Art 494/591: Seminar in Islamic Art and Architecture
Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00PM-5:20PM. FAC 156
Professor Guy Jordan, FAC 413, phone: (270) 745-8865, email: guy.jordan@wku.edu
(note: I check my email more often than I check my voice mail)
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 8AM-12:30PM, or by appointment.

Summary
Students taking this course will gain a working knowledge of the formation and
development of Islam and its art forms from its beginnings in 622 through the present
day. The course will emphasize productive zones of interchange between Islamic and
non-Islamic societies, and the ways that Islamic art drew upon and/or subsequently
influenced Sassanian, Helleno-Byzantine, Central Asian, African, Chinese, Indian,
Southeast Asian, and Medieval Christian cultures.

Required Reading
Textbooks:
Richard Ettinghausen et. al., The Art and Architecture of Islam, 650-1250 (New Haven
and

Both textbooks are available at the WKU Campus Book Store in the Downing University
Center. All other required readings will either be posted on Blackboard or distributed in
class.

Grading
Three unannounced quizzes – 25%
Midterm (Oct 19) – 25%
Reading Journals (Due Friday, Nov 30) – 25%
Final Exam (date TBD) – 25%

Quizzes are short and objective (matching or multiple choice), and test basic factual
knowledge of topics covered in class.

The midterm and final exam are comprised of two parts: an identification section and a
comparative essay. Identification questions present you with images artworks covered
in class and require you to provide their names, dates, makers (if known), places of
origin, and a short paragraph or list of bullet points explaining their historical
significance. The comparative essay will present you with two images at once. After
identifying each (name, maker, date, place), you will be required to write an essay
comparing and contrasting the two artworks with an attention to their formal
characteristics and historical significance.
Reading Journal: For each assigned article, students must write a 300 word summary and critical response. [Note: this only applies to articles, not to readings from the two textbooks.] Although the journal is not due until Friday, November 30th, you should be writing them throughout the semester. This will not only save you a massive headache induced by sleeplessness during the week after Thanksgiving, but will also ensure that you are ready and able to intelligently discuss the readings as they are assigned. Your journal will then function as a useful document that summarizes a set of important articles on Islamic art that you can refer back to in the future should you decide to go on to graduate school and do further research. As you write your journal entries, keep the following questions in mind: What is the author’s thesis? What is he or she arguing? What evidence does the author use to support this argument? Is the argument convincing? Why or why not?

Other Activities
While I have not received any final information about this yet, I am planning an optional field trip to the Islamic Center of Bowling Green, Kentucky. Stay tuned for further details as they become available.

Students with Disabilities
In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center, A-200. The phone number is 270 745 5004. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Plagiarism and Cheating
If you plagiarize or cheat in this class, you will receive an F for the course, and will be referred to the university administration for further disciplinary action.

According to WKU:
“To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one’s own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism.” “No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment, or other project that is submitted for purposes of grade determination.”

Do not even think about cheating or plagiarizing in this class – I will catch you.

Academic Assistance
As your professor, I am personally invested in your growth as a student. If you are having
trouble with any of the concepts or material covered in the course, you are welcome and encouraged to stop by my office (FAC 413) at any time during my office hours (Tuesdays, 8AM-12:30PM). If you can’t make it then, please call or email me and I’ll be happy to schedule an appointment with you at a different time. Also, for writing assistance, help with study skills, note-taking, and a myriad of other academic assistance services, please visit The Learning Center (TLC) (located in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DUC-A330). TLC tutors in most major undergraduate subjects and course levels throughout the week. To make an appointment, or to request a tutor for a specific class, call 745-6254 or stop by DUC A330. Log on to TLC’s website at www.wku.edu/tlc to find out more. TLC hours: M-Thur. 8am-9pm, Fri. 8am-4pm, Sat.-Closed, and Sundays 4pm-9pm.

Class Schedule

M Aug 27 – Introduction to the Course

W Aug 29 – The Matrix of Islamic Art

M Sep 3 – LABOR DAY [No Class]

W Sep 5 – The Dome of the Rock

M Sep 10 – Early Congregational Mosques

W Sep 12 – Wine, Women, and Song: Umayyad Palaces
Readings: Ettinghausen, 36-51

M Sep 17 – The Age of Harun al-Rashid: Abassid Baghdad

W Sep 19 – Center and Periphery: Abassid Architecture in Egypt and Persia
Readings: Ettinghausen, 30-36, 105-110

M Sep 24 – Metalwork, Ceramics, and Textiles in the 10th and 11th Centuries
Readings: Ettinghausen, 59-79, 116-130

W Sep 26 – Early Islamic Calligraphy and Arts of the Book

M Oct 1 – The Splendor of al-Andalus: The Umayyads in Spain

M Oct 8 – Fatimid Cario and Sicily: The Shi’ite Aesthetic  

W Oct 10 – Syria and Turkey in the 13th Century: The Calm Before the Storm  

M Oct 15 – Discussion and Review

W Oct 17 – MIDTERM

M Oct 22 – The Mongol Invasions and the Transformation of Islamic Culture  
Readings: Blair & Bloom, 1-35.

W Oct 24 – The Timurids  

M Oct 29 – The Mamluks in Egypt and Syria  

W Oct 31 – The Alhambra: Mysticism, Abstraction, and Islamic Art  

M Nov 5 – The Early Ottomans  

W Nov 7 – The Ottomans after 1453  
Readings: Blair & Bloom, 213-250.


W Nov 14 – Safavid Architecture  
Readings: Blair & Bloom, 163-198.
M Nov 19 – THANKSGIVING BREAK [No Class]

W Nov 21 – Safavid Painting

M Nov 26 – The Appropriation of Islam in European Visual Culture

W Nov 28 – The Mughal Empire in India

M Dec 3 – Islamic Art Now. Case Study: Shirin Neshat

W Dec 5 – Discussion and Review
[JOURNALS DUE]

December 10-14 – Final Exam Week [Date and Time of Final Exam TBD]