

History of Central Asia Hist 387 – 002

Spring 2006
TR 3:00-4:15pm
RA 208

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A history of Central Asia is a challenging undertaking. Unlike most regions of the world, Central Asia is not demarcated by geography, specific political boundaries, or a self-contained history and culture. As a result, this course approaches Central Asia as a fluid space where the mix of nomadic peoples, frontier states and the high culture of Islam produced a unique synthesis historically. In particular, the course will trace how the introduction of Islam into the region in the 8th century facilitated the assimilation of nomadic peoples into local states and economies that in turn impacted surrounding regions such as the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia and Europe, and resulted in the pivotal role that the region has played in the global balance of power, especially in the modern period.

Course requirements consist of attendance and participation, a midterm, final exam and research paper. Readings will include both primary and secondary sources. Materials are challenging and so attention to assignments and attendance is strongly suggested. Readings for class are to be completed *before* each class. The midterm and final exam will consist of identifications and essays, and the research paper will involve the further exploration of one of the periods or themes of the course. For the latter, study guides and further information will be provided at the appropriate times. There will be no exceptions to exam and paper dates, so please plan work, vacation and other obligations accordingly.

Grade Distribution:

Attendance and participation – 15%
Midterm Exam – 15%
Final Exam – 25%
Final paper – 45%

Required Readings: The following texts are all required and available at the bookstore.

Soucek, A History of Inner Asia
Findley, The Turks in World History
Manz, ed., Central Asia in Historical Perspective
Course Readers, 2 vols. (selections for assignments below marked #).

Final Exam Tuesday May 16, 1:30pm

Tentative Lecture and Assignment Schedule:

1/24, 1/26 Introduction

Introduction

Soucek, "Introduction"

1/31, 2/2 Tribes vs. States

Chaliand, Gerard, "Introduction", Nomadic Empires: From Mongolia to the Danube

Eger, Asa, "Islamic Frontiers, Real and Imagined", Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists, Frye, Richard, "The Silk Route", The Heritage of Central Asia

2/7, 2/9 The Beginnings

Soucek, Chs. 1-3.

#Jahiz, "The Merits of the Turks"

Findley, Ch. 2

#Dede Korkut, "The Story of Yigenek"

2/14, 2/16 Turkic Hegemony and Persian Islam

Soucek, Ch. 6

#Ibn al-Qifti, "The Autobiography of Avicenna"; al-Biruni, "On Hindus in General; Levy, "Five Persian Mystics"

2/21, 2/23 The Mongol Invasions

Soucek, Ch. 7

#al-Juvaini, "A Short Account of the Conquest of Transoxiana"

2/28, 3/2 A Mongol Empire in Central Asia: The Timurids

Soucek, Ch. 9

#Manz, "Structure and Function in Timur's Administration"

3/7, 3/9 **Midterm Exam**

Review for Midterm

MIDTERM EXAM

SPRING BREAK

3/21, 3/23	<p>The Gunpowder Empires</p> <p>Findley, Ch. 3</p> <p>Soucek, Ch. 11</p> <p>#Lal, “The Question of Memoir: The Challenge of a Princess”</p> <p><i>Bibliography Due</i></p>
3/28, 3/30	<p>The Great Game</p> <p>Soucek, Chs. 12, 14</p> <p>Film: The Man Who Would be King</p>
4/4, 4/6	<p>Russian Imperialism</p> <p>Soucek, Chs. 15, 16</p> <p>#Roy, “The Russian Conquest”, “Reform Movements Among the Muslims of the Empire”.</p> <p><i>Paper Outline Due</i></p>
4/11, 4/13	<p>Soviet Central Asia</p> <p>Soucek, Ch. 17</p> <p>Manz, Ch. 5, “Soviet Uzbekistan” and Ch. 7, “Underdevelopment and Ethnic Relations in Central Asia”</p>
4/18, 4/20	<p>The Post-Soviet Period</p> <p>Soucek, Chs. 18, 20</p> <p>Manz, Ch. 8, “The Influence of Islam in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan”</p> <p><i>Rough Draft Due</i></p>
4/25, 4/27	<p>Central Asia Today</p> <p>Manz, Ch. 9, “Commensals or Others?”, Ch. 10, “Post-Soviet Central Asia...The Economic Background of Interdependence”</p> <p>Web assignment</p>
5/2, 5/4 Review	<p>Review of Readings</p> <p>Review for Final Exam</p> <p>RESEARCH PAPER DUE</p>

