

# 4.619

## HISTORIOGRAPHY of ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE



FALL 2014 - DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE - MIT

This course is required for all AKPIA SMarchS students.

This seminar offers a critical review of scholarship on Islamic architecture through close reading of scholarly texts, museum exhibitions, and architectural projects. It also tackles methodological and historiographical questions about the field's formation, genealogy, recent expansion, and its evolving historical and theoretical contours. First is how can we study a culturally defined architectural tradition like Islamic architecture without reducing it to essential and timeless categories? Second, how can we critique the dominant Western architectural paradigm without discarding the idea of paradigm or turning away from its comparative examples? Third, how can we rethink periodization in Islamic architectural history in a more internally

representative way without cutting it off from a global historical framework? And fourth how can we reclaim the assumed temporal boundaries of Islamic architecture—Late Antiquity as a predecessor and Modernism as a successor—as constitutive forces in its evolution?

The course includes weekly reading and writing assignments and requires preparation of and participation in discussions. A research paper is to be first presented in class and then submitted at the end of the term. Topics may be in-depth studies of texts, representations, architectural project, or scholarly traditions within the field. An abstract and preliminary bibliography should be submitted by the fourth week. No text is required for the seminar. All assigned readings will be available on the Stellar Site.

### Suggested Texts:

The articles in the special issue of the Journal of Art Historiography on Islamic art historiography <http://arthistoriography.wordpress.com/> Number 6 June 2012

Oleg Grabar: *The Formation of Islamic Art*. Yale University Press, 1973, 1987 2nd ed.

Terry Allen. *Five Essays in Islamic Architecture*. Solipsist Press, 1988

Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival*. University of Washington Press: 2001

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

### Background Text:

Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* 3 vols. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974.

### INSTRUCTOR:

Nasser Rabbat

### TIME:

T 2:00-5:00

### ROOM:

5-216

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