecture Schedule

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
TRADE & TRIBUTE: A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION	
January 9-13: Course introduction. Tribute and Trade along the Silk Road.	<p>Reading: Foltz, 1-21.</p> <p>Discussion reading: “Cross-cultural contacts and exchanges” (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Web-based exercise <u>due</u> by Friday (see p. 3 of syllabus for instructions)</p>
EAST ASIA: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT	
Monday January 16th	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Classes dismissed; offices closed.
January 18-20: Chinese Culture. Characteristics of the Chinese Imperial Court. Importance of Central Asia.	<p>Reading: “Early Chinese Cosmopolitanism” (on e-reserve)</p> <p>Discussion reading: “Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order”(on e-reserve)</p>
“Practice” Map Quiz #1	Tuesday 1/18
THE SILK ROAD	
January 30-February 3: The Rise of the Silk Road Trade. Han to Tang Dynasties. Xiongnu and Roman Empires	<p>Reading: Whitfield, 1-26.</p> <p>Discussion Film: <i>A Thousand Miles Beyond the Yellow River</i></p>
February 6-10: Religions along the Silk Road: Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Judaism	<p>Reading: Foltz, 23-36, 61-87.</p> <p>Discussion reading: “The Glory of the T’ang” (on e-reserve)</p>
QUIZ #2, Monday 2/6	
February 13-17: Religions along the Silk Road: Buddhism. The Cave Paintings of Dunhuang and Others.	<p>Readings: 1. Foltz, 37-59. 2. Whitfield: 113-137, 155-173.</p> <p>Discussion Film: <i>The Art Gallery in the Desert</i> & British Library Dunhuang images (in class)</p>
February 20- 24: The Islamization of the Silk Road region.	<p>Reading: Foltz, 89-109.</p> <p>Discussion Reading: “Xinjiang: China’s Pre- and Post-Modern Crossroad” (http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/newsletter/vol3num1/2_xinjiang.php)</p>
QUIZ #3, Monday 2/20	

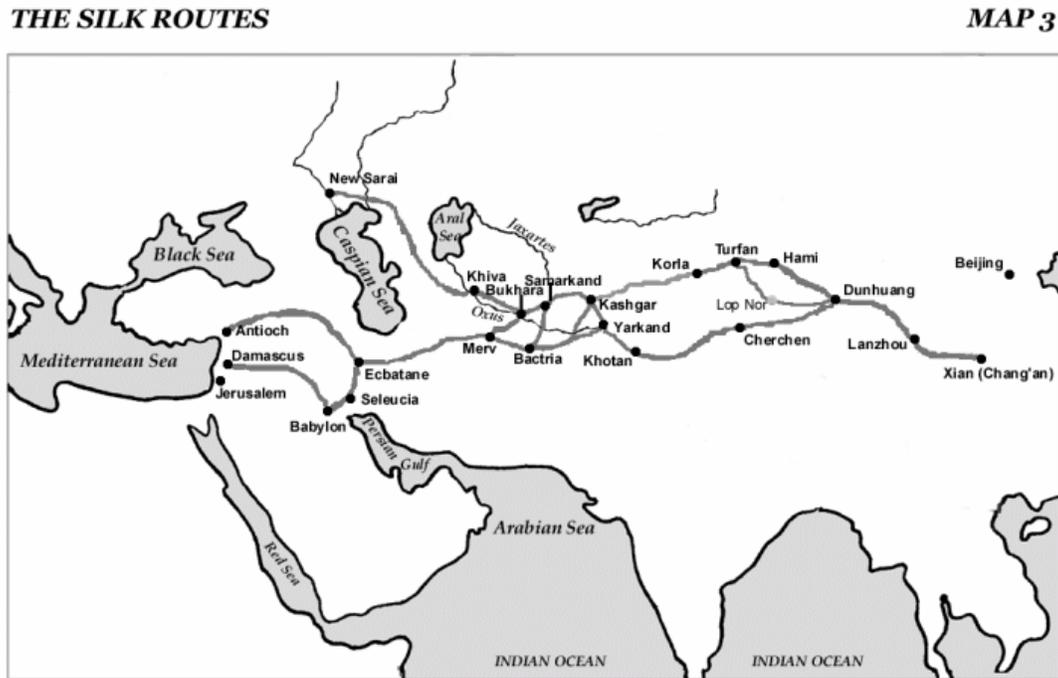
February 27- March 3: Tibet and Xinjiang's Role in Central Asian History.	Reading: Whitfield, 27-94. Discussion Film: <i>The Soghdian Merchants</i> .
FRIDAY, MARCH 3rd	FIRST THINK PIECE PAPER DUE

SPRING BREAK: March 4, Saturday - Instruction Ends for Spring Break 1:00 p.m

March 13, Monday - Classes resume after Spring Break 8:00 a.m

WEEK'S TOPIC	READINGS AND DISCUSSION
March 13-17: Caravans and Conquest: Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, and Kublai Khan	Reading: Foltz, 111-144. Discussion Film: <i>The Dark Castle</i>
THE SPICE TRADE	
March 20-24: The Fall of the Silk Road & the Rise of the Spice Trade. What was the true nature of Zheng He's Voyages?	Readings: Levathes, 19-106. Discussion Film: <i>1421: When China Discovered America? (Part One)</i>
QUIZ #4, Monday 3/20	
March 27-31: What was the true nature of Zheng He's Voyages? (Cont.)	Reading: Levathes, 107-203. Discussion Film: <i>1421: When China Discovered America? (Part Two)</i>
April 3-7: Pre-colonial Indian Ocean Trade and Exchange	Reading: "Shipping and Spices in Asian Seas" (on e-reserve) Discussion Film: <i>Spice Island Saga</i>
QUIZ #5, Monday 4/3	
April 10-14: Pre-colonial Indian Ocean Trade and Exchange (cont.)	Readings: "Trade in the Indian Ocean at the dawn of the 16 th century" (on e-reserve) Discussion Reading: Ibn Battuta (TBA)
April 17-21: Early Europeans along the Spice Routes	Readings: 1. "Malacca in Malay History to 1641" (on e-reserve) 2. "The West arrives in Asia" (on e-reserve)
FRIDAY, APRIL 21st	SECOND THINK PIECE PAPER DUE
April 24-28: Early Europeans along the Spice Routes (cont.)	Readings: 1. "Malacca in Malay History to 1641" (on e-reserve) 2. "The West arrives in Asia" (on e-reserve)
QUIZ #6, Monday 4/24	
May 1: Final Discussion, Concluding Points and Student Evaluations	Final Discussion
MONDAY, MAY 1st	LAST DAY OF CLASS
MONDAY, MAY 8th	EXAM DUE BY 3 PM in MCVR 242

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



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC *marcopolo*
XPEDITIONS
www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions