HIS 454: China and the Outside World
Jonathan Skaff

Midterm Paper: Silk Roads or Steppe Roads?

Due: Wednesday, March 17
    Electronic Copy due to Turnitin.com
    Hard copy due with the grading sheet on the reverse attached

Length: 6 to 10 pages

Topic:

Write a paper comparing influences arriving in China from Eurasian "Steppe Roads" and oasis "Silk Roads" during the period from 2000 BCE to 1000 CE. Organize the paper around a thesis assessing the relative importance of steppe and silk roads on China's historical development. Your paper should consider "items" transmitted (i.e. plants, animals, ideas and material culture[1]) and "agents" of transmission (i.e. people and social and political institutions).

The ideal paper will cite the Di Cosmo and Kieschnick books, all blackboard readings to date, and the Hansen public lecture. You optionally may make reference to the Ebrey textbook and class lectures and discussions. No additional research is necessary to write a successful paper. There are no right or wrong interpretations of the evidence, but some arguments will be more persuasive than others.

Evaluation of Papers:
80% of the grade will be based on content. Grades of A will be awarded to each paper with a clear thesis that is persuasively defended with appropriate evidence drawn from class sources.

The other 20% will be based upon grammar and word usage (4%), spelling, capitalization and punctuation (4%), organization (4%), readability (4%), and bibliography and citations in Chicago A or B format (4%).

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[1] For the purposes of this course, the working definition of material culture will be Kieschnick's unless you can justify adopting a different one. See, John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 15.

Grading sheet (attach to paper)

I. Content (80%)

Mastery of course material: ___Excellent ___Good ___Fair ___Poor

Defense of thesis: ___Excellent ___Good ___Fair ___Poor

A=72-80, B=64-71, C=56-63, D=48-55, F=47 or lower _____

II. Writing mechanics (20%)

A=4, B=3.5, C=3, D=2.5, F=2 or lower

Grammar and word usage (4%) _____

Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation (4%) _____

Organization (4%) _____

Readability (4%) _____

Bibliography and citations in Chicago A or B (4%) _____

Total _____

Correction Symbols Used in Grading Paper

agr	wrong agreement (noun-verb or noun-noun)
awk	awkward sentence
cit	citation needed
frag	sentence fragment (usually a sentence that lacks a verb)
org	organization problems
redun	redundant (using different words to say the same thing more than once)
rep	repetitious use of the same word
run-on	run-on sentence
sp	wrong spelling
trans	poor transition (between sentences or paragraphs)
tn	wrong verb tense
unc	unclear phrase, sentence, or paragraph
wf	wrong grammatical form of word
ww	wrong word usage
¶	new paragraph needed