

# CAH5753: THE SILK ROAD AND THE HISTORY OF CHINA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

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## Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

The Silk Road and the History of China's Foreign Relations

### Subject Code

CAH - Chinese and History

### Course Number

5753

### Academic Unit

Chinese and History (CAH)

### College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

### Medium of Instruction

Chinese

### Medium of Assessment

Chinese

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

Nil

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course introduces the history of both the land and the maritime routes of silk road to students and encourages the students to develop their analytical skills to examine Chinese history from a cross-cultural perspective. This course puts the formation and development of the silk road in the context of China's contact with the outside world. It covers ancient to modern periods and geographically covers East Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Europe. Students will analyze textual sources and virtual materials related to the silk road in this course. This course will help students gain a comprehensive and deep understanding of the silk road history and the commercial, cultural, and religious exchanges between China and other countries. In addition to historical knowledge, it will also introduce multiple theories and research methodologies to students, aiming to enhance the students' ability to conduct independent research in this field.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Demonstrate a broad knowledge of the history of silk road and China's foreign relations	x	x	
2	Discover and analyze the prominent values of the silk road from economic, cultural, and religious perspectives	x	x	x
3	Examine the impact of the silk road on Chinese and world history critically		x	x
4	Argue for or against a topic with evidence in discussing the silk road and China's foreign relations and demonstrate the ability to find new points of departure	x	x	x

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Lectures will introduce important works on the silk road conducted by Chinese, Japanese, and Western scholars. Students will analyse textual and visual primary sources in lectures. The lectures will be conducted in a seminar-style, which encourages active student participation and critical enquiry and communication.	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Tutorials	Students will take turns to present on a chosen topic, and engage with instructor and other students to obtain critical and constructive feedback.	1, 2, 3, 4	
3	Readings	Students are expected to finish assigned reading materials before each lecture, understand the argument, evidence, and research methodologies in each reading.	1, 2, 3	

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1 One individual term paper: Students will show their critical thinking ability and analytical skills in understanding the importance and significance of the silk road and the history of China's foreign relations.	1, 2, 3, 4	40	-	No

2	Oral presentation: Students will demonstrate their knowledge and analytic skills of the silk road history and the primary sources related to it.	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	No
3	In-class discussion: Students will participate in discussions in class, and provide peer review of classmates' presentation.	1, 2, 3	20	-	Yes
4	Canvas discussion: Students will show their critical thinking ability and skills in building strong arguments.	2, 3, 4	10	-	Yes

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

Individual term paper (for students admitted in Semester A 2024/25 &amp; thereafter)

**Criterion**

1. Ability to demonstrate a firm grasp of the subject matter.
2. Ability to integrate ideas and opinions based on one' s clear problematic concerns.
3. Ability to analyze, criticize certain issues with critical and coherent arguments.

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. The written work shows a thorough understanding of the issues and their theoretical and practical implications, with strong evidence of substantial reading and research.
2. The written work shows independent thought, presents informed and logical discussion as well as demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical evaluation.
3. Strong evidence of original thinking.
4. Evidence of superior grasp of the subject matter with extensive knowledge.
5. Exact and accurate expressions, ability to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing and coherent.

**Good**

(B+, B, B-)

1. The written work shows good understanding of the issues and their theoretical and practical implications, with clear evidence of considerable reading and research.
2. The written work shows some independent thought and sensible discussion as well as demonstrates ability for critical evaluation.

**Fair**

(C+, C, C-)

1. The written work shows adequate understanding of the issues and their theoretical and practical implications, with some evidence of a fair amount of reading and research.
2. The written work is not analytical or critical enough, but able to present a sensible discussion.

### **Marginal**

(D)

1. Marginal command of knowledge concerning the subject matter.
2. Marginal critical thinking ability concerning the subject matter.
3. Marginal application of theories concerning the subject.
4. Marginally acceptable ability in knowledge application.

### **Failure**

(F)

1. Vague and devoid of content, weak ability to integrate limited resources.
  2. Very poor organization.
  3. Unsystematic ideas which cannot express the subject matter or relevant themes.
  4. Seriously insufficient or even no reference.
  5. Unsatisfactory command of knowledge concerning the subject.
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### **Assessment Task**

Oral presentation (for students admitted in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

### **Criterion**

Show ability in integrating ideas and opinions which are relevant to the point and evidence of providing innovative ideas, criticism and analysis with convincing statement and creative comments.

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. Excellent command of knowledge of essential aspects of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Excellent linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Excellent oral presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Excellent reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Good**

(B+, B, B-)

1. Good command of knowledge of essential aspects of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Good linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Good oral presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Good reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Fair**

(C+, C, C-)

1. Adequate command of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Fair linguistic competence to describe the arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Acceptable oral presentation skills to illustrate general view of the subject
4. Fair reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Marginal**

(D)

1. Familiarity with the assigned topics and readings.
2. Able to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
3. Marginal ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Marginal reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Failure**

(F)

1. Unsatisfactory command of knowledge.
  2. Unsatisfactory critical thinking ability concerning the relevant subject.
  3. Unsatisfactory application of theories concerning the relevant subject.
  4. Unsatisfactory ability in knowledge application.
  5. Unsatisfactory collaborative skills and interactions with the fellow classmates.
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### **Assessment Task**

In-class discussion (for students admitted in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

#### **Criterion**

1. Ability to identify and analyse the topics critically with excellent grasp of the materials and in-depth knowledge of the subject matter.
2. Ability to interpret independent viewpoints effectively and efficiently.

#### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of:

1. Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points;
2. Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

#### **Good**

(B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of:

1. Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points;
2. Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

#### **Fair**

(C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of:

1. Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points;
2. Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

#### **Marginal**

(D)

Marginally satisfy the basic requirements of participation.

#### **Failure**

(F)

Fail to meet the minimum requirements of participation.

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### **Assessment Task**

Canvas discussion (for students admitted in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

#### **Criterion**

1. Knowledge of the subject
2. Ability to deliver an argument

#### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. Excellent command of knowledge of the silk road

2. Excellent ability to deliver a strong argument

**Good**

(B+, B, B-)

1. Good command of knowledge of the silk road
2. Sufficient ability to deliver a strong argument

**Fair**

(C+, C, C-)

1. Fair command of knowledge of the silk road
2. Fair ability to deliver an argument

**Marginal**

(D)

Marginally satisfy the basic requirements of participating in a discussion.

**Failure**

(F)

Fail to meet the minimum requirements of participating in a discussion.

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**Assessment Task**

Individual term paper (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

**Criterion**

1. Ability to demonstrate a firm grasp of the subject matter.
2. Ability to integrate ideas and opinions based on one's clear problematic concerns.
3. Ability to analyze, criticize certain issues with critical and coherent arguments.

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. The written work shows a thorough understanding of the issues and their theoretical and practical implications, with strong evidence of substantial reading and research.
2. The written work shows independent thought, presents informed and logical discussion as well as demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical evaluation.
3. Strong evidence of original thinking.
4. Evidence of superior grasp of the subject matter with extensive knowledge.
5. Exact and accurate expressions, ability to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing and coherent.

**Good**

(B+, B)

1. The written work shows good understanding of the issues and their theoretical and practical implications, with clear evidence of considerable reading and research.
2. The written work shows some independent thought and sensible discussion as well as demonstrates ability for critical evaluation.

**Marginal**

(B-, C+, C)

1. Marginal command of knowledge concerning the subject matter.
2. Marginal critical thinking ability concerning the subject matter.
3. Marginal application of theories concerning the subject.
4. Marginally acceptable ability in knowledge application.

**Failure**

(F)

1. Vague and devoid of content, weak ability to integrate limited resources.
  2. Very poor organization.
  3. Unsystematic ideas which cannot express the subject matter or relevant themes.
  4. Seriously insufficient or even no reference.
  5. Unsatisfactory command of knowledge concerning the subject.
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### **Assessment Task**

Oral presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

### **Criterion**

Show ability in integrating ideas and opinions which are relevant to the point and evidence of providing innovative ideas, criticism and analysis with convincing statement and creative comments.

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. Excellent command of knowledge of essential aspects of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Excellent linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Excellent oral presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Excellent reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Good**

(B+, B)

1. Good command of knowledge of essential aspects of the assigned topics and readings.
2. Good linguistic competence to explain and assess the main arguments of the assigned readings.
3. Good oral presentation skills to demonstrate deliberation of the subject.
4. Good reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Marginal**

(B-, C+, C)

1. Familiarity with the assigned topics and readings.
2. Able to describe some important points of the assigned readings.
3. Marginal ability and skills to illustrate general view of the subject.
4. Marginal reflective and discovery ability to address new issues pertaining to the subject.

### **Failure**

(F)

1. Unsatisfactory command of knowledge.
  2. Unsatisfactory critical thinking ability concerning the relevant subject.
  3. Unsatisfactory application of theories concerning the relevant subject.
  4. Unsatisfactory ability in knowledge application.
  5. Unsatisfactory collaborative skills and interactions with the fellow classmates.
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### **Assessment Task**

In-class discussion (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

### **Criterion**

1. Ability to identify and analyse the topics critically with excellent grasp of the materials and in-depth knowledge of the subject matter.
2. Ability to interpret independent viewpoints effectively and efficiently.

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of:

1. Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points;
2. Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

### **Good**

(B+, B)

Some evidence of:

1. Active in-class participation, positive listening, ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points;
2. Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

### **Marginal**

(B-, C+, C)

Marginally satisfy the basic requirements of participation.

### **Failure**

(F)

Fail to meet the minimum requirements of participation.

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## **Assessment Task**

Canvas discussion (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

### **Criterion**

1. Knowledge of the subject
2. Ability to deliver an argument

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-)

1. Excellent command of knowledge of the silk road
2. Excellent ability to deliver a strong argument

### **Good**

(B+, B)

1. Good command of knowledge of the silk road
2. Sufficient ability to deliver a strong argument

### **Marginal**

(B-, C+, C)

Marginally satisfy the basic requirements of participating in a discussion.

### **Failure**

(F)

Fail to meet the minimum requirements of participating in a discussion.

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## **Additional Information for AR**

Not applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23

## **Part III Other Information**

### **Keyword Syllabus**

The silk road; the maritime silk road; China's foreign relations; tribute system; foreign trade; cultural exchanges; religious exchanges; Dunhuang; Ningbo; Quanzhou; Guangzhou; Sogdian traders; Arabic traders; East Asia Indian Company; ceramics; silk; tea; export handicrafts

## Reading List

### Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	榮新江：《絲綢之路與東西文化交流》，北京：北京大學出版社，2015年。
2	[美] 韓森：《絲綢之路新史》，北京：北京聯合出版公司，2015年。
3	侯楊方：《這才是絲綢之路》中信出版集團，2024年。
4	侯楊方：《蔥嶺之外，歐亞文明的十字路口》廣東人民出版社，2025年。
5	楊斌：《人海之間：海洋亞洲中的中國與世界》，廣西師大出版社，2023年。

### Additional Readings

Title	
1	[法]魏義天：《粟特商人史》，桂林：廣西師範大學出版社，2012年。
2	陳高華、陳尚勝：《中國海外交通史》，台北：文津出版社，1997年。
3	David C. Kang, <i>East Asia before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute</i> . New York: Columbia University Press, 2010
4	Susan Whitfield, <i>Silk, Slaves, and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road</i> . Oakland: University of California Press, 2018.
5	[日]森安孝夫：《絲綢之路與唐帝國》，北京：北京日報出版社，2020年。
6	[美]薛愛華：《撒馬爾罕的金桃：唐代舶來品研究》，北京：社會科學文獻出版社，2016年。
7	Bin Yang, <i>Cowrie Shells and Cowrie Money: A Global History</i> . Rutledge, 2019.
8	[美]傅高義：《中國和日本：1500年的交流史》，香港：香港中文大學出版社，2019.