The Silk Road

2319 Turlington Hall
Mon., Wed. and Fri. 11:45 a.m.-12:35 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Chuan-kang Shih
Office: B125 Turlington Hall
Phone: (352) 294-7587 (office)
Email: ckshih@ufl.edu
Office hours: Wednesdays and Fridays: 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Course Description

In history, the Silk Road was the greatest overland trading route with China on one end, and Rome on the other. Before cross-ocean maritime trading became practical, the Silk Road was the most significant conduit in the world for far reaching cultural and material exchange. Even though the original Silk Road as a trading route declined after flourishing for over a thousand years, the geopolitical and economic importance of the area connected by the Silk Road have never dwindled and will never diminish. The exceptionally diverse and rich cultures along the Silk Road provides endless opportunities for enriching and deepening anthropological understanding about humanity.

In this course, through lectures, readings, and films, you will gain a fundamental knowledge about the peoples and cultures along the Silk Road in a comprehensive and systematic way. You will learn how the distance trade emerged in the late third century BCE; how China, Europe, and nations in between were affected by the trading and the cultural cross-fertilization; how Buddhism and Islam influenced peoples along the Silk Road; what some of the peoples look like today, how they live, work, and worship, as well as what histories and artistic glories they have created. The learning materials are weighed more heavily on China, the initiator of the Silk Road. Yet you will also learn about the histories, religions, customs, arts, as well as ethnic and international conflicts of some the more important European and Central Asian nations along the Silk Road. In addition, you will be introduced to the current hot topic of the “Belt and Road Initiative” and present plight of the Uyghurs ethnic minority in Xinjiang.

Texts
Dauther, Jay
2009 Down a Narrow Road. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Asia Center.
Elverskog, Johan
Jacobs, Justin M.  

Liu, Xibnru  

Whitfield, Susan  
2015 Life along the Silk Road, 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Terms  
Throughout the semester, you are required to finish each reading assignment on schedule, attend class meetings on time and take an active part in class discussion, take two exams, and write two papers.

It is essential that you finish the reading assignment BEFORE each class session, since this will not only affect your understanding of the lectures, but also help your performance in class discussion.

The two examinations will be equally weighted. The last examination is not cumulative. Rather, it only covers materials that are not covered by the first examination.

The two papers, excluding cover page and references cited, should be about 8 double-spaced pages each with 12-point font in length.

I will keep track of your attendance and you are expected to take an active part in class discussion. Your class performance is measured by your attendance and participation in class discussion.

Percentage of the elements that contribute to your course grade are distributed as follows:
- Exams 50% (25% each);
- Papers 50% (25% each);

Those who keep a record of full attendance (namely, never miss any session) will receive a bonus of 5 points. Those who speak in class (asking questions, answering questions, offering comments, etc.) will receive a bonus of 2 points. Those who miss 20% of the sessions without legitimate reasons will receive a penalty of 5 points. Those who miss 50% of the classes without legitimate reasons will automatically receive E (failure) as course grade.

After adding the bonus points and deducting the penalty points, the final score will be converted to your course grade on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>≥95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>85-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>55-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>45-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>≤44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the tasks must be finished on schedule. Extensions and make-ups may be offered only in exceptional cases with a legitimate reason. The judgment of any reason’s legitimacy is solely based on the Instructor’s understanding and interpretation of the relevant university regulations.

Disability Accommodations  
Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the
instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Important Dates**
- Fri., Feb. 01  First paper due.
- Fri., Mar. 01  First examination.
- Mon., Apr. 01  Second paper due.
- Wed., Apr. 24  Last examination.

**Reading and Film Schedule**

**Mon., Jan. 07**  Introduction and Course overview
- Readings: This syllabus.

**Wed., Jan. 09**
- Film: The Glories of Ancient Chang'an

**Fri., Jan. 11**  China Looks West; Rome Looks East

**Mon., Jan. 14**  The Kushan Empire and Buddhism; A Golden Age Emerges

**Wed., Jan. 16**
- Film: The Art Gallery in the Desert

**Fri., Jan. 18**  Transforming the Eurasian Silk Market; the Twilight of the Silk Road

**Mon., Jan. 21**
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day** (No class)

**Wed., Jan. 23**
- Film: Across the Taklamakan Desert

**Fri., Jan. 25**  Life along the Silk Road: Introduction and the Merchant’s Tale

**Mon., Jan. 28**  Tales of the Soldier and the Horseman

**Wed., Jan. 30**
- Film: A Heat Wave Called Turfan

**Fri., Feb. 01**  Tales of the Princess and the Courtesan
- Readings: Whitfield 2015, pp. 73-103.

**Mon., Feb. 04**  Tales of the Pilgrim and the Writer

**Wed., Feb. 06**
- Film: Where Horses Fly Like the Wind

**Fri., Feb. 08**  Tales of the Official and the Nun

**Mon., Feb. 11**  Tales of the Widow and the Artist

**Wed., Feb. 13**
- Film: Two Roads to the Pamirs
Fri., Feb. 15  Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road: Introduction and Contact  
Mon., Feb. 18 Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road: Understanding  
Wed., Feb. 20  
Film:  The Travels of Xuang Zang in India
Fri., Feb. 22  Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road: Idolatry  
Mon., Feb. 25 Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road: Jihad  
Wed., Feb. 27  
Film:  The Glory of Samarkand
Fri., Mar. 01  First examination

Spring Break

Mon., Mar. 11 Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road: Halal and Conclusion  
Wed., Mar. 13  
Film:  Central Asia, Russia - From Wasteland to Motherland
Fri., Mar. 15  Introduction and Imperial Repertoires in Republican Xingjiang  
Mon., Mar. 18 Collapse of Empires and the Nationalist Threat  
Readings:   Jacobs 2016, pp. 49-88.
Wed., Mar. 20  
Film:  South Caucasus - The Flame and the Cross
Fri., Mar. 22  Rise of the Ethnopopulists  
Readings:   Jacobs 2016, pp. 89-126.
Mon., Mar. 25 The Birth Pang of Chinese Affirmative Action  
Wed., Mar. 27  
Film:  Yemen and Saudi Arabia - The Progeny of the Queen of Sheba
Fri., Mar. 29  The Xinjiang Government in Exile and conclusion  
Readings:   Jacobs 2016, pp. 169-239.
Mon., Apr. 01 Introduction; Blessed Home: Residence and Identity in a Uyghur Neighborhood;  
Yining’s Mehelle as Suburban Periphery  
Wed., Apr. 03  
Film:  Beyond Baghdad
Fri., Apr. 05  Desettling the Land: The Destruction of Uyghur Cthonic Identity; Gleaming  
Eyes, Evil Eyes: Cradle and Cure in Uyghur Child Rearing  
Mon., Apr. 08 At Play in the *Mehelle*: The Language and Lore of Uyghur Childhood; Marriage, Mistresses, and Masculinity: Gender and Adult Social Life
   Readings: Dautcher 2009, pp. 92-142.
Wed., Apr. 10
   Film: All Roads Lead to Rome
Fri., Apr. 12 The Pretty *Olturash*: Masculinity and Moral Order in Adult Play; “Women have hair, men have nicknames”: Uyghur Nicknaming Practices
Mon., Apr. 15 Merchants and Markets in the *Mehelle*: Yining’s Border Trade: Trader-Tourism and Uyghur Sojourning
Wed., Apr. 17
   Film: The New Silk Road: Ambition and Opportunity
Fri., Apr. 19 The False *Hajim* and the Bad *Meshrep*: Piety and Politics in Uyghur Islam; The Hungry Guest: Rhetoric, Reverence, and Reversal in a Uyghur Ramadan; Epilogue
   Reading: Dautcher 2009, pp. 255-309.
Mon., Apr. 22 Most recent reports from Xinjiang
   Readings: Collected newspaper clippings.
Wed., Apr. 24
   **Last examination**
   End of course.