

9-2014

ANTY 141H.01A: The Silk Road

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Recommended Citation

Kia, Ardeshir, "ANTY 141H.01A: The Silk Road" (2014). *Syllabi*. Paper 1476.
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CENTRAL & SOUTHWEST ASIAN STUDIES CENTER

SILK ROAD

(ANTY 141 / HSTR 146)

FALL 2014

TR 12:40 – 2:00

DR. ARDI KIA; OFFICE PHONE 243-2235

OFFICE: STONE HALL (OLD JOURNALISM) 303

OFFICE HOURS: MWF 9:00 – 12:00

Silk Road:

For more than 2,500 years Central and Southwest Asia has been the focus of ancient east-west trade routes collectively called the Silk Road, and at various points in history, cradles of culture, power, and scholarship. They were the board on which the 19th and 20th century's greatest geopolitical chess match, the "Great Game" between imperial Britain and imperial of Russia, was played.

Together, Central and Southwest Asia form a vast expanse of plain, steppe, and knotted mountain ranges stretching from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to Mongolia in the east, from Siberia in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south. Where Europe and Asia meet on the Eurasian steppes, Central and Southwest Asia create both a bridge and barrier. This region encompasses five former Soviet republics (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan), Mongolia, Tibet, the Xinjiang province of China, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Israel and the Arab states of the Middle East. While Southwest Asia historically has been open and accessible, Central Asia until recently was inaccessible and unfamiliar to the outside world, thanks in particular to its isolation within the former Soviet Union and China. Even now, many people think of it as a desert wasteland of illiterate nomads. Nothing could be further from the truth. Both Central and Southwest Asia are as geographically diverse as they are historically rich.

Along with formidable deserts, there are fertile valleys of shoulder high pasture within view of some of the highest mountain peaks on the planet. Though the people of Central and Southwest Asia have had distinct cultural identities for centuries, the majority of the countries that this course covers were invented in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Central and Southwest Asia are again at a geopolitical pivot point – within their borders lies a repository of immense natural wealth and a reservoir of potential converts to Islam, nationalism or the free market. This former blank spot on the map is being discovered again – by armies, students, scholars, aid workers, and travelers.

Over the centuries, the most significant innovations carried along the Silk Road were high value goods, technology, belief systems, and religious arts of India, China, Persia, Central Asia, Mediterranean and the Middle East. Its famous trade in silk was carried on against incredible odds by great caravans of merchants and animals traveling at a snail's pace over some of the most inhospitable territory on earth. For today's student, it is not only the amazing history and the weight of the cultures that makes the Silk Road so intriguing, but the incredible diversity of societies, economies, and ethnic and linguistic groups to be found along the way.

Course Objectives:

The learning objective of this course is to provide students with a broad introductory perspective on the inhabitants, cultures, and economies found along the ancient four thousand mile long Silk Road in Central and Southwest Asia. The countries and cultures found along the Silk Road are studied by examining the diverse historical, cultural, social, economic and political processes that affect them. Upon completion of the course, the student will have a good general understanding of the most important and formative historical events that have occurred in urban and rural environments along Central and Southwest Asia's Silk Road.

Course Grade:

Daily Notes	20%
Midterm Writing Project	20%
Final Writing Project	20%
Final Exam	20%
Map Project	10%
Attendance and Quizzes	10%

Daily Notes (Journal), includes a minimum of one page of notes on the lecture, slides and power point presentation, video and other activities in the class. Students are expected to include in their daily notes (journal) their personal feelings and thoughts at the conclusion of each class.

TEXTBOOK: LUCE BOULNOIS, SILK ROAD, W.W. NORTON, N.Y. 2012.

Course Schedule:

AUG. 26	Introduction
AUG. 28	Empress Leizu, China and the Silk Road Reading: Luce Boulnois' Silk Road, Chapter 1, "Serica," pp. 33-47
SEP. 02	India and the Silk Road Reading: Chapter 2, "The Land of Silk," pp. 48-58.
SEP. 04	State Formation - Achaemenid Empire Reading: Chapter 3,5 "Adventures of a Diplomat Explorer: The Opening of the Silk Road to the West," pp. 59-74
SEP. 09	Parthian Emperor Mithradates II & the Silk Road

- Reading: Chapter 4, "The Power of Kingdom Rests with its Horses," pp. 75-87
- SEP. 11 Kushanid Empire & the Silk Road
Reading: Chapter 5, "Armies and Caravans into the Unknown," pp. 75-87
- SEP. 16 Sassanid Empire & the Other Silk Road
Reading: Chapter 6, "The Geographer in Antiquity and Women's Extravagance," pp. 88-120.
- SEP. 18 Rome & the Silk Road
Reading: Chapter 7, "Dangers of Erythraean Sea," pp. 121-14
- SEP. 23 Arab invasion of Central Asia and coming of Islam
Reading: Chapter 8, "The Seven Treasures," pp. 145-177
- OCT. 02 Secrets of Silk revealed on the Silk Road
Reading: Chapter 9, "Silk Princess," pp. 178-190
- OCT. 07 Byzantium Empire & European Silk Industry
Reading: Chapter 10, "Transfers," pp. 191-208
- OCT. 09 Andalusia & the Revival of Trade & Commerce
Reading: Chapter 11, "Transmitters of Faith," pp. 209-234
- OCT. 14 Samanid Golden Age
Reading: Chapter 12, "Byzantium, Persia, the Turks, and the Soghdians," pp. 234-255.
- OCT. 16 Kingdom of Tibet & the Extension of the Silk Road
Reading: Chapter 13, "Tang China, Islam, the Turks and Tibet," pp. 255-278
- OCT. 21 Turkification of Central Asia & Silk Road via Sea
Reading: Chapter 14, "The World Marketplace of Sindbad the Sailor," pp. 279-311
- OCT. 23 Mongol Invasion and Devastation of the Silk Road via Land

Midterm Writing Project Due

- OCT. 28 Venice and the Silk Road
Reading: Chapter 15, "Polio Oriente, Cloths of Gold and Silk," pp. 311-353
- OCT. 30 Marco Polo and the revival of Silk Road via Land
Reading: Chapter 16, "Tall Tales from Afar," pp. 353-362
- NOV. 06 Golden Age of Timurid Culture & Art
Revival of Silk Road via Land
- NOV. 13 Ching Occupation of Xinjiang

Map Project Due

- NOV. 18 The Great Sea Powers & Silk Road via Sea
Reading: Chapter 17, "The Emergence of the Great Sea Powers and the Birth of the French Silk Industry,"

- pp. 363-378
- NOV. 20 Russian Colonial Expansion
Russification of Central Asia & End of the Silk Road?
- NOV. 25 Nishijin : Japanese Silk Industry
Reading: Chapter 18, " From the Last Sailing Ships to the Eurochrysalid and Transgenic Worm," pp. 379-398
- DEC. 02 The European Union & the New Silk Road
Reading: Chapter 19, "The Second Silk Road: Exploration, Archeologists, and Reporters," pp. 399-416
- DEC. 04 The United States & the New Silk Road
Reading: Chapter 20, "Roads and Bridges, Tourism and Pipelines," pp. 417-435
- DEC. 08 (Monday) Final Exam: 10:10 – 12:00 (noon)**
1. Daily Notes (Journal)
2. Final Writing Project

Late Drop policy: The seventh instructional day is the last day to drop the course without a petition.

Student Conduct Code: The student conduct code applies, and should be read by students. In particular, plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will result in a failing grade on the specific assignment, and/or course.

Disability accommodation: Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented physical, or learning disabilities. University policy states the responsibility of students with documented disabilities to contact instructors **DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF THE SEMESTER** to discuss appropriate accommodations to ensure equity in evaluation of classroom assignments and examination. The instructor will meet with students and staff of the Disability Services for Students (DSS) to make accommodations for this course. Please contact DSS 243-2372, at the Lommasson Center, room 154.