
MIT

SPRING 2003

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

4.630

TIME: Tuesdays 2-5, 5-216
INSTRUCTOR: Heghnar Watenpaugh
<heghnar@mit.edu>
TA: TBA
UNITS: H, 3-0-9

TOPICS IN ISLAMIC AND NON-WESTERN ARCHITECTURE:
TEXTS AND CONTEXTS OF PRE-MODERN ARCHITECTURE

This seminar studies the contexts of the production of architecture and urbanism in Islamic societies in the late pre-modern period (ca. 1550-1850) and the texts in which they are represented, with special attention to the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal states. What were the contexts of the practice of architecture in the pre-modern era? What are the texts that describe, represent, and assign social meaning to architecture and urbanism? The texts examined include architectural treatises, biographies of famous architects, legal documents relating to buildings and their functions, descriptions of buildings and cities in travelogues, histories and poetry. How do these texts participate in the era's significant developments including technological and religious innovation, and cultural and commercial interconnections in the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. We will also examine depictions of cities and architecture, both in illustrated manuscripts and in wall painting. A related concern of the seminar will be a critical look at how contemporary scholars have themselves represented/debated these issues.

