

THE SILK ROAD & CENTRAL ASIA

Tuesdays, October 16 to December 4, 2018 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Fairfield Seniors' Center, 80 Lothian Avenue Etobicoke

www.learningunlimitedetobicoke.com

Coordinator and Presenter: Dr Philip Wood

Course Overview: Central Asia is a fascinating place but little known in the West. The histories of these countries are the stuff of fairy tales, and one has to wonder why more movies haven't been made about them. The stories are really riveting in anecdotal form. We will study the ancient Silk Road with its camel caravans that carried not just trade but ideas inventions and espionage. We will study the present makeup of central Asian "Stans" and go on to see the evolution of China and 'The Modern Silk Road' which has been described as China's signature foreign policy.

October 16. A history of the Silk Road. Camel trains carried trade from one oasis town to another across a string of deserts in Central Asia. China had a monopoly on silk for some years but much more than silk was traded.

October 23. Cultural exchanges and the Silk Road. The Silk Road was the first World Wide Web as ideas, practices of religion, art, architecture, drama and language were shared along the road.

October 30. The Great Game and struggle for Empire. Espionage activities along the Silk Road came to be known as the 'Great Game' and continue to this day. The principle actors were the British and Russian Empires who feared the advances of each other.

November 6. Central Asia and the division of the USSR. It is fascinating to see how the newly independent States of Central Asia are developing since the break up of the Soviet Union.

November 13. Tourism and travel today on the Silk Road. Not for the faint hearted but "The best travel experience we've ever had, and that's no overstatement. As we ventured to places barely visited by Westerners, it showed us just how much there is to discover away from the well-trodden corners of the globe."

November 20. A recent history of China and its economy. China has transformed itself in the last 35 years and is entering a "new era" under strong leadership. China is replacing the USA in the aspirations of many countries.

November 27. A Modern Silk Road – China's signature policy. We will all be amazed to understand the way China is developing a worldwide infrastructure to remake the map of the global economy, with China at its heart.

December 4. What next? With huge surpluses in China and deficits elsewhere; with China taking a globalist position and the USA a protectionist; with differences on the environment and democracy, where in the world are we going?

Researcher/Committee Contact and Chair: Pamela Guy.