

# Introduction to the History and Cultures of Central Asia

## WINTER QUARTER 2005

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An introduction to the linguistic, cultural and historical backgrounds of the peoples of Central Asia, with an emphasis on the period of Central Asian history, from the Scythians to the Mongols (5<sup>th</sup> Century BC to 13<sup>th</sup> Century AD).

Aims to provide a multi-dimensional, interdisciplinary understanding of the early historical roots of some of the populations of the current independent republics of Central Asia (Kazakstan, Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan), and of some adjacent areas including Xinjiang, Siberia, the Volga-Ural region, Azerbaijan, Iran and the Caucasus, as well as Mongolia and parts of China.

Components:

1. **In-class discussion** (based on lectures & readings)
2. **Lectures.**
3. **Presentations** by guest scholars on particular areas or topics.
4. **Films** and audio materials
5. **Required readings**

Required readings include a selection of publications on Central Asia. List of suggested readings incorporates some less frequently used materials, including those in languages other than English. Majority of the readings on reserve at the Regenstein Library. Basic reading packet consisting of selections from the readings on reserve and other materials will also be available.

**Required final project** for the course is a 10-15 page paper, to be presented orally during the final week of class. Final written form of the paper will be **due on last class of quarter**. Any topic pertaining to Central Asia and/or the Turkic Peoples is acceptable, as long as it is consistent with the student's research interests, and has been discussed beforehand with the instructor. Students are encouraged to use this opportunity to prepare

a formal, publishable paper on the topic of their interest. There will be two short take home essays in lieu of midterm and final examinations, and 4 short (1-2 p.) reviews of readings & films.