ARTH 320: ART OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD
FALL 2022

Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30–11:45 am
Music Theater Building 1007
Instructor: Dr. Heidi Gearhart
Email: hgearhar@gmu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 1–3 pm, or by appointment
Office: Horizon Hall 3202

Course Description
This course is an examination of art and architecture of the Islamic world from the beginnings of Islam in the seventh century to our own day. The course focuses on art from the Mediterranean basin, north Africa, and the Middle East, from the Iberian peninsula (modern day Spain) to central Asia (modern-day Afghanistan), and from the Mali Empire to Ottoman Turkey. We will look at art made for the early caliphs in Damascus and Baghdad, for example, and at art made under the Qajars in Iran. We will also discuss monuments like the Dome of the Rock, the Taj Mahal, and the captivating, delicate manuscripts of the Safavid and Timurid dynasties. Finally, we'll examine contemporary art loosely characterized as stemming from “Islamic” countries, and at art by artists who identify with the Muslim religion or culture. Throughout the course, we will investigate issues such as patronage, cross-cultural exchange, the inheritance of classical culture, gender, and globalism.

The goal of this course is to build a basic understanding for the art and culture of the Islamic world and learn a chronology of its history. Students will also learn basic terms and vocabulary of art history, and how to discuss and analyze works of art. 3 Credits.

This course fulfills the requirements for the Global Understanding category of Mason Core.

Learning Objectives
The goal of this course is to become conversant with the development of art in the Islamic world from the beginnings of Islam to the contemporary era. If you work hard, you will be able to:

- Use terms of art history to discuss and analyze works of art
- Describe the characteristics of a work of art and articulate its formal and/or spatial logic
- Assess the production, function, and reception of art within a given cultural context
- Through sustained study, gain an understanding of the meanings and significance of a work of art in its own time and in art history
- Identify works of art within a chronology of the history of art in the Islamic world and situate a work within its cultural context
- Critically assess art historical literature about Islamic art
- Write short analyses of works, assessing the evidence in light of existing literature and situating it in relation to its own context
- Organize and present works according to scholarly themes in a virtual exhibition
- Write a guide explaining the organization of works in virtual exhibition

**Learning Objectives for the Mason Core**
Students who successfully complete this course for the Global Understanding category of the Mason Core must meet a minimum of three of the following learning outcomes:
- Identify and articulate one’s own values and how those values influence their interactions and relationships with others, both locally and globally.
- Demonstrate understanding of how the patterns and processes of globalization make visible the interconnections and differences among and within contemporary global societies.
- Demonstrate the development of intercultural competencies.
- Explore individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field.

**Evaluation**
- Attendance and Participation 15%
- Quiz 1 20%
- Quiz 2 20%
- Short Paper 20%
- Final Project 25%

**Attendance and Participation**
In order to pass this course you will have to keep up with assigned readings. Attendance and participation in class discussion is also critical and will be a part of your grade. If you attend all classes but do nothing else, your attendance and participation grade will be a B-. Thoughtful participation will raise this grade. More than two unexcused absences or disruptive behavior (including repeated lateness), will lower it.

**Deadlines:**
All assignments will be due at the start of the class time. If you need an extension you must contact me 24 hours before the deadline to request more time. If you do not submit an assignment, your grade will be a zero. Likewise, if you do not attend class on the day of a quiz, your grade will be a zero.

There will be NO MAKEUP QUizzes WITHOUT FORMAL DOCUMENTATION OF ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY.

If you wish an exemption for religious holidays you must contact me within the first two weeks of the semester with the appropriate dates.
Readings
For this class, our main text will be Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins, *Islamic Art and Architecture 650-1250*, 2nd ed. (Yale, 2001) and Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250–1800* (Yale, 1996). This book is available in the bookstore. We will also be reading articles dealing with specific works and ideas about how we think about culture and cultural relations. These additional readings will be available on Blackboard.

Short Paper and Final Project
Your short paper assignment will be a 3 page paper, in which you explore one object and a theme of your choosing. This paper will be due Nov. 16 (see course schedule below). Your final project will be a proposal for an exhibition of Islamic art, roughly 8 pages, and including 6-8 objects.

Quizzes
You will have two quizzes over the course of the semester, on Oct. 5 and Oct. 26 (see course schedule below). Each will ask you to identify and discuss works we have examined in class and will take 20 minutes.

Technological Requirements:
*A GMU email address is required for this course. All communication will be through Blackboard and email, and you will be expected to log in regularly.*

Software:
This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the myMason Portal. See supported browsers and operating systems. Log in to myMason to access your registered courses.

Readings beyond the textbook will be posted on Blackboard as pdf files. Please be sure you have the appropriate software to read these files. Powerpoint files of lectures will be posted on Blackboard 24 hours after class.

Occasionally, I will give you resources using Flash, Java, and Windows Media Player, QuickTime and/or Real Media Player. Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. You can access Microsoft Office for free through GMU, at: https://its.gmu.edu/service/microsoft365apps. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free here. Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch this video about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.
Nota Bene: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for Blackboard access, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Technical Devices:
Cell phone use is not permitted in class. Please be sure your phone is put away and silenced. I strongly discourage the use of laptops in class, as they add extra distraction and hinder participation and connection with your fellow students. Please be advised that if you engage in activities unrelated to class during class time (e.g. messaging, games, browsing, videos) your participation grade will suffer.

Academic Integrity:
At George Mason University, Academic Integrity is demonstrated in our work, community, the classroom and research. We maintain this commitment to high academic standards through Mason’s Honor Code. It is an agreement made by all members of our community to not “cheat, steal, plagiarize, or lie in matters related to your academic work.” Students sign an agreement to adhere to the Honor Code on their application for admission to Mason and are responsible for being aware of the most current version of the code.
The Honor Code Pledge reads as follows:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University Community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set for this Honor Code: Student Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

The Honor Committee is selected to promote academic integrity as a core value for our university community. Members of the committee serve on hearing panels established to investigate and resolve alleged violations of the Honor Code. Undergraduate and graduate students at Mason are subject to the university Honor Code. Mason’s law school, the Scalia School of Law, has an Honor Committee that is independent from the rest of the University’s Honor Committee. Questions about cases brought by the Scalia School of Law should be referred to that committee.
In addition, Mason has an office that deals with issues around research misconduct. Those incidents are investigated through the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance. As it states in policy 4007, “Allegations of academic misconduct against graduate students are governed solely by the university’s honor code, except for 1) research activities as defined above regardless of sponsorship; and 2) master’s theses and doctoral dissertations, both of which are governed by this policy. Allegations of academic misconduct against undergraduate students are governed solely by the university honor code, except for sponsored research activities which are governed by this policy.” For more information, visit the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance website at https://rdia.gmu.edu/topics-of-interest/research-misconduct/.
This link provides the full read of the 2019–2020 Honor Code. Select it to download:
George Mason University Honor Code 2019-2020 final

Student Privacy:
For Mason’s policy on student privacy, please see https://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/

Proper Etiquette for our Course:
Rules of respect and etiquette are important in this course. Some of the material we will deal
with in this class may be controversial, and in some cases, politically loaded or difficult. Each
student is expected to treat their fellow students and Instructor with utmost respect, and treat
all persons fairly and kindly.

Our classroom is a safe, open space for the exchange and debate of ideas. Please respect your
fellow students and listen to everyone’s comments. We want our class to be a supportive,
amicable and also challenging place for learning. We are all in this together!

Diversity:
George Mason University values the diversity of its students. So do I. The University’s Office of
Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education (ODIME) seeks to create and sustain inclusive
learning environments where all are welcomed, valued, and supported. Harmful or hateful
behavior will not be tolerated.

Religious Holidays:
Please consult the George Mason religious holiday calendar here:
https://ulife.gmu.edu/religious-holiday-calendar/
If religious observances will require an adjustment to your course schedule, please let me know
within the first two weeks of class.

GMU Calendar:
For important dates regarding registration, add/drop, withdrawals, and mid-term evaluations,
please consult the University calendar:
https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/fall_2022/

Student Privacy:
Student privacy is governed by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students must
use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including
communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages
to a non-Mason email address. For Mason’s policy on student privacy, please see
https://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/
Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence:
George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students and employees who believe that they have been sexually harassed, sexually assaulted or subjected to sexual or interpersonal misconduct to seek assistance and support.

https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy

University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct speaks to the specifics of Mason’s process, the resources, and the options available to students and employees.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual or interpersonal misconduct: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, complicity, and retaliation to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Disability Guidelines
If you have been diagnosed with a disability and require accommodation, I am happy to work with you to help you succeed in this course. However, you will first need to be in touch with the Office of Disability Services. Please see the office website at https://ds.gmu.edu for further information.

Other Student Services:
Mason provides many services to help you learn. Take advantage of them! Here are a few:

- Keep Learning, Learning Services: learningservices.gmu.edu/keeplearning/
- Online Education Services, University Libraries: library.gmu.edu/for/online
- University Libraries: library.gmu.edu
- The Writing Center: writingcenter.gmu.edu
- Counseling and Psychological Services: caps.gmu.edu
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS (15 Weeks)

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION
Aug. 22: About this Course

READ: Syllabus and Course Policies

READ: About Islam, from Khan Academy


The Hajj: https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/introduction-cultures-religions-apah/islam-apah/a/hajj

The Kaaba: https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/introduction-cultures-religions-apah/islam-apah/a/the-kaaba

Aug. 24: What is Islamic Art?
Problems of Definition and Introduction to the themes of the course


Questions for the Reading: As you do your readings this week, think about the following questions: What defines “Islamic Art”? What do the authors identify as some of the problems or benefits of the term? What do you think?
Write down some of the questions the authors suggest as means to look at Islamic art. Write down some questions of your own. What interests you?
Early Islam and the Medieval World

WEEK 2: THE PERSISTENCE OF ANTIQUITY? THE WORLD BEFORE ISLAM
Aug. 29: The Roman Middle East

READ: Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins, *Islamic Art and Architecture, 650-1250*, pp. 3-8

READ: The Nature of Islamic Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/orna/hd_orna.htm

READ: Sarah Brooks, “Byzantium”
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/byza/hd_byza.htm

Aug. 31: The Sasanians

READ: Blair Fowlkes-Childs, “Sasanian Art”
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sass/hd_sass.htm

WEEK 3: THE FOUNDATIONS OF ISLAM
Sept. 5: Labor Day, no class

Sept. 7: Architecture as Political Statement and Religious Ritual: Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus

READ: The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Great Mosque: Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins, 9-27; Browse through 26-36


WEEK 4: THE UMAYYADS
Sept. 12: Desert Palaces: Constructing Kingship

READ: Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins, 36-51

Sept. 14: Umayyad Spain: Frontier in the West

WEEK 5: THE ABBASIDS
Sept. 19: The Abbasids: Baghdad, the Light of the World

READ: Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins, 51-79


Sept. 21: NO CLASS

WEEK 6: THE FATIMIDS AND THE SELJUKS
Sept. 26: The Fatimids in Cairo and Norman Sicily

READ: Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins, 190-213 and 291-302

Sept. 28: The Seljuks: The Old and The New

READ: Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins, 139-143 and 165-183

WEEK 7: THE CRUSADES // WEST AFRICA
Oct. 3: Conquest, War, and Fusion in the age of the Crusades


Questions for reading: Consider Hoffman’s argument for local visual contexts. Can you think of parallels in your own experiences, where cultures come together, or clash, or when local communities share an aesthetic that is all their own? How have your own values affected how you interact with others (either of similar or different background) and with objects you are drawn to? Do you agree with Hoffman’s analysis? If so, why? What are the drawbacks or weaknesses of her proposition?

Oct. 5: West Africa and the Mali Empire

Quiz #1 (Covers Weeks 3, 4, 5, 6)
**EARLY MODERNITY**

**WEEK 8: THE MAGHREB AND THE NASRIDS**

Oct. 10:  CLASSMOVED TO TUESDAY FOR FALL BREAK

Oct. 11 (TUESDAY): The Maghreb

**READ:** Introduction to Blair and Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250-1800,* 1-4
Blair and Bloom, 114-131

Oct. 12: The Nasrids


**WEEK 9: THE ILKHANIDS**

Oct. 17: Sufi Shrines and Ilkhanid Iran

**READ:** Blair and Bloom, 5-19; browse through 21-35

Oct. 19: The Ilkhanids and the Great Mongol Shahnameh


**WEEK 10: THE TIMURIDS**

Oct. 24: The Timurids

**READ:** Blair and Bloom, 55-69; browse through 37-54

Oct. 26: Timurid Miniature Painting


**QUIZ #2 (Covers Weeks 7, 8, & 9)**
WEEK 11: THE SAFAVIDS
Oct 31:   Architecture in Isfahan

READ: Blair and Bloom, 183-198

Nov. 2:   Savafid Manuscripts

READ: Blair and Bloom, 165-181


WEEK 12: THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT
Nov. 7:   The Mughals

READ: Blair and Bloom, 287-302. Browse through 267-286


Nov. 9:   Mughal Painting

Discuss Final Project

WEEK 13: THE OTTOMANS
Nov. 14:   The Ottomans
READ: Blair and Bloom, 231-250; Browse through 213-230

Nov. 16:   Ottoman Painting

SHORT PAPER DUE: Choose 1 work that we have discussed in class, and look for themes that unites it to other works we have examined. In roughly 3 pages, discuss your work, how it is evidence of your theme, other works to which it is related to. This assignment is a warm-up for your final project, in which you will be asked to create an online exhibition. If you were an exhibition curator, what are some themes that you might demonstrate? The assignment should help you think through the images you have studied thus far, and review the themes of
the course. *Nota bene:* This paper is short, it should be carefully thought out and well-written, with good organization, proper spelling, and grammar.

THE MODERN WORLD

**Week 14: THE QAJARS AND COLONIALISM**

**Nov. 21:** Iran under the Qajars

**Orientalism and Colonialism**

**REVISIT:** Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Introduction


**READ:** Mohammadi Nameghi, Khadijeh, and Carmen Pérez González. “From Sitters to Photographers: Women in Photography from the Qajar Era to the 1930s.” *History of Photography: The First Hundred Years of Iranian Photography* 37, no. 1 (February 1, 2013): 48–73.

**THANKSGIVING RECESS (Nov. 23–27)**

**Week 15: CONTEMPORARY ART**

**Nov. 28:** Contemporary Art


**WATCH:** Interview with Saudi artist Manal Al Dowayan on the photograph series “I AM” [https://youtu.be/ZXKSk0GVrgM](https://youtu.be/ZXKSk0GVrgM)

For her photographs see: [http://www.manaldowayan.com/art.html](http://www.manaldowayan.com/art.html)

**WATCH:** Shirin Neshat on Shirin Neshat

[https://youtu.be/VXZkn0nL34Y](https://youtu.be/VXZkn0nL34Y)

**Nov. 30:** Wrap up

**FINAL PROJECT DUE DATE TBD**