

# Arts of the Islamic World

Draft syllabus, subject to change



Door and knocker from the Great Mosque at Cizre (detail), upper Mesopotamia (now Turkey), 13<sup>th</sup> century; cast & engraved bronze, walnut, poplar & brass; Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, Istanbul.

This course introduces students to the vitality and diversity of Islamic art and architecture, with a careful examination of how the faith of Islam and its interpretations shape the material as well as the spiritual world. This course ranges from the late antique Mediterranean to China and Indonesia and back to the Middle East at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will explore iconoclasm, calligraphy, funerary practices and monuments, courtly culture, Mediterranean and Oceanic trade, and the urge to ornament, among other major themes. During class, we will look at gorgeous precious objects such as rock-crystal ewers, fine silks, and ivories, and contrast them with modest goods such as calligraphic plaques and decorative earthenware made explicitly for Muslim middle classes. Architecture will also play a main role; the mosque and its dependencies have many forms, determined in part by historic, geographic, and cultural contexts.

Tuesday & Thursday, 11-12.15, Old Cabell 107  
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## Draft syllabus, subject to change

**Course Objectives:** You will learn to recognize Islamic art and architecture from many times and places and to use appropriate terms to describe its salient features. You will learn how to identify the characteristics that unite some of the arts of Islam and also be able to articulate differences as well as their sources. By the end of term, you will have a solid understanding of the amazingly broad scope of this topic, its main themes, and its place in larger world art history.

**Course Format:** The course considers objects and monuments based on chronology and geography, with occasional lectures on thematic topics. Abbreviated versions of the presentations used in the lectures will be placed on Collab at the end of each week.

### Course requirements and assessment\*

15% Divided between two map and terminology quizzes (15 minutes each), given in **Weeks Four and Twelve.**

20% Divided between two slide identification quizzes (20 minutes each), given in **Weeks Six and Fourteen.**

25% Midterm examination, **Week Seven.**

35% Final examination, set by the university

5% Intangibles: attendance, participation, enthusiasm

**\*NB: failure to sit a quiz or exam sadly results in a zero mark for that assessment.** You must be able to attend the quizzes and exams as specified on the syllabus; exceptions are made rarely and only at the discretion of the instructor.

**There is no textbook for this class.** Readings are available on Collab, where links to on-line resources are also provided.

### Most readings come from the following sources:

Archnet (Aga Khan Program, MIT): [www.archnet.org](http://www.archnet.org)

*Dictionary of Islamic Architecture (DIA)*: online resource, via Virgo

*Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art & Architecture (GE)*: hard copy in the Fine Arts Library; required sections on Collab.

*Metropolitan Museum Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History (TOAH)*:

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>

*Museum with No Frontiers (MWNF)*: <http://www.discoverislamicart.org/index.php>

You will find it most helpful to **complete the readings before class**, in order to familiarize yourself with new vocabulary and place names. While the **lectures** focus on the same topics as the readings, they will incorporate material not necessarily covered in the texts but that may feature in **examinations**; for this reason, regular attendance is mandatory.

**Students are expected to observe UVA's Honor Code.**

**No laptops or phones or tablets in class, please**

## Course Schedule, subject to update

### Week One (one class only, Jan 21)

First class: Introduction and overview, terms and themes.

### Week Two (Jan 26 & 28)

First class: The Mediterranean and western Asia in 615

*TOAH*: essay, The Art of the Hellenistic Age; essay, Byzantium, c. 330-1453; essay, Trade and Commercial Activity in the Byzantine and early Islamic Middle East; essay, Sasanian Empire, 224-651; essay, Gandhara.

Second Class: Mecca and Madina, the Ka'ba and the first Mosque

*Archnet Timeline*: Rashidun

*Archnet*: Ka'ba; Haram al-Sharif; Masjid al-Nabawi (Mosque of the Prophet at Madina)

*GE*: mosque, Koran

*TOAH*: essay, The Birth of Islam

**Primary sources**: The Quran about qibla; the Hadith about waqf

### Week Three (February 2 & 4)

First class: Damascus and Jerusalem

*Archnet*: Qubba al-Sakhra (Dome of the Rock); Haram al-Sharif; Umayyad Mosque in Damascus (Jami' al-Umawi al-Kebir); Damascus

*MWNF*: The Umayyads; Al-Aqsa Mosque; Church of St. Stephen

*TOAH*: essay, Figural Representation in Islamic Art

Second class: The Desert Palaces in the Transjordan

*Archnet*: Khirbet al-Mafjar; Qasr al-Hayr west; Qasr al-Hayr east; Mshatta

*TOAH*: essay, The Art of the Umayyad Period

*DIA*: fortification

### Week Four (February 9 & 11)

First class: The Abbasids in Baghdad, Samarra, and elsewhere

*Archnet*: Baghdad; Dar al-Khilafa (Jawsaq al-Khaqani); Mutawakkil Mosque (Jami' al-Mutawakkil); The Mosque of Ibn Tulun

*MWNF*: The Abbasids and their Vassals

*TOAH*: essay, The Art of the Abbasid Period

Listen or read, BBC Radio & Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*: Episode 52, Harem Wall Painting Fragments from Samarra

**Primary source**: the reception of the Byzantine ambassadors at Baghdad

Second class: **First map and terminology quiz; recorded lecture on pottery & archaeology** (Professor Phillips in DC)

*Archnet Timeline*: Samanids

*TOAH*: essay, the Met's Excavations at Nishapur

Oliver Watson, *Ceramics from Islamic Lands* (2004), pp. 23-33

Ashmolean Pot-web, Technology Part I, How Pots are Made

Ashmolean Pot-web, lecture on Samanid Pottery

## Week Five (February 16 & 18)

First class: Calligraphy, Epigraphy and Textiles

*Archnet Timeline*: The Samanids (review)

*GE*: Calligraphy I and II only; bookbinding; tiraz

*TOAH*: essay, Early Qur'ans (8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries); essay, the Met's Excavations at Nishapur; essay, the Nature of Islamic Art; essay on Figural Representation (review)

*al-Qantara* (Euromed Heritage Program): Veil of St Anne

Second class: Architecture, painting, and luxury goods in Cairo and Palermo

*Archnet*: Cappella Palatina; Ziza Palace; al-Azhar Mosque; al-Aqmar Mosque

*DIA*: Sicily; Muqarnas

*TOAH*: essay, Art of the Fatimid Period

*al-Qantara*: Rock Crystal

*al-Qantara*: Cope of Roger of Sicily

**Primary Source**: the looting of the Fatimid Treasury

## Week Six (February 23 & 25)

First class: **First slide identification quiz and the Silk Road**

*Archnet Timeline*: Samanids (review)

*TOAH*: essay, Trade and Commercial Activity in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Middle East; essay, the Met's Excavations at Nishapur (review)

UNESCO World Heritage Site: Bamiyan

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/208>

Second class: Medieval Persia and Afghanistan

*Archnet*: Taq-i Bust; Masjid No Gumbad; Lashkar-i Bazar; Ghiyath al-Din Minar (minaret of Jam); Ahmed Sanjar Mausoleum; Masjid-i Ali, Isfahan; Gumbad-i Chihil Dukhtaran

*Archnet Timeline*: Ghaznavids

*TOAH*: Art of the Seljuqs of Iran

Ashmolean Pot-web, Lecture on Kashan Ceramics

## Week Seven (March 1 & 3)

First class: The Western Mediterranean: al-Andalus and the Maghreb

*Archnet*: Great Mosque of Cordoba; Jami al-Qarawiyyin; Qubbat al-Barudiyin; Great Mosque of Tinmal

Alhambra Palace

*Archnet Timeline*: Umayyad in Spain

*TOAH*: The Art of the Almoravid and Almohad Periods (c. 1062-1269)

*MWNF*: The Muslim West

**Primary source**: Abd' al-Rahman I: Ode to a Palm Tree

Second class: **MIDTERM**

**\*Spring Break\***

## Week Eight (March 15 & 17)

First Class: Chinese-style book painting under the Mongols

TOAH: essay, the Art of the Book in the Ilkhanid Period; essay, A New Visual Language Transmitted Across Asia; essay, Folios from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*; essay, Folios from the *Jami' al-Tavarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles)

**Primary source:** Rashid al-Din on his atelier endowment

Second class: Ceramics and architecture in Iran

*Archnet Timeline:* Ilkhanids

*Archnet:* Takht-i Sulayman; Gunbad-i Uljaytu; Gunbad-i Ghaffariyya

Ashmolean Pot-web, Treatise of Abu'l Qasim,

TOAH: essay, the Takht-i Sulayman and Tilework in the Ilkhanid Period

## Week Nine (March 22 & 24)

First class: Medieval Anatolia

*Archnet:* Çifte Minareli Madrasa (Sivas); Sultan Han (caravansaray); Gök Madrasa (Sivas); Alaeddin Mosque

*Archnet Timeline:* Ilkhanids (review); Seljuks of Rum

TOAH: essay, the Art of the Seljuq Period in Anatolia

Scott Redford, "How Islamic Is It? The Innsbruck Plate and its Setting," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990), pp. 119-35.

Second class: Medieval Syria and Mamluk Cairo

*Archnet Timeline:* Mamluks

*Archnet:* Sultan al-Zahir Baybars Mosque; Funerary Complex of Baybars al-Jashankir; Funerary Complex of Qansuh al-Ghuri; Wakala of Qansuh al-Ghuri

*MWNF:* Doorwings and knocker (Cizre)

TOAH: essay, The Art of the Mamluk Period

## Week Ten (March 29 & 31)

First Class: Timur and his Court in Iran and Central Asia

*Archnet Timeline:* Timurids

*Archnet:* Madrasa of Ulugh Beg; Mosque of Bibi Khanum; Shah-i Zinda Complex

TOAH: essay, *The Mantik al-Tayr* of 1487

**Primary Source:** the *arzadasht* (petition of the artisans)

Second Class: Architecture and Manuscripts in the Deccan, 1200-1500

*Archnet:* Qutb Complex (Quwwat al-Islam); Ajmer Mosque; Mahmud Gawan Madrasa; Great Mosque of Bijapur

*Aga Khan Museum:* Two folios from Qurans in Bihari Script (India)

## Week Eleven (April 5 & 7)

First Class: Trade and faith in Southeast Asia

*Archnet:* Kandang Aceh (cemetery); Kampung Kling Mosque; Kudus Minaret

*DIA:* Java

Ann Kumar et al., *Illuminations: The Writing Traditions of Indonesia* (1996), Chapter Three, pp. 33-48.

Read or listen, BBC Radio & Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*:  
Episode 83, Shadow Puppet of Bima  
Read and watch, UNESCO World Heritage, Karagöz (Turkish shadow puppet)

Second Class: The Ottomans, the Persians, and the Italians, 1400-1500

*Archnet Timeline*: Ottoman

*Archnet*: Mehmed Çelebi Complex, Fatih Complex (Mosque complexes of Sultans Mehmed I and Mehmed II)

*TOAH*: essay, Venice and the Islamic World, 828-1797; essay, Commercial Exchange [...]

### **Week Twelve (April 12 & 14)**

First Class: The Ottomans in Istanbul, c. 1555

*Archnet*: Süleymaniye Complex; Şehzade Complex

*TOAH*: essay, the Art of the Ottomans Before 1600; essay, the Age of Süleyman 'The Magnificent'

Read or listen, BBC Radio & Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*:  
Episode 71, The Tughra of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent

Second Class: **Second map and terminology quiz**; Mass production and art

*TOAH*: essay, Silks from Ottoman Turkey

Julian Raby and Nurhan Atasoy, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey* (1994), Part IV, pp. 37-64.

**Primary source**: the Sultanic enquiry into Ottoman silk weaving, 1502

### **Week Thirteen (April 19 & 21)**

First class: **recorded lecture on Iranian art and architecture c. 1620** (Professor Phillips speaking in Berlin).

*Archnet Timeline*: Safavid

*Archnet*: Maidan-i Imam; Masjid-i Imam; Mosque of Shaykh Lutfullah

*TOAH*: essay, Shah Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan

Second class: Mughal architecture and art in the 17<sup>th</sup> century

*Archnet*: Taj Mahal Complex; Fatehpur Sikri

*TOAH*: essay, the Art of the Mughals before 1600; essay, the Art of the Mughals after 1600; essay, The Shah Jahan Album

Read or listen, BBC Radio & Neil McGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*:  
Episode 82, Miniature of a Mughal Prince

### **Week Fourteen (April 26 & 28)**

First class: **Second Slide Identification Quiz**; Ottoman art and architecture in the global eighteenth century

*Archnet*: Nuruosmaniye Mosque; Fountain of Ahmed III

*TOAH*: Art of the Ottomans after 1600

Second Class: Islamic art in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

*Archnet*: Kakh-i Gulistan (The Gulistan Palace)

GE: Photography, III (pp. 118-19)

TOAH: essay, Nineteenth-century Iran: Art and the Advent of Modernity; essay, West Asia: Between Tradition and Modernity; essay; The Later Ottomans and the Impact of Europe

**Week Fifteen (May 3, one class only)**

What is so Islamic about Islamic art? Review and discussion.

Ziuddin Sardar, The Destruction of Mecca, *NYTimes* online, September 30, 2014

**Final examination set by the University**