

ARTH 320: ART OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD
PROF. LAWRENCE BUTLER, FALL 2012

PRELIMINARY COURSE SYLLABUS

(The full version will be handed out in class and posted on Blackboard)

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, 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 Washington, DC'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

- Richard Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (Thames & Hudson, World of Art, 1999), ISBN 978-0-500-20305-7.
- *Islamic Art and Visual Culture: An Anthology of Sources*, edited by D. Fairchild Ruggles (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), ISBN 978-1-4051-5402-4.
- Supplementary readings available on Blackboard or JSTOR, on-line.

Recommended, available on-line:

- *Music of Islam: Sampler*. Audio CD. (Celestial Harmony Records, #13159-2)
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Class attendance, with occasional in-class exercises.
- Assigned readings.
- Two required map exercises.
- Self-guided visits to Washington, DC museums.
- Two short papers, based on museum visits 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.

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: after class, or Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:30 to 12:00, 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 Enterprise Hall Room 173, Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00 to 1:30. Assigned readings are listed weekly. Your textbooks are listed here as “Hillendbrand” and “Ruggles, *Anthology*.” The other readings for each week will be found in JSTOR (via the GMU Library portal) or on the class Blackboard website as .pdf files (accessed through Mymason, and the Courses tab). THE FULL LIST OF WEEKLY READINGS WILL BE ON THE FINAL SYLLABUS, POSTED TO BLACKBOARD AND HANDED OUT IN CLASS.

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO THE ISLAMIC WORLD

WEEK I: INTRODUCTION

The Mediterranean World in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries
Sassanian and Byzantine Empires and their arts

Reading:

- Oleg Grabar, “Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art,” in *Muqarnas* I (1983), pp. 1-14 (JSTOR).
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

WEEK II: ISLAM AND THE WRITTEN WORD

Early Islam and its world
The Qur’an, calligraphy and the arts of the book

Reading:

- Hillenbrand, 1: “The Birth of Islamic Art: The Umayyads.”
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 1.4; 3.7 to 3.15 on calligraphy; 3.31 on coins.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

First map assignment due in class on Wednesday, Feb. 1

WEEK III: EARLY ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

Mosque architecture
Palaces and secular arts of the Umayyad caliphs
Abbasid capitals: Baghdad and Samarra

Reading:

- Hillenbrand, 2: “The ‘Abbasids.’”
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 2.6; 4.5 and 4.9 on mosque features; 5.2 to 5.6 on Umayyad buildings; 5.10 and 5.11 on Abbasid Iraq;
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

WEEK IV: Catch-up, review and test

Monday, February 13: Catch-up and review.
Wednesday, February 15: **First test**, on early Islam and its arts

PART II: ISLAMIC REGIONS, 900-1500 AD.

WEEK V: FATIMIDS OF EGYPT

Cairo and the luxury trade of the early medieval Mediterranean
Textiles, ceramics, glass, and metalwork.

Reading:

- Hillenbrand, 3: "The Fatimids"
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 2.1, 2.4 on luxury goods; 3.20 to 3.25 on textiles; 5.24 to 5.25 on Fatimid Cairo.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

WEEK VI: WESTERN ISLAM: AL-ANDALUS

Art and architecture of Al-Andalus (Spain)
Convivencia: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Medieval Spain

Reading:

- Hillenbrand, 7: "The Muslim West"
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 2.6; 4.1 & 4.2 on royal building; 5.12 to 5.16 on Cordoba.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

WEEK VII: WESTERN ISLAM: THE MAGHRIB

The Alhambra Palace in Granada
The great Moroccan cities: Fez and Marrakesh
The North African and East African trade routes
UNESCO's World Heritage program

Reading:

- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 5.17 on the Alhambra; 5.21 to 5.23 on Morocco & Timbuktu.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

Film: "Caravans of Gold" from Basil Davidson's *Africa* series

(Spring Break, March 11-18. No classes.)

Week VIII: THE SALJUQS IN IRAN AND ANATOLIA

Metalwork and ceramics in medieval Iran
Trade routes, market cities and their commercial infrastructure

Reading:

- Hillenbrand, 4 & 5: "The Saljuqs" and "The Age of the Atabegs"
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 4.8, 4.11 to 4.14 on urban structures; 5.42-5.44 on Iranian buildings.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

Week IX: THE MEDITERRANEAN DURING THE CRUSADES

Ayyubid luxury arts and illustrated manuscripts

Mamluk Egypt

Reading:

- Hillenbrand, 6: “The Mamluks”
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 3.28; 5.27 to 5.31 on Mamluk Cairo.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

WEEK X:

Monday, April 2: TEST II

Test on the medieval Islamic arts in Spain, Egypt, Iraq and Saljuq Iran, Hillenbrand 3-7.

PART III: THE ARTS OF THE LATER ISLAMIC EMPIRES

Wednesday, April 4: MONGOLS AND THE SILK ROAD

Ilkhanid Mongol rulers of Iran

Silk Road trade with China and the West

The *Shahnama* tradition and Ilkhanid painting

Reading:

- Hillenbrand, 8: “The Ilkhanids and Timurids”
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 2.3 on princes; 3.10 to 3.11 on books; 5.51 on Uljaytu’s tomb.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

WEEK XI: TIMURID AND SAFAVID EMPIRES OF IRAN

Timur’s Samarkand

Timurid and Safavid Persian manuscript painting

Safavid architecture: Isfahan and the patronage of Shah Abbas

Reading:

- Hillenbrand, 9: “The Safavids”
- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 3.2 to 3.4 on trade with China; 3.16-3.17 on painting; 5.45 to 5.50 on Samarkand and Isfahan.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

Film: “Shah Abbas: The Remaking of Iran”

WEEK XII: THE MUGHALS OF NORTH INDIA

Mughal Empire and its manuscript albums

Mughal architecture: The Taj Mahal and all that

Reading:

- Ruggles, *Anthology*: 3.6 on craftsmen; 5.55 to 5.62, on Mughal rulers & buildings.
- W. Begley, "The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of its Symbolic Meaning," *Art Bulletin* 61 (1979), 17-37 (JSTOR).
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

WEEK XIII: THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN TURKEY

Topkapi Palace and Ottoman luxury arts

Architecture of Sinan

Reading:

- Hillenbrand, 10: "The Ottomans"
- Ruggles, *Anthology*, 5.32 to 5.41 on Ottoman architecture.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

Film: "The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent"

WEEK XIV: EPILOGUE: THE MODERN WORLD

Ottoman Empire and European taste

Modern Islamic architecture

"Orientalism" and Islamic studies

Reading:

- Lawrence E. Butler, "Mosques and Muslim Identity along China's Trade Routes," *East-West Connections* 1 (2001), 112-132.
- Other readings on Blackboard, TBA.

Final Exam: Monday, May 14, 10:30 to 1:15. We will begin with a review session, then move to the test after a short break.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES

Last day to add classes: Tuesday, January 31.

First map due in class, Wednesday, February 1

TEST I: Wednesday, February 15.

Last day to drop classes: Friday, February 24.

First museum paper due: date to be decided in class.

TEST 2: Monday, April 2.

Second museum paper due: Date to be decided in class.

FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 14, 10:30 to 1:15

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. We're all adults; sometimes emergencies come up. However, talking to friends during lectures, wandering in and out, cell phones, and eating food are all badly distracting to everyone else. **Chronic chatterers and latecomers are disruptive, and will be asked to leave the classroom** (Oh yes I can do that—University policy.).

Written work is a major part of the course, and will count heavily towards your final grade. Please study the explanation of my writing standards, attached to this syllabus. In short: **Papers must be written in good formal English, with full documentation** in a standard format such as MLA or Harbrace. **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, returned for a rewrite, or flunked,** as I see most appropriate.

No email submissions of papers, except in special cases with my prior permission. Sorry—I've tried—it causes too many problems. **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.

Laptop computers 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 Disability Resource Center (DRC) or 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. visit their website: www.gmu.edu/student/drc/.

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).

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. The Honor Pledge will be required on all tests. Please report violations to the Honor Committee. See the explanation of plagiarism in the guidelines for writing.

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. Please study the directions for writing assignments, elsewhere in this syllabus.

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.**