

This is an unofficial copy of the HIST 4358 course syllabus. The syllabus of record will be distributed to enrolled members of the course (hard copy in class and electronic copy via eLearning). Contents subject to change.

This unofficial syllabus is for informational purposes only.

HIST 4358: THE SILK ROADS

Spring 2017 | M 7:00–9:45 PM

Prof. J. Michael Farmer

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Office Hours: M 10:00–11:00 AM or by appointment

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions:

There are no pre-requisites or other restrictions for this course.

Prior knowledge of Chinese language or history is not required.

Course Description:

The network of overland exchange routes that linked the whole of the known world (i.e., the Mediterranean, India, China) is generally known by the 19th century appellation “the Silk Roads.” They were the media through which the great civilizations of the West (Rome, Persia, Byzantium) connected with the great civilizations of the East (India, China). As such, an understanding of the history and function of the Silk Roads is essential. *Although the Silk Roads is very much a “world history” topic, our approach will tend toward the Sinocentric, owing to the professor’s interests and expertise.*

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

It is the objective of this undergraduate seminar that students will see how professional scholars approach the historical problems of the Silk Roads, and gain a greater understanding of the history and impact of these overland trade routes on world history. Additionally, the course will provide opportunity for students to develop communication skills key to the practice of the discipline of history. Both of these SLOs (knowledge base and communication skills) will be regularly assessed through ongoing writing and discussion assignments, including in-class Write to Learn exercises, class participation, research and formal argumentative writing. Brief descriptions of these assessment assignments are outlined below, and detailed guidelines will be provided to students in class and via eLearning.

History, Writing, and this Class

Most of you are enrolled in this class because at some level you have developed an interest in history. To this point your interests have likely been passive; that is to say, you have enjoyed reading books or watching documentaries about historical topics. In this course you will shift from being consumers of history to producers of history. You will learn how to “do history.”

“Doing history” might be summed up by three interrelated acts: reading, thinking, and articulating your ideas about the past. The written word lies at the heart of the historical enterprise. Many of the surviving artifacts from the past are written documents, and most of the scholarship that attempts to make sense of these artifacts is also in written form. As such, you will be regularly engaged with writing. You will read the documents from the past. You will read ancient and modern historians’ attempts to organize the artifacts into meaningful representations of different times and places. You will think about both the primary and secondary documents at your disposal and offer your own representation of the past. You will do this through a variety of written assignments; that is how the professional historian works.

Although the creation of original ideas (or critical examinations of old ones) is the most significant act that the historian performs, for ideas to be tested and accepted they must first be shared. These ideas are shared in the form of books, articles, and short essays presented orally at conferences. Audiences will vary. At times historians write for each other. Other times they write for non-specialist or lay readers. And at other times they write for students. Depending on the audience, historians adopt a variety of voices; some formal, others informal. It is important to know how to present your ideas to each specific audience.

The format of historical writing is not simply to satisfy the whims of senior historians (or history professors). Rather, proper presentation of your ideas in writing adds credibility to your argument. Correct style, tone, format, documentation of evidence, etc. tell the reader that you have “sweated the small stuff,” and therefore your big ideas can be taken seriously. Conversely, failure to follow the conventions of the discipline signals to your reader that you have not mastered the simple matters of style, causing them to possibly doubt your ability to handle the more complex issues of content. While the viewpoint expressed above (“bad writing = unintelligence”) is most likely unfair and untrue, the perception remains. Thus it is your responsibility to demonstrate a competency in the craft of historical writing if you want your ideas to be taken seriously.

In this course you will have ample opportunity to examine primary and secondary documents, formulate your own ideas about them, and express those ideas in clear and concise essays. You will not only learn the “facts” about the history of the Silk Roads, you will “do history.”

Required Textbooks and Materials:

All Books Required.

Liu Xinru. *The Silk Road in World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN: 9780195338102

Liu Xinru. *The Silk Roads: A Brief History with Documents*. New York: Bedford St Martins, 2012. ISBN: 0312475519

Keown, Damien. *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd edition. Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN: 0199663831

Foltz, Richard. *Religions of the Silk Road, 2nd edition*. New York: Palgrave, 2010. ISBN: 0230621252

Wriggins, Sally Hovey. *The Silk Road Journey with Xuanzang*. Boulder: Westview, 2004. ISBN: 0813365996

Schafer, Edward. *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963. ISBN: 0520054628

Whitfield, Roderick, Susan Whitfield, and Neville Agnew. *Cave Temples of Mogao: Art and History on the Silk Road*. Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 2001. ISBN: 0892365854

Dawson, Christopher, ed. *Mission to Asia*. Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980. ISBN: 0802064361

Marco Polo, Ronald Latham, trans. *The Travels*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958. ISBN: 0140440577

Hopkirk, Peter. *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road: The Search for the Lost Cities and Treasures of Chinese Central Asia*. University of Massachusetts Press, 1984. ISBN: 0870234358

Assignments & Academic Calendar:

Primary Source Analyses [25%]:

You will prepare a one page primary source analysis paper (PSA) on an assigned primary document most weeks (see schedule). Most of these documents are located in Liu Xinru's *The Silk Roads: A Brief History with Documents*, though others will be made available via eLearning. Weekly reading assignments may contain several documents; write a PSA on only one (your choice). A total of eight PSAs will be submitted over the course of the semester.

Write to Learn [20%]:

Given the central role of writing in the discipline of history, you will not be asked to fill in bubbles on exams in this class. Rather, over the course of the semester you will be required to write several short essays, typically in class. These short essays may ask you to summarize or analyze a primary document, or write a micro-theme on an assigned topic related to course work.

Book/Article Captures [15%]:

You will write a 4–5 page “book capture” on selected secondary monographs (by Wriggins, Schafer, and Hopkirk; listed above). See assignment guidelines for details.

Final Paper [30%]:

As the capstone for this course, you are to conduct research and write a research paper of approximately ten (10) pages in length.

Failure to complete this assignment will result in an automatic grade of F for the class.

Presentation [10%]:

Each student will make a ten minute in-class academic presentation of their research paper.

Guidelines for all assignments will be distributed in class and via eLearning.

Tentative Schedule:

I will make every reasonable effort to follow this reading and discussion schedule, but sometimes changes must be made. Modification to this outline will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to be aware of the schedule and prepare the assigned materials.

Items prefaced by a plus sign (+) are available via eLearning.

Items prefaced by an asterisk (*) indicate a due date.

WK	Date	Reading Assignment
1	1/9	Welcome Introduction to Course Geography Liu, <i>Brief History</i> , Preface, Part One: Introduction, pp. 1-33 + <i>Look!</i>
2	1/16	MLK Holiday No Class
3	1/23	Han & Rome Foltz, <i>Religions on the Silk Roads</i> , Ch. 1-2 Liu, <i>World History</i> , Ch. 1-2 Liu, <i>Brief History</i> , Documents 1-8 * PSA 1 Due
4	1/30	Origins and Teachings of Buddhism Keown, <i>Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction</i> Liu, <i>World History</i> , Ch. 3 Liu, <i>Brief History</i> , Documents 9-12 * PSA 2 Due
5	2/6	The Spread of Buddhism Foltz, <i>Religions on the Silk Roads</i> , Ch. 3 Liu, <i>World History</i> , Ch. 4 Liu, <i>Brief History</i> , Documents 13-18 * PSA 3 Due
6	2/13	Byzantium and the Tang Foltz, <i>Religions on the Silk Roads</i> , Ch. 4 Liu, <i>World History</i> , Ch. 5 Liu, <i>Brief History</i> , Documents 19-24 * PSA 4 Due

7	2/20	Xuanzang: A Buddhist Pilgrim Wriggins, <i>Silk Road Journey with Xuanzang</i> * Book Capture 1 Due
8	2/27	Dunhuang Whitfield, <i>Cave Temples of Mogao</i> + Mogao Image Set * PSA 5 Due
9	3/6	Golden Peaches: Tang Exoticism Schafer, <i>Golden Peaches of Samarkand</i> * Book Capture 2 Due
10	3/13	SPRING BREAK
11	3/20	Islam on the Silk Roads Foltz, <i>Religions on the Silk Roads</i> , Ch. 5 Liu, <i>Brief History</i> , Documents 25–27 * PSA 6 Due
12	3/27	The Mongols Foltz, <i>Religions on the Silk Roads</i> , Ch. 6, 7, Epilogue Dawson, <i>Mission to Asia</i> Liu, <i>World History</i> , Ch. 6 Liu, <i>Brief History</i> , Documents 28–34 * PSA 7 Due
13	4/3	Marco Polo! Polo, <i>The Travels</i> + de Rachewiltz, “F. Wood's <i>Did Marco Polo Go To China?</i> A Critical Appraisal” * PSA 8 Due
14	4/10	Rediscovering the Silk Roads Hopkirk, <i>Foreign Devils on the Silk Roads</i> + Stein, <i>Sand Buried Ruins</i> , Introduction, Ch. XI–XII, XVIII * Book Capture 3 Due
15	4/17	Presentation of Research * Paper Due
16	4/24	Presentation of Research

Legal & Administrivia

Course & Instructor Policies:

Grading Policy:

Percentages for the course assignments have been noted above. The following gradescale will be used: 0–59 [F]; 60–62 [D-]; 63–66 [D]; 67–69 [D+]; 70–72 [C-]; 73–76 [C]; 77–79 [C+]; 80–82 [B-]; 83–86 [B]; 87–89 [B+]; 90–92 [A-]; 93–100 [A]. In narrative form, [F]=failing; [D]=below average; [C]=average; [B]=above average; [A]=exceptional.

The professor reserves the right to curve, round, or otherwise adjust grades at his sole discretion.

Attendance, Participation, and Discussion:

Attendance is mandatory! Please consult the university calendar before scheduling vacations, weddings, or other extra-curricular events that may keep you from your responsibilities in this class. You are responsible for the material and any assignments regardless of whether you were in a given class meeting or not. Any extended absence (two or more consecutive sessions) should be reported to me via email as soon as possible. Every student is expected to actively participate in the discussion of the assigned readings. While there may be no set percentage of the course grade dedicated to this requirement category, students who do not regularly attend and actively participate in class will not fare well in the course.

Late work:

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. *Late work will not be accepted.* For all work not completed by the due date, the student will receive a grade of 0 (zero) for the assignment. Exceptional circumstances may be taken into account. If you feel your circumstances merit special consideration, please notify me via email or in person as soon as possible.

Written Assignments:

All out-of-class written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, in a 10–12 point serif typeface (Times, Palatino, Garamond, Gentium, etc.). Pages must have one-inch margins and contain your name and page number in the upper right-hand corner of each page. Assignments must be printed on white paper in black ink. Multi-page documents must be stapled. Cover sheets are not necessary unless the specific assignment guidelines call for one. Do not submit work in a folder or other type of binder unless the specific assignment guidelines call for it.

Assignments not meeting these basic technical specifications will not be accepted.

Submissions via email or other electronic means will not be accepted.

Personal Electronics:

In general, the use of laptop computers, tablet computers, mp3 players, cell phones, and all other personal electronics is prohibited in this course unless a student has documentation from The Office of Student AccessAbility. Students granted exemptions from the personal electronics policy will be seated in the front row of the classroom. Any non-class related use of personal electronics in the classroom will result in a revocation of exemption, and the immediate confiscation of the device. Confiscated devices will be returned at the end of the class period. Repeat offenses will result in a failing grade in the course.

In this course, some of the required readings may be available as pdf files on eLearning. When we are discussing these documents in class, you will be allowed to access them electronically via your personal laptop, pad, phone, or other device. Electronic devices must be put away at all other times.

Audio and Video Recording/Intellectual Property:

Audio or video recording of class lectures and other activities without the express written permission of the professor is strictly prohibited. Students with documented accommodations from The Office of Student AccessAbility also require written permission from the professor. Additionally, while you are encouraged to take hand-written notes during class, these notes reflect the intellectual work and property of the professor and may only be used for the notetaker's personal academic use. Notes may be shared with enrolled members of the class, but may not be distributed outside of the classroom community without the professor's express written permission. Notes (and/or approved or illicit audio and/or video recordings) may not be posted online or distributed to free or for-profit entities outside of the classroom community. Violation of this policy may result in a failing grade in the class and expose the student to potential legal action.

Office Gun Policy

All persons entering my office will be given *oral notice* indicating that my office is an exclusion zone.

University of Texas at Dallas Policies:

In an effort go green (by cutting back on photocopying) University Policies can now be viewed at the following URL:

<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

Sharing Confidential Information

Students considering sharing personal information in email, in person, or within assignments or exams should be aware that faculty members and teaching/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2527 or after hours 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255), the Women's Center (972-883-8255), a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747), the clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or an off-campus resource (i.e., rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist). Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the UT Dallas Police Department at 972-883-2222 or to the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2218. Additional information and resources may be found at <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/title-ix/resources>.

Course and Instructor Amendments to the University Policies:

Email Use:

Email is the preferred method of communication for this course. I generally reply to messages that require a response (and not all messages require or merit a response from the professor!) within two business days. Messages left on my office voicemail will be retrieved the next time I am on campus, which depending on when the message was left, could be several business days. For queries necessitating a response, email is the best and fastest method of communication.

Your Responsibility:

Students are responsible for all information contained in this syllabus and schedule, as well as any amendments or changes announced by the professor or Teaching Assistant(s) in class. Changes to the course schedule or syllabus will also be announced in class and/or by email. It is your responsibility to regularly check your UTD email account.

Failure to abide by the policies contained in the syllabus and any amendments or changes announced by the professor may result in a failing grade in the course.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

[revised 2 January 2017]