Course Description/Objectives:

The rock-cut architecture at world-famous sites like Ajanta, Ellora, Elephanta, Bamiyan, Dunhuang, Longmen and many others have captured the imaginations of visitors and devotees for centuries. These structures are not built with bricks or timber, rather they have been carved into the sides of mountains. The sites are notable not just for their antiquity and religious significance, but also for the ingenious and sophisticated techniques used to create them. Somewhere between works of architecture and massive sculptures, these monasteries and temples has survived centuries of use and abandonment. Because of their enduring nature, these primarily Buddhist and Hindu sites provide rare opportunities for understanding Asia’s past. Each week this seminar will explore a different site and will begin by exploring the origins of the rock-cut architectural form in the third century BCE India. Subsequent classes will introduce some of the most important examples created in later periods and different regions in South and East Asia. We will examine what we know about these sites’ histories, how they were made, and what was required to maintain them in antiquity—as well as how they are being protected from threats today.

Office Hours: Horizon Hall 3139, Monday and Wednesday and by appointment.

Email: rdecarol@gmu.edu

Course Requirements: Class Participation 10%
Weekly Reading Response Papers (10) 20%
Research Question Proposal 10%
Research Paper 50%
ARTH 482 (7-10 pages)
ARTH 599 (15-20 pages)
Class Presentation 10%

The class meetings will consist of seminar-style discussions on specific topics. These meetings will form the core of the course material so it is strongly advised that you attend class consistently. ALL students are expected to participate in class discussions.

All students will need to turn in Research Question Proposal, in which the subject of the research paper is presented and bibliographic information is provided.

The Research Paper will involve independent research. All students have the option to turn in a rough draft of the paper if done so at least a week before the final draft is due. More information on all of these assignments will be provided during the term.
Each week students will be expected to turn in a 1 to 2-page Reading Response paper. You must turn in 10 over the course of the semester. If you turn in more, the lowest grade will be dropped.

**Grading Policies:**

- **A** 100-93%
- **A-** 92-90%
- **B+** 89-87%
- **B** 86-83%
- **B-** 82-80%
- **C+** 79-77%
- **C** 76-70%
- **D** 69-60%
- **F** 59% and lower

Attendance is necessary; much of the material will only be presented in class discussions. You are responsible for keeping up with the material and for getting notes for missed classes.

This class is a seminar centered on the discussion of assigned texts. A student’s class participation grade will be evaluated not only according to the amount of talking that student does, but also according to whether that student contributes thoughtfully and constructively, based on a careful consideration of the class readings. Obviously, students cannot contribute to class discussion if they are absent; consequently, repeated unexcused absences will be reflected in their participation grade.

Extensions will be given ONLY in cases of emergencies or illnesses with proper documentation (doctor’s note etc.) In all other cases (family obligations, religious holidays, disabilities etc.), extensions may be granted if I am informed well BEFORE the deadline.

Reading Assignments and Research Papers must be submitted to Blackboard before class on the day specified in the schedule. Late papers will be marked down five points (half a grade) for every day they are late. Papers will be graded and returned with comments on Blackboard.

Please refrain from using phones for talking or texting while in class. If it is important please exit the classroom first.

Adherence to codes of academic honesty is expected on all assignments and in all testing situations. I take the Honor Code (as stipulated in the university undergraduate catalog) very seriously. This code is a simple expression of respect for the course, your classmates and yourself. Cheating and Plagiarism are forbidden (obviously).

For those who do not know what Plagiarism is, it can be defined as: presenting as one’s own the words, work or opinions of someone else without giving them proper acknowledgment. Plagiarism can also refer to borrowing the sequence of ideas, arrangement of material, or pattern of thought of someone else without giving them proper credit. Plagiarism can be avoided by proper use of footnotes.
Texts:
All readings will be available on JSTOR, on Blackboard (MyMason) under the Course Content Folder, or available free through other online sources.

Week 1: Aug 24  Chronology: Basics of Cave Temples

*Burgess and Fergusson. Cave Temples of India (1880-1886)*
Keep in mind the age of the text. Its commentary reflects imperialist British values of the period. The maps are still considered reliable. For better or worse the academic tradition builds from this foundation. No need to read it all, just skim portions and look at the maps and ground plans.

https://archive.org/details/cavetemplesofind00ferguoft/page/n677/mode/2up


Week 2: Aug 31  Architecture, Inscription, and Iconography (Bhaja, Bedsa, Karle)


Week 3: Sept 7  Painting and Patronage (Ajanta)


Week 4: Sept 14  Intro to Hindu Caves (Udayagiri, Elephanta)

Research Question Due


Week 5: Sept 21  Trade Networks and Donation (Kanheri)
-- Online Interview with Dr. Brancaccio (?)
Instead of a reading response, please prepare questions for Dr. Brancaccio


Optional:

Week 6: Sept 28  Completion, Repair, and Renovation (Pitalkhora, Junnar, Naneghat)


Optional

Week 7: Oct 5  Shared Site: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain (Ellora)


Week 8: Oct 12  Regional Differences: Southern India (Badami, Mahabalipuram)


Week 9: Oct 19  Sri Lanka: Living Traditions (Colossal Sculpture Part 1)


**Week 10: Oct 26** Afghanistan: Preservation and Destruction (Colossal Sculpture Part 2)


Optional:


**Week 11: Nov 2** Trade Networks / Central Asia (Kizil, Kucha, Bezeklik etc.)


**Week 12: Nov 9** Trade Networks / China (Dunhuang/Mogao and Yungang)


Video: Eugene Wang SOAS Lecture “How to Experience Buddhist Caves as Virtual Reality”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXW33k1XVpM

Optional:


**Week 13: Nov 16** Imperial Sponsorship (Longmen and Dazu/Mt. Baoding)


**Week 14: Nov 23**  
Thanksgiving --- no class this week

**Week 15: Nov 30**  
Final Papers Due  
Student Presentations (20 min)

**Week 16: Dec 7**  
Finals week – potential class meeting