

TEXTILES AND TRADE
(ARTH 430: ADVANCED STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND ISLAMIC ART)

LAWRENCE BUTLER, FALL 2011

COURSE SYLLABUS

Textiles and agriculture were the two major commercial products of the premodern world, tremendously important to human history. Textiles are fascinating to art historians, since they may well have been the visual art most in view and most often traded in the ancient and medieval worlds. Since they are transitory, their history is particularly hard to reconstruct and easy to overlook. In this senior seminar, we will explore the art, history, anthropology and archeology of textiles through case studies. We will make frequent use of Washington DC's unique Textile Museum and its library throughout the course. Since this is a seminar, students will take an active part in discussing the readings, and will present the results of their own research to the class using Powerpoint.

Students pursuing the interdisciplinary minor in Ancient Mediterranean Art and Archeology may use this class to fulfill the seminar requirement, with an appropriate research topic. The course may also count towards the Islamic Studies minor as an appropriate "special topics" course; check with the Islamic Studies program advisor.

General education notes: This course counts as a *synthesis course* for graduation. Due to our bizarre system, it does *not* count as "fine arts" for graduation. It also fulfills the **writing intensive** course requirement for the Art History major. This requirement will be met through the two formal writing assignments, adding up to at least 3500 words.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES. In this course, students will:

- Learn about the basic structures, materials and techniques of textile worldwide, with a particular emphasis on premodern Eurasia and Africa.
- Read and discuss academic approaches to the history, art, and anthropology of textiles.
- Apply reading and research to the study of actual textiles from a private collection.
- Use the resources of the Textile Museum, through visits to the collection and its library.
- Research, prepare and present original research to the class using Powerpoint.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Assigned readings and assigned class discussion of them.
- Preliminary research project, with short 3-5pp. paper and informal oral presentation.
- Formal research with term paper and short Powerpoint presentation.
- Two tests: A term quiz, and a take-home essay test based on the readings.
- Several self-propelled visits to the Textile Museum in Washington, DC.
- Co-leadership of assigned reading discussions.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:

- The usual: word-processing, email, and the ability to use the Internet for research.
- **Powerpoint** presentation. Ability to use, or willingness to learn, simple Powerpoint.
- Course readings on a Blackboard website, available through the **Mymason** site.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

- Ann Hecht, *The Art of the Loom*. Univ. of Washington, paperback, 2001. (Uh-Oh, out of print and unavailable. We'll cope via .pdfs)
- Janet Harvey, *Traditional Textiles of Central Asia*. Thames & Hudson, 1996.
- Elizabeth Wayland Barber, *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years*. Norton, 1995.
- *Arts of Asia*, vol. 26 no. 1 (Jan-Feb 1996). Special issue on the Textile Museum.

Recommended for the interested student, *not* required or expected for this class:

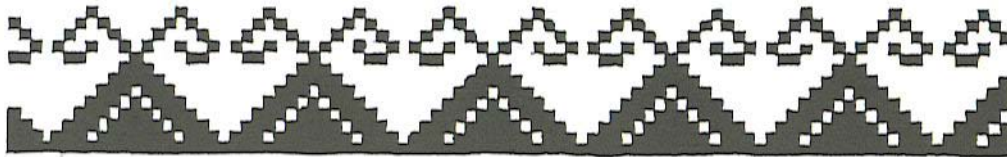
- Jennifer Harris, ed., *Textiles 5000 Years* (hardcover title) or (*5000 Years of Textiles* (paperback title). Abrams, 1993, and others. Out of print, but widely available.
- Mary Schoeser, *World Textiles: A Concise History*. Thames & Hudson, 2003.

HOW TO REACH ME:

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

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES:

- **Last day to add classes:** Tuesday, Sept. 6.
- **Quiz on terms/ Textile Museum reports:** Thursday, Sept. 22nd
- **Last day to drop classes:** Friday, Sept. 30.
- **Take-home reading test due in class:** Thurs, November 10
- **THANKSGIVING:** No class Thurs. Nov. 24
- **FINAL EXAM DATE:** Thursday, December 15, 4:30 to 7:00 PM. **No final exam is planned for this course, but I reserve the day if needed for final student presentations.**



TENTATIVE CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE

All classes will be held in Science and Tech I, room 206, Thursday evenings from 4:30 to 7:10 PM, with a short break halfway through. Please note that this schedule is *very* tentative and likely to change when I get a better sense of student interests and guest opportunities.

Readings are to be done and discussed on the dates listed. Please note:

- **Hecht** = Ann Hecht, *The Art of the Loom*. Univ. of Washington, paperback, 2001.
 - **Harvey** = Janet Harvey, *Traditional Textiles of Central Asia*. Thames & Hudson, 1996.
 - *Arts of Asia* = *Arts of Asia* 26 no.1 (1996), special issue on the Textile Museum.
 - **On-line** = to be found on the class Blackboard website, in .pdf form or as a web link.
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Sept 1: Introduction to the study of textiles.

Readings:

- *Arts of Asia*, on the Textile Museum: "Introduction," "Legacy of Collector," "Caring for Textiles," and "Arthur D. Jenkins Library"
- Lawrence Butler, "Putting Silk into Silk Route Studies." On-line.

Film: "Tana Bana: Wisdom of the Loom"

September 8: Materials and dyes

Readings:

- Gillow & Sentence, *World Textiles*, 1, "Materials." On-line.
- Janet Harvey, *Textiles of Central Asia*, "2. The Materials and Dyes"
- Mary Schoeser, *World Textiles*, "Prehistoric Materials and Techniques." On-line.

Films: "In Search of Lost Color;" and "Indigo: A World of Blue"

Textile Museum project will be assigned.

September 15: Weaving on a loom

Readings:

- Hecht, "Introduction: the loom, spinning, dyeing, weaving."
- Gillow & Sentence, *World Textiles*, 2, "Loom-woven textiles." On-line.

Loom demonstration.

September 22: Term quiz and Textile Museum reports

PART 2: REGIONAL CASE-STUDIES OF TEXTILE AND TRADE HISTORY

September 29: Textiles in the Ancient World

Reading:

- Elizabeth Wayland Barber, *Women's Work: The First 30,000 Years*. Whole thing, yep.

October 6: Silk Trade and the Early Medieval Empires

Readings:

- *Textiles: 5000 Years*, on Sassanian, early Islamic, Byzantine & Sicilian silks. On-line.
- Xinru Liu, *Silk and Religion*, chapters IV-VI on Byzantine & Islamic. On-line.
- David Jacoby and Raymond Lopez on the Mediterranean silk trade, TBA, on-line.

October 13: Islamic textiles and trade

Readings:

- *Arts of Asia*: Mackie, "Increase the Prestige: Islamic Textiles"
- *Arts of Asia*: Bier, "Approaches to Understanding Oriental Carpets"
- Lisa Golombek, "The Draped Universe of Islam." On-line.
- *Textiles: 5000 Years*, on Safavid and Ottoman textiles. On-line.

October 20: Silk and wool in medieval Europe

Readings:

- *Textiles: 5000 Years*, on Central and Northern Europe. On-line.
- Anna Muthesius, "Silk in the Medieval World." On-line.
- Medieval tapestry tradition, reading TBA.
- Film, on the Bayeux Tapestry.

October 27: African textiles, a sampling

Readings:

- Hecht, 3: "West Africa: Narrow-strip Weaving"
- Gilfoy, on African strip-weaving. On-line.
- Patricia Darish, "Dressing for the Next Life: Raffia textile production and use among the Kuba of Zaire," from *Cloth and Human Experience*. On-line.

Film: "African Weaving"

November 3: Nomadic textiles in the Eurasian steppes

Readings:

- Harvey, *Traditional Textiles of Central Asia*, chapters 1, 3 & 4.
- *Arts of Asia*: Carmel, "At the Crossroads of the Continent: Textiles from Central Asia"
- Film, TBA
- Take-home essay test on the readings will be assigned.

November 10: Textiles for Ritual and Trade in SE Asia.

Readings:

- Hecht, 4: "Southeast Asia: Indonesian Textiles."
- *Arts of Asia*: Gittinger, "Southeast Asian Textiles at the Textile Museum"
- Robyn Maxwell, "An Introduction to Southeast Asian Textile History." On-line.
- John Guy, from *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East*. On-line.

Take-home test on readings and discussion due.

PART 3: STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

November 17

December 1

December 8

There will be no final exam, but please reserve the **December 15** slot in case we need an extra session for the final student presentations.

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.

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

GRADES, including pluses and minuses, will be awarded according to the GMU catalogue, with the usual numerical equivalents used in calculating the final grade.

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 a bit of a stretch; A's are NOT given for simply following directions and using the most obvious examples.

B = Good effort with a good result.

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

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: Graduate students will do weekly reading summaries, which will receive a check, plus or minus. A cumulative grade will be rewarded at the end, and count 10% of the final grade. Missing ungraded work will result in a lowered final grade.

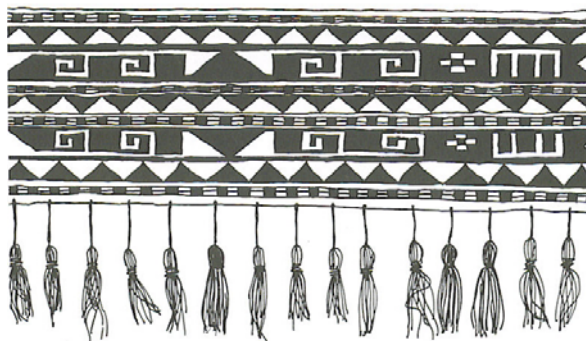
Class participation grade: Normal class participation—showing up on time, keeping up with classwork, participating in group activities, not causing problems--will be figured as "B" level. Great class participation will be graded "A". Problematic will be graded "C" or lower, heaven forbid.

FINAL GRADES will be calculated according to the GMU grading system, and weighted thus for **undergrads**:

Textile Museum project:	10 %	Research presentation	20%
Quiz on terms:	10%	Research paper	30%
Take-home reading test:	20%	Class participation (including 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. **TWO MAJOR (20%-worth) PIECES OF GRADED WORK MISSING AT THE END OF THE COURSE WILL BE GROUNDS FOR FAILING THE COURSE REGARDLESS OF YOUR PRECISE AVERAGE.**



DIRECTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

There will be two short papers assigned for this class. Specific directions will be handed out when the papers are assigned. I expect papers in my classes to be formal academic writing, using correct standard English and essay organization. They should be presented as finished products, unless otherwise specified. In general, all written work for me, or for Art History in general, 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 necessary. A funny title is fine. “Art Paper #1” is not.

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. Quadruple-spacing is *not* OK. Writing the whole darned thing in italics or Olde English is *not* OK. (Why not? Because italics are to be used for specific reasons: emphasis and foreign terms. Because Olde English on perfumed blue paper is too-too high school). 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. Early in the semester, I’ll allow a rewrite (for a maximum of C, which is the average of F and A). Late in the semester there will be no time for a rewrite.

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 (this will be made clear in the assignment), and anything over ten pages is probably expected to include a great deal of research.

Citations. Any time you use a source of information you should consider citing it, to avoid the appearance of plagiarism. Generally-known facts are not normally cited. Anything else is, including a long recitation of facts from one source that you are paraphrasing, a single opinion stated by another author, and any direct quote.

Example 1: “George Washington lived at Mount Vernon.” We know that. No citation needed. Even if you didn’t happen to know that, it is the sort of information that is so widely available that no specific citation is expected.

Example 2: “The cathedral was begun in the 1890’s, and not completed until the 1950’s after several design changes.” This is specialized information, and it must have come from somewhere unless you just made it up. So please cite your source of information! If you are paraphrasing a large amount of information, put a citation at the end of the paragraph. Give a separate citation to each separate source.

Example 3: “The cathedral looks as if it was begun in the 1890’s and not completed until the 1950’s with some design changes along the way.” Clearly your own opinion (we hope) based on your own observations (we hope). If this is the case, then no citation is necessary. However, if you only say it because you read it somewhere, please cite the source. This is the honor system.

Example 4: “This is the finest example of Romanesque-revival style in the country.” Oh, says who? If this is your opinion, please back it up by explaining your assertion. If you are just quoting from someone else, you need to cite the information.

Example 5: “According to Encarta, this is the finest example of Romanesque-revival style in the country.” That’s nice—but you still need to add a footnote or parenthetical reference giving the details, in a standard citation format.

Citation style: There are several acceptable citation styles in academic writing, and you probably have been taught several here and there. Please use the one you know best, or the one most appropriate to your major. In history and art-history, we usually use the **Chicago style**, which uses footnotes. In English and other language humanities, **MLA style** is the standard, with short parenthetical references to authors and page numbers, and a list of works cited at the end. The social sciences use the similar **APA style**. In any case, use one style correctly and consistently throughout your essay. Take the necessary time to learn the standard rules, and follow them carefully. The rules are easily found in any writing manual. **Don't remember the rules? Go to the GMU Writing Center web site, find "resources," and click on their "on-line style guides."** It's just that simple. Here's the URL:
<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources/>.

Submission. All papers are to be submitted in **hard copy** in class on the due date. **I cannot accept email submissions**—sorry, but they cause too many problems. Papers will not be considered “on time” unless I receive them in hard copy.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Here is how the **GMU Honor Code** defines it:

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, even if it is an anonymous museum pamphlet or long museum label**. Those, too, are reasoned writing. I get very unhappy when I read something that sounds like it was copied from a museum website, even if a word is changed here or there. So, I copied the above from the Honor Code listed in the Faculty/Staff Handbook on-line, along with judicial procedures, at <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>

The good news: Plagiarism is easily avoided. Just acknowledge all your sources, using footnotes or other acceptable form of reference. That's really all there is to it. **The bad news: Plagiarism on tests and papers is CHEATING and will be reported to the Honor Committee!**

