ISLAMIC VISUAL CULTURES (CI/DHA)

ARTH 3630 SPRING 2016 TUESDAY/THURSDAY, 10:30-11:45 AM, ENGR 104

Professor Alexa Sand
alexa.sand@usu.edu
Office: FAV112
Hours: Mondays 1-3 pm, Thursdays 9-10 am, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers the art produced in regions under Islamic rule, where Islam was the majority religion, from about 600-1300. It combines lecture, discussion, and research to explore the relationships between the various cultural traditions that shaped the visual arts of the period in regions ranging from Iberia to Central Asia. This semester, we will focus on the theme of fashion: how did local and broader histories, ethnic identities, encounters with others through war and through trade, and economics shape the artistic products of early Islamic societies in Mesopotamia, Central Asia, North Africa, and Iberia? What role did tradition play, versus innovation, in artistic workshops? And how did fashion give people a medium for expressing their own place within society and in the divine order of things? Coursework includes extensive reading of primary sources in translation as well as scholarship in the field, formal and informal writing assignments, small research projects, oral presentations, and two essay-based exams.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND IDEA OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives for this course are

1. To build your knowledge of the range of artistic forms, styles, and iconographies of art in the early Islamic world in their historical contexts
2. To strengthen your written and oral communications skills, particularly in regard to the critical analysis of visual works and the comprehension and integration of scholarly perspectives
3. To introduce you to the methods of research and criticism that form the basis for the discipline of art history

The correspond to the following IDEA objectives

1. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual-cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)
8. Developing skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing
9. Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Attendance is required. If you know in advance that you are going to miss a class meeting, please notify me by e-mail and I will give you make-up work. I cannot give make-up work AFTER the missed class. If you miss class due to an emergency, you may contact me to see about make-up work, but the work must be made up in no more than 5 days from the missed class.

Students who miss more than three classes, excused or otherwise, work made up or otherwise, for any reason will receive an automatic full letter-grade reduction (e.g. from A to B). Students who miss more than five classes for any reason other than major medical issues (documented), will receive an F for the course.

Every day that you attend you are expected to participate actively in class, meaning taking notes, speaking up in discussion, and demonstrating that you are prepared and engaged. Students who do not participate will receive only half credit for attendance for that day.

PREPARATION (READING AND NOTE-TAKING)

In order to participate fully in the class and to achieve the learning objectives articulated above, you need to come prepared to class. This means

- Always do the assigned reading for a given day BEFORE class – do not wait until a few hours before class to figure out what the reading is and to make a single, glancing pass through it.
- PRINT OUT any assigned articles or texts IN PAPER FORM and make handwritten notes, underlinings, etc. Only PRINTED and MARKED UP copies of these texts will be allowed to be used on exam days.
- Look up unfamiliar terms that you encounter in the reading. Make note of questions or confusions that arise for you during reading.
- Take notes: you will be allowed to bring only HANDWRITTEN class and reading notes into the exams.

WRITING

This course is designated CI, or communication-intensive. According to the USU Educational Policy Committee’s official guidelines, “The purpose of Communication Intensive courses is to help students achieve proficiency in both written and oral communication,” and must “Require a significant quantity of oral and written communication as demonstrated by outcomes, assignments, and assessment in the course.” Furthermore, there must be opportunity for “continued improvement through opportunities for revision, and/or multiple assignments.”

Accordingly we will regularly practice both oral and written communication skills. Writing assignments include

- Weekly reading-responses (online, viewable by all course members, open to comment)
- In-class informal writing (think, pair, share exercises)
- Two essays of 1000-1500 words, each of which will go through a draft review with the Writing Fellows program (see below)

ORAL COMMUNICATION
In addition to regular contributions to class discussion (mentioned under Attendance and Participation), you will be giving several short presentations in class.

**RESEARCH**

Research is a component of both essay assignments, but you will also do a number of smaller research-related assignments throughout the semester. The research skills we will be building through these exercises include

- Responding to and clarifying research questions
- Finding and generating needed information
- Evaluating and reflecting on sources and the research process
- Organizing and managing information and the process of analysis
- Analyzing and synthesizing information
- Communicating and applying research findings

You may imagine that “research” is something scientists do at a bench in the lab, but in fact a whole variety of activities fall under this term, including the work of visual analysis undertaken in an art history class.

**EXAMS**

The mid-term and final exams for this class are both essay-based, open note exams; you will take them in class, but you may submit them electronically if you choose to do so (that is, you may bring a laptop). I especially appreciate typed essays from students whose handwriting is poor or illegible.

Both exams will involve a choice of essay questions based on readings, discussions, lectures, and other class activities. The final is not cumulative, but only covers the material from the second half of the semester. Essay responses should be between 800-1000 words if you choose to answer one question, 400-500 words if you choose to answer two questions.

**GRADING**

Attendance and participation: 20%

Writing (formal and informal): 45%

Oral communication (formal and informal): 20%

Exams: 15%

All assignments have a grade-rubric attached in Canvas, which you can look at before you even complete the assignment. Generally, if it is a writing-based assignment, the categories of assessment relate to content (consistency of argument, use of evidence, rigor of research and critical thinking) and form (clarity of writing, correct use of vocabulary, proper English usage, spelling, grammar, etc.).

Each assignment receives a grade in points based on a standard USU letter grade format, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A*</td>
<td>100% to 94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>&lt;77% to 74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A-  <94% to 90%  C-  <74% to 70%
B+  <90% to 87%  D+  <70% to 67%
B  <87% to 84%  D*  <67% to 60%
B-  <84% to 80%  F  <60%
C+  <80% to 77%  *USU does not recognize A+ or D- as grades.

You can check Canvas any time to see what assignments you have completed and turned in and to check on whether they have been graded yet. For longer assignments, please allow up to 3 weeks for a grade to post, though I will usually get to it much sooner than that.

For details relating the grading of individual assignments, see the associated Rubrics and the assignment instructions

COURSE POLICIES

LATE AND MISSING WORK

ALL work must be turned in by the due date and time indicated in the course schedule. Canvas will alert me when you make a late submission and I will deduct 10% from your grade per day, up to three days. Thereafter, no credit is available unless you have arranged an extension with me PRIOR TO the initial due date. In exceptional circumstances, I may offer make-up work, but this is on a case-by-case basis and must be arranged at your initiative, as in, you must come to my office hours to explain why you should receive special treatment.

You will not pass the class if you fail complete major assignments such as papers and presentations.

WRITING FELLOWS

This class has been selected to participate in a special College of Humanities and Social Sciences program designed to help students develop their writing skills with the help of specially trained fellow students.

Here's how the program works: for the two longer writing assignments in our syllabus, you will first submit a good draft to me (online) for your WF. He or she will write comments on the paper, which will then be discussed during a conference between you and the WF. These comments will raise questions, suggest changes, and provide you with a valuable resource for revising your material for the final draft. You will then submit both the original draft (with the WF's comments) and the final paper to me. If the WF makes comments on your online draft, you do not need to submit a paper copy with comments.

The WF will not grade your papers. His/her responsibility is to act as a reader--to make suggestions; you are still ultimately responsible for evaluating these suggestions, revising the draft, and putting it in its final form.

Students working in the WF program were nominated by faculty and come from a variety of majors. They have in common excellent writing skills plus a willingness to work closely with other students. In addition, they enroll in a special seminar that focuses on the theory, practice, and teaching of writing. These WFs can help you improve the clarity and precision of your writing.
As assignment deadlines near, you will be given a sign-up sheet for arranging your individual conference. Keeping in mind the following guidelines will be helpful:

1. Think of the first submission of an assignment as if it were a final product. Papers should be typed (preferably word-processed), doubled-spaced, and complete. They should not be rough drafts but the best work that you can do. It is at this point that real revision can begin.

2. Assignments must be submitted on time as no extensions can be granted. I will collect and distribute them to the WFs.

3. Final papers to be evaluated will not be accepted unless accompanied by the original draft and the WF’s comments.

4. Please note the time and place of your conference; remember that your WF is a student like yourself with busy schedules.

Your evaluation and ideas for improvement will be appreciated. You can relay your concerns to me at any time during the semester or speak to the WF director, Julie Foust Andrew (797-3648; Julie.foust@usu.edu). At the end of the term, you will be asked to fill out a formal evaluation.

Our writing fellows are

Shantae Hill: shantaehill718@gmail.com and http://www.usu.edu/raprogram/currentwfs/shantaehill.html

Jess Morrill: jess.morrill16@gmail.com and http://www.usu.edu/raprogram/currentwfs/jessmorrill.html

EXTRA CREDIT

There is no extra credit regularly scheduled. If something comes up, I will make an announcement.

ELECTRONICS

I STRONGLY encourage you to take notes by hand while in class. Many studies have shown that students retain information markedly better when they take and review handwritten notes. However, if you are for some reason unable to take notes by hand, you may use a laptop or tablet computer in class for the purpose of taking notes (not for consulting assigned readings, which must be brought to class in print form). Any other use of your laptop, tablet, or handheld device (aka your mobile phone) will be noted and I will confiscate your device for the remainder of the class period; you may retrieve it after class. This is embarrassing for everyone involved, so please do not make it happen. If you are found to be repeatedly using your device to text, check Facebook, shop online, etc, further consequences may involve a penalty of points, exclusion from class meetings with no possibility of making up missed work or points, referral to the appropriate disciplinary bodies, or expulsion from the class. Please turn off the ringer on your phone and the sound on your tablet or laptop during class, and if it helps you maintain focus, disable any text or e-mail notifications. Really. This is about respect for your own learning and for that of others around you.

SYLLABUS
This syllabus is a guide and every attempt is made to provide an accurate overview of the course. However, circumstances and events may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester and may depend, in part, on the progress, needs, and experiences of the students. Changes to the syllabus will be made with advance notice, but it is your responsibility to attend class where such notice would be given.

Legal Notices

**Americans with Disabilities & Non-Discrimination**

The Americans with Disabilities act states: “Reasonable accommodation will be provided for all persons with disabilities in order to ensure equal participation within the program.” If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center (797-2444), preferably during the first week of the course. Any request for special consideration relating to attendance, pedagogy, taking of examinations, etc., must be discussed with and approved by the instructor. In cooperation with the Disability Resource Center, course materials can be provided in alternative format, large print, audio, diskette, or Braille.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism includes knowingly “representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one’s own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgement (sic?). It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials” (Code of Policies and Procedures for Students, Article V, Section 3A.1). The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include “#1) warning or reprimand and #2) grade adjustment” (see: Article VI, Section 1A): Other penalties may also be imposed at the Dean’s discretion. These include probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, referral to psychological counseling, and other appropriate disciplinary actions.

**Inclusion**

No student is permitted to create a threatening, intimidating, or harassing environment in this course. Classroom civility is a part of the Student Code, and infractions will be pursued through the Student Conduct Coordinator. This course will be conducted in a safe and tolerant environment, and any person who detracts from that environment will be instructed to leave without the ability to make up coursework.

**Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined by the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as any "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." If you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Office located in Old Main, Room 161, or call the AA/EEO Office at 797-1266.