ISAW-GA 3009-001: Art and Archaeology of the Iranian Plateau and Western Central Asia during the Early Islamic Period (7th-12th Centuries A.D.)

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Thursdays, 9:00am-12:00pm
Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, 15 E 84th Street, Seminar Room (Second Floor)

The conquest of the Iranian Plateau and the oases of Western Central Asia by Muslim armies since 636 and the subsequent inclusion of these areas into the Caliphate marked the beginning of a profound cultural transformation in these territories. However, this was a gradual and multifaceted process, that was different in the various regions of Iran, in the Indo-Iranian borderlands, and in the territories beyond the Amu-Darya (Mā warāʾ al-nahr). In this course we will follow up these changes, leading to the formation of Islamic culture of the Turko-Persian world, down to the Mongol conquest. Taking the perspective of archaeology and art history, we will specifically look at aspects such as the transformation of old and the appearance of new elites, new economic trends, new forms of urbanism, innovations in architecture and visual arts, as well as in ceramic, metal work, and glass production. For this purpose we will comprehensively discuss selected important urban centers, such as Nishapur, Merv, Samarkand, Ghazni, and others. Classes will be held both at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World and in the collections of Metropolitan Museum of Art. Assessment will be by means of a final paper.

Oral Presentations 25% of the grade; Contributions to class discussion 25% of the grade; Research Paper 50%.

Permission of the instructors is required.
INTRODUCTIONS

1. Jan 26: “What is Islamic Archaeology: Definitions and Problems” / Historiography of “Islamic Archaeology” in Iran and Central Asia


Historiography:


2. Feb 2: “Islamization” or “Islamizations”: Political, Social, and Demographic Change during the Early Islamic Period


3. Feb 9: Urbanism and ‘public’ architecture

Ribat-Caravanserai:


Urbanism:


**Madrasa:**


**Palace:**


**TRANSITIONS**

**4. Feb 16: Estakhr: A case study in problems**


Iranian Art and Archaeology presented to Ezat O. Negahban. Teheran: Iran University, pp. 210-219.


5. Feb 23: Samarkand and its hinterland in the eighth century


6. Mar 2: Post-Sasanian/Early Islamic Metal ware


**THE SAMANID TENTH CENTURY**

**7. Mar 9: Bukhara and Paykand**


**8. Mar 23: Nishapur I: Urban Topography and Demographics**


9. Mar 30: Nishapur II: Ceramics and Glassware


THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES: SELJUQS, GHAZNAVIDS, GHURIDS, AND QARAKHANIDS

10. Apr 6: Merv


11. Apr 13: Ghazni, Lashkari-Bazar, and Jam


12. Apr 20: Architectural decoration and ceramics of the eleventh and twelfth centuries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art


13. Apr 27: The Qarakhanids: A View from the “Center” and from the “Periphery”


CONCLUSIONS

14. May 4: Student Presentations