

History 4603G

Silk Roads and Spice Routes: Ancient and Medieval Asia and World Contacts

Winter 2024

Instructor: **Dr. Carl Young**

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This is a **draft** syllabus. Please see the course site on OWL for a final version.

Course Description

This course will investigate the economic, political, religious, cultural, and technological impact of long distance land and sea trade between Asia and other world regions in ancient and medieval times up to around 1500.

Contacts between different world regions are not a new phenomenon. They have occurred since pre-historic times. Although these early contacts cannot be called globalisation, they connected regions that were a long distance from one another, in spite of obstacles of time and transportation technology. Most of the contacts between Asia and other world regions involved trade in luxuries such as precious metals, silk, and spices both by land and by sea. Along with trade goods, ideas and technologies were also exchanged, a lot of which continue to exercise an influence up to the present day.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- be aware of the ancient origins of exchanges between Asia and other world regions
- understand the interaction of long-distance interregional trade with cultural, religious, and technological exchange and the historical impact of these interactions
- Analyze primary and secondary sources on select topics involving contacts between Asia and other world regions in ancient and medieval times through both oral discussion and written work
- Present findings and views from readings through oral presentations
- Synthesise primary and secondary sources to produce a research paper

Prerequisite(s):

2.0 courses in History at the 2200 level or above

Course Materials

Required Texts

James A. Millward, *The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Xinru Liu, *The Silk Roads: A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012)

Richard Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Pre-modern Patterns of Globalization (2nd edition)*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010)

Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996)

Michal Biran, Jonathan Brack, & Francesca Fiaschetti, *Along the Silk Roads in Mongol Eurasia: Generals, Merchants, and Intellectuals*, (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2020)

Selected articles and book excerpts to be posted on the class OWL site

Methods of Evaluation

1 Term Paper (15-20 pages)	40%
2 Article Analyses (10% each; 3-5 pages each)	20%
1 Book Review (5-7 pages)	20%
Oral Presentation	5%
Participation	<u>15%</u>
	100%

The term paper will be a research paper on a topic of your choice in the history of contacts within Asia and out to other world regions in ancient and medieval times. Suggested topics will be handed out early in the beginning of the semester. The suggested length of the papers will be approximately 15-20 pages. The paper will be due on **March 19**.

The two article analyses will be based around the readings for each class. During the semester, students will choose any **2** of the articles indicated with a “***” on the reading list and write a 3-6 page paper each on the articles. These papers are **due on the day of the relevant seminar in which the particular reading is assigned. This assignment will not normally be accepted late. The last chance to hand in a 1st article analysis, for articles between Jan. 16 and Feb. 13, is Feb. 13. The last chance to hand in a 2nd article analysis, for articles between Feb. 27 and April 2, is April 2.** This assignment is more than merely a summary. The main purpose of the paper is to bring forth the main issues of the article or series of documents, discuss how the author(s) bring forth their point of view, and also analyze the effectiveness of the readings in

conveying information and opinion, as well as their contribution to the topic under discussion in the particular seminar.

The book review will be based on **one** of the four books assigned for the course that are eligible (the book *Along the Silk Roads in Mongol Eurasia: Generals, Merchants, and Intellectuals* is not eligible and the readings from this book will qualify as readings for the article analysis). As with the article analyses, this is more than a summary of the book. Like the article analyses, the review will bring out the main themes and ideas of the book, the author's point of view and how the book helps to better understand the themes covered in the course. The book review will be 5-8 pages and will be due on **Feb. 27**.

Students will also be required to do **1** oral presentation in the course of the semester. These will be based on the articles and documents assigned as readings for the seminar. A sign-up sheet will be passed around in the beginning of the semester. This will involve a brief 10-15 minute presentation on the reading in question, which will include a brief summary of the reading and the launching of questions for discussion.

This is a seminar course and the success of the seminar depends a lot on keeping up with the readings, attendance in class, and participation in discussion. It is for this reason that 15% of the course mark depends on seminar participation. Roll will be taken in each class and students will be given marks for participation in the discussions. Students will be marked on a scale of 1 to 5 for each class and at the end of the semester, the marks will be added together to give an overall participation mark.

If you should have any questions pertaining to the structure or content of the course, please do not hesitate to contact me during my office hours, or by phone or e-mail to make an appointment.

Lateness and Absence Policies

The book review and the term paper will be accepted late. However, there will be a penalty of 2% a day that will be applied for every day the assignments are late, including weekends and holidays.

For assignments worth more than 10% of the mark, in case of family emergency, medical, or compassionate grounds, penalties can be removed from assignments or exams can be rescheduled by undergoing the processes laid out by your home faculty's Academic Counseling office. Please refer to the following links for more information:

- Social Science Academic Counselling on [Absence & Academic Consideration](#)
- University policies on [Academic Consideration for Medical Illness](#)
- Department of History [Undergraduate Policies and Statements](#)

For accommodation for work worth less than 10% of the mark, please contact the instructor for an appointment.

If you do hand in your assignment late, please hand it in to the wooden drop-off box outside the History Department office at Lawson Hall. The staff will pick up the assignment and stamp it with a date and time and put it in my mailbox. This provides greater security and clarity for the handing in of the assignment. Please avoid shoving the paper under my office door if at all possible, because it could get lost.

Course Schedule and Readings

History 4603F –Jan.-April 2024

Readings with a ‘**’ are eligible for the article analysis assignments

Jan. 9—Introduction

Jan. 16—Not Just Silk, Not Just a Road

James A. Millward, *The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 1-110

Xinru Liu, *The Silk Roads: A Brief History in Documents*, p. 1-33

Jan. 23—Ancient Worlds: Greeks, Romans and Han Chinese and the Silk Road

** Fergus Millar, “Looking East from the Classical World: Colonialism, Culture, and Trade from Alexander the Great to Shapur I”, *The International History Review*, Vol. XX, No.3 (Sept. 1998), p. 507-531 (available on OWL)

** Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, “Provincializing Rome: The Indian Ocean Trade Network and Roman Imperialism”, *Journal of World History*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (March 2011), p. 27-54 (available on OWL)

Xinru Liu, *The Silk Roads: A Brief History in Documents*, p. 37-83

Jan.. 30—Middle Men: Central Asians, Persians, and Southeast Asians and Trade by Land and Sea

** Xinru Liu, “Migration and Settlement of the Yuezhi-Kushan: Interaction and Interdependence of Nomadic and Sedentary Societies”, *Journal of World History*, Vol 12, No. 2 (2001), p. 261-292 (available on OWL)

** Jenny Rose, “The Sogdians: Prime Movers between Boundaries”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (2010), p. 410-419 (available on OWL)

** Touraj Daryaee, “The Persian Gulf Trade in Late Antiquity”, *Journal of World History*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2003), p. 1-16 (available on OWL)

Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500*, p. 1-36

Feb. 6 —Religion and the Silk Road (I)

Richard Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Pre-modern Patterns of Globalization*, p. 1-104

** Tansun Sen, “Buddhism in the Maritime Crossings” in Dorothy C. Wong and Gustav Heldt, *China and Beyond in the Mediaeval Period: Cultural and Inter-Regional Connections*, (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2014), p. 39-63 (available on OWL)

Xinru Liu, *The Silk Roads: A Brief History in Documents*, p. 84-119

Feb. 13—Religion and the Silk Road (II)

** Johan Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2010) p. 9-55 (available on OWL)

** Xinru Liu, “A Silk Road Legacy: The Spread of Buddhism and Islam”, *Journal of World History*, Vol. 22, no. 1, p. 55-81 (available on OWL)

** Xinru Liu, *Silk and Religion: An Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People, AD 600-1200* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 113-129 (available on OWL)

*******Last chance to hand in 1st Article Analysis—Feb. 13*******

Feb. 19-25—Winter Reading Week—No class

Feb. 27—Tang China and the Silk Road (I) (those who sign up for presentations on Feb. 27 will have their book reviews due on March 5)

** Mark Edward Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty*, (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 145-178 (available on OWL)

** Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 141-166 (available on OWL)

*******Book Review due—Feb. 27*******

March 5—Tang China and the Silk Road (II)

Xinru Liu, *The Silk Roads: A Brief History in Documents*, p.120-151

** Angela Schottenhammer, “China’s Gate to the Indian Ocean: Iranian and Arab Long-Distance Traders”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 76, Nos. 1 & 2 (2016), p. 135-179 (available on OWL)

** Charlotte von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell East Asia Series, 2006), p. 1-22 (available on OWL)

Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500*, p. 37-74

March 12 – The Mongol Empire and the Silk Road (I)

“Introduction” in Michal Biran, Jonathan Brack, & Francesca Fiaschetti, *Along the Silk Roads in Mongol Eurasia: Generals, Merchants, and Intellectuals*, p. 1-24

** David Morgan, *The Mongols (2nd Edition)*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 74-98 (available on OWL)

** “Guo Kan” and “Baiju” in Michal Biran, Jonathan Brack, & Francesca Fiaschetti, *Along the Silk Roads in Mongol Eurasia: Generals, Merchants, and Intellectuals*, p. 27-57

** “Baldwin of Hainaut” and “Jamal al-Din al-Tibi” in Michal Biran, Jonathan Brack, & Francesca Fiaschetti, *Along the Silk Roads in Mongol Eurasia: Generals, Merchants, and Intellectuals*, p. 160-193

Xinru Liu, *The Silk Roads: A Brief History in Documents*, p. 152-169

March 19--The Mongol Empire and the Silk Road (II) (those who sign up for presentations on March 19 will have their term papers due on March 26)

Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500*, p. 75-98

Richard Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Pre-modern Patterns of Globalization*, p.105-126

** “Qutulun”, “Taydula”, and “Padshah Khatun” in Michal Biran, Jonathan Brack, & Francesca Fiaschetti, *Along the Silk Roads in Mongol Eurasia: Generals, Merchants, and Intellectuals*, p. 64-82, 194-212, 270-289

** “Rashid al-Din” and “Isa Kelemichi” in Michal Biran, Jonathan Brack, & Francesca Fiaschetti, *Along the Silk Roads in Mongol Eurasia: Generals, Merchants, and Intellectuals*, p. 215-237, 255-269

** Jonathan Spence, *The Chan’s Great Continent: China in Western Minds*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), p. 1-18 (available on OWL)

*******Term Paper due—March 19*******

March 26—Turning from Land to Sea after the Mongols

** Geoff Wade, “Engaging the South: Ming China and Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 51, no. 4 (2008), p. 578-638 (available on OWL)

** Howard Federspiel, *Sultans, Shamans, and Saints: Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), p. 22-59 (available on OWL)

Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500*, p. 99-104

April 2—The Legacy of the Silk Road

James A. Millward, *The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 110-121

Richard Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Pre-modern Patterns of Globalization*, p. 127-139

** Nadège Rolland, “China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Underwhelming or Game Changer”, *The Washington Quarterly* 40:1 (2017), p. 127-142 (available on OWL)

** Alvaro Mendez, Francisco Javier Forcadell, and Kateryna Horiachko, “Russia-Ukraine Crisis: China’s Belt Road Initiative at the Crossroads”, *Asian Business and Management*, Vol. 21 (4) (2022), p. 488-496

and

Vladimir Prebilič and Vid Jereb, “Implications of the War in Ukraine on the Belt and Road Initiative”, *Journal of Geography, Politics, and Society*, Vol. 12 (2)(2022), p. 1-7

********Last chance to hand in 2nd Article Analysis—April 2********]

Additional Statements

Communication policies: E-mail is generally the easiest way to contact me for short questions. I will endeavour to answer within the day, although there may be delays on weekends and holidays in particular. You can also ask short questions during the class lecture breaks. For longer enquiries, please drop by during my office hours at my office. If you are unable to come to my normal office hours, please contact me to set up an alternative appointment, either in person or through Zoom. For general class announcements, I use the “Announcements” feature on OWL, so please check frequently on OWL to keep track of latest class developments.

Use of generative AI tools: All work submitted in this course must be your own. You may not make use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT for any assignments in this course.

Please review the Department of History’s shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.

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