FAH 21/121 (REL 23/121): Early Islamic Art, 690-1250
Spring 2015
Tues./Thurs. 4:30-5:45
Aidekman Arts Center, Room 12
Instructor: Jennifer Lyons
Office: 11 Talbot Ave., #205
Office Hours: Thurs. 2-3 PM
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Course Description: A survey of visual arts in Muslim lands from Central Asia to Spain between the seventh and thirteenth centuries, emphasizing the role of arts in the formation and expression of cultural identity. We will explore painting, sculpture, and architecture, as well as portable arts including ceramics, ivory, metalwork, and illuminated manuscripts. We will engage with topics including the uses of figural and non-figural imagery, calligraphy and ornament, religious and secular art, public and private art, the art of the court, the art of the urban middle class, as well as the status, function, and meaning of the portable arts.

Learning Objectives:
Students will gain an understanding of the visual arts produced in Islamic lands between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. In addition, the course aims to improve students’ abilities to read actively and to think critically about the readings covered over the course of the semester. Students will also sharpen their powers of visual analysis by engaging with images through slow and careful looking. In addition, students will develop and practice the ability to present their research in oral and written forms.

Requirements and Assignments:
- Attendance and class participation [10%]
- 6 short response papers [15%]
  - These goal of these short essays is to encourage you to read actively and to prepare you to contribute to class discussions. These papers should be 1-2 pages in length and double spaced (in the neighborhood of 350 words). Please DO NOT turn in a summary of the article. Please DO analyze the author's approach to the subject, raise further questions, and cite specific examples from the reading and class lectures. PAPERS WILL BE COLLECTED AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS IN HARD COPY ONLY. Late papers will not be accepted. These short papers will be graded on a check system and the lowest grade will be dropped.
- Midterm Exam (2/26) [25%]
- Research Project (2 parts):
Virtual Exhibition (4/7 & 4/9) [10%]: You will work in small groups to curate a virtual exhibition of Islamic Art to be presented in class in April. Each student will choose one work of art to research and present to class as part of your exhibition. Detailed instructions will be handed out in a few weeks.

Research paper (due 4/14) [20%]: Each student will write 6-8 page independently researched paper (100-level students 8-10) on the object you have chosen for your exhibition.

- Take-Home Final Exam (due 5/5 by 5pm) [20%]

Course Materials:
- Additional readings will be available via Dropbox link.
- Images covered in lecture will be available on Trunk.
- Library Research Page: [http://www.library.tufts.edu/tisch/tutorials/earlyIslamicArt.html](http://www.library.tufts.edu/tisch/tutorials/earlyIslamicArt.html)

Course Policies:
- More than three unexcused absences or excessive lateness will result in a lower grade for the course.
- Late work will not be accepted unless the student arranges for an extension prior to the due date.
- Except in special circumstances in which you have received prior permission from me, assignments should be submitted in hard copy.
- Make-up exams will be given only in the case of documented illness or emergency.
- Please be courteous to your neighbors and do not use your phone in class to text or check the internet. If you would like to use your laptop to take notes during class you may, but please use it responsibly and either disable access to the internet or refrain from surfing the web, as this is a big distraction for your neighbors and your instructor.

Special Needs:
Students requiring academic accommodations for a documented disability should register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and contact the instructor to discuss the implementation of their accommodations.

Academic Integrity:
It is your responsibility to follow the guidelines of academic integrity, as outlined in the Tufts University Student Affairs Handbook. Academic dishonesty including plagiarism will result in a failing grade in the course.
Schedule of Classes:

**Week 1**
Thurs., 1/15  Course Introductions

**Week 2**
Tues., 1/20  Pre-Islamic Contexts: The Late-Antique Mediterranean and Sasanian Lands
Thurs., 1/22  The Function of Images in the Byzantine and Sasanian Empires
**DUE:** Response Paper #1

**Week 3**
Tues., 1/27  The Rise of Islam/Umayyad Art: The Dome of the Rock
**Read:** Islamic Art and Architecture, 3-20
Thurs., 1/29  The Dome of the Rock
**Due:** Response Paper #2

**Week 4**
Tues., 2/3  The Congregational Mosque: Form and Function/The Great Mosque of Damascus
**Read:** Islamic Art and Arch., 20-35; 83-91; 105-116; 139-60
Thurs., 2/5  The Congregational Mosque: The Great Mosque of Cordoba
**Due:** Response Paper #3

**Week 5**
Tues., 2/10  Umayyad Palace Estates: The Private Sphere
**Read:** Islamic Art and Arch., 36-51
Thurs., 2/12  Umayyad Palace Estates, Cont./ The Abbasid Palace-City of Baghdad
**Due:** Response Paper #4
**Week 6**

Tues., 2/17  The Abbasid City of Samarra: The Great Mosque and Stucco Ornament  
**Read:** Islamic Art and Arch., 50-73.

Thurs., 2/19  **No Class (Monday Schedule)**

**Week 7**

Tues., 2/24  Calligraphy and the Art of the Book  

Thurs., 2/26  **Midterm Exam**

**Week 8**

Tues., 3/3  Fatimid Art in Egypt  
**Read:** Islamic Art and Arch., 200-213.

Thurs., 3/5  Exhibition Planning (Bring your laptop to class if you have one!)  
**Due:** Exhibition themes and Paper topics due by the end of class.

**Week 9**

Tues., 3/10  Luxury Arts of Al-Andalus  
**Due:** Response Paper #5

Thurs., 3/12  Meet in the library with Art History Librarian Chao Chen in the Tisch Research Center for a hands-on research session.

**Week 10**

Tues., 3/17  **No Class (Spring Break)**

Thurs., 3/19  **No Class (Spring Break)**

**Week 11**


Thurs., 3/26 Artistic Interchange in the Mediterranean: Egypt, Spain, and Norman Sicily
Due: Response paper #6

Week 12
Tues., 3/31 Islamic Metalwork
Read: Islamic Art and Arch., 165-171

Thurs., 4/2 Art of Mesopotamia and Syria: Inlaid Metalwork of the Thirteenth Century
Read: Islamic Art and Arch., 243-255

Week 13
Tues., 4/7 Presentations

Thurs., 4/9 Presentations

Week 14
Tues., 4/14 Illuminated Manuscripts: The Maqamat of Al-Hariri and the Kalila wa Dimna
Due: Research papers due at the beginning of class.

Thurs., 4/16 Illuminated Manuscripts, Cont.: The Persian Epic: The Shahnama

Week 15
Tues., 4/21 Nasrid Spain: The Alhambra

Thurs., 4/23 The Alhambra, Cont./Course Conclusions
Take-Home Final Essay handed out in class

Take-Home Final Exam due Tuesday, May 5 by 5PM