

THE SILK ROADS HISTORY 440/540

Fall 2020

Dr. Ali İğmen, Professor of History

Monday, 6:30-9:15 p.m.

Office: FO2-116, **Office Hours: M & W 1:00-3:30 p.m.**

This course is online

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Zoom link for advising and office hours: <https://csulb.zoom.us/j/5443958955>

Course Description:

This course examines the Silk Roads from the first century BCE to the end of the fifteenth century CE from a world historical perspective. The course focuses upon the cultural, economic and political exchanges across Eurasia, between the Eastern Mediterranean and the East Asian Pacific in the classical and postclassical periods of world history. The concept and historiography of the Silk Roads as a geographical and historical space will be examined. Cultural and technological encounter and diffusion, environmental and biological interaction, and comparative economic and political development within and across Eurasia will be emphasized. Other themes will include analysis of the agency of pastoral nomadism in Eurasian cultural, economic and political exchange and development; examination of emergent religious and cultural syncretism along and through the Silk Roads; comparison of sedentary agricultural and nomadic empires; analysis of the intensity and scale of technological and economic exchange and integration; evaluation of the applicability of world-systems theory to study of the Silk Roads; and analysis of the relationship between overland and maritime trade at the onset of the early modern world.

Course Objectives:

1. Objective: To introduce the historiographical origins and breadth of World History as a field, with specific focus upon cross-cultural, comparative and environmental approaches, through in-class discussions of methodology, vocabulary, and interpretations presented in assigned readings. **Outcome:** Students will demonstrate familiarity with the historiography and significance of varied approaches to World History in book or journal review essays, historiographical essays, research papers, or annotated bibliographies.

2. Objective: To increase students' abilities to analyze primary and secondary sources that represent a multiplicity of perspectives within the context of World History through in-class training in assessment of such sources as well as assignments. **Outcome:** Students will record and present their assessments of issues of bias and the significance of record keeping (and control over it) in written papers and oral presentations on these sources. In their discussion and written work, students will also analyze the ways that the available primary sources have shaped the findings in various in secondary works.

3. Objective: To introduce the historiographical origins of the history of basins in general and that of Inner Eurasia in particular, noting scholarly convergences and divergences between historical conceptualizations of Inner Eurasia, the Steppes and the Silk Roads, and the discipline of World History. **Outcome:** Students will demonstrate familiarity with the historiography and

significance these differing conceptualizations – and the limits of such approaches – through book or journal review essays, historiographical essays, research papers, or annotated bibliographies.

4. Objective: To examine differing concepts of periodization in World History and their applicability to the history of the Silk Roads. **Outcome:** Students will demonstrate (through papers and class discussion) understanding of concepts of periodization and by recognizing historical divergences and departures between the classical and postclassical periods as applied to the Silk Roads and Central Asian basin.

5. Objective: To examine human environmental interactions and the biological exchange of disease, plants and animals along the Silk Roads and their Eurasian implications. **Outcome:** Through written papers and discussion, students will be able to account for environmental and biological interactions along the Silk Roads and recognize their demographic and environmental consequences on a Eurasian scale.

6. Objective: To be able to analyze and account for cultural encounter along the Silk Roads, and to identify the significant outcomes of these exchanges on local, regional and world historical scales of historical analysis. **Outcome:** Students will prepare oral presentations or written papers, which will compare the origins and consequences of a specific encounter on different spatial scales.

7. Objective: To engage in comparative forms of world historical analysis. **Outcome:** Through papers or BeachBoard responses, students will compare the development and structures of nomadic empires with those of sedentary agricultural societies, and will substantiate their claims with appropriate evidence from secondary historical scholarship.

8. Objective: To demonstrate understanding of the significance of pastoral nomads as conduits and transmitters of culture and technology within and across the Silk Roads. **Outcome:** Through research papers or bluebook examinations, students will identify key nomadic groups and account for their agency in the diffusion of culture and technology along the Silk Roads and weigh its larger significance on a Eurasian scale.

9. Objective: To understand the role of the Silk Roads in the diffusion of major world religions and to identify and analyze the forces that influenced the hybrid and syncretic transformations of these religions across time and space. **Outcome:** Through research papers or historiographic essays, students will account for the movement of religions such as Buddhism along the Silk Roads and analyze the transformation of religious practice in different local and regional cultural contexts with evidence from the scholarly literature.

10. Objective: To weigh the relative validity of different historical arguments and positions within the discipline of World History. **Outcome:** Through historiographic essays or scholarly book reviews, students will analyze the validity of the application world-systems theory to conceptualizations of the Silk Roads and the integration of Afroeurasia at the end of the postclassical period.

Undergraduate Course Requirements

- **The final assignment: a travelogue** (25 points) – 5-7 pages typed, double-spaced with appropriate citations, title page, and bibliography. The travelogue will be a short travel account or diary of an imagined traveler who traveled during a period you will choose on a travel path you will also choose. It will be due during the week of final examinations. Although this is not a research paper but a travelogue, you are required to review the literature assigned during the semester. I will provide more detailed guidelines when we start the semester.
- **Two short primary source analyses** (15 points – 7.5 points each) on Peter Jackson, editor, *Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, and Fa-Hien's *Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*.
- **A book review** (15 points) you must choose one from the recommended texts listed below. Book reviews are not book reports. They should be concise – no more than 4 pages – and address the historiographic and theoretical context, methodology and evidence, and scope and argument of the chosen text. This book review should meet the B.2 requirement for the History 499 portfolio.
- **Ten BeachBoard responses** to prompts generated for weekly readings (30 points—3 each)
- **Class participation** (15 points) – students will be evaluated on the basis of participation and be given guidelines on how to participate and how their participations will be measured. Attendance, preparation, raising and responding to questions, facilitation of book discussions, and critical engagement as demonstrated by oral comments will be among the criteria.

Graduate Course Requirements

In addition to more extensive reading and writing assignments as listed below, graduate students are expected to demonstrate greater breadth, complexity and sophistication in their writing and discussion as compared with undergraduates enrolled in the course.

- **The final assignment: a travelogue** (25 points) – 10 pages typed, double-spaced with appropriate citations, title page, and bibliography. The travelogue will be a short travel account or diary of an imagined traveler who traveled during a period you will choose on a travel path you will also choose. It will be due during the week of final examinations. Although this is not a research paper but a travelogue, you are required to review the literature assigned during the semester. I will provide more detailed guidelines when we start the semester.
- **Two short primary source analyses** (15 points—7.5 each) on Peter Jackson, editor, *Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, and Fa-Hien's *Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*.

- **A book review** (5 points) you must choose a book from the recommended texts listed below. Book reviews should be concise – no more than 4 pages – and address the historiographic and theoretical context, methodology and evidence, and scope and argument of the chosen text.
- **A lecture** (10 points) graduate students will give a 20 to 30-minute lecture based on one of the chapters of the Susan Whitfield book *Silk, Slaves, and Stupas*. Details will be discussed with the students individually.
- **Ten BeachBoard responses** to prompts generated for weekly readings (30 points—3 each)
- **Class participation** (15 points) – students will be evaluated on the basis of participation and be given guidelines on how to participate and how their participations will be measured. Attendance, preparation, raising and responding to questions, facilitation of book discussions, and critical engagement as demonstrated by oral comments will be among the criteria.

Books and Readings

Books may be purchased at the University Bookstore. Articles and book chapters are available on Beach Board.

Required Readings

- **Fa-Hien**, *Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/rbddh10.pdf
- Valerie **Hansen**, *The Silk Road: A New History with Documents*, Oxford University Press, 2016
- Peter **Jackson**, *Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, Hackett Publishing, 2009.
- Susan **Whitfield**, *Silk, Slaves, and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road*, University of California Press, 2018

Optional Readings

- Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989
- Stanley Burstein, “Agricultural and Pastoral Societies” in *The Hellenistic Period in World History*, Michael Adas, ed. (2006).
- David Christian, “The Geography and Ecology of Inner Eurasia,” in *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia: Vol 1: Inner Eurasia from Prehistory to the Mongol Empire* (1998).
- Charles Halperin, “Interpreting the Mongol Yoke: The Ideology of Silence.” in Daniel Kaiser (ed.) *Reinterpreting Russian History* (1994).
- E.E. Kuzmina, “Relations between Eastern and Western Central Asia” in *The Prehistory of the Silk Road* (2007).

- Scott C. Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand, 1709-1876: Central Asia in the Global Age* (2017)
- Scott C. Levi and Ron Sela, “Central Asia and the Arab Conquests” in *Islamic Central Asia: An Anthology of Historical Sources* (2010).
- Xinru Liu, “The Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Interaction in Eurasia” in Michael Adas, ed. *Agricultural and Pastoral Societies* (2001).
- Xinru Liu and Lynda Shafer, *Connections Across Eurasia: Transportation, Communication, and Cultural Exchange Along the Silk Roads*, (2007), ch. 2.
- Xinru Liu and Lynda Shafer, *Connections Across Eurasia: Transportation, Communication, and Cultural Exchange Along the Silk Roads*, (2007), chs. 3-5.
- *Reinterpreting Russian History* (1994).
- Arnold Pacey, “Movements West, 1150-1490” in *Technology and World Civilization* (1991)
- Morris Rossabi, “The ‘Decline’ of the Central Asian Caravan Trade” in James Tracy (ed.) *The Rise of Merchant Empires* (1996).
- A.M. Sakharov, “The Mongols and Cultural Change” in Daniel Kaiser (ed.)

Recommended Texts for the Book Reviews

- Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989
- Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
- Jerry Bentley, *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*, London: Pearson, 2005.
- Frances Wood, *The Silk Road: Two Thousand Years in the Heart of Asia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: August 24, Introduction

- Hansen, introduction and the documents, pp. 1-7

Week 2: August 31: Historiographic Origins

- Hansen, chapter 1 and the documents, pp. 8-11
- David Christian, “‘Inner Eurasia’ as a Unit of World History,” *Journal of World History* (1994)

Beach Board Response #1

Week 3: September 7 (no class meeting on Labor Day): Pastoralism and the Ecology of the Silk Roads

- Hansen, chapter 2 and the documents, pp. 12-17
- Whitfield, chapter 1
- David Christian, “Silk Roads or Steppe Roads? The Silk Roads in World History,” *Journal of World History* (2000).

Beach Board Response #2

Week 4: September 14: Antecedents to the Silk Roads

- Hansen, chapter 3 and the documents, pp. 17-22
- Whitfield, chapter 2
- J.R. McNeill and William McNeill, “The Growth of Webs in the Old World and America, 200-1000 C.E.,” in *The Human Web: A Bird’s-Eye View of World History* (2003).

Beach Board Response #3

Week 5: September 21: Toward a Connected Eurasia

- Hansen, chapter 4 and the documents, pp. 23-27
- Whitfield, chapter 3
- J.R. McNeill and William McNeill, “The Thickening Web, 1000-1500” in *The Human Web: A Bird’s-Eye View of World History* (2003).

Beach Board Response #4

Week 6: September 28: Comparative Methodology in World History

- Hansen, chapter 5 and the documents, pp. 28-31
- Whitfield, chapter 4
- William McNeill, “The Impact of the Mongol Empire of Shifting Disease Balances, 1200-1500, in *Plagues and Peoples* (1977)
- Fa-Hien, *Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, www.buddhanet.com
Primary source analysis (Fa-Hien)

Week 7: October 5: The Second Phase of the Silk Roads: Byzantium and Tang China

- Hansen, chapter 6 and the documents, pp. 32-37
- Whitfield, chapter 5

Beach Board Response #5

Week 8: October 12: Turkic Migrations, Nomadic Empires and the Silk Roads

- Whitfield, chapter 6
- Nicola Di Cosmo, “State Formation and Periodization in Inner Asian History,” *Journal of World History* (1999).
- David Christian, “Turkic Empires of the East” and “Turkic Empires of Western Inner Eurasia” in *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia: Vol 1: Inner Eurasia from Prehistory to the Mongol Empire* (1998).

Beach Board Response #6

Week 9: October 19: Islam on the Silk Road

- Hansen, chapter 7 and the documents, pp. 38-47
- Whitfield, chapter 7
- Carter Findley, “Islam and Empire” in *The Turks in World History* (2005).

Book Review

Week 10: October 26: The Mongol Empire, Eurasian Integration and World-Systems

- Hansen, chapter 8 and the documents, pp. 48-55
- Whitfield, chapter 8
- Valerie Hansen, “The Mongols” in *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600* (2000).

Beach Board Response #7

Week 11: November 2: Comparative Methodology in World History

- Hansen, conclusion
- Whitfield, chapter 9
- Peter Jackson, *Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, Hackett Publishing, 2009.

Beach Board Response #8

Primary source analysis (Friar Rubruck)

Week 12: November 9: Thematic Approaches in World History

- Whitfield, chapter 10
- Arnold Pacey, “Movements West, 1150-1490” in *Technology and World Civilization* (1991)

Beach Board Response #9

Week 13: November 16: The Redirection of the Silk Roads in the late Postclassical Period

- Jerry Bentley, “The New World History” in Lloyd Kramer and Sarah Maza (eds.), *A Companion to Western Historical Thought* (Blackwell, 2002).

Beach Board Response #10

Weeks 14, 15, 16 & 17: November 23, 30, December 7, 14:

Oral presentations of the travelogue

Assignment Due Dates:

- ◇ **Primary Source Analysis (Fa-Hien): September 28**
- ◇ **Book Review: October 19**
- ◇ **Primary Source Analysis (Frier Rubruck): November 2**
- ◇ **Oral Presentations of the travelogue: November 23, & 30, December 7 & 14**

◇ The Travelogue: December 14

Course Policies

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. They are violations of university regulations.

All students will be held to a high standard of academic integrity, which is defined as "the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception." Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

The university defines plagiarism as "the act of using the ideas or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own, without giving credit to the source... Acknowledgement of an original author or source must be made through appropriate references, i.e., quotation marks, footnotes, or commentary. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following: the submission of a work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; failure to give credit for ideas, statements, facts or conclusions with rightfully belong to another; in written work, failure to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or even a part thereof; or close and lengthy paraphrasing of another's writing or programming."

<https://www.csulb.edu/office-of-research-and-sponsored-programs/policy-cheating-and-plagiarism-ps-85-19>

All acts of academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action. All written assignments for the course must be submitted electronically through Beach Board to Turnitin.com in order to ensure the authenticity of the presented written work. A single act of cheating or plagiarism by an undergraduate student will result in a failing grade on the assignment. A single act of cheating or plagiarism by a graduate student will result in a failing grade in the course, regardless of other graded course assignments. All plagiarism cases will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs and, depending on the severity of the case, further disciplinary actions may be taken, including suspension and expulsion, based on University policy. For more information, please see <http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/research/our/information/policies/cheating/>.

Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to notify me in advance of the need for accommodation of a disability. If you have a documented disability and require additional time or other help for examinations and/or assignments, you must obtain verification from the Disabled Students Services Office located in Brotman Hall. The number is 562-985-5401.

Tardiness

Consistent tardiness will not be acceptable and will result in a grade deduction. You need to let me know ahead of time if you are going to be late. If you are late to class beyond 20 minutes of seminar time, I will consider you absent for the day.

Policy on Attendance and Absences

Attendance and participation are required. Missing more than three classes will reduce your grade regardless of how well you do in your other requirements. I am not obligated to consider other absences except the following excused absences: including illness or injury to the student; death, injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like; religious reasons (California Education Code section 89320); jury duty or government obligation; university sanctioned or approved activities (examples include: artistic performances, forensics presentations, participation in research conferences, intercollegiate athletic activities, student government, required class field trips.) If in doubt, please read the CSULB attendance policy: <http://www.csulb.edu/~senate/Policies/01-01.html>.

Please contact me immediately if you need to be absent. If I do not hear from you, I will consider your absence unexcused.

Classroom Etiquette

I will not allow reading of extraneous materials, listening to headsets, private conversations between students and talking on cell phones. PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES, PAGERS, AND OTHER DISTRACTIONS!

Email Communication & Etiquette

Make sure you have your csulb.edu email directed toward your preferred email address in order to receive class news. It is your responsibility to make the appropriate change. Please use a formal address in email contacts, e.g. "Dr. "İğmen," and be sure to sign your full name and your student ID number. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response to your message. I do not accept assignments via e-mail unless special arrangements have been made with me in class prior to the due date. Finally, I do not respond to email message on the weekends or during the holidays.