

George Mason University in Korea

Fall 2019

HIST 202 K01: *China and the Silk Road, Then and Now*

Course No. 82282

Meets Aug 27, 2019 - Dec 12, 2019

Tues and Thurs: 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Instructor: Dr. Gail Hook

Office: G551 / Email: ghook@gmu.edu

Office hours: Tuesday 1 -2 pm; Wednesday 3 – 4pm; or by appointment

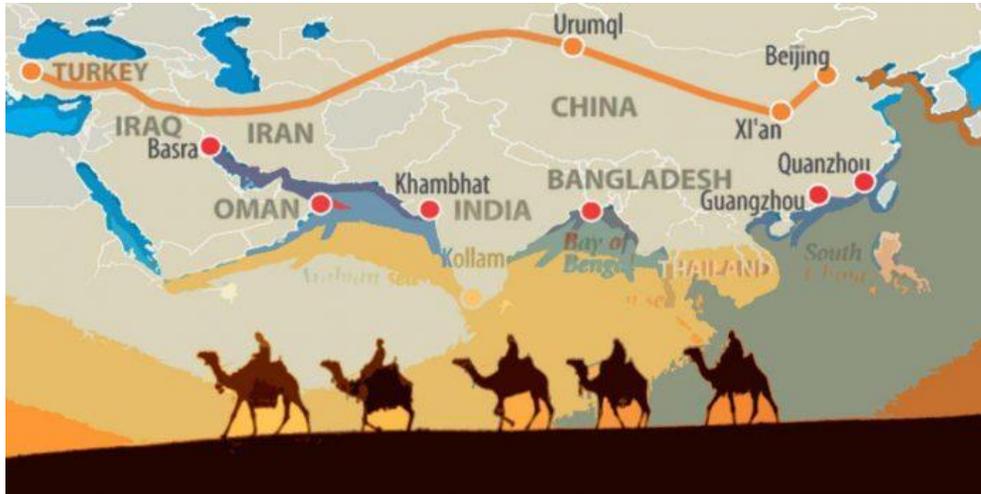


Image from <http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/iran-china-boost-trade-ties-via-silk-road/>

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate the instructional and/or student needs.

COURSE OVERVIEW

The ancient “Silk Roads” that connected China with Europe (130 BCE-1453 CE) also included trade routes through Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Silk and other goods, arts, religion, cultures, ideas and technology were transferred on these routes and later on interconnected water routes during the Age of Discovery (1453-1660 CE). In the 21st century, the Silk Road is the basis for new global trade routes, tourism, and cultural exchange and even the growth of new cities.

Students will be asked to read scholarly articles and primary documents as the basis for weekly class discussions about various aspects of the ancient Silk Roads. For the final third of the semester, we will explore the current “One Belt, One Road” initiative of the Chinese government that is based on the idea of the ancient silk routes, and its implications for trade between Asia, Africa, and Europe today. This will have particular consequences, both positive and negative, for relations between the United States and China, Iran, and Turkey. In examining current news articles and announcements, students will be asked to also assess bias and propaganda versus the actual benefits or disadvantages to the various countries involved in the new trade routes.

Finally, we will discuss the similarities or differences between the ancient routes and the new initiatives. For example, what are the consequences of each for regional and global economies? How are politics involved in today’s initiatives, and can they be compared to the ancient cultures? Will China be able to use the “silk routes” today as a way to build global power in the same way as in ancient times?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand the main forces in the historical development of the ancient silk routes from 130 BCE-1453 CE
- Understand the processes and problems of this development of trade in silk and other goods, arts, religion, cultures, ideas and technology
- Understand the linkages between empires and the development of a global economy
- Understand the historical background of global connectedness today
- Develop the skill to analyze historical sources and make conclusions based on that analysis
- Compose critical essays explaining the significance of historical events and movements and to relate current events with the historical context

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

The Silk Roads: A New History of the World Paperback, by Peter Frankopan (Vintage, reprint edition, March 7, 2017). ISBN: 978-1101912379

RECOMMENDED (OPTIONAL)

Silk, Slaves, and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road by Susan Whitfield (University of California Press, March 13, 2018). ISBN 978-0520281783

Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road, by Johan Elverskog (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). ISBN 9780812242379

Additional readings will be available on Blackboard.

GRADING

A+ = 98-100; A = 93-97; A- = 90-92;
 B+ = 87-89; B = 82-86; B- = 80-81;
 C+ = 77-79; C = 72-76; C- = 70-71;
 D+ = 67-69; D = 62-66; D- = 60-61; F = below 60

Final semester grades are based on a number of 1-page responses to the class material (50% altogether) and a research paper (30%), a poster (10%), and presentation to the class of your research (10%). Attendance is also required. See "Attendance" below.

- **ATTENDANCE**
 Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. For every four classes you miss, your final semester grade will be reduced by one full letter grade.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students must be responsible for their own work. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code. Any student found cheating, including plagiarism, will receive a grade of "0" for the assignment or exam and may also be referred to the Dean of Student Services for additional disciplinary action. If you are unsure what plagiarism is, you should read through this website: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

MasonLive/EMAIL (GMU Email)

Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

Once you sign up for your Patriot Pass, your passwords will be synchronized, and you will use your Patriot Pass username and password to log in to the following systems: Blackboard, University Libraries, MasonLive, myMason, Patriot Web.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Students must follow the university policies. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>].

RESPONSIBLE USE OF COMPUTING

Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu>].

WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASS

If you choose to withdraw from this class, it is your responsibility to check the appropriate deadlines and proceed with the withdrawal process.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

NOTE: This schedule is an outline only and subject to change. See Blackboard for weekly assignments.

***Class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm**

WEEK 1

*August 27 Tuesday, August 28: First Day of Class
Introduction to class / Getting to know each other
Setting the stage for China (in-class exercise)

WEEK 2

September 3 *Read:* Frankopan, Chapter 1, “The Creation of the Silk Road”
And “Valerie Hansen Redefines the Silk Road” posted on Blackboard
<http://mongolschinaandthesilkroad.blogspot.com/2014/05/valerie-hansen-silk-road-new-history.html>

Study topics: Persia/ Alexander the Great / Expansion of China 206 BC-AD220 / Beginnings of the silk roads / Exploration and class discussion of primary sources, beginning with this list at:
http://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/13.3/forum_02_maunu.html

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Was the silk road one continuous route? What “roads” made up the ancient silk routes? What is Professor Hansen’s argument about the silk routes? Do you agree, and can you give examples to support your opinion?

How do we learn about the silk roads? Which primary sources do you find most helpful or credible?

WEEK 3

September 9 *Read:* Frankopan, Chapter 2, “The Road of Faiths” and Chapter 3, “The Road to a Christian East”
and excerpts from *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, by Johan Elverskog
and video in class: “The Diamond Sutra: A Story of Printing, Piety, and
Preservation on the Silk Road” (dating from c. 868)
http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/public_programs/diamond_sutra.html
Study topic: Expansion of religion on the Silk Routes (Buddhism and Christianity) /
Buddhism at Dunhuang

Harvest Moon Festival, No Classes: Thursday, Sept. 12 – Saturday, Sept. 14

WEEK 4

September 17 *Read:* Frankopan, Chapter 4, “The Road to Revolution” and Chapter 5, “The Road to Concord”
and excerpts from *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, by Johan Elverskog
Study topics: Islam on the Silk Road / Christianity and Islam compared in economic terms

WEEK 5

September 24 *Read:* Frankopan, Chapter 8, “The Road to Heaven”
Study topics: The Crusades and the silk roads

WEEK 6

October 1 *Read for Tuesday:* Frankopan, Chapter 9, “The Road to Hell,”
and excerpts from *Silk, Slaves, and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road*
Study topics: The Mongols

National Foundation Day (no classes): Thursday, Oct. 3

WEEK 7

October 8 **Fall Recess (no classes): Mon. Oct 7 – Tues. Oct 8**
Hangul Proclamation Day (no classes), Wed. Oct. 9
Assignment for Thursday to be announced.

WEEK 8

October 15 *Read:* Frankopan, Chapter 10, “The Road of Death and Destruction” and Chapter 11, “The Road of Gold”
And excerpts from *The Travels of Marco Polo* at
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10636>
And review these websites:
(1) <https://festival.si.edu/2002/the-silk-road/the-silk-road-connecting-peoples-and-cultures/smithsonian>
and (2) <http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/art/marcopolo.shtml>
Study topics: The Mongol conquests and European trade / Venice, Genoa / Expansion of cultures / European exploration in the 14-15th centuries

 WEEK 9

October 22

Read: Frankopan, Chapter 12, "The Road of Silver"*Study topics:* The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 / Columbus in 1492

 WEEK 10

October 29

Read: Frankopan, Chapter 13, "The Road to Northern Europe"*Study topics:* The British and Dutch trading companies / The Enlightenment / Russian expansion in the 1890s

 WEEK 11

November 5

Read: Frankopan, Chapter 16, "The Road to War" (skim Chapters 14-15)*Study topics:* World War I / Oil replaces silk

 WEEK 12

November 12

Read: Frankopan, Conclusion, "The New Silk Road"and article: "On the Ancient Silk Road, a Walk Shadowed by a Mystery" in *National Geographic* at<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/12/silk-road-kazakhstan-uzbekistan-history-trade/>

and

"The new Silk Road will link China with the Middle East," by Laurence Brahm (Jun. 6, 2016) in *Business Insider* at<https://www.businessinsider.com/new-silk-road-to-link-china-and-middle-east-2016-6?r=UK&IR=T>*Study topics:* The Cold War (Russia isolated) / The "New" Silk Road / China's current One Belt, One Road initiative to revive the ancient silk roads in modern terms

 WEEK 13

November 19

Read: Recent articles and academic papers to be announced, including:

- "Iran, China to Boost Trade Ties via Silk Road," in *Iran Front Page* (January 30, 2018) at <http://ifpnews.com/exclusive/iran-china-boost-trade-ties-via-silk-road/>
- "China's One Belt, One Road: Will it reshape global trade?" at <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/china/chinas-one-belt-one-road-will-it-reshape-global-trade>
- "Building the New Silk Road," Council on Foreign Relations (2015), discusses how "the United States and China have developed competing visions for reviving ancient trade routes connecting Asia and Europe. The U.S. diplomatic strategy focuses on Afghanistan, while China hopes to economically integrate Central and South Asia. India and Russia also have regional ambition. At <https://www.cfr.org/background/bldg-new-silk-road>
- "How Turkey, Iran, Russia and India are playing the New Silk Roads: A pacified Syria is key to the economic integration of Eurasia through energy and transportation connections" at

<http://www.atimes.com/article/turkey-iran-russia-india-playing-new-silk-roads/>

Study topic: China's current One Belt, One Road initiative to revive the ancient silk roads in modern terms (continued)

Tuesday: Posters due

WEEK 14
November 26

Student presentations

WEEK 15
December 3

Student presentations

WEEK 16
December 10

December 9, Monday: Last day of classes
December 10, Tuesday: Reading Day
December 11-18, Wed-Wed: Exam period

Final paper due no later than 11:59 pm on Thursday, December 12
