

4.614

Religious Architecture and Islamic Cultures

FALL 2011

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| DAY: | M & W |
| TIME: | 2:00-3:30 |
| ROOM: | 3-133 |
| INSTRUCTOR: | Christian Hedrick |
| E MAIL: | chedrick@mit.edu |
| LEVEL: | H |
| UNITS: | 3-0-9 or 3-0-6 |



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.

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