

Religious Architecture in Islamic Cultures

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Course Description:

This course introduces the history of Islamic cultures through their most vibrant material signs: their religious architecture that spans fourteen centuries and three continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe. It reviews a number of representative architectural examples (mosques, madrasas, mausolea, etc.) from various periods and places and discusses their architectural, urban, and stylistic characteristics in conjunction with their historical, political, and intellectual environments.

The course also analyzes the development of the sacred, commemorative, pious, and educational architecture in the Islamic world in light of a changing Islam from a reform movement in 7th-century Arabia to a global power straddling three continents in the medieval period to a world religion professed by one-sixth of humanity in the present. Films and discussions are used to elucidate the artistic/cultural varieties and historical developments of this architectural vision within both the Islamic and the larger, universal, and cross-cultural contexts.

Throughout the course, a number of critical issues will be considered: How do we define and/or qualify architecture? What is the relationship between architecture and culture? How do we study an architectural tradition that covers several regions and encompasses a variety of cultures and national and ethnic identities? And, what, if anything, is Islamic about this architecture, and how do we understand and describe vis-a-vis the global history of architecture?

BEGINNINGS

Religious architecture: Visual impressions and intellectual contours

Simple origins and influences of pre-Islamic traditions

Reading:

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

The life and message of the Prophet. 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.
- Hoag, *Introduction and Chapter 1: The Beginning of Islamic Architecture*.
- Ettinghausen and Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam*, 17-25.

Rituals of worship: The vocabulary of religious architecture

Reading:

- James Dickie, "Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas, and Tombs," in G. Michell, Architecture of the Islamic World, 65-79.
- A. B. Prochazka, Mosques, 16-25.
- Hourani, "Ways of Islam," 147-52; "The Articulation of Islam," 59-79.

General Background Reading:

- Arthur Jeffery, A reader on Islam: Selections from the Qur'an: 17-25; 49-62; 67-72.
- The Sira (Biography of the Prophet): 284-336; The Mantle Poem of al-Busiri: 605-20
- On the Merits of Mecca: 598-604.
- Karen Armstrong, Muhammad : a biography of the prophet.
- Nabia Abbott, Aishah: the beloved of Mohammed.
- Roy Mottahedeh, Loyalty and leadership in an early Islamic society, 6-39.

PAX ISLAMICA

The conquests and the adaptation of ancient motifs as assertive elements of a new faith. The First Islamic monument: the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Competing ideologies, myths, and world views.

Reading:

- Jeffery, "The Story of the Night Journey and the Ascension," 621-39.
- Hourani, "The Formation of an Empire," 22-37.
- Ettinghausen and Grabar, 26-34.
- Grabar, Formation, 45-67.
- Allan and Creswell, 19-40.

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

Reading:

- Ettinghausen and Grabar, 35-45.
- Allan and Creswell, 43-88.
- Hoag. Chapter 2. Umayyad architecture.
- Grabar. Formation, 104-38, "Islamic Religious Art: The Mosque."

The splendors of the Abbasids at Baghdad and Samarra. An Islamic architectural language: Monumentalizing the hypostyle type.

Reading:

- Ettinghausen and Grabar, 75-92
- Allan and Creswell, 359-76.
- Hoag. Chapter 3.

Religious monuments of the West: Ifriqiya and Spain. Imperial versus provincial expressions of power

Reading:

- Ettinghausen and Grabar, 92-105, 127-40.
- Allan and Creswell, 291-330, 391-406.
- Hoag. Chapters 4 & 5.
- Jerrilynn Dodds, "The Great Mosque of Cordoba," *Al-Andalus* , 11-25.

Fatimid Cairo: New traditions and old forms. Muqarnas: decorative purposes and symbolic meanings.

Reading:

- Wheeler Thackston, (trans.), Naser-e Khosraw's book of travels (*Safarnama*).
- Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture of Cairo*, 58-67.
- Ettinghausen and Grabar, 167-86.
- Hoag. Chapter 8.

Iran and Central Asia: developments on 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, 209-22.
- Hoag. Chapter 10: The Early Islamic Architecture of Persia.
- Kuban, *Muslim Religious Architecture*, 2: 27-33

FRAGMENTATION AND IMAGES OF UNITY

The Architecture of the Great Seljuqs: the four-iwan plan; from palatial to religious

Reading:

- Hoag. Chapter 11: The Seljuks.
- Ettinghausen and Grabar, 253-84.
- Mohammad al-Asad, "Applications of Geometry," in Frishman and Khan The mosque, 55-75

The architecture of the Sunni revival: Eastern influences and western traditions. The Introduction and spread of the Madrasa and the Khanqah

Reading:

- Hourani, "Ways of Islam," 147-57, and "The Culture of the ŒUlama," 158-66.
- Arthur Jeffery, A reader on Islam: " Sufism," 640-66.

Bibliography

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- Hillenbrand, Robert. *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning*. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 1994.
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- *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2d Edition, article "Masdjid," 6: 644-706.