Course Syllabus

Columbia University, GSAPP – Fall 2018 Seminar A6806

BUILDING ISLAM, a brief history of the Mosque architecture.

Ziad Jamaleddine – 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’

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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
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- Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan, "Islam and the Form of the Mosque", The Mosque (Thames & Hudson Ltd, London, 1994), Chapter 1 (p 17-41)
- Oleg Grabar, "Islamic Religious Art: The Mosque", The Formation of Islamic Art (Yale University Press;1987), Chapter 5 (p 104-139)

| **Week 3** | 24-Sep | The Orientalism Debate |

- Cemil Aydin, "What is the Muslim World?", The idea of the Muslim World (Harvard University Press, 2017), Intro (p1-14)

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


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

- Timothy Mitchell, "Egypt at the Exhibit, Colonizing Egypt (University of California Press, October 11, 1991), Chapter 1 (p1-34)
Ahmet A. Ersoy "Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary". (Routledge, 2015)
Farhat, Maymanah, "Rethinking Islamic Art." Jadaliyya, November 16, 2011.

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

Finbarr Barry Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the end of Islamic Art". Journal of Art Historiography, No. 6, 2012
Avinoam Shalem, "What do we mean when we say ‘Islamic art’? A plea for a critical rewriting of the history of Islam". Journal of Art Historiography. No. 6, 2012
Nasser Rabbat, "What is Islamic Architecture Anyway?" Journal of Art Historiography, No. 6, 2012

Gulsum Baydar and Nalbantoglu, "Toward Postcolonial Openings Rereading Sir Banister Flechtheim’s History of Architecture", Assemblage, No.35–1998 (p 6-17)

II – HISTORICAL REVISIONS

Week 6 15-Oct The Islamic City and Landscape

Stefano Bianca, Urban Form in the Arab World Past and Present (UK: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2000), Chapter 2
Diana K. Davis “Imperialism, Orientalism and the Environment in the Middle East”, Environmental imaginaries of the Middle East and North Africa, 2011
Nathan Citino, “Suburbia and Modernization: Community Building and America's Post-War World” Arab Study Institute, Vol. 13/14, No. 2/1, Fall 2005/Spring 2006, (p 39-64)
Nezar AlSayyad, “The Fundamentalist City?”, The Fundamentalist City, Religiosity and the remaking of urban space, ed. Nezar AlSayyad, (p 3-26)

Week 7 22-Oct The Destruction of Cultural Heritage

Finbarr Barry Flood, "Idol-breaking as Image-making in the 'Islamic State'", Religion and Society
Week 8  29-Oct  The Mosque Today


x  Nada Mountaz, "The knotted politics of value: Beirut's Islamic charitable endowments between Islam and capital." (DRAFT)


x  Cemil Aydin, "Resurrecting Muslim Internationalism (1945-1988)”, The idea of the Muslim World, (Harvard University Press, 2017), Chapter 6 (p 173-226)

x  Terry Allen, "Aniconism and Figural Representation in Islamic Art”, Five Essays on Islamic Art, (Solipsist Pr June 1, 1986), Chapter 2 (p 17-38)


Nabhat Avcioglu, "Identity-as-Form: The Mosque in the West", Cultural Analysis 6 (2007), (p 91-112)


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  Azra Aksamija, "Cultivating Convergence: The First Islamic Cemetery in Vorarlberg, Austria", International Journal of Islamic Architecture, Volume 3, Number 1, 1 March 2014, (p 131-146)

Nathan Citino, "Suburbia and Modernization: Community Building and America's Post-World War II Encounter with the Arab Middle East," The Arab Studies Journal, No. 2/1 (Fall 2005/Spring 2006). (p 39-64)
Week 11    19-Nov    The National / Modern Mosque - The Transnational / Global Mosque

Mohammed Arkoun, 'Spirituality and Architecture', Understanding Islamic Architecture (Routledge January 8, 2003), (p 3 - 8)


Mohammed Arkoun, "Metamorphosis of the Sacred", The Mosque (Thames & Hudson Ltd, London, 1994), Chapter 16 (p 268 - 272)

Kishwar Rizvi, "Global Islam and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", The Transnational Mosque: Architecture and Historical Memory in the Contemporary Middle East (The University of North Carolina Press; 1 edition, November 30, 2015), Chapter 2


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
King Khalid International Airport Mosque. Riyadh. 1983
Faisal Mosque. Islamabad. 1987