

Course Syllabus

[Jump to Today](#)

Columbia University, GSAPP – Fall 2018 Seminar **A6806**

BUILDING ISLAM, a brief history of the Mosque architecture.

Ziad Jamaledine – **L.E.FT**

Building Islam is not about Islamic buildings, nor is it an attempt at forming a comprehensive history of the built environment of the Islamic world. Instead the class aims to critically re-formulate (re-build) the field of historical inquiry into the architecture of the mosque - the most religious 'Islamic' architectural type.

We will pursue this objective through two parallel and simultaneous methods:

- 1) The class will start by studying the historiography of 'Islamic Architecture'*— the production of knowledge and the formation of the discipline through established (academic and cultural) theoretical narratives. We will critically unpack the 'Orientalist' roots of this field of thought, which provide an all-encompassing meta-narrative. This deterministic framework, pioneered by early Orientalist travelers and experts, understood the architecture of the mosque typologically or stylistically, through dynastic periodization (abruptly ending in the 18th century) or through a medieval historical lens— denying the discipline from the project of 'modernity'.
- 2) In parallel, the class will study and analyze, through an illustrated paper, a series of 'modern' and contemporary mosques from the 20th and 21st centuries. Each case study will produce its own constellation of relevant historical knowledge - layered into the drawings - which will include: the Social (stakeholders, users, gender issues, etc.), the Urban (physical evolution, property ownership, etc.), the Political (questions of representation and symbolism, etc.), the Economic (funding, Waqf and other economic support for the institution, etc.), the Environmental (consumption of resources, building performance, etc.) as well as the spatial agendas mobilized by architects during specific architectural historical periods.

The seminar seeks to contextualize these buildings and (re)learn them in light of this uncovered knowledge. The research conducted during the seminar will build upon contemporary academic discourses in the field of 'Islamic architecture' that aim to break free from the previous fixed and singular understanding of the mosque typology in favor of a dynamic theoretical framework.

Building is an opposite and complementary act to destroying. Because dynasties are frequently built on the destruction of their predecessors, we will seek to learn about the monuments that have been altered, transformed or erased in the name of God. Here, the mosque typologies alterations, transformations and destructions, are equally integrated as the act of building into the larger history of the evolution of the mosque.

* See Nasser Rabbat, *Islamic Architecture as a field of Historical Enquiry*

DATE READING

Week 1 10-Sep Intro / Class Structure

I – HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

Week 2 17-Sep Lecture: Historical Survey of Islamic Architecture

- x Robert Hillenbrand, "Islamic Architecture", *The Mosque* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1978)
- x Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan, "Islam and the Form of the Mosque", *The Mosque* (The American University of Beirut Press, Beirut, 1978)
- x Nasser Rabbat, "Surveying Islamic Art and Architecture", *Eothen: Münchner Beiträge zur Geschichte der Islamwissenschaft*, 1978
- x Oleg Grabar, "Islamic Religious Art: The Mosque", *The Formation of Islamic Art* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1975)

Week 3 24-Sep The Orientalism Debate

- x Cemil Aydin, "What is the Muslim World?", *The Idea of the Muslim World* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1994)
- x Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House Inc., 1979), (p1-28)
- x Timothy Mitchell, "The Stage of Modernity", *Questions of Modernity*, ed Timothy Mitchell (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995)
- x Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism", *The American Historical Review*, Volume 107, Issue 3, 1998

Zeynep Celik, "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism", *Assemblage* 17, (p 59-74)

Nader Naderi, "Max Weber and the Study of the Middle East: A Critical Analysis," *Berkeley Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1998

Week 4 1-Oct What is Islamic Art and Architecture? (1) Who and Where

- x Timothy Mitchell, "Egypt at the Exhibit, Colonizing Egypt" (University of California Press, October 1995)
- x Eva Troelenberg, "Regarding the exhibition: the Munich exhibition Masterpieces of Muhammad" (University of California Press, October 1995)
- x Celik, Zeynep. *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth Century World's Fairs*, (University of California Press, 1992)
- x Esra Akcan, "Is A Global History of Architecture Displayable?, A Historiographical perspective on the display of Islamic architecture" (University of California Press, 2000)

Ahmet A. Ersoy "Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary". (Routledge, 2015)

Stephen Vernoit, "Islamic Art and Architecture An overview of scholarship and collecting ", Disc

Farhat, Maymanah, "Rethinking Islamic Art." Jadaliyya, November 16, 2011.

Rabbat, Nasser. "What's in a Name? The New 'Islamic Art' Galleries at the Met" Artforum 50, No

Week 5 8-Oct What is Islamic Art and Architecture? (2) How: Methods and Alternative narratives

x Gulru Necipoglu, "The concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches". Journ

x Finbarr Barry Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the end of Is

x Avinoam Shalem, "What do we mean when we say 'Islamic art'? A plea for a critical rewriting of

x Nasser Rabbat, "What is Islamic Architecture Anyway?" Journal of Art Historiography, No. 6, 20

x Wendy M.K. Shaw, "The Islam in Islamic art history: secularism and public discourse" Journal of

Gulsum Baydar and Nalbantoglu, "Toward Postcolonial Openings Rereading Sir Banister Fleeth

Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of a

II – HISTORICAL REVISIONS

Week 6 15-Oct The Islamic City and Landscape

x Stefano Bianca, Urban Form in the Arab World Past and Present (UK: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2

x Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City – Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relev

x Diana K. Davis "Imperialism, Orientalism and the Environment in the Middle East", Environm

x Nathan Citino, "Suburbia and Modernization: Community Building and America's Post-World Wa

Nezar AlSayyad, "The Fundamentalist City?", The Fundamentalist City, Religiosity and the rema

Week 7 22-Oct The Destruction of Cultural Heritage

x Finbarr Barry Flood, "Idol-breaking as Image-making in the 'Islamic State'", Religion and Society

- x Finbarr Barry Flood, "Between Cult and Culture Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum"
- x Nada Moumtaz, "The knotted politics of value: Beirut's Islamic charitable endowments between"
- x Nasser Rabbat, Pamela Karime, "The Demise and afterlife of Artifacts", Aggregate, December

Cemil Aydin, "Resurrecting Muslim Internationalism (1945-1988)" , The idea of the Muslim World
 Terry Allen, "Aniconism and Figural Representation in Islamic Art ", Five Essays on Islamic Art,

Week 8 29-Oct The Mosque Today

- x Nasser Rabbat, "The Arab Revolution takes Back Public Space," Critical Inquiry (criticalinquiry.c
- x Kishwar Rizvi, "Agency of History", The Transnational Mosque: Architecture and Historical Mem
- x Finbarr Barry Flood, "God's Wonder: Marble as Medium and the Natural Image in Mosques and
- x Nebhat Avcioglu, "The Mosque and The European City" (2013), Islam and Public Controversy in

Nebhat Avcioglu, "Identity-as-Form: The Mosque in the West", Cultural Analysis 6 (2007), (p 91-
 Hasan-Uddin Khan, "An Overview of Contemporary Mosques", The Mosque (Thames & Hudson

PAPER ASSIGNMENT PRESENTATION - GROUP FORMATION

Week 9 5-Nov NO CLASS (election day)

III – (RE)BUILDING THE MOSQUE

Week 10 12-Nov The Colonial / Regional Mosque

- x Mohammed Arkoun, "Building and Meaning in the Islamic World", Muqarnas Online, Volume 16
- x PANAYIOTA I. PYLA, "Hassan Fathy Revisited Postwar Discourses on Science", Journal of Arc
- x Azra Aksamija, "Cultivating Convergence: The First Islamic Cemetery in Vorarlberg, Austria", Int

Nathan Citino, "Suburbia and Modernization: Community Building and America's Post-World Wa

Week 11 19-Nov The National / Modern Mosque - The Transnational / Global Mosque

- Mohammed Arkoun, 'Spirituality and Architecture', Understanding Islamic Architecture (Routledge)
- x Mohammad Al Assad, "The Mosque of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara: Breaking
- x Berin F. Gur, "Sancaklar Mosque: Displacing the Familiar", International Journal of Islamic Arch
- Mohammed Arkoun, "Metamorphosis of the Sacred", The Mosque (Thames & Hudson Ltd, Lond
- x Kishwar Rizvi, "Global Islam and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", The Transnational Mosque: Arch
- x John Biln, Mohamed El-Amrousi, "Abu Dhabi Forms and Fragments: Muslim Space and the Mo

Week 12 26-Nov PAPER FINAL PRESENTATION

CASE STUDIES (TBD):

- Mosque in University of Baghdad. Baghdad. 1957
- National Assembly Building of Bangladesh. Dhaka. 1963
- National Mosque of Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur. 1965
- Tooba Mosque. Karachi. 1969
- Namaz-Khaneh Mosque. Tehrān. 1978
- Sherefudin's White Mosque. Visoko. 1980
- Assem Salam Khashokgi Mosque. Beirut. 1981
- King Khalid International Airport Mosque. Riyadh. 1983
- Faisal Mosque. Islamabad. 1987
- Grand National Assembly Mosque. Ankara. 1989