



Near and Middle Eastern Studies

Module descriptors for Inbound Students.

Module Code	NMU11102
Name	Islamic Art: A Historical and Theoretical Approach
Semester	2
ECTS	5
Module Coordinator	Contact NMES Study Abroad Coordinator

Module Content

Week 1: Introduction to Islamic Art and Its Theoretical Frameworks

Defining Islamic art: debates and perspectives

The role of religion in artistic production

Historiographical approaches to Islamic art

Week 2: The Formative Period: Early Islamic Art and Architecture

The Umayyad and Abbasid contributions to art and architecture

The development of the mosque: Qusayr 'Amra, Dome of the Rock, Great Mosque of Damascus

Calligraphy as a sacred art form

Week 3: Classical Islamic Art of the Middle Period

The emergence of regional styles: Fatimid, Seljuk, and Ghaznavid art

Manuscript illumination and book arts

Advances in ceramics, textiles, and metalwork

Week 4: Persianate Aesthetics and the Rise of Miniature Painting The Timurid and

Safavid contributions to Islamic art

The development of Persian miniature painting

The role of court patronage in artistic innovation

Week 5: Islamic Architecture in Spain and North Africa

The artistic legacy of al-Andalus: the Great Mosque of Córdoba, the Alhambra North

African architectural styles: Almoravid and Almohad influences

The synthesis of Islamic and local artistic traditions



Week 6: Ottoman Art and Architecture

The development of the Ottoman architectural style: Mimar Sinan and the Süleymaniye Mosque

The Topkapı Palace and courtly aesthetics
Ottoman ceramics, textiles, and calligraphy

Week 7: Mughal Art and the Fusion of Islamic and Indian Traditions

Mughal architecture: the Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri

Miniature painting in Mughal court culture

Artistic exchanges between Mughal India, Persia, and Europe

Week 8: The Role of Calligraphy and Geometric Design in Islamic Art

Arabic script as an artistic medium: Kufic, Naskh, and Thuluth styles

The mathematical foundations of Islamic geometric patterns

The philosophical and symbolic meanings of ornamentation

Week 9: The Impact of Colonialism and Modernity on Islamic Art

European encounters with Islamic art and their influence on museum collections

Islamic modernism and the adaptation of traditional forms

The tension between heritage and innovation in contemporary Islamic art

Week 10: Contemporary Islamic Art and Globalization

The work of contemporary Muslim artists

Islamic artistic expressions in diaspora communities

The future of Islamic art in the digital age

Week 11: Student Presentations and Conclusion

Student-led discussions on research findings

Reflecting on the role of Islamic art in cultural heritage and identity

Summative reflection and feedback

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Understand the major periods and movements in Islamic art and architecture.
- Analyse key artistic elements, including calligraphy, arabesque, geometric patterns, and



figural representation.

- Evaluate the impact of religious, political, and cultural influences on Islamic artistic production.
- Compare regional variations in Islamic art from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.
- Engage with theoretical and historiographical debates on Islamic art.
- Conduct independent research on Islamic art and present findings effectively.

Assessment

1. Class Presentation (20%)
2. Essay 1 (35%)
3. Essay 2 (45%)