Course description
This course explores the history of religions on the Silk Road from antiquity to the present examining the impact of trade, translation, and interaction of world religions from Venice, Italy to Chang’an, China. The course will be based on lectures, reading, visiting historic sites, and discussions of the texts, art, music and film related to religions on the Silk Road.

Onsite benefits
The course will be held in cities formerly on the ancient Silk Road. We will begin in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and go overland from there to Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. On the way back to Boston we will stop for debriefing in Istanbul, Turkey where we will visit additional historical sites such as the Hagia Sophia. Accommodations will clean, safe, and modest.

Learning Outcomes
Students who participate in “Religions on the Silk Road” will:
1. Gain a basic understanding of the history of each of the major world religions.
2. Study the impact of Silk Road trade on the spread and development of the world’s religions.
3. Become familiar with the cartography and geography of the Silk Road.
4. Understand the dynamics of cultural and religious exchange.
5. Begin to discern the current situation on the Silk Road and its implication for the future of trade and religion.

Required Texts and CD
Course Requirements
Students should be aware of the weight of class participation in the final grade. Students are expected to keep up with all assignments, and to come prepared for each class discussion session.
1. Travel journal (30%)
2. Two book reviews (800 words for each, 30%, the Beckwith and Whitfield books)
3. One 3,000-word essay on religions on the Silk Road (40%)

Pre-departure lectures
Feb 7, 2014, 6:30-9pm
The Silk Roads and Trade

Mar 7, 2014, 6:30-9pm
Religion on the Silk Road

Apr 11, 2014, 6:30-9pm
Uzbekistan and Turkey

Abbreviated Itinerary (Uzbekistan, Turkey)
May 21-23 Fly Boston to Tashkent via Istanbul
May 24 Tashkent
May 25 Transfer to Samarkand by land
May 26-27 Excursion in Samarkand
May 28 Transfer to Nurata Yurt camp
May 30 Transfer to Bukhara by land
May 31-J1 Excursion in Bukhara
June 2 Transfer to Khiva
June 3-4 Khiva
June 5 Fly to Tashkent
June 6 Transfer to Ferghana
June 7 Ferghana
June 8 Return to Tashkent
June 9 Tashkent to Istanbul
June 10-11 Visit sites and debriefing
June 12 Istanbul to Boston

Seminar schedule (in hotels on the trip)
Seminar 1
Manichaeans and Zoroastrians on the Silk Road

Seminar 2
Buddhists on the Silk Road

Seminar 3
Christians on the Silk Road
Seminar 4
Muslims on the Silk Road

Seminar 5
Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, and Chinese religions on the Silk Road

Seminar 6
Istanbul on the Silk Road

Seminar 7
The Silk Road today

Additional readings
Foltz, Richard, *Spirituality in the Land of the Nobles*.