AH 385-01 ISLAMIC ART AND CULTURE
SYLLABUS

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Office hours: By appointment

Class semester: Spring, 2008
Class credit: 3
Class time: Tuesday, 8:30 – 11:15 am
Class room: Goldstein 6

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS:

   a. Course Prerequisite:

      This course is open to any student, from any department, who has taken AH 191 and AH 192 or the equivalent.

   b. Course Description and Content:

      “Islamic Art and Culture” examines the formation and development of art and architecture in lands dominated by Islam. The inseparable link of Islamic art with its religious, historical and cultural contexts is explored through a variety of topics. These may include; architectural types, monuments, and the Aga Khan awards; creative geometry; mysticism, poetry and calligraphy; and the art of the book, including miniature painting.

   c. Course Objectives:

      The objectives of this course are twofold: first, to explore the governing principles behind the creation of masterworks of Islamic art and architecture dating from the seventh century until today, placing them in their cultural and artistic context; and the second, to translate the aesthetic systems characterizing Islamic art into a personal aesthetic which students can incorporate into their own studio art.

   d. Course Competencies:

      The competencies to be achieved in all Liberal Arts art history courses are addressed in both the conceptual and the practical framework of this course. Participation in art history courses will enable students to develop skills in critical thinking about issues of artistic context and discernment. Writing competencies will be addressed through the required course work.

2. WRITING AT RINGLING:

   a. In Liberal Arts Program courses at the Ringling College of Art and Design, all writing assignments (reports, quizzes, response papers, essays, essay questions on exams, research papers, etc.) are expected to be appropriately organized and coherent, and demonstrate a command of Standard English. Research should be consistently and appropriately documented in accordance with a prescribed format. For clarification of Standard English issues, and documentation formats, see Keys for Writers (Fourth Edition), by Ann Raimes.
b. Plagiarism Policy:

The intentional and/or unintentional use of another writer’s words, ideas, intellectual property or research, without showing proper credit (documentation of the source), is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is dishonest and illegal. Plagiarized assignments receive an F, and the guilty student could receive an F for the course. Writing Studio will cover the proper ways to document your work, giving credit where it is required, so you can avoid the crime (inadvertent or otherwise) of plagiarism.

3. COURSE CAUTIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS:

a. Course Cautions:

During the semester, there may be material discussed and/or illustrated which might be considered by some to have controversial, adult, or otherwise “politically incorrect” content. Art and ideas perceived as containing such content, however, are presented for their educational value, not for reasons of exploitation or confrontation.

b. Policy on Laptops and Other Equipment During Class Time:

The use of laptops, cell phones, and other mechanical/digital devices during the class period is not permitted. All electronic devices (notebooks, MP3s, cell phones, etc.) are to be turned OFF during art history classes. The only exception will be for the student/notetaker entering the current class lecture notes into his/her computer. For this purpose only, designated seating will be assigned by the instructor at the beginning of the semester. If you are anticipating an emergency phone call, please alert the instructor at the beginning of the class and turn your cell phone to the vibration mode. Otherwise, all cell phones must be turned OFF. Text messaging during class is not permitted for any reason.

c. Course Accommodations:

The Ringling College of Art and Design makes reasonable accommodations for qualified people with documented disabilities. If you have a learning disability, a chronic illness, or a physical or psychiatric disability that may have some impact on your work for this class and for which you may need accommodations, please notify the Director of Academic Resource Center (Virginia DeMers; second floor, Ulla Searing Student Center, room 227; 359-7627), preferably before the end of the drop/add period, so that appropriate adjustments can be made. The specific document guidelines essential to complete this process appear at www.arc.rsad.edu. Ms. DeMers will examine the documentation provided and, as indicated therein, write a letter listing the accommodation(s) needed, for you to give your instructors.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Ringling College of Art and Design is committed to providing students, faculty, and staff with a safe and healthful learning and work environment and to comply with all applicable safety laws and regulations and safe work practices.

5. COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

a. The required texts are in paperback and available in the campus bookstore. Please bring the texts to each class.

1) N.I. Matar, ISLAM FOR BEGINNERS

2) Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, ISLAMIC ARTS

Copies of the required texts are on reserve in the Library.
1) Other Materials:
   Supplementary reading material is available on Reference and Open Reserve shelves in the Kimbrough Library.

c. For many classes, you will bring print-outs or Xeroxes of certain subjects, as per syllabus #7, Course Schedule. This material is to be assembled in a Course notebook, together with class hand-outs. Bring this notebook, organized by course week, to each class.

6. COURSE WORK AND GRADING POLICY:
   a. Attendance:
      Regular and timely class attendance is MANDATORY. Continual lateness will affect grade. Pick up your folder from the box when you enter the classroom, and hand it back at the end of class. Do NOT write on the attendance sheet stapled to your folder; only the instructor will make entries on the attendance sheet.
      Class absences may be excused for reasons of health, family emergencies or legal requirements; however, a note from a doctor or the office of the Dean of Students is required to gain excused absences. There is only ONE unexcused absence allowed in this advanced class. Each unexcused absence thereafter lowers your final grade by one-half of a letter grade. Students are responsible for material presented in each class as well as any outside work required for each class.

   b. Required Work:
      1) Completion of all required readings, and meaningful class participation based on the readings.

      2) There will be two quizzes. These are non-cumulative, and are in the form of standard art history quizzes. They may include identification of selected works of art, their periods and styles, as well as discussion of important terms and concepts. SLD students may have tests read to them. The two quizzes are scheduled as follows:
         First quiz: week six (2/12/08)       Second quiz: week twelve (4/8/08)

      3) One course project (See “d” below,) due no later than week fourteen (4/22/08).

   c. Course Grade:
      1) Regular and timely class attendance and participation.
      2) Two quizzes  [30% each, total of 60% of grade].
      3) Course project or paper  [30% of grade].
      4) Course notebook  [10% of grade].
d. Course project or paper (choose one of the following):

1) Create a work of art which is demonstrably Islamic in its style but reflects your particular interests or major (or both). The technique, the inspiration and the success of the work should be discussed in a two page, computer-generated, spell-checked, literate, and well-organized paper accompanying the work of art. Full citations of sources are essential, as is consultation with the instructor before the project has begun.

2) Construct an illustrated paper on one specific aspect of Islamic art; this may include a modern artist, a particular design, a specific major building, or other, upon consultation with instructor. Full citations of sources are essential; and the four page paper must be computer-generated, spell-checked, literate, and well-organized.

7. COURSE SCHEDULE (Tentative) AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Note: Most classes will include one video or DVD as well as class lectures and discussion. There also may be outside speakers, depending on their availability, so this schedule may be adjusted during the semester. The quiz and course project/paper due dates, however, are fixed.

**Week One (1/8/08) Introduction to subject**

Read through Syllabus.
General assessment of knowledge of subject.
Introduction of useful websites.
Introduction to the basic history and principles of Islam.

**Week Two (1/15/08) The Historic and Geographic Background**

Continue discussion of the founders, the principles and practices, the texts and the languages associated with early Islam, and determine how they influence Islamic art.

Reading: Matar: pp. 1-63
Bloom/Blair: pp. 5-11, 14-20

Log on to [www.lacma.org/islamic_art/intro.htm](http://www.lacma.org/islamic_art/intro.htm) [hereafter LACMA website], print out the following information and bring to class in course notebook: **Introduction** and **Glossary**.

**Week Three (1/22/08) The Architecture of Islam**

Major forms, principles of plans and design, requirements for religious use, patronage, calligraphic enhancement.

Reading: Matar: pp. 67-81, 186
Bloom/Blair: pp. 23-56

Search websites and reference books for history and style of the Dome of the Rock; bring print-outs to class, in course notebook.
Week Four (1/29/08)  Islamic Calligraphy

The tools and styles of calligraphy, its practitioners, and the aesthetics and power of the written word.

Reading:  Matar: pp. 82-89
           Bloom/Blair: pp. 58-78

Log on to the Metropolitan Museum website (www.metmuseum.org); the “Timeline of Art History” contains links to Thematic Essays on Islamic art: Islamic Art/The Nature of Islamic Art/Calligraphy, or LACMA website: Islamic Art/Calligraphy and Books/Manuscripts/Albums (Note: when the LACMA website is cited below, there may also be a Metropolitan Museum selection which would be equally as appropriate and could be substituted.); bring to class in course notebook.

Week Five (2/5/08)  The Early Dynasties

Focus on the early years, traveling west from Damascus and Baghdad to Spain.

Reading:  Matar: pp. 90-109
           Bloom/Blair: pp. 81-98, 101-127, 141-145

From the LACMA website, print out Early Islamic Period and Early Medieval Period; bring to class in course notebook. Find information on 8th century Baghdad; bring to class in course notebook.

Week Six (2/12/08)  FIRST QUIZ

The quiz covers class materials and reading from Weeks One through Five. It includes identification of important terms, personalities, and masterworks of art and architecture. You should be able to draw a plan of a typical mosque and identify its parts.

DVD/Videos after quiz.

Week Seven (2/26/08)  The Medieval Period, Turks and Mongols

Moving from Western Islam into Turkey, Persia and points east, with focus on architectural masterpieces, miniature painting and Sufism.

Reading:  Matar: pp. 110-137
           Bloom/Blair: pp. 130-138, 146-188

From the LACMA website, print out notes on Late Medieval Period; bring to class in course notebook.

Week Eight (3/11/08)  Later Painting and Decorative Arts

Reading:  Bloom/Blair: pp. 192-220, 222-246, 249-283, 362-383, 390-413

From the LACMA website, print out notes on Late Islamic Period; bring to class in course notebook.
Week Nine (3/18/08)  The Safavid Dynasty - Mature Persian Illustration

Reading:  Bloom/Blair: pp. 286-294, 302-321, 331-342

Week Ten (3/25/08)  The Ottoman Empire

Study of the distinct style of this great empire, its patrons, and characteristic art and architectural forms.

Reading:  Matar: pp. 138-145
           Bloom/Blair: pp. 295-302

From websites and books, gather information on the illustrations of the Shahnameh; bring to class in course notebook.

Week Eleven (4/1/08)  The Mughal Empire

Study of the borrowed and individual styles of this great empire, its patrons, and characteristic art and architectural forms.

Reading:  Matar: pp. 146-151
           Bloom/Blair: pp. 321-328, 342-360

Research the Taj Mahal; bring print-outs to class in course notebook.

Week Twelve (4/8/08)  SECOND QUIZ

The quiz covers class materials and readings from Weeks Seven through Eleven. It includes identification of important terms, ideas, personalities, and masterworks of art and architecture.

Discuss course project, due in two weeks.

Week Thirteen (4/15/08)  Colonialization and the Rise of Modern Islamic Art

The fall of empires, the rise of European influence, “Orientalism”, and Islamic responses.

Reading:  Matar: pp. 152-164
           Bloom/Blair: pp. 416-422

From the Metropolitan Museum website’s Thematic Essays on Islamic Art, print out “Orientalism in the 19th Century” and bring to class in course notebook.

Week Fourteen (4/22/08)  Contemporary Art and Architecture

COURSE PROJECT or PAPER DUE

Log on to the Aga Khan Architectural Award website (www.akdn.org/agency/aktc_akaa.html); find the purpose of this award and the types of winners; bring to class in course notebook.

Find websites with information on contemporary Arab or Persian artists; bring to class in course notebook.

Week Fifteen (4/29/08)  Return of all work.