

## 4.614 RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE AND ISLAMIC CULTURES (HASS-D)

**Class Schedule:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:00-12:30, in Room 3-133

**Instructor:** Nasser Rabbat, nasser@mit.edu, x3-1417

**TA:** Azra Aksamija <azra@MIT.EDU>

**Units:** 3-0-9, HASS-D.

**Class Requirements:** 4 short papers (6-7 pp., 15% of the final grade each) and a final open-book exam (30 % of the final grade), and 10% of the final grade for attendance and participation in discussion.

**URL:** <http://web.mit.edu/4.614/www/>, also available on the Open Course Ware website

### **DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces the history of Islamic cultures through its most vibrant marker: architecture. Religious, commemorative, and educational structures are surveyed from the beginning of Islam in 7th-century Arabia to its unfolding as a world religion professed by one-sixth of humanity today. The survey follows primarily a dynastic chronology with emphasis on distinguished patrons, influential thinkers, and outstanding designers. Representative examples of mosques, madrasas, mausolea, etc. are analyzed and their architectural, urban, and stylistic characteristics are examined in conjunction with their historical, political, and intellectual settings.

Images and films are used to elucidate the artistic/cultural varieties and historical developments of this architectural vision. Students are encouraged to raise questions and generate debates during the lectures. The aim is to explore all possible venues of interpretation to better locate Islamic religious architecture within its regional, pan-Islamic, and universal and cross-cultural contexts.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

George Michell, ed. *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1978 [reprint 1984].

Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina. *The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650-1250*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001.

Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *The art and architecture of Islam 1250-1800*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

Robert Irwin, *Islamic Art in Context: Art, Architecture and the Literary World*. New York, 1997.

Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991.

Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar. *The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650-1250*. London and N.Y.: Penguin Books, 1987.

Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture*. London : Thames and Hudson, 1999.

John D. Hoag, *Islamic Architecture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977.

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### SYLLABUS:

#### PART 1: BEGINNINGS

**1: Wed Sep 8:** Religious architecture: Visual impressions and intellectual contours.  
The evolution of religious beliefs and their architectural representations in the world from Stonehenge to the Cathedral of Chartres.

**2: Mon Sep 13:** Simple origins and influences of pre-Islamic traditions  
Mecca on the Eve of Islam: The Ka'ba and its pre-Islamic role

**Reading:**

Hourani, "The Making of a World," 1-21.

Irwin, 17-32.

**3: Wed Sep 15:** The Life and message of the Prophet  
The Mosque of the Prophet in Madina and other early mosques

**First Paper Assignment.**

**Reading:**

Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, vol. 1, chapter 3, pp. 163-75; chapter 4, pp. 188-208.

Allan and Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 3-10, 15-17.

**4: Mon Sep 20:** The vocabulary of religious architecture

Short Film: *Mosque* (20 mins) + discussion of the interplay of setting and rituals of worship in the definition of religious spaces.

**Reading:**

James Dickie, "Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas, and Tombs," in G. Michell, *Architecture of the Islamic World*, 65-79.

Hourani, "Ways of Islam," 147-52; "The Articulation of Islam," 59-79.

**5: Wed Sep 22:** The conquests and the mosques of Amsar

Adaptation of ancient motifs as assertive elements of a new faith.

**Reading:**

Hoag, Introduction and Chapter 1: The Beginning of Islamic Architecture.

Ettinghausen and Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam*, (1): 17-25.

Ettinghausen and Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam*, (2): 3-11.

#### PART 2: PAX ISLAMICA

**6: Mon Sep 27:** First Caliphal Expressions:

The First Islamic monument: the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem:

Competing ideologies, myths, and world views.

Umayyad Mosques (715-50): Islamization of the empire and Arabization of the state.

**Reading:**

(Suggested) Jeffery, "The Story of the Night Journey and the Ascension," 621-39.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (1), 26-45.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (2), 15-26.

Allan and Creswell, 19-88.

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Hoag. Chapter 2. Umayyad architecture.

Grabar, *Formation*, 45-67, 104-38, "Islamic Religious Art: The Mosque."

Hillenbrand. Chapter 1.

**7: Wed Sep 29:** The Splendors of the Abbasids at Baghdad and Samarra.  
An Islamic architectural language: Monumentalizing the hypostyle type.

**Reading:**

Ettinghausen and Grabar (1), 75-92

Ettinghausen and Grabar (2), 28-33

Allan and Creswell, 359-76.

Hoag. Chapter 3.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 2.

**8: Mon Oct 4:** Iran and Central Asia: Developments on the Eastern frontier.  
The survival and revival of pre-Islamic modes of construction and expression.  
The introduction of the mausoleum.

First Paper Due

Second Paper Assignment:

**Reading:**

Allan and Creswell, 264-69, 345-51.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (1), 209-22.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (2), 105-15.

Hoag. Chapter 10: The Early Islamic Architecture of Persia.

Kuban, *Muslim Religious Architecture*, 2: 27-33.

**9: Wed Oct 6:** Monuments of the West: Ifriqiya and Spain.  
Imperial versus provincial expressions of power.

**Reading:**

Ettinghausen and Grabar (1), 92-105, 127-40.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (2), 33-36, 83-91.

Allan and Creswell, 291-330, 391-406.

Hoag. Chapters 4 & 5.

Jerrilynn Dodds, "The Great Mosque of Cordoba," *Al-Andalus*, 11-25.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 7.

**Mon Oct 11: Holiday**

### **PART 3: FRAGMENTATION AND STRIVING FOR UNITY:**

**10: Wed Oct 13:** Fatimid Cairo: New traditions and old forms.  
Muqarnas: decorative purposes and symbolic meanings.

**Reading:**

Wheeler Thackston, (trans.), *Naser-e Khosraw's book of travels (Safarnama)*, 38-63.

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Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture of Cairo*, 58-67.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (1), 167-86.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (2), 187-200.

Hoag. Chapter 8.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 3.

**11: Mon Oct 18:** The Architecture of the Great Seljuqs:  
The Four-Iwan Plan: From palatial to religious.

**Reading:**

Hoag. Chapter 11: The Seljuqs.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (1), 253-84.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (2), 139-45.

Mohammad al-Asad, "Applications of Geometry," in Frishman and Khan *The mosque*, 55-75

Irwin, 66-77.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 4.

**12: Wed Oct 20:** Architecture of the Sunni revival: influences and traditions.  
The Introduction and spread of the *Madrassa* and the *Khanqah*

**Reading:**

Hourani, "Ways of Islam," 147-57, and "The Culture of the 'Ulama," 158-66.

Arthur Jeffery, *A reader on Islam*: " Sufism," 640-66.

Hoag. Chapter 12: The Classic Islamic Architecture of Syria and Iraq.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (1), 294-97, 303-13.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (2), 215-43.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 5.

**13: Mon Oct 25:** Crusades and Counter Crusades:  
The articulation of the idea of Jihad  
Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Religious Architecture.

**Second Paper Due:**

**Reading:**

Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture of Cairo*, 85-110.

Blair and Bloom, 70-84

Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, vol. 1, chapter 1, pp. 41-60 (Cairo).

**14: Wed Oct 27:** The Mongol invasions and consequent Islamization: The mosques, madrasas, and mausolea of the Ilkhanids.

**Third Paper Assignment:**

**Reading:**

Hoag. Chapter 14: Ilkhanids and Timurids.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (2), 145-52.

Blair and Bloom, 5-15.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 8.

**15: Mon Nov 1:** Religious Architecture of India under the Sultanates:

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### **Reading:**

Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, vol. 3, chapter 11, pp. 619-28.

Hoag. Chapter 15: The Classical Islamic Architecture of India.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (1), 291-93.

Blair and Bloom, 149-60.

P. Hasan "The Indian Subcontinent," in Frishman and Khan, *Mosque*, 159-79.

### **16: Wed Nov 3: Cairo: The Capital of Islam.**

Mamluk Religious Architecture

### **Reading:**

Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture of Cairo*, 122-57.

Hoag. Chapter 9: The Later Classic Islamic Architecture of Egypt.

Blair and Bloom, 70-93.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 6.

## **PART 4: IMPERIAL MONUMENTALITY:**

### **17: Mon Nov 8: Timurid and Uzbek Architecture: A Tradition of Monumentality.**

Third Paper Due

### **Reading:**

Thackston, Wheeler (trans.), *A century of princes : sources on Timurid history and art*, 63-100: Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi *Zafarnama*.

Hoag. Chapter 14: The Later Classic Islamic Architecture of Persia: Timurids.

Golombek and Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, 34-52.

Blair and Bloom, 37-50 and 199-207.

### **18: Wed Nov 10: Anatolia: The Islamization of the northern frontiers.**

From the Rum Seljuks to the Early Ottomans.

Fourth Paper Assignment.

### **Reading:**

Hoag. Chapter 13: The Classic Islamic Architecture of Anatolia.

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 297-303, 313-27.

Blair and Bloom, 132-46.

Ettinghausen and Grabar (2), 233-43.

G. Necipoglu, "Anatolia and the Ottoman Legacy," in Frishman and Khan, *Mosque*, 141-53.

Also check, Vogt, *Mosquées: grand courants de l'architecture islamique*. 151-212, for her typological and formal comparisons.

### **19: Mon Nov 15: Imperial Ottoman mosques and *kulliyes*:**

### **Reading:**

Gulru Necipoglu-Kafadar, "The Suleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: an Interpretation," *Muqarnas*, 3 (1985): 92-115.

Hoag. Chapter 16: The Architecture of the Ottoman Empire.

Blair and Bloom, 213-30.

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Hillenbrand. Chapter 10.

**20: Wed Nov 17:** Mosques and Mausolea of the Great Mughals of India.

**Reading:**

Hoag. Chapter 18: The Architecture of the Moghul Empire.

Glenn Lowry, "Humayun's Tomb: Form, Function and Meaning in Early Mughal Architecture," *Muqarnas*, 4 (1987): 133-48.

Blair and Bloom, 267-86.

**21: Mon Nov 22:** Discussion: Religion and the City  
short film, *The Islamic City*.

**Reading:**

Hourani, "The Life of Cities," 109-29.

Kostof, *A History of Architecture*, 453-68.

Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-ibar. The Muqaddimah : an introduction to history*. Chapter 4 of the abridgment: "Countries and Cities," 263-95.

**22: Wed Nov 24:** Imperial Safavid Mosques and Madrasas of Isfahan.

Short film, *Isfahan*.

**Reading:**

Hoag. Chapter 17: The Architecture of the Safavid Empire.

Blair and Bloom, 183-92.

**Hillenbrand. Chapter 9.**

#### **PART 5: MODERNITIES AND REVIVALS:**

**23: Mon Nov 29:** Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Mosques in Major Capitals:

Fourth Paper Due.

**Reading:**

Hourani, "The Age of European Empires," 263-78.

Mohammad al-Asad, "The Mosque of al-Rifa'i in Cairo," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 108-24.

G. Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture*. Chapter 10.

**24: Wed Dec 1:** Historicism in Contemporary Religious Architecture:

**Reading:**

Grabar, "The Mosque in Islamic Society Today;" Hasan-Uddin Khan, "An Overview of Contemporary Mosques," in Frishman and Khan, *The mosque*, 242-67.

**25: Mon Dec 6:** Contemporary mosques and their messages

The building of mosques in the West

**Reading:**

Titus Burckhardt, *Sacred Art in East and West*, Foundations of Islamic Art, 101-19.

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Mohammed Arkoun, "The Metamorphosis of the Sacred," in Frishman and Khan, *The mosque*, 43-53, 268-72.

Omar Khalidi, "Approaches to Mosque Design in North America," in Y. Haddad and J. Esposito, ed. *Muslims on the Americanization Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

**26: Wed Dec 8:** Azra Aksamija.presentation

Islam in the West: Generic Prayer Space for Contemporary Islamic Practice

Final Exam: to be scheduled.

### READER

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Hourani, "The Making of a World," 1-21.

Irwin, 17-32.

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Kuban, *Muslim Religious Architecture*, 2: 27-33.

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Titus Burckhardt, *Sacred Art in East and West*, Foundations of Islamic Art, 101-19.

Mohammed Arkoun, "The Metamorphosis of the Sacred," in Frishman and Khan, *The mosque*, 43-53, 268-72.

Omar Khalidi, "Approaches to Mosque Design in North America," in Y. Haddad and J. Esposito, ed. *Muslims on the Americanization Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).