



ARTH 314 Islamic Art and Society

Saint Louis University in Madrid

FL 2013

M/W 5-6:30, PRH 6

Dr. Cathleen Fleck, Asst. Prof., Fine and Performing Arts Dept.

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This course will present the rich culture of the Islamic world of the areas now called the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, Turkey, Central Asia, and India from Islam's seventh-century beginnings to the modern era. The class will consider the diverse types of secular and religious art of this large region, while also analyzing unifying aesthetic

principles, themes, imagery, and motifs found in Islamic art. Through select examples of art and architecture, students will study mosque and palace architecture, the art of the book, metalwork, carving, mosaics, pottery, textiles, and carpets. The course will analyze how Islamic art was used and shaped by religion as well as by its wide-ranging contexts and cultures. The course will analyze how Islamic art was used and shaped by religion as well as by its wide-ranging contexts and cultures. Special attention will be given to Islamic culture and monuments in Spain. No prerequisites are required for this course.

Students will have readings from a textbook and from scholarly articles, with two exams scheduled during the semester. Their main assignment will be to develop a virtual art exhibition with a group in the form of a website. Students will work together to choose their own relevant topic about a theme, a place, an art form, etc. of their interest. Four in-class workshops will help students learn about how to write about art history topics and prepare a website.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Please do the readings in the order they are listed on the syllabus for each day.

Required Texts:

- Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islamic Arts* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997) [referred to as **B/B** for your readings].
- ISBN-10: **071483176X**
- *Note that the authors use British spellings for certain words, like 'splendour' instead of the American 'splendor' or 'practise' instead of the American 'practice'. Also, they sometimes use alternate English spellings for Arabic words.
- Additional required readings will be available via the class webpage on Blackboard (formerly SLUGlobal) online.

Course Objectives: (These objectives will be gained through the methods listed here; and assessed in the numbered assignments listed here).

- To inform students about the art, architecture, society, and culture of the people, lands, and cultures dominated by Islam from the seventh century to the modern era. (Lectures, discussions, readings; assessed in assignments 2-7)
- To challenge students to look closely at art and architecture. (Lectures, discussions, readings; assessed in assignments 2, 5-7)
- To help students learn visual and material clues that signal styles, locale, artists, etc. in Islamic art (Lectures, discussions; assessed in assignments 2-7)
- To encourage and teach students how to talk and write about art and architecture. (Lectures, discussions, readings, and participation; assessed in assignments 2-7)
- To inform students about different types of scholarship and sources in the art history field. (Lectures, discussions, readings, and participation; assessed in assignment 2, 5-7)
- To teach students about the process of writing an art history exhibition. (Lectures, discussions, readings, and participation; assessed in assignment 5-6)
- To teach students about the major periods, cultures, historical figures, and religious trends affecting the arts and culture in Islamic lands. (Lectures, discussions; assessed in assignments 2-7)
- To help students understand the history of Islam and its common features across parts of the world. (Lectures, discussions, readings; assessed in assignments 2-7)
- To educate students about the many facets of Islam and its cultures such that they can appreciate that in the past and present there are many kinds of Islam and Muslims. (Lectures, discussions, readings; assessed in assignments 2-7)
- To give students the opportunity to become culturally-informed, global citizens who are sensitive to aspects of culture, religion, and history that effect political and economic situations today. (Lectures, discussions, readings; assessed in assignments 2-7)

Assignments and Grade:

Attendance and Participation: 5 and 5%

- 1) *Attendance (5%)* in this course is an essential element of your grade. Please arrive in class on time. Attendance includes punctuality: 3 late arrivals will count as one unexcused absence. Excessive absences (over 3) will affect your attendance grade. You have no need to inform me of why you are absent for your 3 allowed absences. Only if you have an extended

problem or extenuating circumstances is it necessary to provide more information, such as a physician's or university official's note.

If absence or non-completion is unavoidable for a scheduled assignment or exam for an official (non-emergency) reason, PLEASE INFORM ME AT LEAST ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE in person or via email in order to be able to make up the missed work. In the case of an emergency, please document it with a physician's or university official's note and let me know as soon as possible via email. If you miss an exam for oversleeping or lack of time management, you will receive a 0 on the exam. Only students with a physician's, professor's, or university official's note may make up exams/presentations missed in class, though no make-up lectures will be given. Please schedule routine, non-emergency doctor's visits or other appointments for non-class times. Make-ups and their form will be arranged at the discretion of the instructor.

- 2) Besides being present in class, another essential course requirement is student participation (5%) in class. You will be graded on your active participation based on the following elements:
 - Doing the readings assigned for each class session IN ADVANCE
 - Vocal and aural participation in class discussions, either asking or answering questions and actively listening
 - Thorough preparation of presentations and assignments
 - Completion of all assignments in a timely manner
 - Regular, thoughtful analysis and/or comments on the import of learning about Muslim culture in today's world

- 3) •**First Exam:** 18% of grade

This exam will cover the first half of the class material. The exam will ask students to express their understanding of the Islamic history, art, and cultures examined through identifications, explanations, comparison essays, and multiple-choice questions.

- 4) •**Second Exam:** 22% of grade

The second exam will be weighted towards the second half, with occasional references to the influence of art of the first half. A review sheet with more information about format will be distributed in advance of the exams. Exams will be a combination of identification, short answer, matching, and written analysis of the issues and monuments covered in class. The students will be responsible for those monuments covered in the books, our readings, and in class.

- 5) •**Workshop participation:** 8% (4x2% each)

There will be four scheduled in-class workshops that will count 5% towards your grade. These will entail breaking up into small groups, discussing, writing about, and then reporting back on specific works of art for exams or on your project. The purpose is to provide practice for how to write about works of art and to prepare you for your project and exams. In addition, it will allow you to have a voice in class, to meet classmates, and perhaps to develop study groups for exams. ***These days are required attendance days noted by ♠ on the syllabus.*** Non-attendance will require the student to submit a 2-3 page research essay for grading on a related topic or receive a 0 for that discussion.

- 6) •**Final Project:** 5% Group component; 20% Individual Written component; 10% Individual Presentation component
Groups of students will create a virtual exhibition of Islamic art. The exhibition's theme can be based on culture group, object type, materials, technique, function, or any theme approved by the professor. More information to follow. Some class time will be devoted to discussion about the project, in which you are required to be present and participate. The *due date* for all related materials is the day of your presentation at the end of the semester. A significant component of the exhibition and presentation will be not only to relate the art historical content of your virtual exhibition but also to express what modern viewers can gain from learning about the represented aspect of Muslim culture and how that might affect their understanding of modern Muslim culture.

- 7) •**Reading presentation and summary (8%):**

An integral part of the course will be readings to create a context of Islamic history and culture over the periods of the course. In particular, students will be asked to comment on how this reading expands their knowledge of a particular faith and its history, and on how it effects their understanding of the current state of Islamic affairs. Students will be assigned weekly to present a summary of an assigned reading from the required list of readings. The verbal summary should be about 5-10 minutes long. ALL student/s must also prepare one question to ask the class to bring on some discussion. The question may highlight some aspect of the article, ask the students' opinions about an aspect of the article or the monuments discussed, or may try to bring out a comparison with another article or monument or current situation in the Islamic world. If students do not seem to be preparing for these discussions, this assignment will be replaced with quizzes.

Class Technology Policies:

To create a classroom atmosphere of respect and appropriate academic focus,

- Please note that no computers, cell phones, or other mobile technology are allowed on your desk or out of your bag during class unless you have special approval or accommodation from the instructor.
- Please turn all cell phones' volume off, and no texting is allowed during class.
- Also, you are responsible for checking (or forwarding) your SLU email and checking SLU Global/Blackboard (via myslu.slu.edu) for any course updates/announcements.

Grading Policy:

- ALL COURSEWORK MUST BE COMPLETED AND HANDED IN ON TIME FOR CREDIT. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS ACCEPTED – SO WORK AHEAD!** Late assignments will receive a 0!
- All assignments for the class must be completed for a passing grade in the class.

Grading scale

A= 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B= 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C= 74-76; C- = 70-73; D= 65-69; F= 64 and below

Fine and Performing Arts Dept. Classroom Civility Statement:

To ensure an optimal learning environment the student must be an active participant in the educational endeavor. The behaviors of each student impact not only his/her own learning, but the learning of their peers and the teaching of the professor. In order to facilitate an optimal learning environment, students taking this class will agree to observe the following:

1. Respect: Treat others with respect in all situations.
2. Diversity: Embrace the diversity of others. Respect differing views shared by students or instructors, and politely share your own differing/similar opinions.
3. Courtesy: Acknowledge and respect your instructor as the expert. Do not talk during instructor-led portion of class, unless you raise your hand and are directed by the instructor. Pay attention to the professor’s or your classmate’s presentations by taking notes and keeping all non-related textbooks and non-class related material off of your desk.

Academic Integrity and Honesty: The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity, such as would be expected at a Catholic, Jesuit institution. As members of this community, students, faculty and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general that all soliciting, receiving or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students, but also undermines the validity of the University's evaluation of students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of a faculty member or administrator.

Examples of academic dishonesty are copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student's work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, colluding with another student or students to engage in an act of academic dishonesty, and making unauthorized use of technological devices in the completion of assignments or exams.

Where there is clear indication of such dishonesty, a faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply appropriate sanctions. Investigations of violations will be conducted in accordance with standards and procedures of the Madrid Campus. Recommendations of sanctions to be imposed will be made to the Academic Dean. Possible sanctions for a violation of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension and dismissal from the University.

Requests for modifications: In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 204, send an e-mail to counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu, or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter. (Please discuss any needed accommodations in the first week of the semester with Dr. Fleck).

September

W 4: Course Introduction

Sun 8: Join the SLU Trip to Toledo, Spain! (see this [video](#))

M 9: Historical and Artistic Background ****Please bring textbook to class today****
B/B: Introduction 5-11

W 11: The Rise of Islam
B/B: Rise of Islam 15-20

M 16: The Umayyads
B/B: 23-38 (“...emerged.”)

Homework (complete worksheet): *Islam: Empire of Faith* (PBS Documentary), Pt. I [Available on Blackboard]

Also M 16 from 2:15-3 pm: You are invited to hear Dr. Fleck lecture on:

“*Continuity of Devotion: A Medieval ‘Crusader’ Prayerbook in the Hands of a Renaissance Italian Nun*”

W 18: The Mosque and Mecca

2 Readings: M. Frishman, “Islam and the Form of the Mosque,” *The Mosque*, eds. M. Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 17-42 **AND** F. E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), Primitive Sanctuary 9-19; Muhammad and the Hajj, 46-59.

M 23: The Umayyads in Spain ...

Reading: Oleg Grabar, “Islamic Spain, The First Four Centuries an Introduction”, in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, ed. Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York, 1992), 3-9. (If you want to see the entire book, it is available for free as a digital book: <http://books.google.com/books?id=ILArx8bC8UC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>).

Homework (complete worksheet): *Cities of Light* (Documentary: Sections on Migration, Foundation, and Unity) [Available on Blackboard]

- **Discussion: Weekend trip to Cordoba and Granada???**

♠SPECIAL WORKSHOP #1: HOW TO DISCUSS ISLAMIC ART

W 25: Umayyad and Abbasid Palaces and Abbasid Architecture; Umayyad (and later) Spain

B/B: Abbasids 38-56; Architecture: 131-138; 141-146 (“...inscription.”); 183 (“Similar...)-189

2 Readings: Jerrilynn D. Dodds, “The Great Mosque of Córdoba,” 10-25 **AND** James Dickie, “The Palaces of the Alhambra,” 134-151, in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, ed. Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York, 1992).

M 30: The Koran and Early Writing

B/B: Koran and Early Writing 59-78

Reading: W. M. Thackston, “The Role of Calligraphy,” *The Mosque*, eds. M. Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 43-54.

October

W 2: Early Arts of the Loom

B/B: Loom 81-98

Reading: Lisa Golombek, “The Draped Universe of Islam,” in *Context and Content of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla R. Soucek (University Park: Penn State Press, 1988), 25-49.

M 7: Decorative Arts 600-900

B/B: Decorative Arts 101-127

W 9: Final Projects Discussion

M 14: Exam review

♠SPECIAL WORKSHOP #2: WRITING ABOUT ISLAMIC ART ON AN EXAM

W 16: FIRST EXAM

M 21: Regional Centers and Islam 900-1500

B/B: Madrasas and Muqarnas... 146 (“The hypostyle...”)-98

W 23: Taifa Spain: Toledo

Reading: Tom Nickson, “Copying Córdoba? Toledo and Beyond,” *Medieval History Journal* (Oct. 2012), Vol. 15 Issue 2, p 319-354.

Homework (complete worksheet): *Cities of Light* (Documentary: Sections on Division, Purification, Crossroads, Survival, and Loss)

M 28: Arts of the Book 900-1500... B/B: 193-220

W 30: Final Projects Discussion

♠SPECIAL WORKSHOP #3: WRITING ABOUT ART FOR AN EXHIBITION

November

M 4: Arts of the Loom and the Decorative Arts 900-1500

B/B: Loom 223-246; Decorative Arts 249-283

W 6: ♠**Field Trip!**: Meet at the main entrance of **Museo Sorolla**, General Martínez Campos, 37 - 28010 – Madrid

<http://museosorolla.mcu.es/index.html>

Autobuses: 5, 7, 14, 16, 27, 40, 45, 61, 147 y 150; Metro: Iglesia (Línea 1), Rubén Darío (Línea 5), Gregorio Marañón (Líneas 7 y 10)

M 11: Great Empires 1500-1800: Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals

B/B: Architecture 287-328

Reading: Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium,” in *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, ed. by Robert Mark and Ahmet Ş. Cakmak (New York, 1992), 195-225

W 13: Great Empires Architecture cont.

Homework (complete worksheet): *Islam: Empire of Faith* (PBS Documentary), Pt. II

M 18: Arts of the Book 1500-1800

B/B: 331-60

W 20: Arts of the Loom 1500-1800

B/B: 363-388

M 25: Decorative Arts 1500-1800

B/B: 391-413

W 27: Exam Review and Final Projects Discussion

♠**SPECIAL WORKSHOP #4: WRITING ABOUT ART FOR AN EXHIBITION Cont.**

[Dr. Fleck returns to the U.S. Nov. 29]

December

M 2: No Classtime: **Homework (complete worksheet):** *Islam: Empire of Faith* (PBS Documentary), Pt. III

The Second Exam – a Take-home exam – will be made available by the end of Monday

W 4: No Classtime: Take-Home Second Exam Due at class time 5 pm in Madrid

M 9: During classtime: *Required* meeting of individual group to discuss Final Project

W 11: During classtime: Students will be presenting their Final Powerpoints to me (in the U.S.) via electronic means