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%).

---

\(^1\) 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