

4.614

**Religious Architecture  
and  
Islamic Cultures**

F A L L 2 0 1 0

This course introduces the history of Islamic cultures through its architecture. Religious, commemorative, and educational structures are surveyed from the beginning of Islam in 7th-century Arabia to its developing into a world religion professed by one-sixth of humanity today. The survey is chronological with emphasis on distinguished patrons, influential thinkers, and outstanding designers. Representative 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.

Visual media are used to elucidate the artistic/cultural varieties and historical developments of this architectural heritage. Students are encouraged to raise questions and generate debates during the 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 and cross-cultural 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.

**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.

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

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

**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.

**DAY:** Tuesday & Thursday

**TIME:** 2:00 - 3:30

**ROOM:** 5-216

**INSTRUCTOR:** Nasser Rabbat

**LEVEL & UNITS:** U, HASS/D-A, 3-0-9

PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR