

CH/TH 621 Religions on the Silk Road: From Antiquity to the Present  
Global Education Course in Uzbekistan  
BTI summer workshop course  
May 21-June 12, 2014  
Professor: Todd M. Johnson, Ph.D.  
BTI host: Rodney Petersen, Ph.D.

### **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**

Beckwith, Christopher I., *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. 472 pages

Foltz, Richard C., *Religions of the Silk Road: Premodern Patterns of Globalization*. Second Edition, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 190 pages

Simpfendorfer, Ben, *The New Silk Road: How a Rising Arab World is Turning Away from the West and Rediscovering China*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 256 pages.

Ma, Yo-Yo, *Silk Road Journeys*, (Compact Disc) Washington DC: Smithsonian Folkways, 2002.

ten Grotenhuis, Elizabeth, ed. *Along the Silk Road*. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2002. 144 pages

Whitfield, Susan, *Life Along the Silk Road*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999. 242 pages

### **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**

- Adshad, S.A.M., *Central Asia in World History*. London: Macmillan, 1993.
- Baum, Wilhelm, and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Burn, Barbara, ed., *Monks and Merchants: Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China*. New York: Asia Society, 2001.
- Cooper, Alanna E., *Bukharan Jews and the Dynamics of Global Judaism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.
- Dawson, Christopher, ed., *Mission to Asia*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1955.
- Foltz, Richard, *Spirituality in the Land of the Nobles*.
- Fyre, Richard N. *The Heritage of Central Asia: From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion*. Princeton: Marcus Wiener, 1996.
- Gilman, Ian and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1999.
- Levin, Theodore. *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia*. (with CD). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Liu, Xinru, *Silk and Religion*. New Delhi: Oxford India, 1996.
- Moffett, Samuel, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, Vols 1 & 2, Harper.
- Muqi, Che. *The Silk Road: Past and Present*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989.
- Nebenzahl, Kenneth. *Mapping the Silk Road and Beyond*. London: Phaidon, 2004
- Rice, Tamara Talbot. *Ancient Arts of Central Asia*. New York: Praeger, 1965.
- Vainker, Shelagh. *Chinese Silk: A Cultural History*. London: British Museum Press, 2004.
- Vollmer, John. *Silk Roads, China Ships*. Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1983.
- Wriggins, Sally Hovey. *The Silk Road Journey with Xuanzang*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2004.