

«Central Asian Studies World Wide»
Course Syllabi for the Study of Central Eurasia
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Jack Weatherford
The Mongols: Past and Present (Anthropology 50-01)
Syllabus for the course offered in Fall 2001
Macalester College
Dept. of Anthropology

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The Mongols: Past and Present

Anthropology 50-01

MWF 2:20-3:20 CAR 05

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Inner Asia remains one of the least understood areas of the world today; yet, in the thirteenth century, it was from this area that the Mongols created the largest empire in world history. By combining ethnography and history, we will study the origins of the Mongol Empire and the impact that it had on the conquered countries -- including China, Russia, the Middle East, and India. We will look at the contemporary people of Inner Asia as they struggle to deal with their dramatic legacy in the modern world system.

During the first half of the semester, we will concentrate on a detailed study of the Mongol Empire. During the second half, we will have a quick survey of Mongolian history since then, and we will study a series of topics related to Mongolia in the twentieth century.

BOOKS:David Morgan, *The Mongols*Paul Kahn, (translator) *The Secret History of the Mongols*Giovanni DiPlano Carpini, *The Story of the Mongols Whom We Call the Tartars***Assignments:**

You will write six essays of one thousand words each and a research paper of about 3,000-4,000 words. You will also make two oral presentations.

Class Format:

We will have a combination of discussion and lecture throughout the semester. Class attendance and participation are important.

Grade:

10% each for six papers

10% each for two oral presentations

20% for the research paper

If exams are needed, they will be scheduled, and their weight in the final grade will be decided at that time

Class Schedule and Readings:

Week I	Introduction	
Sept 5	Overview of the course	
7	What is the <i>Secret History</i> ?	<i>Secret History, Intro &</i> pages 3-11. Morgan, pages 1-14
Week II	Youth of Genghis Khan	
Sept 10	Birth - First Kill	<i>Secret History</i> , pages 11 - 20. Morgan, pages 55 - 61
12	Kidnap & Rescue	<i>Secret History</i> , pages 20 - 39.
14	Assignment I	
Week III	The Wars in Mongolia	
Sept 17	Love & War	<i>Secret History</i> , pages 40 - 68. Morgan, Chapter 2
19	War & Unification	<i>Secret History</i> , pages 68 - 91.
21	The Naiman Campaign	<i>Secret History</i> , pages 91 - 113. Morgan, pages 61 - 68
Week IV	The Developing Empire	
Sept 24	Assignment II	
26	Temujin becomes Chinggis Khan	<i>Secret History</i> , pages 114 - 141. Morgan, Chapter 4
28	Genghis Versus Shaman	<i>Secret History</i> , pages 141 - 145.
Week V	Genghis Khan's Finale	
Oct 1	Genghis Attacks the World	<i>Secret History</i> , pages 146 - 165. Morgan, pages 68 - 73.
3	Assignment III	
5	Death of Genghis Khan	<i>Erdeni-yin Tobchi</i> <i>Secret History</i> , pages 179-190.
Week VI	The Empire without Genghis Khan	

Oct 8	Reign of Ogedei	<i>Secret History</i> , pages 166- 177 Morgan, pages 112-117
10	Writing the <i>Secret History</i>	
12		Morgan, pages 5 - 31
Week VII	The Great Khatuns	
Oct 15	Assignment IV	
17	The Reign of Women	
19	Sorghagtani Beki's Revolution	
Week VIII	Western Conflict	
Oct 22	Assignment V	
24	Invasion of the West	Morgan, Chapter 6
26	FALL BREAK	
Week IX	Western Contact	
Oct 29	First Papal Envoy	Carpini, Preface, and Chapters 1-5 Morgan, Chapters 7
31	Assignment VI	
Nov 2	First Impressions	Carpini, Chapters 6 - 9
Week X	Khubilai Khan & Civil War	
Nov 5	Steppe versus City	Morgan, pages 118-132
7	Division of the Empire	Morgan, 195 - 206
9	Assignment VII	
Week XI	Legacy of the Mongol Empire	
Nov 12		
14		
16	Assignment VIII	

Week XII The image of the Mongols in science and literature

Nov 20

22

24 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week XIII Genghis Khan and Pan-Mongolism in Asia in the Twentieth Century

Nov 26

28 Assignment IX

30

Week XIV Research Reports

Dec 3

5 Assignment X

7

Week XV Research Reports

Dec 10 Research Papers Due

12

14

Assignments:

I. Mongols in our Minds

Write an essay on one of the following two topics:

A. Mongol Surfing

What kind of information is available about the Mongols on the Internet? Where are the sites? Who sponsors them? For what purpose? What kinds of topics are covered. Is the content mostly current events? History? Spirituality? Etc.

B. Public Perceptions of Mongols

Conduct interviews or form a focus group of three to five people to discuss what they know about Mongols and images or perceptions they have of who the Mongols are. Write a thousand-word essay on these findings. Be sure to include a statement of methodology and who the subjects were as well as an explanation of your findings.

II. Newspaper story

Write a newspaper article on a particular event in the history of the Mongol Empire in the manner that it might have been covered if modern journalists had been there.

III. A word or Name

Write an essay on one word or name in the *Secret History*. Explain how the word is used in the text and what its importance or role seems to be. This may be a word in English translation such as *heaven, wolf, cry, brother, woman, horse, smell, mother, or water*. It may be a Mongol word such as *ordo, anda, khatun, khan, or khuraltai*. It may be the name of a place or a person. Try to keep the interpretation as much within the text as possible. Use as much evidence (quotes usually) as you can from the text.

IV. Film Review

Write a newspaper-style review of about 750 words on a film made in Mongolia or about Mongols. The film may be either a fictional drama or a documentary.

V. Book Comparison

Find a biography of Genghis Khan or another translation of *The Secret History of the Mongols* and compare it carefully and critically with the translation that we read. In what ways do the texts differ? What accounts for the difference? Do they compliment or contradict each other? Is one clearly superior to the other?

VI. Research the kinds of topics and issues related to Mongolia in the international press. Compare these with the kinds reported in the Mongolian press. Use Lexus-Nexus for international press, use Mongolia on Line, Montsame, or other Mongolian site for Mongolian press.

VII. Carpini

Select any subject examined by Carpini's in his report to the pope and compare his handling of the subject with that of the *Secret History*. Do they agree on the facts? Interpretation? Explanation? Do you think that Carpini was accurate? Did he see something that the Mongols may not have known about themselves?

VIII. Mongol Legacy

Research the impact or influence of the Mongols on one area of the world or on a particular group of people. Try to be as specific as you can. This may be a country such as Korea, India, or Armenia, or it may be a group or category of people such as Muslims, merchants, or Buddhists.

IX. Travel Accounts and Journalists' Books

Find a book by a journalist or traveler in Mongolia within the last century. Review the book and evaluate the author's intentions and achievements.

X. Screenplay or Book Proposal

Organize a proposal for a fictional or documentary film or book you would like to write on a topic in Mongol history or in contemporary society. Include an outline of the work, a summary or overview, and statement of audience.

Research Paper

Select one of the nine essays you wrote in this class and expand it into ten-page research paper. Under some circumstances, you may be able to combine material from different essays or even select an entirely new topic, but this should be done in consultation with the professor.

If you would like to use some other format such as an audio-visual medium, website, etc., please discuss the idea with the professor.