

The Silk Roads: arts, history and exploration



Buddha, 2nd c., National Museum New Delhi 68.187.
Photographer Daniel Waugh

A Royal Asiatic Society Summer School Monday July 8 – Thursday July 11, 2019

The influence of the interactions enabled by the Afro-Eurasian trade routes known as the Silk Roads are much in discussion today, especially with China's Belt Road Initiative. But what is the story of the Silk Road? Does such a concept make sense? What does it mean in terms of the history and arts of pre-modern Afro-Eurasia?

In this 4 day course, leading scholars on the historical Silk Road will introduce the term, its history and the 20th century explorations which brought the role of central Asia to the fore. The course will then look in some details at aspects of Silk Road art and technologies: silk production, books and printing, glass, ceramics and metalware. The participants will have the chance to see original manuscripts and books at the British Library and the Royal Asiatic Society, introduced by their curators.

This is a course intended for a general audience. No prior knowledge is required, although a short bibliography will be supplied for those wishing to do some reading in advance. The group will be limited to 12-15 people and therefore there will be ample opportunity for questions and group discussion.

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DETAILS

Venue: The Royal Asiatic Society, 14 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD
Duration: 4 days Monday-Thursday non residential
Cost: £600 Non-residential including 3 lunches and tea and coffee (Fellows receive a 12% discount).

COURSE ORGANISERS AND LEAD TUTORS

Dr. Susan Whitfield Honorary Senior Lecturer, University College London
Dr. Alison Ohta Director, Royal Asiatic Society
Dr. Peter Coles Morus Londinium and Goldsmiths' College London
Mélodie Doumy IDP, The British Library

For further information: ao@royalasiaticsociety.org;



Photographer: John Falconer

PROGRAMME

Monday: 8 July *The Silk Road: History, Art and Exploration*

09.30-10.30: Welcome, introductions and practical matters over coffee

10.30-12.30: The Silk Road: Introduction to its History and Art

12.30-14.00: Sandwich lunch

14.00-17.00: The Silk Road: Exploration and Discovery (2 lectures with break)

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Tuesday 9 July: *Silks and Sericulture on the Silk Road*

- 10.00-11.30: Sericulture and its Spread
- 11.30-13.00: Silks in Buddhism
- 13.00-14.30: Lunch
- 14.30-16.00: Silks in Christianity
- 16.30-19.00: England's Early Silk Industry: Walk and lecture in St James led by Dr. Peter Coles
- Followed by early evening drinks

Wednesday 10 July: *Books, paper and printing on the Silk Road*

- 10.00-11.00: Lecture on development of books, paper and printing in East Asia (SW)
- 11.00-13.00: Visit to British Library to view Silk Road manuscripts (MD)
- 13.00-14.30: Lunch
- 14.30-16.00: 'Judging Books by their Covers', Islamic Book bindings (AO) followed by session in RAS Library

Thursday 11 July: *Glass, Ceramics and Metalware*

Three lectures telling the stories of particular Silk Road objects.

- 10.00-11.30: A Roman glass bowl (SW)
- 11.30-13.00: An Islamic ceramic dish (SW)
- 13.00-14.30: Lunch
- 14.30-16.00: A Bactrian ewer (SW)

Closing Discussion