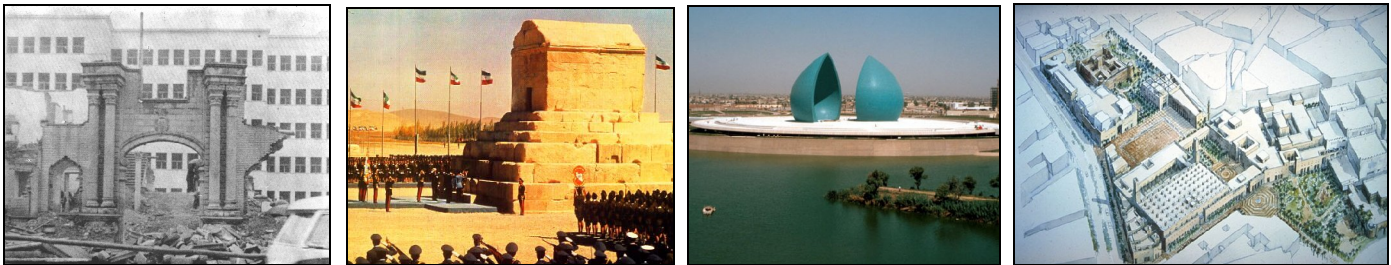


The *Politics* of **Public Space** in **Islamic Societies**



Primarily focusing on the architectural examples of the modern Middle East, the course raises concerns related to the political (mis/re)use of spaces, structures, and signs. By contextualizing each architectural case in its specific sociopolitical history, we will ask the following questions: How is architecture used as a site of power and resistance in politically charged societies? Why is architecture-as-representation so central to the making of coercive narratives about modern identities and civil order? How do these shifting uses of the landmark leave their imprint on architectural form, function, and meaning? Our aim will be to analyze how architecture both endorses political discourse and, by contrast, sustains social resistance. Above all, what can modern Muslim states and societies inform us about the politics of space and identity?

While the course will begin with selected examples of public spaces from Islamic history, it will rapidly enter the 19th century, where various colonial encounters and subsequent imperial discourses will be examined. The bulk of the course considers the use of urban ‘text’ as an ideological tool by the leaders of modern nation-states: the heaving-handed modernism and revivalism of the 1920s and 1930s, the native-ization of modernity in the 1950s and 1960s, and the urban revolution of Iran in 1979. The course will conclude with the current events in Afghanistan and Iraq bringing to the fore broader architectural question such as the destruction of monuments as political acts, the women’s veiling as a gendered space, and today’s architectural implication on politics and vice versa.

PRE-MODERN ISLAM

Mon Feb 24

‘Reading’ Islamic Space

Grube, E. ‘What is Islamic Architecture?’, *Architecture of the Islamic World*, ed. Michell (NY, 1978) 11-14

Wed Feb 26

Islam Manifested: “Islam: Empire of Faith” (PBS, CA, 2000)

Bianca, S. ‘Basic Principles of Islam and their Social, Spatial and Artistic Implications’, *Urban Form in the Arab World* (London, 2000) 23-47

Mon Mar 3

Performing Space: Formative & Classic Era of Islam

Dickie, J. ‘Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs’, *Architecture of the Islamic World*, ed. Michell (NY, 1978) chapter 1

- Wed Mar 5** **(Em)powering Space: Medieval & Gunpowder Empires**
Grabar, O. 'The Architecture of Power: Palaces, Citadels, and Fortifications', *Architecture of the Islamic World*, ed. Michell (NY, 1978) chapter 2

CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

- Mon Mar 10** **Elsewhere Invented: The West, Orientalism, and the Muslim world**
Said, E. 'Introduction', *Orientalism* (New York, 1978) 1-23
- Wed Mar 12** **Colonizing Space: French North Africa**
Beguin & Baudez. 'Arabisances: Observations on French Colonial Architecture in North Africa between 1900-1950', *Lotus International* 26 (1980) 41-52
- Mon Mar 17** **Imperializing Space: British South Asia**
Chakravarty, S. 'Architecture and Politics in the Construction of New Delhi', *Architecture + Design* 2/2 (January/February 1986) 76-92
- Wed Mar 19** **Elsewhere Displayed: International Exhibitions in Europe**
Mitchell, T. 'Egypt at the Exhibition', *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge, 1988) chapter 1
- Mon Mar 24** Spring Break
- Wed Mar 26** Spring Break

MIMICKING MODERNITY, REINVENTING MODERNISM

- Mon Mar 31** **High Modernism Imposed: Reza Shah's Iran & Kemalist Turkey**
Scott, J. 'Authoritarian High Modernism', *Seeing like a State* (New Haven, 1998) 87-132
Anderson, B. 'Census, Map, Museum', *Imagined Communities* (London, 1991) 163-185
Bozdogan, S. 'The Predicament of Modernism in Turkish Architectural Culture', *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle, 1997) 133-154
- Wed Apr 2** **Modernity 'Gone Native': Theorizing 'Vernacular' & 'Spiritual' Architecture**
Al-Sayyad, N. 'From Vernacularism to Globalism: the Temporal Reality of Traditional Settlements', *Traditional Dwellings & Settlements Review* 7/1 (1995) 13-25
Fathy, Hassan. *Architecture for the Poor* (Chicago, 1973) Skim
Ardalan, Nader. *The Sense of Unity* (Chicago, 1973) Skim
- Mon Apr 7** **Mid-Term Project Due: In class pin-up and review**
- Wed Apr 9** **Space of Modernity: Nehru's Chandigarh & Dhaka's National Assembly**
Ksiazek, S. 'Architectural Culture in the Fifties: Louis Kahn and the National Assembly Complex in Dhaka', *JSAH* (December 1993) 416-435

POSTMODERN DESPOTS & THEIR SPACES

- Mon Apr 14** **Revolution in/of Space: "Live from Tehran" (ABC documentary, 1999)**
Dabashi, H. & P. Chelkowski. 'From the Myth of Revolution to the Art of Persuasion', *Staging a Revolution: The Art of Persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran* (London, 2000) read 32-43; Skim

- Wed Apr 16** **Space Revolts: The Urban Revolution of Iran, 1978-79**
Grigor, T. 'Monument Performed, Space Claimed: from Shahyad to Azadi', unpublished paper (Cambridge, 2000)
- Mon Apr 21** **Space Claimed: Khomeini's Iran and Resistance to an 'Islamic' Revolution**
Adelkhah, F. 'A New Public Space for Islam?' *Being Modern in Iran* (New York, 2000) 18-29, 105-113
Grigor, T. '(Re)Claiming Space: the Use/Misuse of Propaganda Murals in Republican Tehran', *International Institute of Asian Studies Newsletter* 28. Amsterdam, (August 2002) 37
- Wed Apr 23** **Cluttering Space: Asad's Syria**
Wedeen, L. 'Killing Politics: Official Rhetoric and Permissible Speech', *Ambiguities of Domination* (Chicago, 1999) 32-49
- Mon Apr 28** **Battling the Same Space: Israeli/Palestinian struggle over al-Aqsa**
Monk, D. 'Introduction', *An Aesthetic Occupation: the Immediacy of Architecture and the Palestine Conflict* (Durham, 2002) 1-13
Osman, M. 'An Interview with Daniel Bertrand Monk', *Thresholds* 25 (Cambridge, Fall 2002) 20-23
- Wed Apr 30** **Spatial Megalomania: Saddam's Iraq**
Michalski, S. 'Iraq in the 1980s', *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage* (UK, 1998) 195-200
Al-Khalil, S. *The Monument: Art, Vulgarly & Responsibility in Iraq* (London, 1991) 68-77, 116-134

ISLAM (RE)INVENTED

- Mon May 5** **Veiled Space: Muslim Women in Public Space**
Hadimioglu, C. 'Black Tents', *Thresholds* 22 (Cambridge, Spring 2001) 18-25
- Wed May 7** **Towers & Buddhas: Taliban's 'Revenge'**
Flood, F. B. 'Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum', *Art Bulletin* 134/2 (December 2002) 641-659
- Mon May 12** **Destroying Architecture: Islamic Iconoclasm or Fundamentalism?**
Gamboni, D. 'Outside the First World' & 'Disqualification and Heritage', *The Destruction of Art* (New Haven, 1997) 107-116, 329-336
- Wed May 14** **Final Project Due: In-class pin-up and review**
- Mon May 19** **Final Project Due: In-class pin-up and review**
- Wed May 21** **'Orient' Talking: "The Children of Heaven"** (director Majid Majidi, Tehran, 1997)
Salman Rushdie. 'Imaginary Homelands', *Imaginary Homelands* (NY, 1982) 9-21

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Requirements:** 15% Participation; 25% Summaries, 30% Mid-term project; 30% Final project.
- Readings:** Assigned readings must be done prior to the class.
A class reader will be available in RISD Library and Jo Art.
- Attendance:** 15% of your grade; not only presence in class but also participation in discussions.
The course is based on exchange of ideas and interpretations, therefore attendance and participation is a must.
- Summaries:** 25% of your grade. Due each Monday at the beginning of the class.
These consist of reactions to the weekly readings. By either focusing on a specific issue or raising broader concerns, you have to be able to articulate intelligent and interesting ideas about the text. These exercises are also meant to help you raise question and generate discussing in class.
- Projects:** 60% of your grade. Due April 16 and May 21.
The mid-term and final projects, to be distributed in class two weeks prior to the due date, each consists of a synthesis of graphic and textual analysis to a specific historic/social problem. Both projects are mandatory and fixed. No make-ups. Both are also scheduled before your studio reviews period.
- Resources:** Course reader in RISD library; Book collection
<http://archnet.org/library/>