



Introduction to Sacred Art and Design

A VRC Curriculum Syllabus



Written by: Justin Poe, Ibrahim Qureshi, Nicholas Stone, and Aaron Spevack

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A Verification and Renewal Curriculum (VRC) Syllabus

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The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Allah prescribed excellence for everything [one does].” (Muslim)

The Messenger ﷺ also said: “Allah is beauty and loves beauty...” (Muslim)

Introduction, Purpose, and Course Objectives

The Introduction to Sacred Art and Design course introduces students to the principles, methods, patterns, and objectives of art and design as found throughout Islamic civilization. The course integrates what students have learned from the postulates and proofs in Geometry and seeing Allah’s knowledge, will, and power in the complexity and design of the universe and what they will later learn in their hadith and *tazkiya* courses about the process of passing on knowledge and seeking excellence in all one does, respectively.

The principles learned in the course transfer over to the study of the practical expression of geometry, symbolism, aesthetic, functionality, and the sacred in art and design. Through both a theoretical and hands-on study of sacred art and design from the past to present, students will learn to recognize, experience, and demonstrate specific principles and patterns in for example some of the most famous architectural wonders Muslims have built (including mosques, palaces, forts, bathhouses, markets) and the expression of the sacred in ceramics and tapestry, nature in biomorphic designs, and the worship of Allah through Quranic calligraphy. Students are introduced to other expressions of art and design, such as jewelry, clothing and utensils, printing and bookbinding, city structure, and more, learning that art and design are found in many facets of daily life and not limited to what is preserved in museums. They will learn about the influences on Islamic art and the influence Islamic art has had on other traditions.

The course divides into overall subjects based on the material and instrument used for the art and design: architecture (masonry), ceramics and wood (clay, wood, and pigments), rugs and carpets (textiles and dyes), jewelry (metal and gemstones), and calligraphy (pen and ink). Each of these units run for two weeks. The course demonstrates to students that we find and should apply principles such as unity, symmetry, balance, and complexity to every field of art, including what we use on a day-to-day basis such as our professional instruments, clothing, and utensils. Sacred art and design are real and close, and these principles appear throughout culture and times in different ways. Students will learn to recognize these principles and patterns and appreciate them and begin to develop a sense of *tarbiya* (spiritual refinement) of humility and patience through the hands-on activities. A comparative art and design segment and the principles that are central to other cultures is included in the course along with a history of crafts and disciplines and the importance of the master passing on the technique and specialized knowledge to the student. Students will learn about the guild tradition and how guilds preserved ancient techniques and were the conduit for passing down art and knowledge from teacher to student, from generation to generation, and from culture to culture. Short

documentaries and readings show students how artisans from various backgrounds and regions strive to preserve their techniques, pass them on, and adapt them.

Classes will be held three times a week and will be part lecture, consisting of history, theory, and analysis, and part practicum in which students apply what they learned in the lecture to a project for each unit. Students will have short readings for each unit. At the end of each unit, students will have produced at least one practical work. The course will culminate with a final project, requiring planning and consistent work from the student. The final project asks students, individually or as a group, to plan a product that incorporates principles and techniques learned throughout the course. Students will design or make a prototype of the product, color, add specific dimensions, explain the principles learned throughout the course that were applied to the product, mention the four causes (especially the final cause in detail), and provide a short presentation on the product. At the end of the course, students will have a portfolio of work to present at the end of the year along with the rest of the portfolios of work from their other classes.

Course Objectives

- 1) Identify principles of sacred art and design to be able to accurately recognize and describe these principles in examples of art
- 2) Experience concepts such as unity, symmetry, balance, patience, and excellence in the art and design studied
- 3) Notice the connections between geometry, art, spiritual and moral training, and hadith (through the teacher-student *isnād* mechanism)
- 4) Produce a portfolio of work in which the principles learned in class are applied

Potential Texts and Resources

Primary Texts/Readings

- *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, Isma'il al-Faruqi and Lois al-Faruqi, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986, Chapter 20–22 (p. 354–440)
- *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*, Titus Burckhardt
- *Islamic Design: A Genius for Geometry*, David Sutton, Wooden Books

Secondary Resources/Readings

- “Resources,” The Art of Islamic Pattern, [Resources – Art of Islamic Pattern](#)
- [Geometry and Arabesque – Adam Williamson ART](#)
- *Sacred Geometry*, Miranda Lundy, Wooden Books
- *Thuluth Practice Book*, Omar N. Uddin, <https://www.myqalamacademy.com/thuluth-practice-book>
- YouTube Channels for Documentaries:

- *Business Insider*: many videos about tradition arts, crafts, designs, and techniques, search for particular topics
- *Insider Art, Victoria and Albert Museum, TRT World, For All Humans*, and *Standart* also good resources
- [Nicholas Stone—Art and Design Resources \(Dropbox\)](#)

Main Themes and Unit Breakdown

Unit 1: What is Art: The Sacred and the Sanad

- Key ideas and concepts:
 - Discussion on the definition of art and design and propose different possible purposes of art and design, based on the readings and class discussions
 - Principles and vocabulary around art and design to be referenced and used throughout the course
 - Initial connections between art, *tazkiya*, *tarbiya*, excellence, and the methods used to reflect in art and design aspects of unity and the complexity and design Allah creates with His knowledge, will, and power
 - Introduction to concepts such as symbolism, aesthetic, and functionality
 - How techniques and knowledge of art and design are passed down as crafts through apprenticeship, guilds, and culture, and recognize that art is present all around and in one's daily life
 - Brief comparison between aesthetic philosophies and how Muslims adapted them and the history of art and design in Muslim civilization
 - General overview of *fiqh* guidance in art
- Some key terms:
 - aesthetic, art and design, final cause, functionality, guild, *ihsān*, *isnād*, symbolism, *tarbiya*, *tazkiya*
- Reading:
 - *Art of Islam*, selections from Chapter 2: The Birth of Islamic Art, p. 7–28
 - *Art of Islam*, Chapter 5.1: The Nature and Role of Sacred Art, p. 87–90
 - *Art of Islam*, Chapter 8.2: Art and Contemplation, p. 220–225
- Projects (2):
 - Make a list of five items around you, be they in your house or yard or room or on your person, and identify at least one principle of art and design from class present in the object.
 - Take one of these items and research how it was made and note the step-by-step procedure; then write out in two paragraphs how you would redesign the item based on your aesthetics and the principles learned thus far.
- Resources:
 - [How Islamic Architecture Shaped Europe | Diana Darke - YouTube](#)
 - [The complex geometry of Islamic design - Eric Broug - YouTube](#)
 - [The Foundations of Classical Architecture Part 1: Roman Classicism - Institute of Classical Architecture & Art](#)

Unit 2: Large Scale: City-Planning and Architecture

- Key concepts and ideas:
 - Theory and design that form the foundation of a well-planned city and the architecture within it, drawing from geometric principles and patterns along with considering sustainability, efficiency, and utility for the population
 - Focus on *tawhīd* (unity) in both city and architecture
 - Central importance of cities and what makes up a city and how they should ideally be designed in light of access to prayer spaces (especially the central masjid), green spaces, markets, and schools
 - Examine two historic cities that exhibit these principles (Baghdad and Cordoba) and compare them to contemporary cities (Dallas, TX; Doha, Qatar; and Nizwa, Oman)
 - Ibn Khaldūn makes an appearance in discussions about cities, from whom students learn about the key factors for a well-maintained and designed city
 - Connections to matters of jurisprudence, particularly discussions of the Friday prayer and prayer during travel, both of which presume the definition of a city
 - The unit moves closer to the structures inside the city, including masjids, government buildings, houses, and parks
 - Introduction to the common design patterns found in these structures and learn terminology for the salient patterns and designs, which students will use to describe aspects of their projects
- Some key terms:
 - arabesque, arcade, cupola, façade, *mihrāb* niche, motif, *muqarnas*, overlay, stucco, terra cotta, transfiguration, urban planning, vault-crown
- Reading:
 - *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, selections from Chapter 22: The Spatial Arts, p. 408–440
 - *Art of Islam*, selections from Chapter 2: The Birth of Islamic Art, p. 7–28
 - *Art of Islam*, selections from Chapter 8: The City, p. 196–220
 - *Art of Islam*, Chapter 4.4: The Sphere and the Cube, p. 73–80
 - *Art of Islam*, selections from Chapter 7: Synthesis (Mosques), p. 123–197
 - *Islamic Design*, p. 1–11, 46–49
- Projects (2–3):
 - City-Planning
 - Trace on tracing paper the blueprint design of ancient Baghdad or another ancient city from a high-resolution image (search: structure/design of ancient Baghdad) and identify the key components of a city.
 - Architecture
 - Design a masjid in Minecraft or using balsa wood.
 - City-Planning and Architecture
 - Design a city on grid paper with a central masjid, park, graveyard, housing, school, grocer, etc. Label each object, color-code, and provide a

short description of one feature of your design that reflects the principles discussed in this unit.

- Resources:
 - About Ibn Khaldūn's theory of cities and civilization
 - [Saudi Aramco World : A Man With A Plan](#)
 - [Notes from Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah: Chapter 4 – HB.](#)
 - [Why Ibn Khaldun Still Matters for Urban Sustainability | Research Communities by Springer Nature](#)
 - [What would Ibn Khaldun have made of Silicon Valley? - The Sociological Review](#)
 - [The desert and the city. Two stories. — THE WASTE BOOKS](#)
 - Architectural Design
 - [Islam & Mosque Architecture in Ancient China | Dr. Umar Faruq Abd'Allah - YouTube](#)
 - [Spain's Architectural Wonder: The Great Mosque of Cordoba - YouTube](#)
 - Cities
 - [The City of Peace: Reconstructions of the Round City of Baghdad](#)
 - [What were buildings like in the early Islamic civilisation? - BBC Bitesize](#)
 - [Story of cities #3: the birth of Baghdad was a landmark for world civilisation | Cities | The Guardian](#)

Unit 3: Impressing Design: Ceramics and Carpentry Woodcarving

- Key concepts and ideas:
 - Focus on the items and utensils in daily use and the art and design behind them
 - Where and how the material for ceramics and wood are harvested; method of shaping, baking, glazing, and painting ceramics; method of etching, shaving, and burning wood for design
 - Importance of ceramics and woodcarving in art history, passing down stories and narratives and history, and why both are considered prized possessions
 - Awareness of the art and design around us and our appreciation (or lack thereof) for the technique and effort
 - The effect of modern manufacturing on the loss of technique and the spirit of art and design, in the example of ceramics and woodcarving
- Some key terms:
 - cartouche, casting, chevron, embellishment, enameling, filigree, glaze, hatching, interlacing/interlocking structure, keel, lacquer, lattice, meander structure, merlon, ornamentation, overlay
- Reading:
 - *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, selections from Chapter 21: Ornamentation in the Islamic Arts, p. 378–407
 - *Art of Islam*, selections from Chapter 4.3: The Arabesque, p. 62–73
 - *Islamic Design*, p. 14–15, 28–29, 32–33, 36–37
- Projects (1–2):

- Ceramics (making a coaster or wall tile)
 - Using a pre-baked blank clay tile, etch onto the soft clay a design from a class handout, then bake the tile until it hardens; afterwards, apply glaze and paint onto the tile the design with acrylic paint.
 - or
 - Using a glazed ceramic tile, paint onto the tile the design with acrylic paint.
- Woodcarving (making a coaster or wall tile)
 - Using a smooth wood tile and a woodburning tool, etch a design from one of the examples shown in class onto the tile.
 - or
 - Using a smooth wood tile, carve into the tile a design from one of the examples shown in class.
- Resources:
 - [10 Woodworking Projects for High Schoolers | The Art of Hand Tools](#)
 - *The Perfumed Palace: Islam's Journey from Mecca to Peking*, M.A. Aldrich and Lukas Nikol, Garnet Publishing Ltd., 2010
 - [How Descendants Of Taj Mahal Artisans Are Keeping Marble Inlay Work Alive | Still Standing - YouTube](#)
 - [Meet The Family Keeping 2000-Year-Old Swat Wood Carving Art Alive In Pakistan | Still Standing - YouTube](#)
 - [How India's Perfumers Recreate The Smell Of Rain On Earth | Still Standing - YouTube](#) (not directly connected, but a good documentary about artisanry)

Unit 4: The Needle and the Thread: Weaving and Dyeing Clothing, Rugs, and Carpets

- Key concepts and ideas:
 - Dedication and patience in completing a tapestry and rug
 - Learn about different natural textiles, including cotton, flax, wool, and silk, and the impact of natural textiles on the environment and sustainability, and newer methods
 - The history of dyeing fabrics, the material and dyes used, and the design patterns and their meaning in different cultures
 - Different types of weaves
 - See how a simple needle and thin threads come together to show a complete picture and design
- Some key terms:
 - batik dyeing, loom, lyocell denim, merino wool, rosette, silk/ikat, spinning, stitching, warp, weaving, weft
- Reading:
 - *Art of Islam*, Chapter 5.5: The Art of Apparel, p. 102–105
 - *Art of Islam*, Chapter 6.2: The Art of the Carpet, p. 113–121
- Projects (2):

- Weaving
 - Students use a cardboard loom to learn the basic techniques and methods to produce a design.
 - Students then produce on the cardboard loom two basic design patterns the instructor selects; students can use a simple paper grid to plan a design if they choose to work on a more complicated design.
- Dyeing
 - Students explore outside the classroom and collect natural flower petals, leaves, roots, and other objects to use for dyeing a 4”x4” cotton swatch.
 - Students use food coloring, fabric dyes, or indigo, a block print template, and a fabric of their choosing and design (depending on what they would like to make); fold the fabric around the template, clamp it, and start the dyeing process.
- Resources:
 - Weaving
 - Documentary on silk (ikat) factory, weaving, and carpet making in Margilan, Uzbekistan, showing complexity and time (5–8 years) to produce one carpet
 - [Textile - Weaving, Looms, Fabrics | Britannica](#)
 - [Activity Idea: Weaving with Art and Math – NCMA Learn](#)
 - [Exploring weaving KS3 | Y8 Art and design Lesson Resources | Oak National Academy](#)
 - [20 Wonderful Weaving Activities For All Ages - Teaching Expertise](#)
 - [How to Weave on a Cardboard Loom : 9 Steps \(with Pictures\) - Instructables](#)
 - [10 Fun and Easy Weaving Projects for School | Actualizado October 2024](#)
 - [#MetKids—Weave on a Mini Loom - YouTube](#)
 - [Cardboard loom weaving - YouTube](#)
 - [Yarn weaving 101 - BASICS for kids - YouTube](#)
 - Dyeing
 - [Dye Techniques & Projects - Instructables](#)
 - [DIY Dyeing Projects: Fun Ideas for All Skill Levels | Live to Plant](#)
 - [Engage High Schoolers with Creative Art Projects | LoveToKnow](#)
 - [10 Creative Projects to Try at Your Next DIY Dye Workshop –](#)
 - Documentaries
 - [藍を究める In Pursuit of Indigo: Japanese ikat /Traditional technique \(hand weaving, natural indigo dye\) - YouTube](#)
 - [How Rug Weavers In Morocco Are Working Together To Fight For A Fair Wage | So Expensive - YouTube](#)
 - [In Search of Forgotten Colours - Sachio Yoshioka and the Art of Natural Dyeing - YouTube](#)
 - [Tatreez: The Ancient Art of Palestinian Embroidery | Fashion Unpicked - YouTube](#)
 - [How The World's Most Expensive Fibers Are Made | Insider Art - YouTube](#)

- [How 1,000-Year-Old Tie-Dye Designs Are Made in Gambia | Still Standing | Insider Business - YouTube](#)

Unit 5: Wearing Art: Jewelry

- Key concepts and ideas:
 - Traditional and modern sophisticated techniques, tools, and methods of making jewelry with stones, metals, ivory, and other materials
 - Role of jewelry in culture, narrative, interpersonal and familial connections, and recognition that jewelry is more than and not exclusively a sign of wealth and status
 - Recognize symbolic meanings behind many motifs and colors and when, where (space and body), and by whom jewelry is worn
- Some key terms:
 - embossing, enameling, filigree (openwork and closedwork), gilded, gilt silver, granulation, inlay, niello, pendant, precious and semi-precious stones
- Reading:
 - Instructor should select readings from the resources below, some of which are online and others in print (with digital copies available)
- Projects (1–2):
 - Metalwork
 - Starting with malleable pieces of copper, aluminum, and brass and using needle-nose pliers, a small mallet, and other tools, copy a simple design for a bracelet, floral piece, or other item found in the design books in the art and design library and handouts. Students should focus not on trying to copy the complexity but the overall design, realizing the mastery of dexterity, patience, and vision to produce a single piece.
 - String and Beads
 - With string and glass or stone beads, select an assortment of beads and arrange them in a way similar to a design found in the design books. Students may include an odd number of beads from polymer clay they could make in the ceramic unit.
 - [How to make beads with polymer clay? – Hands on Supply](#)
- Resources:
 - [Jewelry in Islamic Lands](#) (slide presentation)
 - [The fascinating history of islamic jewellery | Dialoghi Mediterranei](#) (blog)
 - [Islamic Jewelry in The Metropolitan Museum of Art - The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) (book)
 - [Jewelry in Islamic Lands – Khamseen](#) (video presentation and worksheet)
 - [Glass of the Sultans - The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)
 - *The Art of Adornment: Jewellery of the Islamic Lands*, Part 1 and 2, Michael Spink and Jack Ogden, The Nour Foundation, 2013
 - [Islamic Jewelry Design : The Art and Symbolism Behind Stunning Pieces](#)
 - [Beyond Adornment: Symbolism and Meaning in Islamic Jewelry](#)

- [Magazine | Islamic Arts Magazine](#)
- [A Global Guide to Islamic Art - TeachMideast](#)
- [Islamic Art Collection | The Farjam Foundation](#)
- [Museum of Islamic Art Collection Highlights - Museum of Islamic Art](#)
- [Discover Islamic Art - Virtual Museum](#)

Unit 6: Art Through Light: Lenses, Photography, and Glass

- Key concepts and ideas:
 - Learn about the ways light is incorporated, used, captured, and manipulated in sacred art, including in glass, lamps, mirrors, windows, and sacred spaces
 - History, techniques, and methods of producing tradition blown glass and stained glass as an art and craft (and reference to Jābir b. Ḥayyān)
 - Draw connections between light, unity, the soul, and metaphors between these in art and design
 - Experience contemplation through focused observation through a lens, stillness and patience, and capturing complexity and design through photography (of landscape, natural, medical)
 - Concepts of shadow and light, gradient, refraction, reflection, exposure, negative space, etc.
 - The history and development of lenses and their role in art (and science), the role of Ibn al-Haytham in optics, privacy and personal space today with modern and digital photography
 - Guidance on photography in Islam
 - Photography as capturing light and reflection
- Some key terms:
 - aperture, armature, casing, cooper foiling, crown, cut line, depth of field, diffraction, distortion, exposure, flaring, focus, kiln, lathe, oxidizing, panel, pontil, reflection, refraction, soldering, wash
- Reading:
 - *Art of Islam*, selections from Chapter 4.5: The Alchemy of Light, p. 80–84
 - *Art of Islam*, Chapter 5.2: The Miḥrāb, p. 90–94
 - *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, selections from Chapter 21: Ornamentation in the Islamic Arts, p. 378–407
- Projects (1–2):
 - Photography
 - Applying the principles of light and shadow students learned in class, students will use either a cellphone camera or a class-provided camera to take a black-and-white photo of one tree, one animal, and one landscape outside and analyze each.
 - Stained-Glass
 - Provided with an assortment of stained-glass pieces, plan out a design on a traced piece of paper, then use a glass cutter and sandpaper to cut the

pieces for the pattern, add copper tape around the edges of the pieces, arrange them face down, and then solder them together.

- Resources:
 - o [Stained Glass Class - YouTube](#)
 - o [Islam's Golden Age Sparks a Spectrum of Optical Knowledge | Features | Sep 2020 | Photonics Spectra](#)
 - o [Making a Murrine Vase - Full Glassblowing Process Demonstration - YouTube](#)
 - o [Narrated glassblowing process, my best color pattern yet, HUGE channel announcement - YouTube](#)

Unit 7: Making Your Mark: Calligraphy and Typography

- Key concepts and ideas:
 - o Learn about modern typography related to Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and other Arabic-script languages, along with Roman-script languages, especially English
 - o Connection of scripts and calligraphy to weaving (strokes of the pen)
 - o Types of pens and ink, the method of mixing ink and from where both are derived
 - o Understand the connection between calligraphy and spiritual refinement and the soul's journey to unity after fragmentation in different cultures
 - o Fonts and history of calligraphy and typography, modern technology and use of applications and programs in digital space
- Some key terms:
 - o biomorphic (vegetal and zoomorphic) calligraphy, brush, figural calligraphy, floriated script, Kufic script, *kuttāb*, Maghribi, Naskh script, Nastaliq script, *nuqta*, plaited script, proportioned system of writing, reed pen, rhombic dot, script, Sino script, Thuluth script, vertical and slanted letters, vowelings
- Reading:
 - o *Islamic Design*, p. 12–13
 - o *Art of Islam*, selections from Chapter 4.1: Arab Art, Islamic Art, p. 42–51
 - o *Art of Islam*, Chapter 4.2: Arabic Calligraphy, p. 52–61
 - o *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, selections from Chapter 20: Calligraphy, p. 354–377
- Projects (2):
 - o Calligraphy
 - Students over four lessons practice thuluth and naskh scripts with a reed pen and a brush, ink, and parchment paper. In the first two lessons, students copy from a thuluth and naskh workbook, finishing with copying an *āya* of their choice. In the third lesson, students learn to cut a reed pen and mix ink. In the fourth lesson, students write their first name using the principles and techniques they learned.
 - o Typography
 - Using a calligraphy app, students design with modern Arabic font and typography their first name and compare it to the name they wrote in the previous class.
- Resources:

- [The art of Arabic calligraphy - YouTube](#)
- [Arabic calligraphy: knowledge, skills and practices - YouTube](#)
- [The story of Islamic calligraphy | Showcase Special - YouTube](#)
- [Sini Script \(Chinese Style Arabic Calligraphy\) - YouTube](#)
- [Arabic Islamic Calligraphy in the Chinese Tradition Demonstration by Master Haji Noor Deen on Vimeo - YouTube](#)
- ['Arabic Typography: History and Practice' is out now - Titus Nemeth | tntypography](#)
- [A guide to the seven styles of Arabic calligraphy | Middle East Eye](#)
- [BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TRADITIONAL ARABIC TYPE. | Jawaher](#)
- *Arabic Typography: A Comprehensive Sourcebook*, Huda S. Abifares, Saqi Books, 2000
- *Arabic Typography: History and Practice*, Titus Nemeth, et al., niggli, 2023
- *Bi-Scriptural: Typography and Graphic Design with Multiple Script Systems*, Ben Wittner, et al., niggli, 2018
- *Thuluth Practice Book*, Omar N. Uddin, <https://www.myqalamacademy.com/thuluth-practice-book>
- *Thuluth: A Comprehensive Step-By-step Study of the Thuluth Script Arabic Calligraphy Mastery Series*, Omar N. Uddin, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016

General Outline

How to use the General Outline:

The general outline for the course is a flexible tool for teachers and parents. It provides a guide through studying and learning about sacred art and design in the Islamic world.

The seven units above introduce students to major “spaces” of sacred art and design. The suggested number of sessions per unit are four to six, depending on the frequency of classes. Students should complete the selected reading prior to moving to the hands-on projects so that they have an understanding of the theory and principles to be used in the projects. Each unit above lists the key concepts and ideas students should take away from the class and then some key terms they should know by the end of the unit. These key terms will be needed to describe their projects. The projects listed for each unit are suggestions. The instructor should tailor the projects to the student body and resources available. Economy has been kept in mind when making the suggested projects and instructions. The resources are also suggestions, and the instructor may know of other resources for the class as a whole or for students to benefit from individually.

The units are arranged with two ideas in mind: scale (in terms of size, complexity, number of crafts and individuals involved, etc.) and closeness (from city and buildings to things in one’s hand).

Additional Teacher Resources

Potential assigned readings or additional resources for teachers and students:

- *A Dictionary of Architecture and Arts*, Afif Bahnassi, Librairie du Liban
- *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*, Andrew Petersen, Routledge
- *Islamic Art Collections*, Karin Adahl and Mikael Ahlund
- *Metalwork and Material Culture in the Islamic World: Art, Craft and Text*, eds. Venetia Porter and Mariam Rosser-Owen, I. B. Tauris
- *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World*, Brill
- *The Arabesque Coloring Book*, APA, White Star, 2021
- *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture*, eds. Jonathan M. Bloom and Shelia S. Blair, 2 Vols.

Methodology of Instruction

The method of instruction for this course would incorporate a combination of lecture and seminar-based classes with hands-on projects, some of which require two or more classes to complete. A balance between the two, such that one method complements and synchronizes with the other, would be ideal. Lectures would be reserved for those concepts and topics that instructors aim to directly share with students, which might prove challenging for students to derive on their own. The seminar allows students to address and work with the themes of the readings on their own, with their individual thoughts and ideas at the forefront. Students have more leeway in the latter to direct the conversation and their learning towards the aims of the course, incorporating aspects learned from lectures as they deem appropriate.

***Muṭāla‘a* (Pre-reading)**

This portion of the class requires students to prepare their readings before class. They should read the texts, take notes, write down questions, and make their own timelines of events.

***Mudhākara* (Group Review)**

Students should get together at least once a week to review material from the course. This can include, but is not limited to, discussions on the major concepts of the readings and the history and techniques of art and design discussed in class and additional time to work together on projects and get helpful feedback from each other about the progress of their work, the latter introducing students how to give and receive critical appraisal of their work. Students can also use this time to discuss questions amongst themselves or to continue a discussion from class. One of the aims of the group review is to allow students a space to take charge of their learning with their fellow peers.

Classwork and Homework Ideas

Classwork for this class would include participation and a grade for seminars (on days there is a seminar) and time given to work on their hands-on projects. Homework would mainly consist of the reading assignment, group review, and working on the projects.

Testing

Testing for the course would include a mixture of conceptual quizzes at the beginning of class and an evaluation of the hands-on projects and description students produce of these projects, which can be used to ensure students are able to retain the information and work with the ideas discussed in the class.

Topical Bibliography for Teachers

Islamic Art

A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture: 2-volume set, Flood, Finbarr Barry and Necipoğlu, Gulru, Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons. 2017

Art of Islam, Titus Burckhardt, World of Islam Festival Publishing, 1976 / World Wisdom, 2012

Islamic Art and Spirituality, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Golgonooza, 1987

Sacred Art in East and West, Titus Burckhardt, Sophia Perennis et Universalis, 1986

Sufi: Expressions of the Mystic Quest (Art and Imagination), Laleh Bakhtiar, Thames and Hudson, 2004

The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture, Nadar Ardalan & Laleh Bakhtiar, University of Chicago Press, 1973

Sacred Geometry

Golden Section: Nature's Greatest Secret, Scott Olsen, Wooden Books, 2009

Order in Space - A Design Source Book, Keith Critchlow, Thames & Hudson, 1994

Sacred Geometry, Robert Lawlor, Thames and Hudson, 1982

Sacred Geometry, Miranda Lundy, Wooden Books, 2002

The Hidden Geometry of Flowers, Keith Critchlow, Floris Books, 2011

Islamic Geometric Patterns

Arabic Geometrical Pattern and Design, Jules Bourgoïn (1838 - 1908), First published in 1879 / Dover, 1973

Geometric Concepts in Islamic Art, Issam El-Said and Ayse Parman, World of Islam Festival, 1976

Islamic Art and Architecture: System of Geometric Design, Issam El-Said (author), Tarek El-Bouri (editor), Keith Critchlow (editor), Garnet Publishing Ltd, 1999

Islamic Art and Geometric Design- Activities For Learning, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004

Islamic Design Workbook, Eric Broug, Thames & Hudson, 2016

Islamic Design: A Genius for Geometry, Daud Sutton, Wooden Books, 2007

Islamic Geometric Design, Eric Broug, Thames & Hudson, 2013

Islamic Geometric Patterns, Eric Broug, Thames & Hudson, 2008

Islamic patterns: An analytical and cosmological approach, Keith Critchlow, Inner Traditions, 1999 / Thames and Hudson, 1983

Practical Geometric Pattern Design: Geometric Patterns from Islamic Art, Mirosław Majewski, Independently published, 2020

Ruler and Compass: Practical Geometric Constructions, Andrew Sutton, Wooden Books, 2009

Islamic Biomorphic Patterns (Islimi)

Curves: Flowers, Foliates & Flourishes in The Formal Decorative Arts, Lisa DeLong, Wooden Books, 2013

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