

Department of Architecture
MIT, Fall 2008
4.614 RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE AND ISLAMIC CULTURES (HASS-D)

Class Schedule: MW 2-3:30, in Room 3-133

Instructor: Nasser Rabbat, nasser@mit.edu, x3-1417

TA: Anneka Lenssen, [<annekalenssen@gmail.com>](mailto:annekalenssen@gmail.com)

Units: 3-0-9, HASS-D.

Class Requirements: 4 short papers (6-7 pp., 15% of the final grade each) and a final open-book exam (30 % of the final grade), and 10% of the final grade for attendance and participation in discussion.

Course Website: URL: <http://web.mit.edu/4.614/www/> also Open Course Ware website

Stellar Website: <http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/4/fa08/4.614/>

The **Writing and Communication Center (12-132)** offers you **free professional** advice from published writers about oral presentations and about all types of academic, creative, and professional writing. Go to <http://web.mit.edu/writing> and click on the yellow sunburst. If you cannot find an open appointment slot, do not despair. There are always cancellations on the day of the appointment. Click on the Wait List (the blue strip that says "***Is the time that you want already reserved?***"). Whenever a cancellation occurs on that day, you will be automatically notified by email. Because several people might receive that same message, go online ASAP to schedule that open spot; 96% of clients who want an appointment end up with one **if** they use the Wait List. If you can't find an appointment, you may come by the Center and sign up to be a drop-in client and/or you may try the Online Tutor at <http://web.mit.edu/writing/Center/onlinetutor.html> . The Center's hours are Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.; Friday 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.; and Sundays, 5:00-9:00 p.m. –check the online scheduler for up-to-date hours.

DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the history of Islamic cultures through architecture. Religious, commemorative, and educational structures are surveyed from the beginning of Islam in 7th-century Arabia up to the present. The survey is chronological with emphasis on influential patrons, thinkers, and designers. Major examples of mosques, madrasas, mausolea, etc. are analyzed and their architectural, urban, and stylistic characteristics are examined in conjunction with their historical, political, and intellectual settings.

Students are encouraged to raise questions and generate debates in lectures as well as the discussion sessions. The aim is to explore all possible venues of interpretation to better locate Islamic religious architecture within its regional, pan-Islamic, and universal contexts.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina. *The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650-1250*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001.

Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *The art and architecture of Islam 1250-1800*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

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RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

George Michell, ed. *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1978 [reprint 1984].

Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991.

Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar. *The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650-1250*. London and N.Y.: Penguin Books, 1987.

Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic architecture: form, function and meaning*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994.

John D. Hoag, *Islamic Architecture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977.

SYLLABUS:

PART 1: BEGINNINGS

1: W Sep 3: Images of world religious architecture from Stonehenge to Mecca.

2: M Sep 8: Origins and influences of pre-Islamic traditions
Mecca on the Eve of Islam: The Ka'ba and its pre-Islamic role

Reading:

Hourani, "The Making of a World," 1-21.

3: W Sep 10: The Life and message of the Prophet Muhammad
The Mosque of the Prophet in Madina and other early mosques

Reading:

Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, vol. 1, chapter 3, pp. 163-75; chapter 4, pp. 188-208.
Allan and Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 3-10, 15-17.

4: M Sep 15: The conquests and the mosques of Amsar
Adaptation of ancient motifs as assertive elements of a new faith.
First Paper Assignment.

Reading:

Hoag, Introduction and Chapter 1: The Beginning of Islamic Architecture.
Ettinghausen and Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam*, 3-11.
Hoag. Chapter 2. Umayyad architecture.

PART 2: PAX ISLAMICA

5: W Sep 17: First Caliphal Expressions:

The First Islamic monument: the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem:
Competing ideologies, myths, and world views.

Umayyad Mosques (715-50): Islamization of the empire and Arabization of the state.

Reading:

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 15-26.

Allan and Creswell, 19-88.

Jeffery, "The Story of the Night Journey and the Ascension," 621-39.

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Hoag. Chapter 2. Umayyad architecture.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 1.

M September 22: Student Holiday

6: W Sep 24: The Splendors of the Abbasids at Baghdad and Samarra.

An Islamic architectural language: Monumentalizing the hypostyle type.

Reading:

Grabar, *Formation*, 45-67, 104-38, "Islamic Religious Art: The Mosque."

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 28-33

Allan and Creswell, 359-76.

Hoag. Chapter 3.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 2.

7: M Sep 29: Iran and Central Asia: the Eastern frontier.

The survival and revival of pre-Islamic modes of construction and expression.

The introduction of the mausoleum.

Reading:

Allan and Creswell, 264-69, 345-51.

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 105-15.

Hoag. Chapter 10: The Early Islamic Architecture of Persia.

8: W Oct 1: Monuments of the West: Ifriqiya and Spain.

Imperial versus provincial expressions of power.

First Paper Due

Second Paper Assignment:

Reading:

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 33-36, 83-91.

Allan and Creswell, 291-330, 391-406.

Hoag. Chapters 4 & 5.

Jerrilynn Dodds, "The Great Mosque of Cordoba," *Al-Andalus*, 11-25.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 7.

9: M Oct 6: Fatimid Cairo: New traditions and old forms.

Muqarnas: decorative purposes and symbolic meanings.

Reading:

Wheeler Thackston, (trans.), *Naser-e Khosraw's book of travels*, 38-63.

Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture of Cairo*, 58-67.

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 187-200.

Hoag. Chapter 8.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 3.

8: W Oct 8: Discussion: The vocabulary of religious architecture

The interplay of setting and rituals of worship in the definition of religious spaces.

Short Film: *Mosque* (20 mins)

Reading:

James Dickie, "Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas, and Tombs," in G.

Michell, *Architecture of the Islamic World*, 65-79.

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Hourani, "Ways of Islam," 147-52;"The Articulation of Islam," 59-79.

M Oct 13: Colombus Day Holiday

PART 3: FRAGMENTATION AND STRIVING FOR UNITY:

10: W Oct 15: The Achitecture of the Great Seljuqs:
The Four-Iwan Plan: From palatial to religious.

Reading:

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 139-45.

Mohammad al-Asad, "Applications of Geometry," in Frishman and Khan *The mosque*, 55-75

Hoag. Chapter 11: The Seljuks.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 4.

11: M Oct 20: Architecture of the Sunni revival: influences and traditions.
The Introduction and spread of the *Madrassa* and the *Khanqah*

Second Paper Due:

Third Paper Assignment:

Reading:

Hourani, "Ways of Islam," 147-57, and "The Culture of the 'Ulama," 158-66.

Arthur Jeffery, *A reader on Islam: " Sufism,"* 640-66.

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 215-43.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 5.

Hoag. Chapter 12: The Classic Islamic Architecture of Syria and Iraq.

12: W Oct 22: Crusades and Counter Crusades:

The articulation of the idea of Jihad

Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Religious Architecture.

Reading:

Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture of Cairo*, 85-110.

Blair and Bloom, 70-84

Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, vol. 1, chapter 1, pp. 41-60 (Cairo).

13: M Oct 27: The Mongol invasions and consequent Islamization: The mosques, madrasas, and mausolea of the Ilkhanids.

Reading:

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 145-52.

Blair and Bloom, 5-15.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 8.

Hoag. Chapter 14: Ilkhanids and Timurids.

14: W Oct 29: Religious Architecture of India under the Sultanates:

Reading:

Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, vol. 3, chapter 11, pp. 619-28.

Blair and Bloom, 149-60.

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P. Hasan "The Indian Subcontinent," in Frishman and Khan, *Mosque*, 159-79.
Hoag. Chapter 15: The Classical Islamic Architecture of India.

15: M Nov 3: Timurid Architecture: A Tradition of Monumentality.

Reading:

Thackston, Wheeler (trans.), *A century of princes: sources on Timurid history and art*, 63-100: Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi *Zafarnama*.

Blair and Bloom, 37-50 and 199-207.

Hoag. Chapter 14: The Later Classic Islamic Architecture of Persia: Timurids.
Golombek and Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, 34-52.

16: W Nov 5: Anatolia: The Islamization of the northern frontiers.
From the Rum Seljuks to the Early Ottomans.

Reading:

Ettinghausen and Grabar, 297-303, 313-27.

Blair and Bloom, 132-46.

Hoag. Chapter 13: The Classic Islamic Architecture of Anatolia.

G. Necipoglu, "Anatolia and the Ottoman Legacy," in Frishman and Khan, *Mosque*, 141-53.

PART 4: IMPERIAL MONUMENTALITY:

Monday Nov 10: Veteran Day Holiday

17: W Nov 12: Cairo: The Capital of Islam.
Burji Mamluk Religious Architecture

Third Paper Due

Fourth Paper Assignment.

Reading:

Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture of Cairo*, 122-57.

Hoag. Chapter 9: The Later Classic Islamic Architecture of Egypt.

Blair and Bloom, 70-93.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 6.

18: M Nov 17: Imperial Ottoman mosques and *kulliyes*:

Reading:

Gulru Necipoglu-Kafadar, "The Suleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: an Interpretation," *Muqarnas*, 3 (1985): 92-115.

Hoag. Chapter 16: The Architecture of the Ottoman Empire.

Blair and Bloom, 213-30.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 10.

19: W Nov 19: Mosques and Mausolea of the Great Mughals of India.

Reading:

Hoag. Chapter 18: The Architecture of the Moghul Empire.

Glenn Lowry, "Humayun's Tomb: Form, Function and Meaning in Early Mughal Architecture," *Muqarnas*, 4 (1987): 133-48.

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Blair and Bloom, 267-86.

20: M Nov 24: Imperial Safavid Mosques and Madrasas of Isfahan.
Short film, *Isfahan*.

Reading:

Hoag. Chapter 17: The Architecture of the Safavid Empire.

Blair and Bloom, 183-92.

Hillenbrand. Chapter 9.

21: W Nov 26: Discussion: Religion and the City

Reading:

Hourani, "The Life of Cities," 109-29.

Kostof, *A History of Architecture*, 453-68.

Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-ibar. The Muqaddimah : an introduction to history*. Chapter 4 of the abridgment: "Countries and Cities," 263-95.

Nov 27-28: Thanksgiving Holiday

PART 5: MODERNITIES AND REVIVALS:

22: M Dec 1: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Mosques in Major Capitals:
Fourth Paper Due.

Reading:

Hourani, "The Age of European Empires," 263-78.

M. al-Asad, "The Mosque of al-Rifa'i in Cairo," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 108-24.

G. Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture*. Chapter 10.

23: W Dec 3: Historicism in Contemporary Religious Architecture:

Reading:

Grabar, "The Mosque in Islamic Society Today;" Hasan-Uddin Khan, "An Overview of Contemporary Mosques," in Frishman and Khan, *The mosque*, 242-67.

24: M Dec 8: Discussion: Contemporary mosques and their messages

Reading:

Titus Burckhardt, *Sacred Art in East and West*, 101-19.

Mohammed Arkoun, "The Metamorphosis of the Sacred," in Frishman and Khan, *The mosque*, 43-53, 268-72.

25: W Dec 10: (Last Day of Class) The building of mosques in the West

Reading:

Omar Khalidi, "Approaches to Mosque Design in North America," in Y. Haddad and J. Esposito, ed. *Muslims on the Americanization Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Jerrilynn Dodds and Edward Grazda [Photographs]. *Ny Masjid: The Mosques of New York*. New York: powerHouse Books, 2002.

Final Exam: to be scheduled.