

Near East 230

Calligraphy as a theme in Islamic Culture

This course will combine a survey of the aesthetics, uses, interpretations of beautiful writing in Islamic culture with a "hands on" approach to recognizing, appreciating and, in a small way, creating Arabic script calligraphy. It is not required that students either know the Arabic script beforehand or that they have calligraphic talents, although some prior familiarity with Islamic civilization will be useful.

The course will divide itself between 3 days of lecture and 2 days of calligraphy writing/recognition practice.

Required reading:

Schimmel, Calligraphy and Islamic Culture

Testing/papers:

- 2 quizzes
- 1 final exam
- 1 project or paper

Class Schedule:

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| WEEK I | Lecture: Introduction; The Alphabet; Early History of Arabic Writing.
Writing Lab: Alphabet; writing tools. |
| WEEK II | Lecture: The Arabic language; Major Movements in Islamic History.
Writing Lab: Introduction to the Thuluth Script. |
| WEEK III | Lecture: Religious movements, Sunna, Shi'ah, Sufism; Tawhid and world view.
Writing Lab: Thuluth Script. |
| WEEK IV | Lecture: The Basic Scripts-Kufic; early scripts; Ibn Mugla and the notion of proportion.
Writing Lab: Thuluth Script, vowel marks, decoration. |
| WEEK V | Lecture: Basic Scripts-Thuluth group, connecting group, hanging group.
Writing Lab: Thuluth Design |
| WEEK VI | Lecture: Basic Scripts continued; The Calligraphers.
Writing Lab: Thuluth; The Abjad. |
| WEEK VII | Lecture: Sufism, Introduction, World-view, Numerology.
Writing Lab: Introduce Rika or Nasta'liq. |

Class Schedule

WEEK VIII Lecture: Magic (djinn), Magic and Sufism; Sufi Literature.
Writing Lab: Thuluth and Nasta'liq

WEEK IX Lecture: Sufism, Zikr, Garden, Beloved.
Writing Lab: Thuluth and Nasta'liq

WEEK X: Film: Lecture: Symbolism of the tools of calligraphy;
The Calligrapher.

Writing Lab: Projects

للعلم بالسفاهة لا بتعليق الأقدام ^{مضاف} ورمادها

الله ارسلنا بالهدى رسلا مصدقين بابايت وتبيان

لحاجة الخلق في حكم العقول الى متم وكنا في علم اديان

لولا لم ينظر امر الملح كما ولا امر الملح لا يتار وهدونا

Selections from Pre-Islamic Poetry

Imru al-Qais (d. 540? A.D.)

- 1) Stop, my two friends, let us weep as we remember my beloved and [look upon] the place where she once camped, in the edge of a sandy desert between Dakhul and Hawmal,
- 2) [Between] Tudih and Maqrat, places where one can find traces that have not been obliterated, despite the North wind and the South wind blowing and re-blowing over them.
- 3) You will see [there] the dung of the white deer in the enclosures and courtyards, which resembles seeds of pepper.
- 4) On the morning of separation, when she and her family departed, it was as if I, [standing] near the acacia shrubs [surrounding the encampment] of the tribe, were breaking pods of wild colocynth.¹
- 5) My companions, stopping their camels near me in that place, say "Do not die of grief, but bear it patiently."
- 6) For me, the only cure [for grief] is a flowing tear. But is there anywhere, in this deserted campsite, a place for crying?
- 7) Before her, you had the same experience with Umm al-Hawārith and her neighbor Umm al-Rabāb in Masal.
- 8) When the two of them stood up [to go], the [odor of] musk diffused from them, like the soft breeze of the south wind, bringing with it the smell of cloves.
- 9) So the tears of my eyes flowed down on my breast, on account of the tenderness of my love, until my tears wetted my sword belt.
- 10) Behold how many pleasant days you have spent with them, and especially the day at Dāra(t) Juljul.
- 11) And a day when I stabbed my riding camel for the virgins; O the wonder of its riding saddle divided into several loads!
- 12) O wonder at its being unsaddled after having been saddled and wonder at the butcher, who exerts himself.²
- 13) And the virgins [sat there] for a long time, throwing its meat [into the kettle], and its fat, like fringes of twisted silk.
- 14) And a day when I entered the howda, the howda of 'Unaiza, and she said: "Woe to you, that you will make me go on foot!"

¹ The pungent odor from this plant brings tears to the eyes of anyone who gets close to it.

² By "the butcher," the poet means himself.

- 15) She said, as the camel saddle tilted to the side with both of us together: "You have wounded my camel, Imru' al-Qais; now get down!"
- 16) I said to her: "Keep going, loosen his reins, and do not keep me far from your twice-tasted fruit.
- 17) Leave the camel alone, do not feel sorry for him because we are riding him one behind another; and let us taste your fruit like a quince-apple.
- 18) For many a beautiful woman like you, [Unaiza,] have I visited at night, while she was pregnant or nursing a child, and I have diverted her thoughts from her tiny child.
- 19) When, behind her, the child cried, she turned towards him with one-half [of her body] while her other half was under me, and was not turned away.
- 20) One day on the ridge of a sandhill she made excuses to me [for not fulfilling my desire], and swore an oath [of faithfulness to me] to which she made no exception.
- 21) O Unaiza, [put aside] some of this coquetry, be gentle, and if you have indeed made your mind to cut off [friendship with] me, then do it kindly.
- 22) Has anything about me deceived you? Your love is killing me, and as often as your heart gives an order to my heart, it will obey.
- 23) And if any one of my habits has caused you annoyance, then put away my heart from your heart, and it will be put away.
- 24) Never once did your two eyes flow tears without your two arrows striking me in my broken heart, conquered by love.
- 25) I remember a fair-skinned woman in a secluded tent, with whom I enjoyed myself, in no hurry.
- 26) To get to her, I slipped by some guards and a group gathered by the fire who would have been happy to kill me, if they could do it secretly, [without my kinsmen finding out].
- 27) The Pleiades were in the sky, like the jewels on a belt set with pearls and gems.
- 28) I came in; she had already taken off her clothes for sleep, except for a single long gown; she was standing by the door curtain.
- 29) Then she said: "I swear, you didn't even bother to try to fool them, and I don't expect you will ever stop going the wrong way."
- 30) I went out with her; she walking and pulling behind us the skirts of an embroidered woollen robe over our footprints.
- 31) Then when we had crossed the enclosure of the tribe, we sought the middle of the open plain, with its sandy undulations and hills of sand.
- 32) I drew the two long ringlets on the sides of her head toward me; and she leaned over me; she was slender of waist, but her legs were strong and full.

- 33) Thin-waisted, white-[skinned], there was no trace of fat on her stomach; her collar-bones shone like a polished mirror,
- 34) [Her complexion was the color of] the first egg of an ostrich--whiteness softly shading into tawny brown--pure water, unmuddied by many people walking through it, had nourished her.
- 35) She turns away, showing her smooth cheek, and stops [me from caressing her] with an eye that glances like a wild animal with young in the desert of Wajra.
- 36) [Her] neck is like the neck of a white deer, neither disproportionate when she raises it, nor unornamented.
- 37) [She has] a perfect head of hair, which [when loosened] adorns her back, black, very dark in color, thick like clusters of dates on a heavily-laden [palm] tree.
- 38) Her curls cascade down from the top of her head, and the plaits are lost in the twisted hair and the hair falling loose.
- 39) She turns to me with a slender waist, thin as the twisted leather bridle of a camel, and with a leg like the trunk of a palm tree bending over [from the weight of its fruit].
- 40) In the morning when she wakes, particles of musk are [lying] over her bed; she sleeps much in the morning and does not gird a working dress about her waist.
- 41) She gives with thin fingers, not thick, resembling the worms of the desert of Zabi, soft as the twigs of the Ishil tree.
- 42) In the evening she brightens the darkness, as if she were the light tower of a monk, a recluse, [which is lighted] in the evening [to guide travelers].
- 43) Towards one like her, the wise man gazes incessantly, lovingly; she is well-proportioned, [somewhere] between [the height of] the wearer of a long dress and the wearer of a short frock.
- 44) The follies of men are removed after their youth, but my heart is not freed from your love.
- 45) Do you see--there are many bitterly contentious ones [here], giving good advice, [reproaching me for loving] you; they are unfailing in their blame, I have turned my back [upon them].
- 46) And many nights, like waves of the sea, have let their curtains down upon me, with all kinds of grief, that they might test me.
- 47) I said to one of them, when he stretched out his forelegs and then his haunches, reared back his breast and neck:
- 48) "Long night, be brightened by dawn, but the morning is not preferable to you [in my opinion, for the pain of separation continues],
- 49) You are a night that causes wonder, in which it is as though the stars are [tied] by ropes of hemp to a huge boulder."

- 50) And many leather water-bags belonging to the people: I have placed their straps over my shoulder, submissive, and repeatedly gotten into the saddle [with them].
- 51) And many valleys like the plain of 'Aer, a sterile desert, have I crossed, in which the wolf was howling like a gambler with a family [to support]
- 52) I said to him, when he howled, "our affairs are small in the way of wealth, if you too have never been prosperous,
- 53) If either of us obtains anything, he makes away with it; and anyone who cultivates [the soil] as we do would become thin."
- 54) Early one morning I started out, when the birds were still in their nests, on a well-bred, long-bodied horse, outstripping the wild beasts [in his gallop].
- 55) Attacking, fleeing, advancing, retiring, [he does whatever I wish], yet is withal like a huge boulder hurled down by a flood from high above [in his pace, force and invulnerability].
- 56) [He is] of a bay color; he causes the saddlecloth to slip off the middle of his back, just as a smooth stone causes the falling rain to slip off of it.
- 57) In spite of his thinness, he is very lively, and when the heat [of his temperament] boils over in him, his snorting [sounds] like a kettle boiling.
- 58) At full gallop, at a time when the swift horses, on account of their fatigue, raised up the dust on the rough ground beaten by their hoofs.
- 59) The light boy slips off his back, and he throws away the garments of the heavy rough rider.
- 60) Very fast, like the top of a child, the successive working of his two hands with the string connected to it has made it spin well.
- 61) He has the flanks of a buck, the legs of an ostrich, a gallop like the lope of a wolf, and the canter of a cub.
- 62) Well-shaped, [with thick bones and strong sinews]: if you stand behind him, he shuts the place between his thighs from view with a tail that is full, hanging down to a little above the ground, that is not crooked.
- 63) As if, when he was standing in front of the tent, his back was the stone on which they grind up musk for the perfuming of a bride, or the stone on which they break up colocynth pods.
- 64) As if the blood from the leader of the herd [splashed] on his neck were the red juice of henna in combed white hair.
- 65) Then there appeared to us a flock of wild sheep, the ewes of which were like the virgins of Duwar in long trailing robes.
- 66) They turned around to flee and they resembled the markings on a cowry shell [hanging in a necklace] on the neck of a boy who is descended on both his mother's and father's side, from noble families in the tribe.

- 67) He³ caused us to overtake the foremost ones [in the herd], while close behind them were those who remained, in a crowd that did not disperse.
- 68) He killed one after the other, a bull and a cow, overtaking them, and yet he did not break out into a sweat that would make it necessary to wash him.
- 69) Then the men who dressed the meat were in part baking slices of roasted meat placed in a line [directly over the fire] while another part [of them] were boiling [the meat] quickly in a kettle.
- 70) We returned in the evening, and the eye almost failed [to appreciate his beauty; for] when the eye was raised to see [the upper part of] him, it would quickly be pulled downward [being attracted by the beauty of the lower part].
- 71) He passed the night with his saddle and bridle on him; he passed the night standing within sight of my eyes, without being sent to the stable-pen.
- 72) O my companion, do you see the lightning, the glittering of which I am pointing out to you; like the flashing of the two hands in the thick collecting crowned clouds?
- 73) There shines the glory of it, or [it resembles] the lamps of a monk who has dipped well-twisted wicks into the oil.
- 74) I sat down with my companions [waiting for the rain] between Zarij and 'Uzaib after looking attentively at the lightning.
- 75) In looking for rain, [we guessed that] the right side of its downpour was over Qatan, while the left of it was upon Satar and, beyond it, upon Yazbul.
- 76) [The storm] commenced pouring out its waters over Kuthaifa, overturning upon their faces the big trees called kanahbul.
- 77) The spray from it passed over the hills of Qanan, [so violently that] it caused the wild goats to hurry down from every place of refuge there.
- 78) And at Taima'a it did not leave a single date-tree trunk standing, and no buildings except those strengthened by hard stones.
- 79) As if [Mount] Thabir at the first downfall of its rain became a great one of the people, wrapped in a striped cloak [to shield him from the wet].
- 80) As if in the morning the summit of the peak of Mujaimir, by reason of the flood and the debris around it, were the tip of spindle [wrapped in wool].
- 81) And the cloud poured out onto the desert of Ghabit its goods⁴ ; [resembling] a Yemeni merchant arriving with his trunks loaded [with rich cloth].
- 82) As if in the morning the small birds of the valley of Jiwa'a had drunk deeply of old, pure spiced wine,

³ This pronoun refers to the horse.

⁴ By the "goods" of the cloud, Imru' al-Qais means the rain which is pouring down from it.

83) As if in the evening the wild beasts that had drowned in the furthest parts [of the valley] were the root-bulbs of wild onions.”

Theory and Scholarly Practice in the Study of Near Eastern Culture

Syllabus

Although we will talk about a number of prominent (and not so prominent) critics and theoreticians, the basic required reading for this seminar will consist of the following books which will, with any luck, be available at the bookstore:

Hentsch, Thierry (1992) *Imagining the Middle East*. Montreal/New York, Black Rose Books.

Herrnstein Smith, Barbara (1988) *Contingencies of Value*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Menocal, Maria Rosa (1994) *Shards of Love*. Durham, Duke University Press.

In order to make it easier to participate in the discussion, I recommend reading these books as soon as possible at about three week intervals. I will be talking to you about a number of topics, you will be expected to talk with me and each other about these books and whatever other reading you choose to do. The attached reading list is an aid for those who wish to prepare for or follow up on issues raised in the lectures and discussions. From time to time there will also be brief readings suggested as preparation for particular classes.

Week I—Lecture 1: *Introductions: Stances, Trajectories, Intersections*

[Some reflections on the construction of scholarly authority beginning with Lyotard and introducing “imagining” the Middle East (and *Imagining the Middle East*) in the context of a major theoretical tremor that had shattering reverberations down to Deleuze and Guattari’s assault on the foundations of subjectivity.]

For reference: Holland (1991) (1988); Lyotard (1991); Mahon (1992); Deleuze (1992) [with a good introduction by Paul Bové]; several articles in Stivale (1991), Eagleton (1983).

Week II—Dialogue: With Zakiya Hanafi on the search for a post-authoritarian subject of writing about culture.

For reference: (TBA)

Week III—Lecture 2: *Istanbul: Influence, Continuity, Time, Place*

[Istanbul as a metaphor and text for tergiversations on the history of histories and texts about texts; anxieties of influence and anxieties about influence as a theme in scholarly writing. Bloom to De Man to “reform” in Middle Eastern Culture.]

For reference: Bloom (1973); de Man (1983) Title essay and review of Bloom; Menocal (1989); Lentricchia (1980) Chapters 8 and 9.

Week IV–Dialogue: With Terri De Young on issues of “influence.”

For reference: (TBA)

Week V–Lecture 3: *Contingency of Value: The Value of Contingency*

[An exploration of the ways we make “distinctions” and how our distinctions have an impact on the various interlinked “economies” of of the subject, of objective knowledge, of art and “art about art” as these manifest themselves in issues of critical valuation, the canon, translation, and reading. How such activities are implicated in our own projects of self-adequation.]

For reference: Bourdieu (1990/1980) (1990), Bataille (1991) Vol. I part 1, Bloom (1973), de Man (1983).

Week VI–Dialogue: With Naomi Sokoloff on the Jewish other and Jewish self in writing and the institution of scholarship.

For reference: Boyarin and Boyarin (1993)

Week VII–Lecture 4: *Time Warps: Through the Transparent Wall as Literature Writes Literary History*

[Theories of literary change and persistence read against the example of Atilla Ilhan’s attempt to reconstitute historical Ottoman genres. An engagement with the politics of reading the past.]

For reference: (TBA)

Week VIII–Dialogue with Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak on Lothman, Bakhtin and the theory of literary change.

For reference: Lothman (1977/1974); Lothman and Uspensky (1978)

Week IX–Lecture 5: *Who’s Got the Text? What Text?*

[Using a few specific examples this lecture problematizes the status of the pre-modern unitary text and the business of creating that text. It also raises questions about how these processes are related to other projects of reconstruction and dominance. I will also present some summary thoughts on a heterologous critical practice.]

For reference: (TBA)

Week X–Dialogue with Kemal Silay on the politics of scholarship in Turkey and its implications for foreign scholars.

For reference: (TBA)

Theory and Scholarly Practice in the Study of Near Eastern Culture

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Week I—Lecture 1: *Introductions: Stances, Trajectories, Intersections*

[Some reflections on the construction of scholarly authority beginning with Lyotard and introducing “imagining” the Middle East (and *Imagining the Middle East*) in the context of a major theoretical tremor that had shattering reverberations down to Deleuze and Guattari’s assault on the foundations of subjectivity.]

For reference: Holland (1991) (1988); Lyotard (1991); Mahon (1992); Deleuze (1992) [with a good introduction by Paul Bové]; several articles in Stivale (1991), Eagleton (1983).

Week II—Dialogue: With Zakiya Hanafi on the search for a post-authoritarian subject of writing about culture.

For reference: (TBA)

Week III—Lecture 2: *Istanbul: Influence, Continuity, Time, Place*

[Istanbul as a metaphor and text for tergiversations on the history of histories and texts about texts; anxieties of influence and anxieties about influence as a theme in scholarly writing. Bloom to De Man to “reform” in Middle Eastern Culture.]

PLEASE ANNOUNCE...PLEASE ANNOUNCE...PLEASE ANNOUNCE

LECTURES:

Winter Quarter 1993

During this quarter in my seminar (Near East 536), I will be giving five formal lectures on some recent theoretical issues in literary criticism and their relation to writing and studying the Middle East. Because the theories to which I will refer represent a profound challenge to the way we are accustomed to do our various scholarly jobs, I am inviting any of our students (graduate or undergraduate) or faculty who are interested to attend the lectures. The time of the seminar is Wednesday from 3:30 to 5:30 pm and the lectures should take all or a part of the first hour. The general topics of the lectures and their dates are listed below.

Walter G. Andrews

Denny 209

Week I (Jan. 5)-Lecture 1: *Introductions: Stances, Trajectories, Intersections*

[Some reflections on the construction of scholarly authority beginning with Lyotard and introducing "imagining" the Middle East (and Thierry Hentsch's *Imagining the Middle East*) in the context of a major theoretical tremor that has had, as one of its results, Derrida's assault on the grounds of Western metaphysics.]

Revised
 Week III (Jan. 19)-Lecture 2: *Istanbul: Influence, Continuity, Time, Place. (Exiles from Influence).*

[The metaphor of Istanbul as the text (or sub-text) of some reflections on the history of histories and texts about texts. I will explore the relation of E. J. W. Gibb and Namik Kemal as emblems of anxieties of influence and anxieties about influence as a theme in scholarly writing, in the context of critical theory from Harold Bloom to Paul De Man to "reform" in Middle Eastern Culture.]

Revised
 Week V (Feb. 2)-Lecture 3: *The Contingency of Value: The Value of Contingency.*

[An exploration of the problematics of "objectification" and how this affects the ways we make "distinctions" and how our distinctions have an impact on the various interlinked "economies" of art and "art about art" as these manifest themselves in issues of critical valuation, the canon, translation, and reading. How such activities are implicated in our own projects of self-adequation and our own needs for intimacy. I will touch upon the work of Bourdieu, Bataille, Derrida and Foucault.]

Revised
 Week VII (Feb. 16)-Lecture 4: *Time Warps: Through the Transparent Wall as Literature Writes Literary History*

[I will discuss some of the major issues surrounding concepts of continuity, origin, and modernity which will include theories of literary change and persistence read against the example of Atilla Ilhan's attempt to reconstitute historical Ottoman genres. An engagement with the politics of reading the past.]

Revised
 Week IX (Mar. 2)-Lecture 5: *Who's Got the Text? What Text?*

[Using a few specific examples this lecture problematizes the status of the pre-modern unitary text and the business of creating that text. It also raises questions about how these processes are related to other projects of reconstruction and dominance. An introduction to a "self-erasing" project of heterologous criticism and Maria Rosa Menocal's *Shards of Love*.]

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