

Such was their image of power...to this day Mughal, usually spelled as Mogul, remains a metaphor for a powerful man.

Francis Robinson

The Mughal Emperors: And the Islamic Dynasties of India, Iran, and Central Asia, 113

“İsfahān nişf-i jahān” (Isfahan is Half the World)

Popular Quote

Gar firdaus bar rū-e zamīn ast, Hameen ast-o hameen ast-o hameen ast”

(If there’s paradise on the face of earth, this is it, this is it, this is it!)

Poet-Musician Amir Khusro (d.1325)

The city has served as the site of power, its spaces made coherent and hold in the image of man himself. The city has also served as the space in which these master images have cracked a part. The city brings together people who are different, it intensifies the complexity of social life, it presents people to each other as strangers. All these aspects of urban experience - difference, complexity, strangeness- afford resistance to domination. This craggy and difficult urban geography makes a particular moral promise. It can serve as a home for those who have accepted themselves as exiles from the Garden.

Richard Sennett

Flesh & Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization

ISLAMIC CITY

Windows into Muslim Religion, History, Society and Culture

REL 278 (Spring 2020) T & TH 9:40-10:55 a.m. (Chambers 2164)

WHAT IS IT ABOUT? (Previously Course Description):

Walking around on campus, have you ever stopped to wonder how one would study Davidson’s culture and life? What if you were to consider its space, art, and architecture as a window into the community? As one might at Davidson, in this course, to understand Islamic societies and their inhabitants, “the Muslims” we approach Islamic civilization “spatially”. That is, we explore the three great Islamic empires of the pre-modern era, the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals, through their cities. How were those cities spatially arranged? What was the center of town? Where were the markets? Who lived where? Researching and

imagining their societies, institutions, and cultural and artistic lives, we digitally recreate major cities of these Muslim empires. Given that it is a religious studies course, role of religion, religious thought and religious life of these empires will receive special attention.

There are various ways of studying a culture, civilization or a religious tradition. One can choose the window of history (thus studying its historical origins and evolution), read the various texts its inhabitants has produced, listen to the stories that were deemed important by its inhabitants, listen (or/and speak) to the inhabitants OR approach them “spatially”, i.e., by paying close attention to the spaces that they created. It is the latter that we will do this term. Our explorations seek to imagine, discover and share with one another a bird's eye view of premodern Muslim spaces, those created within the boundaries of the three biggest empires in human history, the Ottomans, the Safavids and the Mughals. We will seek to understand Islamic societies and its inhabitants “the Muslims” by painting a picture/image of a major "Islamic City" with its religious, cultural, social, political, and economic life as experienced within the imperial boundaries of these three empires. Led by a TLA-team (T=Technology; L=Library; A=Academic) you are invited to explorations of traditional Islamic civilization in which you will ‘choose’, ‘discover’, ‘imagine’ and ‘re-present’ an Islamic city and its political, religious, social, economic and cultural life.

Instructors:

James Sponsel (Library), Tiffany Johnson (Library), Brian Little (T&I) & Syed Rizwan Zamir (Religious Studies)

Contact & Meeting Hours

- ◇ Ms. Tiffany Johnson, Research and Design Studio (RADS), 1st Floor Library
tjohnson@davidson.edu
 - By appointment through <https://davidson.libcal.com/appointments?u=54510>
- ◇ Mr. Little (Cham B256); brlittle@davidson.edu
 - By appointment through email
- ◇ Mr. Sponsel (jasponsel@davidson.edu);
 - By appointment through <https://davidson.libcal.com/appointments/sponsel>.
- ◇ Mr. Zamir: EU Hall 104; rizamir@davidson.edu
 - Mon & Wed 12:00-1:30

LEARNING OUTCOMES

DLT TEAM:

By the end of this term the students will hopefully have:

1. Learned about three of the biggest pre-modern Muslim empires, the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals and their religious, political, economic, cultural and social life;
2. Learned about Islam and Muslims through the city-spaces Muslims created in a period of high Muslim political and cultural glory;
3. Creatively imagined and visualized and reflected on imagination's role in research;
4. Gained appreciation of spaces (and city-spaces in particular) as among the 'key windows' for understanding a culture and civilization and its underlying worldview;
5. Experimented in 'plotting' the story of a cultural world other than one's own;
6. Learned how to "look and find" (research) information on a phenomena;
7. Learned how to "navigate and bring together" (synthesize) what one's findings;
8. Consciously shared an accessible, reliable, thoughtful and visually compelling synthesis of research discoveries with an intended audience;
9. Thoughtfully planned and managed one's intellectual property.

INSTRUCTEES, PARTICIPANTS, CONTRIBUTORS, COLLABORATORS (YOURS?):

TEXT-GUIDES ON THE JOURNEY:

The Empires of the Near East and India: Source Studies of the Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal Literate Communities Paperback – April 23, 2019 by [Hani Khafipour](#) (Editor)

From <https://www.amazon.com/Empires-Near-East-India-Communities/dp/0231174373/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=The+Empires+of+the+Near+East+and+India&qid=1571977736&sr=8-2>

The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals (New Approaches to Asian History) 1st Edition by [Stephen F. Dale](#) (Author)

From <https://www.amazon.com/Empires-Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals-Approaches/dp/0521691427/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=STEPHEN+DALE&qid=1571977761&sr=8-1>

Text-Guides for Basic Background in Islam:

Note: Prior knowledge of Islam and Muslim civilization is not expected or assumed. For your own comfort, you may pick ONE of the introductory books listed on Veils & Webs.

{Veils & Webs (rizwanzamir.net) > Hover Over Dear Strangers > Click "Resources" }

INTELLECTUAL PRACTICES (Previously Course Assignments):

Midterm Review (SRZ)	30%
Annotated Bibliography (AB), 1400-Word CITY-HISTORY, Timeline→ Present, Special Features of the CITY (One Google document for the class)	20%
Presentations on City-Spaces (5% each, 3 out of 4 will be counted)	15%
Guided Tour (will incorporate History research into the presentation)	15%
Showcasing (must include clear takeaways for the viewer)	10%
Contributions/Process/Efforts/Struggles/Journey/Quality	10%

Disabilities: A student who requires accommodation for a documented disability of any type should see the instructor immediately to discuss modifications to course requirements. “Davidson College values the diversity of its community and is an equal access institution that admits otherwise qualified applicants without regard to disability. The college seeks to accommodate requests for accommodations related to disability that are determined to be reasonable and do not compromise the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact Beth Bleil, Director of Academic Access and Disability Resources, in the Center for Teaching and Learning by visiting her office in the E.H. Little Library, by emailing her at bebleil@davidson.edu, or by calling 704-894-2129. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive.”

Honor and Conscience: The College expects students to fully abide by the Honor Code. The instructor wonders about the convergence between the two.

THE ROADMAP

SEE MOODLE FOR CALENDAR OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

Disabilities: A student who requires accommodation for a documented disability of any type should see the instructor immediately to discuss modifications to course requirements. “Davidson College values the diversity of its community and is an equal access institution that admits otherwise qualified applicants without regard to disability. The college seeks to accommodate requests for accommodations related to disability that are determined to be reasonable and do not compromise the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact Beth Bleil, Director of Academic Access and Disability Resources, in the Center for Teaching and Learning by visiting her office in the E.H. Little Library, by emailing her at bebleil@davidson.edu, or by calling 704-894-2129. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive.”

Honor and Conscience: The College expects students to fully abide by the Honor Code. The instructor wonders about our conscience and the convergence/divergence between the two.

RESOURCES (& Background Readings):

Additional Resources & Support: There are numerous resources available to help you through the course. Please see the section entitled “Resources” under the “Dear Strangers” tab from Veils & Webs (rizwanzamir.net).

- Ira Lapidus (1973) “The Evolution of Muslim Urban Society” (B)
- Mohamad Gharipor, “The Bazaar in Islamic City: Design, Culture and History”
- George Makdisi (1970), “Madrasa and University in the Middle Ages”
- Said Arjomand (1999), “Development of the Institutions of Learning from the Tenth to the Fifteenth Century”
- Dohaish (1989), “Growth and Development of Islamic Libraries”
- Titus Burkhart, *Fez: The City of Islam*
- Titus Burckhardt, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*
- “Sufism and the People” & “Popular Culture and High Culture in Medieval Cairo” in *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*
- Ibn Battuta from *One Thousand Roads to Mecca*, 55-67
- Francis Robinson ed. *Cambridge Illustrated History of the Islamic World*
- **Watch:** “Knowledge of the World” The Traditional World of Islam (R) (Part 5)
- **Watch:** “Unity” The Traditional World of Islam (R)–[VC T7632 DVD] (Part 1)
- Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Art & Architecture” in *Islam in the Modern World*, pp.205-258