

THE MONGOL WORLD EMPIRE

CENTRAL EURASIA, 1000–1500

Semester

History 544

MW, 1:30–3:18, BE 0198

Instructor

Professor Scott Levi

levi.18@osu.edu

Office Hours

MW, 9:30–10:30, and by appointment

152 Dulles Hall, 292-2447

Important Dates

First Day of Classes	Sept. 24	Paper Due	Nov. 19
Map Quiz	Oct. 6	Last Day of Classes	Dec. 3
Mid-Term Exam	Oct. 27	Final Exam	Dec. 9, 1:30–3:18

Course Description and Objectives

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, a small and relatively obscure nomadic people emerged from their isolated homeland in the steppe north of China to forge what would quickly become the largest contiguous empire in the history of the world. The architect of this empire was the young Mongol warrior Temuchin, who rose from a youth full of challenges and disappointments to unite the disparate and warring Turco-Mongol tribes. In the year 1206, Temuchin was elevated to the position of Chinggis Khan (“Oceanic Ruler”) and he announced the “Mandate from Heaven” — the Mongols were destined to conquer the world and Chinggis Khan and his heirs were destined to rule it. A strategic genius, Chinggis Khan expertly exploited his enemies’ weaknesses and used his nomadic troops’ superior speed, mobility and military skills to great advantage. Sedentary peoples were offered the options of total submission or total annihilation, and one by one the great cities of Eurasia toppled. Within just a few decades Mongol rule spread over the peoples of China, Eastern Europe and the Islamic Middle East.

While the Mongol Empire is long gone, it had a profound and undeniable impact on the trajectory of world history. The destruction of the Mongol conquests was overwhelming, but that relatively short period of trauma was followed by a lengthy recovery under the Pax-Mongolica: the Mongol Peace. For several decades, Eurasia witnessed an unprecedented rise in the movement of people and a corresponding rise in the transcontinental exchange of commodities, scientific knowledge, religious and cultural traditions, and even disease pathogens. In the fifteenth century, as the Europe emerged from the Black Death into the Renaissance, the Europeans’ new-found appreciation for the intoxicating spices, silks and other riches of the East developed into an unquenchable thirst, and efforts to obtain these exotic luxuries led to the voyages of Columbus and Vasco da Gama, and the Age of Discovery.

This course will introduce students to the social, cultural and political history of medieval Central Eurasia, paying special attention to the quite regular, occasionally turbulent, but never dull interactions of pastoral-nomadic and sedentary peoples. Additionally, students will develop their critical thinking skills as they engage a wide variety of primary sources that offer valuable insights into Central Asian history.

Important Information

All students must be officially enrolled in the course by the end of the second full week of the quarter. No requests to add the course will be approved by the Chair of the Department after that time. Enrolling officially and on time is solely the responsibility of the student.

Required Reading

Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan* (Oxford, 2007).
Christopher Dawson, *The Mission to Asia* (Toronto, 1980).
Timothy May, *The Mongol Art of War* (Yardley, PA, 2007).
David Morgan, *The Mongols*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, MA, 2007).
J. J. Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (Philadelphia, 2001).

Recommended Reading

Thomas Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge, UK, 1997).
Nicola di Cosmo, *Warfare in Inner Asian History, 500–1800* (Leiden, 2001).
Charles Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde* (Bloomington, IN, 1985).
Paul Kahn, tr., *Secret History of the Mongols* (Boston, 1998).
J. Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New Haven, 1999).
Ronald Latham, tr., *Travels of Marco Polo* (London, 1958).
Paul Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy* (Cambridge, MA, 1991).
Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley, 1988).
Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* (New York, 2004).

Note: all required and recommended readings have been put on two-hour reserve at the Main Library. All books are available for purchase at SBX.

Assignments and Grading

Participation	10%
Map Quiz:	10%
Paper	25%
Mid-Term	25%
Final	30%

Grading Scale

A	92.5–100	B-	80–82	D+	67.5–69.5
A-	90–92	C+	77.5–79.5	D	60–67
B+	87.5–89.5	C	72.5–77	E	59.5 and below
B	82.5–87	C-	70–72		

Note: the instructor reserves the right to consider improvement in determining final grades.

Map Quiz

In the third week of the quarter you will be required to take a map quiz. In the first week of the quarter I will provide you with a list of geographical terms, ten of which you will be required to locate on a blank map in class.

Class Participation and Attendance

Attendance and active participation in class discussion is required for this course. Additionally, the lectures for this course augment the required readings, and exam questions will be taken from both. You are strongly encouraged to attend all class periods. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed and to collect lecture notes and information regarding any changes to the syllabus from other students. Chronic absences, more than two, may result in a penalty of one full letter grade.

Examinations

The mid-term and final examinations will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short identifications and essay questions that you will be required to answer in class. Essay questions will be graded based upon how well your answer communicates in writing what you have learned. Make-up exams will be given only in cases of serious illness or other documented emergency, and will consist entirely of essay questions. To make-up any exam, you will have to take it during one of the regularly scheduled exam sessions offered by the Department of History.

Make-up Exams

If you have to miss an exam because of illness or a verifiable emergency, you must contact me before the exam. To make-up any exam, you will have to take it during one of the regularly scheduled exam sessions offered by the Department of History. Only in extraordinary and verifiable cases will I give an extension on the out-of-class essay assignments.

Paper Assignment

You are required to submit a well-crafted paper of between five and seven pages, due in class on the date specified in the syllabus below. Papers must incorporate a critical analysis of at least one primary source. Additional instructions for this assignment will be distributed in class.

Learning how to express one's ideas clearly is an important goal of any liberal arts education. For this reason, paper grades will be based not only on content, but also on grammar and your correct use of formal writing style. Papers should be typed and double-spaced in 12-point font, and they should make proper use of footnotes or endnotes, a title page and a bibliography. Useful resources include: Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (4th ed.) and the OSU Writing Center (<http://cstw.osu.edu/writingCenter/>). Please note that papers will drop one full grade for each class period that they are late.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term academic misconduct includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

Plagiarism is representing someone else's words or ideas as your own. It is a form of academic dishonesty and it is not tolerated. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: handing in someone else's work as your own; taking credit for ideas that are not your own; including in your work phrases, sentences, paragraphs or any text from a book, article, or web site without marking the text as a quotation and citing the source; and paraphrasing text from a source (i.e., taking an idea from a source while not quoting it exactly) without citing the source. Any student found to have plagiarized on any assignment may receive a failing grade for the semester. Additionally, the instructor will notify the Committee on Academic Misconduct. See http://cstw.osu.edu/writingCenter/handouts/research_plagiarism.cfm for further discussion of plagiarism.

Reserve Clause

The professor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary or beneficial to meet the objectives of the course, to compensate for missed classes or schedule changes, or for similar legitimate reasons. Students will be notified of any such changes to the syllabus in adequate time to adjust to those changes.

SYLLABUS

WEEK 1 • Introduction to the peoples and geography of medieval Central Eurasia
Sept. 24

Reading: Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, 9–16

WEEK 2 • The pastoral-nomadic way of life
Sept. 29, Oct. 1 • Early nomadic empires and their neighbors

Reading: Morgan, *The Mongols*, 1–48
Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, 17–43
Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 1–26

WEEK 3 • Temuchin and the unification of the Mongol tribes
Oct. 6, 8 • **Map Quiz, Oct. 6**

• Chinggis Khan and the Mandate from Heaven
Reading: Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 27–46
Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, 44–72
Morgan, *The Mongols*, 49–73
May, *Mongol Art of War*, 1–26

WEEK 4 • Chinggis Khan's final years and the battle for succession
Oct. 13, 15 • Ogedei's Qaghanate and the Mongol invasion of Europe

Reading: Morgan, *The Mongols*, 74–98
Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 47–73
May, *Mongol Art of War*, 27–85

WEEK 5 • Karakoram: Mongol imperial culture in the steppe
Oct. 20, 22 • The Mongols and the West

Reading: Morgan, *The Mongols*, 99–119
Dawson, *Mission to Asia*

WEEK 6 • **Mid-Term Exam, Oct. 27**
Oct. 27, 29 • Civil war and the conquest of China

Reading: Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, 73–118
May, *Mongol Art of War*, 86–137

WEEK 7 • **No Class, Monday, Nov. 3**
Nov. 3, 5 • Yüan China: Marco Polo and Qublai Khan

Reading: Morgan, *The Mongols*, 112–35

WEEK 8
Nov. 10, 12
Reading: • The Chaghatai Khanate
• The Il-Khanate: Mongols and Assassins in the Middle East
Morgan, *The Mongols*, 120–51
Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, 119–54
Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 74–107

WEEK 9
Nov. 17, 19
Reading: • The Golden Horde
• Eurasia in the 14th century: plague, revolution and rebirth
• **Paper Due, Nov. 19**
Morgan, *The Mongols*, 152–73

WEEK 10
Nov. 24, 26
Reading: • Tamerlane and the last nomadic empire of Central Eurasia
• **No Class, Wednesday, Nov. 26**
Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, 155–74

WEEK 11
Dec. 1, 3
Reading: • Russia's rise from the Mongol Yoke
• The Mongol legacy
Morgan, *The Mongols*, 174–206
Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 108–62
Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, 175–200
May, *Mongol Art of War*, 138–46

FINAL EXAM
Tuesday, December 9 from 1:30 to 3:18