

NEH Summer Institute  
Central Asia in World History  
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### **Preliminary Ideas: Exploring Central Asia in World History**

*Course:* World History and Geography I: Middle Ages to Age of Revolution  
9<sup>th</sup> Grade; On Level

### **Unit(s): Islam in the Middle Ages; Sub-Saharan Civilizations in the Middle Ages; China in the Middle Ages; Medieval Europe**

#### **Standards:**

- 9.1. Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, social, and religious structures of the civilizations of Islam in the Middle Ages.
  2. Describe the expansion of Muslim rule through military conquests and treaties, emphasizing the cultural blending within Muslim civilization (Phoenician and Persian) and the spread and acceptance of Islam and the Arabic language. (P, R, M, S)
  8. Describe the establishment of trade routes among Asia, Africa, and Europe; the role of the Mongols in increasing Euro-Asian trade; the products and inventions that traveled along these routes (e.g., spices, textiles, paper, steel, and new crops); and the role of merchants in Arab society. (G, I, E)
  
- 9.2. Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of China in the Middle Ages.
  5. Trace the spread of Chinese technology — such as papermaking, wood-block printing, the compass, and gunpowder — to other parts of Asia, the Islamic world, and Europe. (S, I, E)
  6. Describe the Mongol conquest of China. (M, P)
  
- 9.4. Students analyze the geographic, political, religious, social, and economic structures of the sub-Saharan civilizations of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai of West Africa in the Middle Ages.
  2. Describe the role of the trans-Saharan caravan trade in the changing religious and cultural characteristics of West Africa and the influence of Islamic beliefs, ethics, and law. (G, R, S)
  
- 9.5. Students analyze the geographic, political, religious, social, and economic structures of the civilizations of medieval Europe.
  8. Describe the economic and social effects of the spread of the bubonic plague from Central Asia to China, the Middle East, and Europe, and its impact on global population. (G, S, E)

## **Activities:**

### **1. From the Silk Road to the Metro (Intro to Silk Road and Human Webs)**

Introduction to the Silk Road as conduit for culture and commerce; linking together cultures; get students thinking about Silk Road as a network by having them think about major transportation networks (metro system, interstate 95, etc); Students can diagram places they travel to and why (school, work, church, leisure, commerce, etc); Key questions: How do we travel? Why do we travel? What observations can we make about the routes we take? (webs) What are the consequences of our travel, intended and unintended? How do routes and the places along them change over time as a result of travel along the routes?

Use as both intro to Silk Road and cultures to be studied as well as symbol for interdependent web of human history

#### **Materials:**

- DC metro map; Atlas/road maps
- notes/images of Silk Road from NEH Institute: Levi PPT
- website Silk Road Seattle for resources (TBD)
- Handout: The Silk Road: Linking Europe and Asia through Trade
- Susan Whitfield book on Silk road stories/images
- Handout: Introduction from Human Web by McNeill and McNeill

### **2. Spread of Islam: Religion and Culture**

Examine geographic spread of Islam over time from Arabian peninsula into northern Africa, Middle East, Europe and Central Asia; discuss causes and consequences of spread, specifically impact on Central Asian culture

#### **Materials:**

- Glencoe World History textbook map on spread of Islam (p. TBD)
- NEH lecture notes/PPT on spread of Islam
- resources to illustrate manifestations of Islam in various cultural contexts

### **3. Silk Road v. Trans-Saharan Trade Routes**

Compare and contrast Silk Road as a conduit of culture and commerce with trans-Saharan trade routes; review PERSIA framework for analyzing characteristics of civilizations (political, economic, religious, social, intellectual/artistic, and area/geography and discuss trade routes' respective impacts over time

#### **Materials:**

- website Silk Road Seattle for resources: <http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/index.html>
- Handout: The Silk Road: Linking Europe and Asia through Trade
- Story: The Carpet of Dreams (about the Silk Road) from Tales Told in Tents
- Handout: PERSIA framework overview

#### 4. *Chinghiss Khan: Father of the World?*

Debate or Socratic Seminar on topic: *Chinghiss Khan: Father of the World?*; students read background on Chinghiss Khan and the Mongols, new articles on genetic legacy of Chinghiss Kahn, and lecture/articles on political and cultural legacy in immediate region and beyond; discuss as Soc Sem or debate

**Materials:**

- selected readings on Chinghiss Khan from NEH seminar and other articles from newspapers, pop culture connections
- PPT from Tim May

#### 5. "Ooh Ooh Fleas on Rats"

Compare and contrast causes and effects of plague on Central Asia and Medieval Europe; discuss plague origins; watch video on Black Death by History for Music Lovers

**Materials:**

- Notes from NEH Institute on plague/Mongols v. Genoese
  - Black Death music video by History for Music Lovers
- <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=UUAiABuhVSMZJMqyv4Ur5XqA&feature=plcp>