

**TEXTILES AND TRADE**  
**(ARTH 430/599: ADVANCED STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND ISLAMIC ART)**

**LAWRENCE BUTLER, FALL 2009**

**PRELIMINARY COURSE SYLLABUS**

Textiles and agriculture were the two major commercial products of the premodern world, tremendously important to human history. Textiles are fascinating to art historians, since they may well have been the visual art most in view and most often traded in the ancient and medieval worlds. Since they are transitory, their history is particularly hard to reconstruct and easy to overlook. In this senior seminar, we will explore the art, history, anthropology and archeology of textiles through case studies. We will make frequent use of Washington DC's unique Textile Museum and its library throughout the course. Since this is a seminar, students will take an active part in discussing the readings, and will present the results of their own research to the class using Powerpoint.

Students taking this class for ARTH 599 graduate credit will be required to do extra work appropriate to that level. Students pursuing the interdisciplinary minor in Ancient Mediterranean Art and Archeology may use this class to fulfill the seminar requirement, with an appropriate research topic. The course may also count towards the Islamic Studies minor as an appropriate "special topics" course; check with the advisor, Prof. Sumaiya Hamdani.

**General education notes:** This course counts as a *synthesis course* for graduation. Due to our bizarre system, it does *not* count as "fine arts" for graduation. It also fulfills the **writing intensive** course requirement for the Art History major. This requirement will be met through the two formal writing assignments, adding up to at least 3500 words.

**COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.** In this course, students will:

- Learn about the basic structures, materials and techniques of textile worldwide, with a particular emphasis on Medieval and Islamic Eurasia.
- Read and discuss academic approaches to the history, art, and anthropology of textiles.
- Apply reading and research to the study of actual textiles from a private collection.
- Use the resources of the Textile Museum, through visits to the collection and its library.
- Research, prepare and present original research to the class using Powerpoint.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Assigned readings and assigned class discussion of them.
- Preliminary research project, with short 3-5pp. paper and informal oral presentation.
- Formal research with term paper and short Powerpoint presentation.
- Two tests: A term quiz, and a take-home essay test based on the readings.
- Several self-propelled visits to the Textile Museum in Washington, DC.
- Co-leadership of two assigned reading discussions.
- *For graduate students taking this course as ARTH 599: extra weekly reading assignment with a weekly written reaction paper. Longer classroom presentation..*

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:**

- The usual: word-processing, email, and the ability to use the Internet for research.
- **Powerpoint** presentation. Ability to use, or willingness to learn, simple Powerpoint.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

- *Cloth and Human Experience*, ed. Annette B. Weiner and Jane Schneider. Smithsonian, reprint edition (1991). Paperback.
- Ann Hecht, *The Art of the Loom*. Univ. of Washington, paperback, 2001.
- *Arts of Asia*, vol. 26 no. 1 (Jan-Feb 1996). Special issue on the Textile Museum.

**Recommended for the interested student, *not* required or expected for this class:**

- Janet Harvey, *Traditional Textiles of Central Asia*. Thames & Hudson, paperback, 1997.
- Jennifer Harris, ed., *Textiles 5000 Years* (hardcover title) or (*5000 Years of Textiles* (paperback title). Abrams, 1993, and others. Out of print, but widely available.
- Mary Schoeser, *World Textiles: A Concise History*. Thames & Hudson, 2003.
- John Gillow, *Traditional Indonesian Textiles*. Thames & Hudson, 1995.

**HOW TO REACH ME:**

- Email: [lbutler@gmu.edu](mailto:lbutler@gmu.edu). No more private office phone, sorry. Budget cuts.
- To leave a voicemail message: History and Art History Department office at **(703) 993-1250**.
- Office hours: **Mondays and Fridays, 1:30 to 2:00 and 3:30-4:30** (drop-in). Other times by appointment. Office: **Robinson B340**, deep inside the History and Art History Department.

**SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT DATES:**

**Last day to add classes:** Tuesday, Sept. 15.

**Quiz on terms/ Textile Museum reports:** Wednesday, Sept. 23rd

**Last day to drop classes:** Friday, Oct. 2.

**Elective withdrawal period for undergraduates:** October 5-30

**Take-home reading test due in class:** Wednesday, November 11

**THANKSGIVING:** No class Weds. Nov. 25

**FINAL EXAM DATE:** Wednesday, December 16, 4:30 to 7:00 PM. **No final exam is planned for this course, but I reserve the day if needed for final student presentations.**

**PRELIMINARY CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE**  
**(READINGS AND DATES STILL FLUID, TO BE ADJUSTED AS NEEDED)**

All classes will be held in the Fine Arts Building, Room B212. Section 002 meets on Thursday evenings from 4:30 to 7:10 PM, with a short break halfway through. Please note that this schedule is *very* tentative and likely to change when I get a better sense of student interests and guest opportunities. This is the nature of a seminar: think Daoist.

Graduate students will be assigned extra exhibition catalogues to review, in order to bring their total assigned reading load to roughly one book per week, as expected by the Department.

This is preliminary. Complete reading for subsequent weeks will be assigned. Please note:

- ***Cloth*** = *Cloth and Human Experience*, ed. Annette B. Weiner and Jane Schneider. Smithsonian, reprint edition (1991). Paperback.
- **Hecht** = Ann Hecht, *The Art of the Loom*. Univ. of Washington, paperback, 2001.
- ***Arts of Asia*** = *Arts of Asia* 26 no.1 (1996), special issue on the Textile Museum.
- **On-line** = to be found on the class Blackboard website, in .pdf form or as a web link.

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**Sept 2: Introduction to the study of textiles.**

Readings:

- *Cloth*, chapter 1: Introduction
- *Arts of Asia*, “Introduction” and “Legacy of Collector...”
- Lawrence Butler, “Putting Silk into Silk Route Studies”

Film: “Tana Bana: Wisdom of the Loom”

**September 9: Materials and dyes**

Readings from:

- Gillow & Sentence, *World Textiles*, 1, “Materials”
- Janet Harvey, *Textiles of Central Asia*, “The Materials and Dyes”
- Mary Schoeser, *World Textiles*, “Prehistoric Materials and Techniques”

Films: “In Search of Lost Color;” and “Indigo: A World of Blue”

**September 16: Weaving on a loom**

Readings from:

- Hecht, “Introduction: the loom, spinning, dyeing, weaving”
- Hecht, 3: “West Africa: Narrow-strip Weaving”
- Gillow & Sentence, *World Textiles*, 2, “Loom-woven textiles”
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Film: “African Weaving”

**September 23: Term quiz and Textile Museum reports**

Readings: *Arts of Asia*: “Caring for Textiles” and “Arthur D. Jenkins Library”

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## **PART 2: REGIONAL CASE-STUDIES OF TEXTILE AND TRADE HISTORY**

### **September 30: Textiles in the Ancient World**

Readings from:

- Frances Wood, *The Silk Road*
- Elizabeth Barber, chapters from *Women's Work: The First 30,000 Years*.
- Diane Lee Carroll, *Looms and Textiles of the Copts*

Grad students: critique *Silk Roads, China Ships*, exhibition catalogue on reserve.

### **October 7: Research for the final projects**

Meet at the Johnson Center Media Library, the bibliographic instruction room.

Final research projects assigned.

Film: TBA.

### **October 14: Byzantine and Islamic silk in Eurasia**

Readings:

- On Byzantine textile production, TBA
- *Arts of Asia*: Mackie, "Increase the Prestige: Islamic Textiles"
- Lisa Golombek, "The Draped Universe of Islam"
- Xinru Liu, "VII. Silk Trade under Islamic Rule"

Grad students: critique *When Silk Was Gold*, exhibition catalogue, on reserve.

### **October 21: Silk and wool in medieval Europe**

Readings:

- Heller, "Fashion in French Crusader Literature: Desiring Infidel Textiles"
- Anna Muthesius, "Silk in the Medieval World"
- On the Bayeux Tapestry, TBA

### **October 28: Nomadic textiles in the Eurasian steppes**

Readings from:

- Mallory & Mair, "Tartans in the Tarim" from *The Tarim Mummies*
- Harvey, *Traditional Textiles of Central Asia*
- Hecht, 2: "The Middle East: The Bedouin"
- *Arts of Asia*: Carmel, "At the Crossroads of the Continent: Textiles from Central Asia"

Grad students: critique *Nomads of Eurasia*, exhibition catalogue, on reserve.

### **November 4: Carpets and the Eurasian market**

Readings from:

- Walter Denny, *The Classic Tradition in Anatolian Carpets*
- Rosamund Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza*
- Helfgott, "Production and Trade: The Persian Carpet Industry"
- *Arts of Asia*: Bier, "Approaches to Understanding Oriental Carpets"

Grad students: critique *Venice and the Islamic World*, exhibition catalogue, on reserve.

### **November 11: Textiles for Ritual and Trade in SE Asia.**

Readings from:

- Hecht, 4: "Southeast Asia: Indonesian Textiles"
- *Arts of Asia*: Gittinger, Southeast Asian Textiles at the Textile Museum"
- Robyn Maxwell, "An Introduction to Southeast Asian Textile History"

- John Guy, *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East*

Grad students: critique Mattiebelle Gittinger, *Textiles from This World and Beyond*," exhibition catalogue.

**Take-home test on readings and discussion due.**

### **PART 3: STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS**

**November 18**

**December 2**

**December 9**

Student presentations will include be based upon and include discussion of the readings unassigned to this point in *Cloth and Human Experience* and *Art of the Loom*, on African, Indian, later European, North and South American and Oceanic textile traditions. Specific dates and assigned readings will be determined when we all know. All class members will be expected to do the readings appropriate for the evening's presentations.

**There will be no final exam, but please reserve the December 16 slot in case we need an extra session for the final student presentations.**

## CLASS POLICIES

**Attendance** is necessary; much of the material will only be covered in our slide lectures. You are responsible for getting notes, and for all consequences of missed classes. **Class participation will affect your grade, if it is conspicuously good, conspicuously lacking, or continually disruptive.** I will be making spot checks of attendance—they're not perfect, but they help us both recognize a pattern.

**Classroom atmosphere.** Courtesy and common sense, please. We're all adults; sometimes emergencies come up. However, talking to friends during lectures, wandering in and out, cell phones, and eating food are all badly distracting to everyone else. **Chronic chatterers and latecomers are disruptive, and will be asked to leave the classroom** (Oh yes I can do that—University policy.).

**Written work** is a major part of the course, and will count heavily towards your final grade. Please study the explanation of my writing standards, attached to this syllabus. In short: **Papers must be written in good formal English, with full documentation** in a standard format such as MLA or Harbrace. **All students are expected to use word-processors with spell-checkers. Spelling and grammar count.** Please submit papers typed, double-spaced, and PROOFREAD. **Badly written work will be downgraded, returned for a rewrite, or flunked,** as I see most appropriate.

**No email submissions of papers,** except in special cases with my prior permission. Sorry—I've tried—it causes too many problems. **Written work is due in hard copy in class on the due date.** Papers will not be considered "on time" unless and until I receive them in hard copy.

**Late work will be graded down five points per day and ten points over a weekend.** Plan ahead--last-minute hard-disk and printer failures are your problem, and do not constitute legitimate excuses. **By the final exam, all missing work becomes F work.** Make-up tests and elaborate medical excuses will require verification with a physician's or associate dean's excuse. There will be no make-up final exams.

**English as a Second Language:** If English is not your first language, I will be happy to help you do your best in the writing assignments--by previewing papers, offering extra help, that sort of thing. But the final result must be written in good standard English. Please work with **The Writing Center** in Robinson I, Room A116. Call them at (703) 993-1200, or see their web page for English language help, at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>.

**Learning disabilities.** If you are a student with disabilities, and you need academic accommodations, please see me *and* contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) or 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Visit their website: [www.gmu.edu/student/drc/](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/).

**Religious holidays.** I have planned this course according to the George Mason University calendar. If you observe a religious holiday that the University does not, please let me know and I will make necessary accommodations for you (but not for the whole class).

**Auditors** are welcome to sit and listen, if there is room. If you would like to participate more actively, that's fine with me *if* (!!) you are keeping up with the assigned class reading. Otherwise, please be quiet.

**Academic honesty** is expected in all tests and writing. Please respect the Honor Code, our classroom standards, your fellow students, and yourself. The Honor Pledge will be required on all tests. Please report violations to the Honor Committee. See the explanation of plagiarism in the guidelines for writing.

## GRADING POLICIES

**TESTS** must be taken on the scheduled date. If there has been an emergency, it must be documented by a note from the dean's office or your doctor. In those cases, there will be one make-up test given, probably during the subsequent class. Tests will be graded by percentage. **Grades will be calculated as follows:**

A	= 100% to 93%, or 4.00	B-	= 82% to 80 %, or 2.67	D	= 60% to 66%, or
A-	= 92% to 90%, or 3.67	C+	= 79% to 77 %, or 2.33		1.0
B+	= 89% to 87%, or 3.33	C	= 76% to 73 %, or 2.00	F	= below 60% and
B	= 86% to 83 %, or 3.00	C-	= 72% to 70 %, or 1.67		receives no credit

I may award a final A+ in rare instances: 4.0 average *plus* unusually good writing and class participation.

**WRITTEN WORK** may be graded by points, or by the following criteria, as appropriate:

A = Startlingly good, exceeding our expectations, and well-written. Must be imaginative; NOT given for simply following directions.

B = Good effort with a good result.

C = Perfunctory; or, tried but missed the point; or, did something well but it wasn't the assignment; or, good idea but careless or sloppy.

D = Warning; accepted under protest.

F = Unacceptable as college-level work.

**Paper grades will be lowered** for lateness, sloppiness, lack of proofreading, bad English, lack of necessary documentation, faulty logic, or failure to follow directions for the assignment. Please study the directions for writing assignments, elsewhere in this syllabus.

**Late written work:** Papers are **due in class in hard copy** on the day specified. After that, late papers will be lowered five points a day, or half a grade, during the work week (Mon-Fri) and lowered ten points over a weekend. Note that this makes even the best work "F" work after about ten days. **If you need an extension, you must ask for it before the due date, not on or after**, if you want to avoid a penalty.

**Ungraded work:** Maps and other ungraded exercises will be given checks, pluses or minuses only; when figuring up your final grade, these will help us determine borderline grades. **Missing maps will result in a lowering of your final grade by 5 points per item.**

**Class participation grade:** Normal class participation—showing up on time, keeping up with classwork, participating in group activities, not causing problems--will be figured as "B" level. Great class participation will be graded "A". Problematic will be graded "C" or lower, heaven forbid.

**FINAL GRADES** will be based on the average of your paper, test and class grades. Each assignment will be weighted thus:

Textile Museum project:	10 %	Research presentation	20%
Quiz on terms:	10%	Research paper	20%
Take-home reading test:	20%	Class discussion	20 %

**Graduate students will be awarded checks, pluses, minuses or zeros for ungraded reaction papers.**

**Final grades may be raised or lowered from strict average in the following circumstances:**

- A pattern of pluses or minuses on ungraded assignments;
- I may raise or lower your grade in recognition of significant change over the course of the semester.
- **TWO MAJOR (20%-worth) PIECES OF GRADED WORK MISSING AT THE END OF THE COURSE WILL BE GROUNDS FOR FAILING THE COURSE REGARDLESS OF YOUR PRECISE AVERAGE.**

## DIRECTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

There will be two short papers assigned for this class. Specific directions will be handed out when the papers are assigned. I expect papers in my classes to be formal academic writing, using correct standard English and essay organization. They should be presented as finished products, unless otherwise specified. In general, all written work for me, or for Art History in general, must observe the following rules:

**Organization:** College-level essays are to be carefully constructed and presented as finished products. They are not just journal entries or stream-of-consciousness. This means they must have a thesis of some sort, and present reasoned arguments through the examination of evidence. There should be an introductory thesis statement and a conclusion. Paragraphs should be used as a way to structure the argument so a reader can follow your thinking. An interesting or informative title is necessary. A funny title is fine. “Art Paper #1” is not.

**Mechanics:** All papers must be typed and double-spaced, using a standard font in 10 or 11-point size. Please stick to plain old white paper and standard fonts. Handwriting is *not* OK. Quadruple-spacing is *not* OK. Writing the whole darned thing in italics or Olde English is *not* OK. (Why not? Because italics are to be used for specific reasons: emphasis and foreign terms. Because Olde English on perfumed blue paper is too-too high school). Pictures are nice, but strictly optional. Pictures cannot be a substitute for writing. Nice presentation is always welcome, but please be clear that adding pictures will not affect your grade unless they are explicitly part of the assignment.

**Spelling and grammar** are expected to be excruciatingly correct. Use the spell-checker. I will mark down work for sloppy spelling and grammar. If the writing is really awful—ungrammatical, no evidence of proofreading, horrible spelling, or laughably short—I will not read it. I’ll return it as unacceptable, with an F. Early in the semester, I’ll allow a rewrite (for a maximum of C, which is the average of F and A). Late in the semester there will be no time for a rewrite.

**Page limits** should be observed, and should be your guide to the depth of writing: a one-to-two page paper is pretty much a quick observation, with thesis and conclusion. Three-to-five pages means there is time to develop a thesis and argue it through several paragraphs, considering several different questions, angles or pieces of evidence. An eight-to-ten page paper usually includes research (this will be made clear in the assignment), and anything over ten pages is probably expected to include a great deal of research.

**Citations.** Any time you use a source of information you should consider citing it, to avoid the appearance of plagiarism. Generally-known facts are not normally cited. Anything else is, including a long recitation of facts from one source that you are paraphrasing, a single opinion stated by another author, and any direct quote.

Example 1: “George Washington lived at Mount Vernon.” We know that. No citation needed. Even if you didn’t happen to know that, it is the sort of information that is so widely available that no specific citation is expected.

Example 2: “The cathedral was begun in the 1890’s, and not completed until the 1950’s after several design changes.” This is specialized information, and it must have come from somewhere unless you just made it up. So please cite your source of information! If you are paraphrasing a large amount of information, put a citation at the end of the paragraph. Give a separate citation to each separate source.

Example 3: “The cathedral looks as if it was begun in the 1890’s and not completed until the 1950’s with some design changes along the way.” Clearly your own opinion (we hope) based on your own observations (we hope). If this is the case, then no citation is necessary. However, if you only say it because you read it somewhere, please cite the source. This is the honor system.

Example 4: “This is the finest example of Romanesque-revival style in the country.” Oh, says who? If this is your opinion, please back it up by explaining your assertion. If you are just quoting from someone else, you need to cite the information.

Example 5: “According to Encarta, this is the finest example of Romanesque-revival style in the country.” That’s nice—but you still need to add a footnote or parenthetical reference giving the details, in a standard citation format.

**Citation style:** There are several acceptable citation styles in academic writing, and you probably have been taught several here and there. Please use the one you know best, or the one most appropriate to your major. In history and art-history, we usually use the **Chicago style**, which uses footnotes. In English and other language humanities, **MLA style** is the standard, with short parenthetical references to authors and page numbers, and a list of works cited at the end. The social sciences use the similar **APA style**. In any case, use one style correctly and consistently throughout your essay. Take the necessary time to learn the standard rules, and follow them carefully. The rules are easily found in any writing manual. **Don't remember the rules? Go to the GMU Writing Center web site, find "resources," and click on their "on-line style guides."** It's just that simple. Here's the URL:  
<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources/> .

**Submission.** All papers are to be submitted in **hard copy** in class on the due date. **I cannot accept email submissions**—sorry, but they cause too many problems. Papers will not be considered “on time” unless I receive them in hard copy.

**Plagiarism** is a serious academic offense. Here is how the **GMU Honor Code** defines it:

B. Plagiarism encompasses the following:

1. Presenting as one's own the works, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement.
2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement.

That means **you must acknowledge your source, even if it is an anonymous museum pamphlet or long museum label**. Those, too, are reasoned writing. I get very unhappy when I read something that sounds like it was copied from a museum website, even if a word is changed here or there. So, I copied the above from the Honor Code listed in the Faculty/Staff Handbook on-line, along with judicial procedures, at <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>

**The good news: Plagiarism is easily avoided.** Just acknowledge all your sources, using footnotes or other acceptable form of reference. That's really all there is to it. **The bad news: Plagiarism on tests and papers is CHEATING and will be reported to the Honor Committee!**

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