

# ***Global Commodities and Culture Contact***

***Fall 2018***

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**Office:** History Department

**Office hours:** Tuesdays, all day! Do email me for appointments at other times.

## **Course Description**

This class focuses on cultural contacts as they are mediated by global commodities, such as silk, tea, coffee, sugar, and opium, among others. While cultural contacts might be approached through more local mechanisms, such as war, migration, or trade between contiguous countries, the social relationships and cultural contacts that form around global commodities are remarkable in that they often occur across huge distances. Producers of a commodity may never meet the consumers of it, even though the two groups often transform each other's lives profoundly. Students will examine the cultural aspects of global economies in two main contexts – the Silk Roads of Asia (200BC-1200AD) and the British Empire (1630s-1900).

In addition to this topical focus, we will be working hard on paper writing in this class. The main event of the second quarter will be for you to spend significant time working through the steps of a larger research paper on a single global commodity of your choice, using the Collins article and our discussions of sugar and coffee as your template.

## **Course Objectives**

- To **improve your writing skills** through a quarter-long research project
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- To demonstrate mastery of material regarding:
  - o The **disruption and/or collaboration** that happens when diverse groups meet in service of trade
  - o The **cultural aspects** of trade and economics
  - o The profound effects of **global trade** on modern history
- To learn about **how history is written** by examining the very stuff of history – historical documents and, to a lesser degree, archaeological evidence.

## **Grades**

Participation	20%
In-Class Writings/Quizzes	15%
Paper 1 – Silk Road	15%
Short Essay Test	15%
Outline	5%
Draft	10%
Paper 2 – Commodity	20%

***In order to pass this class, you must turn in all the assignments.***

## **Required Texts**

Xinru Liu, *The Silk Roads*

Henry Gates, *The Classic Slave Narratives*

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

***Most readings will be found on Moodle in PDF***

# Course Schedule

## **Introduction and Get-To-Know-You**

Let's read something fun and talk about it – Clan of the Cave Bear is a novel about Neanderthal life, which is quite a feat, given that what we know about them comes from scant archaeological evidence deposited some 40000 years ago. We will talk about how the archaeology and the novel match up as we try to discern the very first known example of culture contact.

**Assessments: In-class writings, Participation**

## **Unit 1: Silk Roads and Writing Papers**

Using mostly primary sources, we will discuss cultural contact along the silk roads, mostly prior to 1000AD. Contact between diverse cultures, especially between nomads and sedentary farming societies was rife with conflict, but it also produced a number of religious, cultural, and political collaborations across Asia and Europe, including the spread of Buddhism. We will also spend significant time talking about paper writing during this unit.

**Assessments: Participation, Quizzes, Paper, 4 pages:** Using mostly primary sources, describe three ways that the network of the Silk Roads changed people religiously, culturally, economically, or politically (choose at least three). Use sources from class, and cite them.

## **Unit 2: Theory**

We will look into two sets of theories on how global commodities and culture contact work: commodity chains and the social history of things. These are not easy texts to read; good theory rarely is. You will be responsible for integrating one of these theories into your final papers, so pay close attention this week.

**Assessments: In-class writing, Participation**

## **Unit 3: British Empire: Imperial Commodities and Culture Contact**

In this unit, we will focus heavily on commodities and cultural contact through imperial trade. We will pay special attention to the history of coffee and the way it fostered civil society in Britain, as well as the sugar/slave complexes of the West Indies. Then, we will spend some time learning about the tremendous struggle between China and Britain over opium in the nineteenth century, culminating in the Opium Wars. Finally, we may talk about the history of quinine and its relationship to the Haitian Revolution and the colonization of Africa. All of these

stories involve two groups, usually colonized and colonizer, interacting over the production of a single profitable good, and will serve as models for your final paper.

### Essay Test

### Outline and Introduction for Final Paper on a Global Commodity Chain

### Draft (full) for Final Paper on a Global Commodity Chain

### Final Paper on a Global Commodity Chain

## Rules and Expectations

### Attendance

Attendance is mandatory, as per the Student Handbook. **If you are not in class to answer when I call your name for attendance, I will mark you absent.** Students who appear between attendance being taken and the **five-minute mark** in class will be re-marked tardy. It's in your best interest to see me after class if you miss attendance to ensure I don't forget to change it.

### No Internet Sources in Paper Writing Unless They Have Been Pre-Approved Two Weeks Before the Paper is Due

Is she serious? Dead serious. We will be spending rather a large chunk of time in the library for this class. You will have plenty of time to order interlibrary loan books for your paper and ample opportunity to check out online databases. There will be books placed on reserve for this class. You will work with the others doing your topic to trade books. You can visit with Ms. James-Jenkin in the library, who can help you to find resources.

There is nothing more detrimental to learning the process of research at the moment than the internet itself. It's a wonderful resource to use **after** you have already learned how to research and can evaluate what you find there. So, in these early stages, we will use books instead.

For each unapproved internet source that appears in your paper, you will lose five points on the final grade of that paper.

## No Technology

Nothing with a screen shall the instructor find in the hand of a student, except on Library Days. Clicking is the enemy of cogitation, and we'll have none of it.

**Bring** paper, pens, and printed readings. You may share a reading among a table, if you'd like. If printing readings is burdensome, take excellent notes with page numbers and bring those.

No earphones, no phones, no laptops. I will stand for a tablet with the readings on display, but I should be able to see the screen at all times (ie, keep it flat on your desk.

## Note Taking

Take notes on lectures and anything your instructor writes on the board during discussions. You will use these notes again in your final paper, and in your in-class writings and quizzes, so these notes are incredibly important to you. Not taking notes can break your grade. **Bring your notes to class every day.**

## Make-up work and Extensions

No make ups, no rewrites, no extra credit, no extensions, unless you have an excused absence or are taking an exam. I do not make exceptions for this rule. Own your mistakes and do better next time.

**Late papers will lose a full grade per day (24 hours) until they are turned in.**

## Turning in Assignments

Turn in papers through Turnitin. You **MUST** receive a receipt from turnitin.com and confirm that your assignment was turned in. If you are unsure, mail it before the deadline to my inbox. This year, I will have no patience for claims that turnitin didn't work, and the late papers will be subject to the late paper policy above.

**In order to pass the class, you must turn in all assignments unless an exemption has been worked out with the instructor.** This sort of exception only occurs in usual circumstances having to do with illness.

## Participation

Your grades have a large participation component. Your instructor expects you to come to class -

- 1- Having **done your homework**
- 2- Ready to **discuss** the readings
- 3- Ready to **participate** in class activities
- 4- Ready to actively **take notes** on lectures
- 5- Ready to execute **in-class writings** (bring paper, pens, ALL CLASS NOTES and readings)

## **Academic Integrity**

All of the work you turn in for this course should be your own. Do NOT plagiarize.

Plagiarism defined:

“You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone else’s words or ideas but fail to credit that person. . . . You plagiarize even when you do credit the source but use its exact words without using quotation marks or block indentation. . . .You [also] plagiarize when you paraphrase a source so closely that anyone putting your work next to it would see that you could not have written what you did without the source at your elbow.”<sup>1</sup>

Claiming as your own the work of others, in whole or in part, will result in **referral for disciplinary action**, which can include **dismissal from IMSA**. See the IMSA Student Handbook for specific details and be sure to refer to the Chicago Style Guide for IMSA Students (<http://staff.imsa.edu/socsci/chicagostyle/>).

## **Basic Requirements for Assignments**

For papers

- 1” margins, 12pt Times New Roman
- Double-spaced
- .doc or .docx (MS word, avoid Google Docs)
- Bibliography, along with endnotes or footnotes. Use abbreviations like “Hesiod, 77” for every citation after the first.
- Will include an introduction and conclusion
- USES APPROPRIATE TOPIC SENTENCES

For Presentations

- Speak clearly in full sentences
- Avoid filler words, like “um”

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams in their book *The Craft of Research*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003)

- Chin up (keep your head out of your notes)
- Attempt eye contact with audience, don't look at your own powerpoint
- Vary your intonation

For In-class Writings

- Follow instructions
- Must **be legible, or the assignment will not be graded.**