

## Of Islamic Art and Architecture: 7<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Centuries



This survey course aims at introducing the students to the art and architecture of the Islamic world from its early days in the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century to the present-day. While the concept ‘Islamic world’ is both vague and vast, stretching from Spain to Indonesia and beyond, the course will focus on several geographic areas to explore the visual culture produced by Muslims. A selection from architecture (mosques, mausoleums, palaces, garden ensembles and urban environments), the luxury objects, painting, and the arts of the book will be explored as manifestations and visual representations of the production of Islam. They enunciate its spiritual and intellectual values as well as the socio-economic parameters that defined its distinctive systems. Priority will be given to architecture and urbanism. For that purpose the course will develop chronologically and geographically by looking at the various stages of development of Islamic art and architecture throughout the ages as well as the way such a tradition has influenced – and in turn was influenced by – various pre-Islamic political and artistic networks.

Regular PowerPoint presentations, a visit to the museum, viewing of films, and a model-making project will help elucidate the historical developments of Muslim artistic and architectural canon. Particular emphasis will be placed on the sociopolitical context of selected artifacts, the close analysis of which will provide both a basic understanding of formal and artistic elements as well as their historical particularities. Throughout the course, a number of key conceptual and art-historical points will be raised: How do we define and/or quantify ‘Islamic’ art and architecture? What is the relationship between artifacts and larger sociopolitical forces? How does political power manifest and shape architecture and city-planning? In turn, how does architecture and city-planning contribute to the manifestation and dissemination of power? A number of historiographical and methodological questions will be raised as well: While adhering to the canon of Islamic art and architecture, how do we decode its underpinning assumptions about the validity of selected edifices? Ultimately, what can Islamic visual culture teach us about larger art-historical inquiries?

### REQUIREMENTS

**Grading:** 60% Exams 20% Model Project 10% Museum Essay 10% Participation  
A 90-100% B 89-80% C 70-79% D 60-69%

I do not give plus nor minuses; if this will have a negative effect on my GPA, reconsider taking this class. Because of privacy laws, all grades will be posted directly on LATTE. Please do not discuss with me your grades in public. If you have any questions regarding your grade that has a private nature, I’ll be happy to see you in my office.

**Exams** 60% Three exams will divide the material of the semester into three separate parts. Because of their format and images, exams must be taken when scheduled: NO make-up. Each exam will have four parts: identifications; comparisons; terminology; essay. We will have review sessions prior to each exam during which details will be provided.

**Model Project** 20% A research paper (1,500 words), accompanied by a three-dimensional model will be exhibited and reported in class on March 10. Team will speak about its project and papers for a few minutes. Papers and models will not be returned unless requested. Papers must be typed, 11 point type face with 1” margins and single spaced. All assignment must be turned in on the back of a used/recycled paper. Handwritten or incorrectly formatted papers will be disregarded and given no grade.

**Museum Essay** 10% An analytical and critical essay (800 words) will be due on April 26 after the April 18 museum visit. The field trip is mandatory and aims to provide an opportunity to students with a firsthand experience of Islamic art objects and architectural interiors. Discussions will take place in the museum. For the essay, students will select a object those available at the museum and with the use of the readings and lectures will discuss and analyze one specific art historical or historiographical problem. The essay is to be a critical and analytical narrative vis-à-vis the theories and histories discussed in class and at the museum; not a descriptive essay.

**Participation** 10% Exams will cover all material from lectures, class discussions, and readings. Your final grade will be affected by your participation and attendance in class and museum visit. Your final grade will be affected by your participation and attendance in class. Active engagement with the material, your colleagues, and your instructor constitutes the basis for your participation grade.

**Readings** Readings assigned must be done prior to the start of the week under which they appear in the syllabus. The books listed below are required; I encourage you to buy and *keep* these books. Articles and book-chapters outside these required books are posted on LATTE under “Reading” file. All handouts, instructions, and assignments are also posted on LATTE under the appropriate file (“Lecture Notes”, “Readings”, “Handouts”, etc.). Because of large size, lectures will NOT be posted on LATTE. You must attend class to see and hear them.

**Required Books** Blair, Sheila & Jonathan Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250-1800*  
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994)  
Ettinghausen, Richard & Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650-1250*  
(London & NY: Penguin Books, 1987)  
These books are available at the campus bookstore.  
Sign up and use the ArchNet site: <http://archnet.org/front/front.html>

**My Availability** Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:00-2:00 in my office, 106 Goldman Building. I will be in my office every week and available to answer your questions. Make sure you email me before you drop by. We can also arrange an appointment. I also encourage you to speak to me right before and after lectures in class for short answer questions. If you think your question might interest other students, I also encourage you to ask it in class for the benefit of everyone. I will make time for in class discussions and questions.

**Miscellaneous** I expect my students to abide by the academic honor code. I count on your integrity, honesty, and hard work to create a pleasant, productive, and stimulating environment. Students with special needs, see me at the beginning of the semester. This syllabus, the schedule of courses, and requirements for the class will be strictly followed; in cases of unforeseen exceptions, all these are subject to change at my discretion.

Jan 20	<b>Introduction to Course and Textbooks</b>
Jan 25	<b>Quantifying 'Islamic' Art</b> Ettinghausen & Grabar, 'Rise of Islam & Artistic Climate,' <i>Art &amp; Architecture of Islam</i> , 17-25 or 3-13 in new edition (n.e.) Grube, E. 'What is Islamic Architecture?' <i>Architecture of the Islamic World</i> (NY, 1978) 10-14 Film: <i>Islam: Empire of Faith</i> , Part I & II (PBS 2000)
Jan 27	<b>Late Antiquity &amp; the Caliphate: Sassanian &amp; Byzantine precedents</b> Bier, L. 'Sasanian Palaces and their Influence in Early Islam,' <i>Ars Orientalis</i> (1993) Hillenbrand, R. 'Birth of Islamic Art: the Umayyads,' <i>Islamic Architecture</i> , 11-37, optional
Feb 1	<b>Umayyads of Damascus: 650-750</b> Ettinghausen & Grabar, 'Umayyads & their Art,' <i>Art &amp; Architecture</i> , 26-74 or 15-41 n.e. Grabar, O. 'Islamic Religious Art,' <i>Formation of Islamic Art</i> , 99-131, optional
Feb 3	<b>Abbasids of Baghdad &amp; Samarra: 750-950</b> Ettinghausen & Grabar, 'The Abbasid Tradition,' <i>Art &amp; Architecture</i> , 75-125 or 51-79 n.e. Northedge, A. 'Creswell, Herzfeld, and Samarra,' <i>Muqarnas</i> 8 (1991), optional
Feb 8	<b>Umayyads in Spain: 750-1260</b> Ettinghausen & Grabar, 'The Muslim West,' <i>Art &amp; Architecture</i> , 127-66 or 83-101 n.e. Grabar, O. <i>The Alhambra</i> , 115-32 & 176-86, optional
Feb 10	<b>Fatimids of North Africa: 910-1171</b> Ettinghausen & Grabar, 'Fatimids in North Africa & Egypt,' <i>Art &amp; Architecture</i> , 167-208 or 187-200 n.e. Bloom, J. 'The Origins of Fatimid Art,' <i>Muqarnas</i> 3 (1985): 20-38, optional
Feb 15-17	Midterm recess
Feb 22	<b>Iran &amp; Central Asia: 800-1025</b> Ettinghausen & Grabar, 'Iran & Central Asia,' <i>Art &amp; Architecture</i> , 209-30 or 105-30 n.e. Hoag, J. 'The Early Islamic Architecture of Persia,' <i>Islamic Architecture</i> , chapter 10, optional
Feb 24	<b>Exam 1 Review</b>
Mar 1	<b>Exam 1</b>
Mar 3	<b>Seljuks of Persia &amp; Anatolia: 1000-1250</b> Ettinghausen & Grabar, 'Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries,' <i>Art &amp; Architecture</i> , 253-66 or 139-54 n.e. Hillenbrand, R. 'Ilkhanids & Timurids,' <i>Islamic Architecture</i> , 196-225, optional
Mar 8	<b>Mongols &amp; Timurids of Persia: 1000-1250</b> Blair & Bloom, 'Timurid & their Contemporaries,' <i>Art &amp; Architecture</i> , 37-50 & 55-63 O'Kane, B. 'From Tents to Pavilions: Royal Mobility and Persian Palace Design,' <i>Ars Orientalis</i> 23 (1993): 249-68, optional
Mar 10	<b>Mamluks of Egypt: 1260-1517</b> Blair & Bloom, 'Architecture in Egypt under the Bahri Mamluks,' & 'Architecture in Egypt, Syria, & Arabia under the Circassian Mamluks,' <i>Art &amp; Architecture</i> , 70-96
Mar 15	<b>Paper-Model Project; In-class Exhibition &amp; Report</b>

