

HIEA 128: HISTORY OF THE SILK ROAD IN CHINA

Spring Quarter, 2009

Time: Tu Th, 5:00 – 6:20
Professor: Suzanne Cahill
Phone: (858) 534-8105
E-mail: secjbm34@aol.com

Place: Warren Lecture Hall 2205
Office: HSS 3040
Office Hours: Th 10:00 AM – Noon,
after class, or by appointment

INTRODUCTION

This course introduces the Silk Road(s) in medieval China and, to a lesser extent, Japan. We will explore the Silk Road in history, archaeology, religion, economics, material culture, information and technology transfer, and in the Chinese imagination. We will focus most closely on the period from around 206 BCE to about 907 CE, including the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE), Three Kingdoms, Jin, and Six Dynasties period (220 – 581 CE) through the Sui(581 – 618) and Tang (618 - 907) dynasties. A detailed chronology is found at the end of this syllabus.

We will begin the first week with definitions of the Silk Road and an overview of the history of early exchanges between China and the West. For the rest of the quarter we will examine the significance of the Silk Road for different aspects of Chinese history and culture. Starting in the second week, we will outline the controversies arising out of foreigners removing artifacts from Silk Road sites. Next we will survey religions along the trade route, especially Buddhism. After that we visit a famous World Heritage Site: the Mogao cave temples at Dunhuang. In week five we will have the midterm examination. Next we will examine lives of people at various places along the silk route, and you will turn in your paper or project proposal. After that we will visit another site, Urumchi, and investigate the controversial mummies of non-Chinese descent found there. Finally, we will read a satirical novel based on the travels of a famous Buddhist monk and set along the silk route. In the tenth week we will have no reading assignment so that you can finish your research projects. We will see and critic at least one film a week, including many episodes of an NHK series on the Silk Road.

One underlying assumption of this course is that contact has been going on between the east and the west for a very long time and has profoundly influenced the cultures of East Asia. People have been trading, fighting, and traveling for thousands of years along what we now call the Silk Road. Globalization is not new. In fact, the Tang dynasty (618 – 907) was a high point of international culture. Trade and transfer of things, ideas, and technology have a long history, of which the period of extensive trade and contact along the Silk Road is a pivotal chapter.

Our approach is interdisciplinary: we use ideas and materials from several academic disciplines in order to examine material culture in China as thoroughly as we can. Disciplines include history, literature, architecture, design, technology, archaeology, religious studies, anthropology, sociology, and critical gender studies. We read both primary and secondary sources, and view art and film as well as texts.

REQUIREMENTS

There are no prerequisites. Each student should come to class with the reading for that day finished, participate in discussions, and complete all assignments. Assignments are due on the date they are listed. You must complete all required assignments to pass the class. There are four. First, each student will bring something connected to the Silk Road to share with the class (10% of your grade). We will schedule this to take place at the beginning of class throughout the quarter. You will show your object, explain how you got it, and its relation to the Silk Road. (Your object must relate to the Silk Road.) Secondly, there will be an in-class midterm exam consisting of essays and identifications (30%). The midterm will cover readings, films, lectures, and class discussions. Third, a project or paper (approximately 10 pages) is due on the last day of classes (30%). Suitable projects include specific research, site visits, fieldwork, fiction, drama, art, and music. You must clear your topic with me by the sixth week. You may do projects together. Finally, there will be a take-home final exam consisting of essays covering material from after the midterm (30%). The final will be due on June 11, from 7 – 10:00 PM.

REQUIRED TEXTS: listed in order of use

Texts are available at Groundworks Books: (858) 452-962, and on reserve at Geisel Library.

Xinru Liu, *The Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Interactions in Eurasia*

Peter Hopkirk, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*

Arthur Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History*

Whitfield, Whitfield, and Agnew, *Cave Temples of Mogao: Art and History on the Silk Road*

Susan Whitfield, *Life Along the Silk Road*

Elizaabeth Wayland Barber, *Mummies of Urumchi*

Arthur Waley, *Monkey*

Recommended text

Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics*

OUTLINE OF COURSE

DATES

TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS

Week One

- March 31 **I. INTRODUCTION**
Aims, Issues, Definitions, Requirements
Assignment: Buy your books; first reading assignment due Thursday
- April 2 **II. THE SILK ROAD: A BRIEF OVERVIEW**
A. Material and Cultural Exchanges
Reading: *The Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Interactions in Eurasia*
(Read the whole pamphlet)
B. Setting Out From Chang'an
Film: "The Glories of Ancient Chang'an" (NHK)
- III. A CONTINUING CONTROVERSY: ARE FOREIGNERS
LOOTERS OR SAVIORS OF SILK ROAD CULTURE?**

Week Two

- April 7 **A. Introducing the Players and the Problem**
Reading: *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, chapters 1 - 6
- April 9 **B. Exploration, Discovery, Adventure, Scholarship, Diplomacy, Robbery**
Reading: *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, chapters 7 – 12
Film: NHK series

Week Three

- April 14 **B. The Debate on Removing Artifacts from the Silk Road**
Reading: *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road*, chapters 13 - 16

IV. RELIGIONS ALONG THE SILK ROAD

April 16 **A. Buddhist Teachings**
Reading: *Buddhism in Chinese History*
(Read the whole book.)

Week Four

April 21 **B. Buddhism and Material Culture in China**
C. Other Religions: Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, Islam
Film: NHK series
Reading: *Cave Temples of Mogao: Art and History on the Silk Road*, pages 1 - 70

V. SITE VISIT: THE MOGAO CAVES AT DUNHUANG

April 23 **A. History, Fabrication, Conservation**
Reading: *Cave Temples of Mogao: Art and History on the Silk Road*, p. 71 - 137

Week Five

April 28 **B. Touring the Caves**
Film: “The Art Gallery in the Desert” (NHK)
No reading: Review for the midterm

April 30 **MIDTERM**

Week Six

VI. LIFE ALONG THE SILK ROAD

May 5A. **A. From Samarkand to Kocho**
Reading: *Life Along the Silk Road*, pages 1 - 94

May 7 **B. From Chang’an to Dunhuang**
Reading: *Life Along the Silk Road*, pages 95 – 173
Film: NHK series

Week Seven

- May 12 **C. Around Dunhuang**
Reading: *Life Along the Silk Road*, page 124 - 229
PAPER OR PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE

VII. SITE VISIT: URUMCHI (WULUMUQI)

- May 14 **A. The Mummies of Urumchi**
Reading: *The Mummies of Urumchi*, chapters 1 – 5

Week Eight

- May 19 **B. Who Were They?**
Reading: *The Mummies of Urumchi*, chapters 6 - 10
video: “Mysterious Mummies of China”

VIII. THE SILK ROAD IN CHINESE LITERARY IMAGINATION

- May 21 **A. The Pilgrim Monk Xuan Zang and His Travels**
Reading: *Monkey*, Chapters I - X

Week Nine

- May 26 **B. The Novel *Xi You Ji* “Record of a Journey to the West” or “Monkey”**
Reading: *Monkey*, chapters XI - XXI

- May 28 **C. Adventures and Meanings**
Reading: *Monkey*, chapters XXII – XXX

Week Ten

- June 2 **D. Monkey in Modern Media**
Fim: Cartoon of Monkey

- June 4 Student Presentations
PROJECT OR PAPER DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS
Final Exam handed out at end of class
- June 11 FINAL EXAM DUE** between 7:00 PM and 10:00 PM in WLH 2205

PAPER OR PROJECT

You may choose almost anything that fits within the subject matter of our course. You may do a group project. Some possible types of paper or project include:

1. Research paper with a narrow focus
2. Fieldwork, survey, or site report
3. Art history paper
4. Art project, installation, or model
5. Drama or music
6. Fiction or poetry
7. Fake primary sources such as letters, journals, instructions: historical documents of any kind
8. Game/game analysis
9. Literature or film criticism
10. Class presentation or demonstration

The paper or project will be judged on **topic, research, effort, analysis, and the quality of the final product**. Prof Cahill must approve your topic. At least three academic sources are required. Wikipedia is not an academic source, although you may use it to lead you to appropriate sources. You may use DVD or other new media for your final product. Make sure that you use equipment and formats compatible with Professor Cahill's. **CHECK!** If you write a paper, it should be about 10 pages long (double-spaced). A group paper or project would need to be proportionately longer. You may use any standard format for footnotes and bibliography. Papers and projects may not be submitted by e-mail. (You are turning them in on the last day of classes; the chance for loss or bad transmission is too great.

DYNASTIES AND THEIR DATES

B.C.E.

Xia	ca. 2100-1600
Shang	ca. 1600-1028
Zhou	ca. 1027-256
Western Zhou	ca. 1027-771
Eastern Zhou	ca. 770-256
Spring and Autumn	722-468
Warring States	403-221
Qin	221-207
Han	206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.
Former Han	206 B.C.E-8 C.E.

C.E.

Xin	9-25
Latter Han	25-220
Three Kingdoms	220-265
Wei	220-265
Shu	221-263
Wu	222-280
Jin	265-420
Western Jin	265-317
Eastern Jin	317-420
Six Dynasties	420-589
SOUTHERN	
Liu Song	420-479
Southern Qi	470-502
Southern Liang	502-557
Southern Chen	557-589
NORTHERN	
Northern Wei	386-534
Eastern Wei	534-550
Western Wei	535-577
Northern Qi	550-577
Northern Zhou	557-581

Sui	581-618
Tang	618-907
Zhou	690-705
Five Dynasties	907-960
Liao	916-1125
Song	960-1279
Northern Song	960-1126
Southern Song	1127- 1279
Jin (Jurchen)	1115-1234
Yuan (Mongols)	1260-1368
Ming	1368-1644
Qing	1644-1911
Republic (Taiwan)	1911-
People's Republic	1949-

These dates are based on William H. Nienhauser. *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986