

ARTH 320: ART OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD
PROF. LAWRENCE BUTLER

FALL 2016
COURSE SYLLABUS

This course is meant as an introduction to the rich material culture of the Islamic world, from the time of the Prophet to the present day. The course will concentrate on selected moments and monuments in the central historic regions—the Arab Middle East, North Africa, Spain, Iran, Central Asia, India, and Turkey—and consider the relationship of the visual arts to the history, geography, and traditions of each region. The Washington, DC area is particularly rich in museum collections of Islamic art, which this course will feature.

OBJECTIVES:

- Familiarity with the major periods, regions, monuments and media of the Islamic world;
- Familiarity with basic principles of Islam as they pertain to the visual arts;
- Understanding the relationship between the history and culture of each region and its art;
- Practice in describing, researching, analyzing and writing about art objects;
- Introduction to the Washington area's major museums of art from the Islamic world.

GENERAL EDUCATION: This course fulfills the GMU University requirement in **Global Understanding**. It also fulfills the College of Humanities and Social Sciences additional requirement for **Non-Western Culture**. Please note, however, that you cannot use it to fulfill both. Sadly, it does *not* fulfill the University requirement for Fine Arts. (*Why not? Long story.*)

TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE MATERIALS

- Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islamic Arts* (Phaidon Arts and Ideas series, 1997), ISBN 978-0714831763. Paperback.
 - *Islamic Art and Visual Culture: An Anthology of Sources*, edited by D. Fairchild Ruggles (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), ISBN 978-1-4051-5402-4. Paperback.
- Supplementary readings available on Blackboard or JSTOR, on-line.

(Recommended, not required, for those who would like more background: John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (4th edition). Oxford USA, 2010. ISBN 978-0195396003. Paperback.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Class attendance, with occasional in-class exercises.
- All assigned readings and two required map exercises.
- One self-guided visit to Washington, DC museums.
- Two short 4-5 pp. papers, based on museum visits, on-line research, and required readings.
- Two tests and a final exam.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:

- Ability to use GMU email and willingness to do so regularly for class announcements.
- Course Blackboard website: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/> select **courses**.
- Use of the University Libraries' on-line research databases, especially **JSTOR**.

HOW TO REACH ME:

- **Email:** lbutler@gmu.edu. No more private office phone, sorry. Budget cuts.
- To leave a voicemail message: History and Art History Department office at **(703) 993-1250**.
- **Office hours:** Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 to 3:00, or by appointment.
- **Office:** **Robinson B340**, deep inside the History and Art History Department.

TENTATIVE LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

All classes will be held in Research I, Room 202, Wednesdays from 4:30 to 7:10 PM, with a break midway. Assigned textbook readings are listed here as “Bloom & Blair” and “Ruggles, *Anthology*.” The other readings for each week will be found in Blackboard as .pdf files, or in JSTOR.

PART I: THE EARLY ISLAMIC WORLD

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

First class on Wednesday, January 20

Arabia in Antiquity

Reading:

- Bloom & Blair: “Introduction”
- John Esposito, “Muhammad and the Quran: Messenger and Message,” from his *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: New York, 4th ed., 2010).

WEEK 2: ISLAM IN THE WORLD OF LATE ANTIQUITY

Roman, Byzantine and Sasanian Empires

Islam in the Seventh Century: Muhammad and the Qur’an

Reading:

- Robert Irwin, “The Historical Background,” from *Islamic Art in Context: Art, Architecture and the Literary World* (NY: Abrams, 1997), pp. 16-37.
- The Qur’an: Sura 1: The Opening (*Al-Fatiha*), and Sura 96: The Clot (*Al-‘Alaq*)
- Mohamed Zakariya, “Islamic Calligraphy: A Technical Overview” from *Brocade of the Pen: The Art of Islamic Writing*, ed. Carol Garrett Fisher (Michigan State, 1991), pp.1-17.

WEEK 3: EARLY ISLAMIC ARTS

Arts of the Book

Mosques and their decoration

Reading:

- Bloom & Blair, 1: “Mosques, Mansions and Mosaics” and 2: “Pens and Parchment: The Koran and Early Writing.”
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 1.4; 3.7 to 3.15 on calligraphy; 4.5 and 4.9 on mosque features.
- Nasser Rabbat, “Meaning of the Umayyad Dome of the Rock,” *Muqarnas* 6 (1989), 12-21.

WEEK 4: EARLY ISLAMIC PALACES AND CITIES

Palaces of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs

Catch-up and review, Weds. February 10

Reading:

- Ruggles, *Anthology*;; 5.2 to 5.6 on Umayyad buildings.
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 2.1, 2.6, 3.8, 4.8, 4.11, 5.10 and 5.11 on Abbasid Iraq
- Anna Ballian, “Country Estates, Material Culture and the Celebration of Princely Life: Islamic art and the secular domain,” from *Byzantium and Islam* (NY: Met, 2012).

WEEK 5: Wednesday, Sept. 28: First test, on early Islamic art and architecture.

First paper assigned, on museum objects in Washington-area collections.

PART II: ISLAMIC REGIONS, 900-1500 AD.

For this part of the course, **please read all Part II of your Blair & Bloom textbook, “Regional Centers and Local Powers, 900-1500 AD,” Chapters 3-8, as soon as you can.** They divide the material up by medium, but my lectures will look at it geographically. You’ll figure it out. The second paper will be assigned in this part of the course, due date to be decided.

WEEK 6: LUXURY OBJECTS AND TRADE IN THE ABBASID WORLD

Reading:

- Bloom and Blair, *Islamic Arts*, 3, “The Draped Universe, and 4: “Pots, Pans and Pitchers”
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 2.4, 3.1, 3.20-3.25, 3.28 on luxury goods
- Maryam Ekhtiar, “Art of the Early Caliphates (7th to 10th cents),” from *Masterpieces of Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (NY: Met, 2011), 20-24.

WEEK 7: BAGHDAD AND CAIRO

Illustrated manuscripts

Fatimid Egypt and the trade of the medieval Mediterranean

Reading:

- Bloom and Blair, *Islamic Arts*, Chapter 6: Penmen and Painters: Arts of the Book” and 8: “Colours and Figures”
- Ruggles, 5.24 to 5.31 on Cairo
- Selections from *Kalila wa Dimna*, the *Maqamat*, and *The Arabian Nights*.

WEEK 8, WESTERN ISLAM: AL-ANDALUS

Art and architecture of Al-Andalus (Spain)

Convivencia: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Medieval Spain

Palaces and royal ritual

Reading:

- Bloom & Blair, *Islamic Arts*, 5, “Madrasas and Muqarnas” and 7: “Warps, Wefts and Pile.”
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 2.6; 4.1 & 4.2 on royal building; 5.12 to 5.16 on Cordoba. 5.17 on the Alhambra
- Robert Irwin, chapter 3, “A Palace to Think In,” from *The Alhambra* (London: Profile Books, 2005), pp. 99-132.

WEEK 9: MOROCCO AND WORLD HERITAGE

The great Moroccan cities: Fez and Marrakesh

The North African and East African trade routes

UNESCO’s World Heritage program (<http://whc.unesco.org>)

October 26: First paper due in class.

Second paper assigned, on World Heritage sites in the Islamic world

Reading:

- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 5.21 to 5.23 on Morocco & Timbuktu.
- Ibn Battuta, excerpts from his *Risla* or *Travels*
- “Fez: Preserving a City,” from *Saudi Aramco World*
- The Venice Charter, on historic preservation.

WEEK 10:**Wednesday, November 2: Review and Test 2**

PART III: THE ARTS OF THE LATER ISLAMIC EMPIRES

In this part of the course, please read all of Part III: “The Great Empires 1500-1800 AD” in your Bloom & Blair book. Again, they divide the material by medium; I will divide it by geography.

Week 11: SALJUQ TURKS AND MONGOLS ON THE SILK ROADS OF ASIA

Saljuq Turks: ceramics and commercial architecture

Timur and Samarqand

Reading:

- Begin reading Bloom and Blair, *Islamic Arts*, chapters 9-12. They divide it up by medium; I'll divide it up by region and period.
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 3.2 to 3.4 on trade with China; 3.16-3.17 on painting; 4.8, 4.11 to 4.14 on urban structures; 5.42-5.48 and 5.51 on Iranian buildings.
- “Bishan and Manizha,” from the *Shah-Nama of Firdausi*, ed. by Barbara Leonie Picard. Oxford, 1972, pp.131-143.

WEEK 12: THE GOLDEN AGE OF IRANIAN ART

Safavid architecture: Isfahan

Safavid royal manuscripts

Reading:

- Bloom and Blair, *Islamic Arts*, chapters 9-12, esp. on Isfahan, Persian painting and textiles.
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 3.16 on manuscript painting; 5.49 to 5.50 on Isfahan.
- Selections from *Shahnameh, The Persian Book of Kings*, by Abolqasem Ferdowsi, translated by Dick Davis (Penguin Classics; New York, 2006).
- *Textiles 5000 Years*, ed. Carroll, on Safavid textiles.

WEEK 13: No class on Wednesday, November 23. Thanksgiving Break.**WEEK 14: THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN TURKEY****Wednesday, October 30: Second paper due in class**

Topkapi Palace and Ottoman luxury arts

Architecture of Sinan

Reading:

- Bloom and Blair, *Islamic Arts*, Chapters 9-12, especially on the architecture of Istanbul and Ottoman luxury arts.
- Ruggles, *Anthology*, 5.32 to 5.41 on Ottoman architecture.
- Walter Denny, “The Palace, The Power, and The Arts,” from *Palace of Gold and Light: Treasures from the Topkapi, Istanbul* (Washington: Palace Arts, 2000), pp. 16-25.

WEEK 15: MUGHAL INDIA AND MODERN GLOBAL ISLAM

Mughal Empire and its manuscript albums

Mughal architecture: The Taj Mahal and all that

Global Islamic arts today

Reading:

- Bloom and Blair, *Islamic Arts*, finish chapters 9-12, especially on the architecture and art of Shah Jahan's time. Taj Mahal and all that.
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 3.6 on craftsmen; 5.55 to 5.62, on Mughal rulers & buildings.
- Lawrence Butler (that's me!) on mosques in China.

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 14, 4:30 to 7:15. Class review to begin with.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

Last day to add classes: Tuesday, September 6

First map due in class, when assigned.

TEST I: Wednesday, September 28.

Last day to drop classes: Friday, September 30.

Selective withdrawal period: October 3-28..

First museum paper due: Wednesday, October 26.

TEST 2: Wednesday, November 2.

Second museum paper due: Wednesday, October 30.

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, December 14, 4:30 to 7:15. Class review to begin with.



The main overland and maritime long-distance trade routes linking China and the Mediterranean world during the Tang Dynasty

Adapted from Roderick Whitfield and Anne Farrer, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Chinese art from the Silk Route*. London: British Museum, 1990, p. 11

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance is necessary; much of the material will only be covered in our slide lectures. You are responsible for getting notes, and for all consequences of missed classes. **Class participation will affect your grade, if it is conspicuously good, conspicuously lacking, or continually disruptive.** I will be making spot checks of attendance—they're not perfect, but they help us both recognize a pattern.

Classroom atmosphere. Courtesy and common sense, please. Talking to friends during lectures, wandering in and out, cell phones, and eating food are all badly distracting to everyone else.

Written work is a major part of the course, and will count heavily towards your final grade. **Papers must be written in good formal English, with full documentation** in MLA or Chicago style. **All students are expected to use word-processors with spell-checkers. Spelling and grammar count.** Please submit papers typed, double-spaced, and PROOFREAD. **Badly written work will be downgraded or returned.**

No email submissions of papers, except in special cases with my prior permission. **Written work is due in hard copy in class on the due date.** Papers will not be considered "on time" unless and until I receive them in hard copy. Papers submitted by email without my permission will be graded down 10 points.

Computers and tablets are fine for taking notes in class. Texting and Facebook: no. **No computers or telephones may be used during tests**, however. Phones will be turned off at all times, of course.

Late work will be graded down five points per day and ten points over a weekend. Plan ahead--last-minute hard-disk and printer failures are your problem, and do not constitute legitimate excuses. **By the final exam, all missing work becomes F work.** Make-up tests and elaborate medical excuses will require verification with a physician's or associate dean's excuse. There will be no make-up final exams.

English as a Second Language: If English is not your first language, I will be happy to help you do your best in the writing assignments--by previewing papers, offering extra help, that sort of thing. But the final result must be written in good standard English. Please work with **The Writing Center** in Robinson I, Room A116. Call them at (703) 993-1200, or see their web page for English language help, at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu> .

Learning disabilities. If you are a student with disabilities, and you need academic accommodations, please see me *and* contact the **Office of Disabilities Services** at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Visit their website: ods.gmu.edu .

Religious holidays. I have planned this course according to the George Mason University calendar. If you observe a religious holiday that the University does not, please let me know and I will make necessary accommodations for you (but not for the whole class).

No gifts, please. I appreciate the thought, thanks, but cannot accept any gifts. They complicate things.

Auditors are welcome to sit and listen, if there is room. If you would like to participate more actively, that's fine with me *if* (!!) you are keeping up with the assigned class reading. Otherwise, please be quiet.

Academic honesty is expected in all tests and writing. Please respect the **Honor Code**, our classroom standards, your fellow students, and yourself. Please report violations to the Honor Committee. See the explanation of **plagiarism** in the guidelines for writing. Honor Code note on out-of-class assignments: You are free to visit museums and discuss your ideas with other students, but **the writing must be your own.**

Life crises and counseling. Problems come up. Let me know, but please make use of the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Phone: 703-993-2380, email caps.gmu.edu . For acute situations, call the **University Police** at 703-993-2810, or dial 911 for emergencies. Their website is www.gmu.edu/police.

GRADING POLICIES

TESTS must be taken on the scheduled date. If there has been an emergency, it must be documented by a note from the dean's office or your doctor. In those cases, there will be one make-up test given, probably during the subsequent class. Tests will be graded by percentage. **Grades will be calculated as follows:**

A	= 100% to 93%, or 4.00	B-	= 82% to 80 %, or 2.67	D	= 60% to 66%, or
A-	= 92% to 90%, or 3.67	C+	= 79% to 77 %, or 2.33		1.0
B+	= 89% to 87%, or 3.33	C	= 76% to 73 %, or 2.00	F	= below 60% and
B	= 86% to 83 %, or 3.00	C-	= 72% to 70 %, or 1.67		receives no credit

I may award a final A+ in rare instances: 4.0 average *plus* unusually good writing *and* class participation.

WRITTEN WORK may be graded by points, or by the following criteria, as appropriate:

A = Startlingly good, exceeding our expectations, and well-written. Must be imaginative; NOT given for simply following directions.

B = Good effort with a good result.

C = Perfunctory; or, tried but missed the point; or, did something well but it wasn't the assignment; or, good idea but careless or sloppy.

D = Warning: accepted under protest.

F = Unacceptable as college-level work.

Paper grades will be lowered for lateness, sloppiness, lack of proofreading, bad English, lack of necessary documentation, faulty logic, or failure to follow directions for the assignment. **Papers submitted via email without my permission will only be accepted with a ten point grade penalty.** Yes, really.

Late written work: Papers are **due in class in hard copy** on the day specified. After that, late papers will be lowered five points a day, or half a grade, during the work week (Mon-Fri) and lowered ten points over a weekend. Note that this makes even the best work "F" work after about ten days. **If you need an extension, you must ask for it *before* the due date, not on or after,** if you want to avoid a penalty.

Ungraded work: Maps and other ungraded exercises will be given checks, pluses or minuses only; when figuring up your final grade, these will help us determine borderline grades. **Missing maps will result in a lowering of your final grade by 5 points per item.**

Class participation grade: Normal class participation—showing up on time, keeping up with classwork, participating in group activities, not causing problems--will be figured as "B" level. Great class participation will be graded "A". Problematic will be graded "C" or lower, heaven forbid.

FINAL GRADES will be based on the average of your paper, test and class grades. Each assignment will be weighted thus:

Test 1:	10 %	First museum paper	15%
Test 2:	20%	Second museum paper	20%
Final exam:	25%	Participation (map, attendance)	10%

Final grades may be raised or lowered from strict average in the following circumstances:

- A pattern of pluses or minuses on ungraded assignments;
- I may raise or lower your grade in recognition of significant change over the course of the semester.
- **THE WRITTEN WORK MUST BE TURNED IN TO PASS THE CLASS.** If no museum paper is received by the final exam, then don't even bother to show up at the final exam. Course failed.
- **TWO PIECES OF GRADED WORK MISSING AT THE END OF THE COURSE WILL BE GROUNDS FOR FAILING THE COURSE REGARDLESS OF YOUR PRECISE AVERAGE.**
- **IF YOU FLUNK THE FINAL EXAM, WITH AN F ON ANOTHER MAJOR PIECE OF WORK, YOU WILL RECEIVE A FAILING GRADE FOR THE WHOLE COURSE.** To pass this course you must demonstrate *some* mastery of the material from all parts of the course.

DIRECTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

There will be two short papers required for this class. Specific directions will be handed out when the papers are assigned. In general, all written work for me, or for Art History in general, should be finished, professional-looking, and must observe the following rules:

Organization: College-level essays are to be carefully constructed and presented as finished products. They are not just journal entries or stream-of-consciousness. This means they must have a thesis of some sort, and present reasoned arguments through the examination of evidence. There should be an introductory thesis statement and a conclusion. Paragraphs should be used as a way to structure the argument so a reader can follow your thinking. An interesting or informative title is expected.

Mechanics: All papers must be typed and double-spaced, using a standard font in 10 or 11-point size. Please stick to plain old white paper and standard fonts. Handwriting is *not* OK. Single-spacing is *not* OK. Triple-spacing is *not* OK. Writing the whole darned thing in *italics* or some cute font you like is *not* OK. Pictures are nice, but strictly optional. Pictures cannot be a substitute for writing. Nice presentation is always welcome, but please be clear that adding pictures will not affect your grade unless they are explicitly part of the assignment.

Spelling and grammar are expected to be excruciatingly correct. Use the spell-checker. I will mark down work for sloppy spelling and grammar. If the writing is really awful—ungrammatical, no evidence of proofreading, horrible spelling, or laughably short—I will not read it. I'll return it as unacceptable, with an F. I may allow rewrites, depending on the class, but the highest grade for a rewritten F paper is C.

Page limits should be observed, and should be your guide to the depth of writing: a one-to-two page paper is pretty much a quick observation, with thesis and conclusion. Three-to-five pages means there is time to develop a thesis and argue it through several paragraphs, considering several different questions, angles or pieces of evidence. An eight-to-ten page paper usually includes research, as will be made clear.

Citations. All papers, whatever length, must include the complete and correct citation of any sources of information to avoid the appearance of plagiarism. Generally-known facts are not normally cited. Anything else is, including a long summary of facts from one source, a single opinion stated by another author, and any direct quote. If you are using information from museum labels or pamphlets, cite that too.

When you do citations, please one of these two standard forms, as you have learned here in college:

- **MLA style**, using parenthetical page references and list of works cited at the end of the paper.
- **Chicago style**, using correctly-done footnotes and a bibliography.

Both of these are explained in detail in the Infoguides available on the University Libraries website:

<http://infoguides.gmu.edu/humcites>

Do citations carefully and correctly! Points will be deducted for missing citations of information, missing page numbers, missing list of “works cited” at the end, or just messed up mechanics.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Here is how the **GMU Honor Code** defines it, as quoted from the University Catalog, <http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/0203/apolicies/honor.html>:

B. Plagiarism encompasses the following:

1. Presenting as one's own the works, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement.
2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement.

That means **you must acknowledge your source of information**. Museum labels, anonymous pamphlets, and websites all count as sources, and must be acknowledged—even if you are summarizing them with word changes. **Plagiarism is cheating, and will be reported to the Honor Committee for action.** For more on the procedures, see <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>