Dru C. Gladney
The Silk Road: Pre- and Post-Modern Travel Narrative (Asian Studies 620)
Syllabus for the course offered in Spring 2001
University of Hawaii
Asian Studies Department
Asian Studies 620  
"The Silk Road: Pre- and Post-Modern Travel Narrative"  
Dru C. Gladney  
Professor, Asian Studies, SHAPS  

Time: Tuesdays, 2:30-5:00  
Place: Moore 203  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon  
Spring 2001  
Office: Moore Hall, 408  
Tel: 956-5237; Home: 924-8884  
Email: dru@hawaii.edu

This course will examine contemporary theories of travel narrative from the perspective of the Silk Road across Eurasia. The course will consider the relevance of this growing body of theory for understanding social and political processes in the old and new states of Asia. Considering the Eurocentric nature of most theories of travel and the Silk Road, this course will ask: Are these theories useful for the Asian context? Do they help or hinder understanding of recent and current travel narrative in Asia? Are there different styles of travel and travel narrative in Asia and Europe? What is the role of religion, ritual, and representation in constructing the nature of the Silk Road? What is the general history of the Silk Road and why is it important in linking constructions of the pre- and post-modern histories of East and West?

Participation: As an advanced reading/discussion seminar course, students are required to complete all readings before coming to class, and two students will be assigned to discuss/debate the merits (or shortcomings) of the articles, chapters or book assigned (20%).

Short Paper: A short paper/critique will be assigned on a “classic” Silk Road travel narrative, to be decided upon after consultation with the professor. Due the 6th week of class (5-7 pages) (15%)

Research Paper - Rough Draft: A longer research paper will be required on a subject to be determined with the instructor, due in rough draft form in 12th week of class (15%, with proposal due earlier, worth 5%). Proposal is due Week 4.

Research Paper - Final Draft: A longer research paper will be required on a subject to be determined with the instructor, due last week of class (50%).

Final Examination/Readings Journal: A readings journal is due on the day of the final (10%) (1 page per seminar reading)

Required Books (additional articles to be made available):


**Course Schedule:**

**Week 1. The Post- and Pre-Modern travel narrative**


**Assignment:** 5-7 page paper, on a “classic” Silk Road narrative. To be handed in on the sixth week of class and discussed in class. Typed, Double-spaced. 15% of grade.

**Week 2. Reflections and preservations of travel narratives**


**Week 3. History(s) of the Silk Road(s)**


**Week 4. History(s) continued**


**Assignment:** Research proposal for a study (library/historical, or field/present) related to some aspect of the past and/or present Silk Road. 1 page, typed. Due in class (students are strongly urged to meet with instructor individually). (5% of grade)

**Week 5. History, Historiography, and the Western Imagination**

Student presentations on this topic

**Week 6. The Early Religious Expansions: Buddhism**

**Assignment: Short Paper due**

**Week 7. The Early Religious Expansions: Nestorianism and Manicheanism**
Foltz, Richard C. Religions of the Silk Road. New York: St Martin's Press, 1999. Chapter 4

Student presentations/readings on this topic

**Week 8. The Later Religious Expansions: Islam**

Student presentations/readings on this topic

**Week 9. The Later Religious Expansions: Islam**

Student presentations/readings on this topic

**Week 10: (Spring Break)**

**Week 11. Ideological Expansions: Imperialism, Nationalism, and Communism**
Week 12.  Ideological Expansions: The end of Imperialism and the rise of Nationalism

Weeks 13.  Ideological Expansions: Capitalism and Secularism
Readings to be handed out in class

Week 14.  Cyber Silk Roads? The future of travel narrative in the Diaspora
Chapter 12: Epilogue.

Weeks 15.  Student Presentations/Papers
Student research project presentations
NOTE: WRITTEN PAPERS DUE!!

Weeks 16: Wrap-up
Readings Journal/Final: Due on day of Final Exam