Core 20.06 The Development of the Silk Road

An exploration of the art and architecture of the Silk Road from China into Central Asia, with some attention to exports to Europe, from the Han Dynasty (2nd century BCE) until the Mongols (13th century CE). Subjects covered: the history of art, the rise and interaction of Islam and Buddhism, and the economic and diplomatic context that facilitated the development and expansion of the Silk Road, the Silk Road today.

Objectives: Students will

1. Be able to think critically and creatively, to reason logically, to reason quantitatively, and to express their thoughts orally and in writing with clarity and precision
2. Learn about the arts, histories and cultures of Central Asia, surrounding the Silk Road through history, but particularly in the medieval period
3. Understand what knowledge is and how it is acquired by the use of differing methods in different disciplines, such as archaeology, anthropology, history, art history, etc.
4. Evaluate different types of evidence, especially archaeological, art historical, historical and literary both in class discussion and in writing
5. See works of art related to the Silk Road in New York City collections
6. Visit at least two museums with collections of East and Central Asian, and Islamic art (The Metropolitan, The Brooklyn, The Asia Society)

Required Texts:
Richard Foltz, Religion of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century
Susan Whitfield, Life Along the Silk Road

The other readings for the course will be on reserve in main library or given as handouts

Weekly Assignments:

Introduction
Foltz, chapter 1, The Silk Road and its Travelers

The development of the Silk Road: The Han and Chang Ch’ien
Foltz, Chapter 2, Religion and Trade in Ancient Eurasia

Sogdiana: Cultural and Economic Crossroads
Whitfield, The Merchant’s Tale and The Courtesan’s Tale

BROOKLYN MUSEUM ASIAN GALLERIES
Meet at Brooklyn Museum

All about silk: From Moriculture to Sericulture
Museum Paper Due (detailed assignment will be handed out)

Buddhism on the Silk Road
Foltz, Chapter 3, Buddhism and the Silk Road
Whitfield, The Monk’s Tale, The Nun’s Tale, The Official’s Tale and The Artist’s
The Uighars
Foltz, Chapter 4, *A Refuge of Heretics: Nestorians and Manicheans*
Whitfield, Chapter 3-4, *The Horseman’s Tale and The Princess’s Tale*

Islam and the Silk Road
Foltz, Chapter 5, *The Islamization of the Silk Road*
Ross E. Dunn, “Persia and Iraq,” in *Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveller of the 14th Century*

The Mongols
Foltz, Chapter 6, *Ecumenical Mischief*
*The Legacy of Ghenghis Khan*, chapters 1-2 (Reserve)

Europeans travel the Silk Road
Foltz, Chapter 7, *A Melting Pot No More*
Excerpts from Gertrude Bell’s *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*
*Final paper due*

Guest lecturer: Modern Central Asia and the Silk Road
Reading TBA

Review

Plagiarism and Cheating:

“The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: [http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies). If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.”

-Brooklyn policy on Academic Integrity