

# THE N.C. SCHOLAR OF GLOBAL DISTINCTION PROGRAM



Middle East and  
North Africa

ART 121

## Two-Dimensional Design

Amy Levine | Piedmont Community College

This course introduces the elements and principles of design as applied to two-dimensional art. Emphasis is placed on the structural elements, the principles of visual organization, and the theories of color mixing and interaction. Upon completion, students should be able to understand and use critical and analytical approaches as they apply to two-dimensional visual art.

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### Description of Module:

Islamic art is not from just one time period, place or culture. It is the artwork that began with the birth of Islam, some 1400 years ago. The artists are usually Muslim, but they can be non-Muslims living in predominantly Muslim lands, including the countries of Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, India, Morocco, Spain, Syria, and Turkey, among others. In this module, we will be discussing Islamic art from the MENA region of the world. MENA refers to countries the Middle East and North Africa. While there are great differences in the artwork depending upon the time period and specific location, there are also commonalities. Some features that have become iconic and inspiring are geometric designs and patterns. For this assignment, we will be focusing upon Islamic geometric design. Upon seeing these designs and patterns, students will undoubtedly feel some familiarity, as they have become recognizable motifs throughout the world and inspire contemporary design. By creating both traditional and original patterns, students will be able to tie Islamic geometric patterns to the elements and principles of design. This class does not traditionally have a high registration, but globalizing this class will give AFA-VA students a pathway to becoming scholars of global distinction.

### Student Global Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will explore the elements and principles of design through the study of Islamic geometric design and patterns.
2. Students will study the significance of Islamic art and design of the MENA region, through the study of Islamic geometric design and pattern.
3. Students will analyze the ways Islamic geometric design has permeated contemporary American design culture.

### Activity 1. Exploring Formal Design and Content through the Study of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque

#### Objective:

Students will be able to analyze an Islamic artwork with geometric patterns in terms of the elements and principles of design and content.

#### Procedure:

This activity will take place after a class discussion about formal design and content when analyzing a work of art. Students will study the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in Esfahan, Iran through analysis of the wall patterns of the mosque. They will study these patterns in terms of composition, use of elements and visual organization via the principles. They will also study the mosque's significance in the MENA region by researching its history and significance. This assignment will take place on the discussion board.

Assignment/Assessment:

Students will be given several images of the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque that include Islamic geometric patterns. On the discussion board, they will describe how the elements and principles have been used in composing the pieces. Next, they will describe the historical significance of the mausoleum in the MENA region and the relationship between art of the mosque and Islamic design. All students will respond to at least two other students in this discussion and be assessed on the accuracy of their analysis and the originality of their responses.

Resources and References:

Lumen Learning: Module 1 Elements and Principles of Design

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/masteryart1/chapter/oe-1-3/>

Metmuseum: Islamic Art and Geometric Design

[https://www.metmuseum.org/-/media/files/learn/for-educators/publications-for-educators/islamic\\_art\\_and\\_geometric\\_design.pdf](https://www.metmuseum.org/-/media/files/learn/for-educators/publications-for-educators/islamic_art_and_geometric_design.pdf)

Iranian Tours

<https://www.iriantours.com/attraction/sheikh-lotfollah-mosque/>

BBC Religions

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/art/art\\_1.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/art/art_1.shtml)

Invaluable: Islamic Art Patterns and Their Symbolic Meaning

<https://www.invaluable.com/blog/islamic-art-patterns/>

## Activity 2. Classic Patterns

Objective:

Students will study traditional Islamic design, focusing on the basic geometric shapes of six, eight and ten points.

Assignment 1/Assessment:

Students will watch the videos listed in the resource section of the assignment. They will then prepare three geometric design sketches, one six point, one eight point and one ten point. Students will have to measure the spaces, keeping each design symmetrical and evenly divided.

Assignment 2/Assessment:

Students will prepare three sketches of traditional Islamic geometric patterns, one each for six, eight and ten-point designs. They will be assessed on the accuracy of measurement and craftsmanship of the designs.

Assignment 3/Assessment:

Each student will find an example of Islamic art or architecture based on Islamic geometric design. This artwork will be used in Assignment 4. They will provide information about the artwork including its time period, location, art form, medium, artist (if known) and significance. They will also identify how many points are in the design. Students will add their chosen artwork to an interactive Google Map of the MENA region. They will be graded on accuracy and completeness of the assignment.

Resources and References:

The Guardian: Muslim rule and compass: the magic of Islamic geometric design

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/alex-s-adventures-in-numberland/2015/feb/10/muslim-rule-and-compass-the-magic-of-islamic-geometric-design>

Type of Islamic Geometrical Patterns

[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Type-of-Islamic-Geometrical-Patterns\\_fig5\\_305041390](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Type-of-Islamic-Geometrical-Patterns_fig5_305041390)

Khan Academy: Arts of the Islamic World (article)

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-islam/beginners-guide-islamic-world-art/beginners-guide-islamic-art/a/arts-of-the-islamic-world>

TED Talk: The complex geometry of Islamic design - Eric Broug

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-islam/beginners-guide-islamic-world-art/beginners-guide-islamic-art/v/geometry-islamic-design>

How to draw an Islamic geometric pattern by Ayyubid Star

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27iVbB656a0>

Paint and draw Islamic geometry from Mughal, India with Samira Mian

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_tw-XuSU\\_uo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tw-XuSU_uo)

### Activity 3. Original Design Based Upon Islamic Geometric Patterns

Objective:

Students will use the concepts introduced in this module to create an original design based upon Islamic geometric design and patterns.

Procedure:

After looking at the provided resources, students will create an original design based on either six, eight or ten-point Islamic design as recognized in assignment 3. They will focus on the specific artwork from assignment 3 as inspiration for their design. Using their knowledge of the elements and principles of design as well as traditional Islamic geometric design, they will create their own distinct geometric design in color. They must add at least one non-traditional element to the design.

Assignment /Assessment: Students will have a class discussion about the impact of Islamic geometric design on worldwide and American architecture, fashion and other areas of design. Each student will be asked to present at least one example for the discussion. Students will be assessed on their level of participation in the discussion.

Assignment 5/Assessment: Students will use their choice of artworks in assignment 3 as the inspiration for their piece. They will create a geometric design (six, eight or ten points) that can be repeated to create a pattern. They will use color to complete the design, keeping the balance symmetrical. There will be at least one non-traditional component to the design. Students will be assessed on their skill in creating a symmetrical design with equal parts, the originality of design and craftsmanship.

Resources and References:

Met Museum: Geometric Patterns in Islamic Art

[https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/geom/hd\\_geom.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/geom/hd_geom.htm)

Al-Fanar Media: Contemporary Art Inspired by Islamic Tradition

<https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2018/11/contemporary-art-inspired-by-islamic-tradition/>

Islamic Patterns in Arabic Architecture

<https://www.nomadineception.com/islamic-design/islamic-design-resources/islamic-geometric-design-in-arabic-architecture.html>

Nomad Inception: Patterns in Arabic Architecture

<https://www.nomadineception.com/islamic-design/islamic-design-resources/islamic-geometric-design-in-arabic-architecture.html>

## Additional Resources

The Art of Islamic Pattern

<https://artofislamicpattern.com/resources/iranian-art/>

Nomad Inception/Patterns in Arabid Architecture

<https://www.nomadinception.com/islamic-design/islamic-design-resources/islamic-geometric-design-in-arabic-architecture.html>

Invaluable/Islamic Art Patterns and Their Symbolic Meaning

<https://www.invaluable.com/blog/islamic-art-patterns/>

Culture Trip/Spectacular Moroccan Tilework in 11 Buildings

<https://theculturetrip.com/africa/morocco/articles/spectacular-moroccan-tilework-in-11-buildings/>

CAORC/Preserving Cairo's Islamic Tiles' The Al-Darb Al-Ahmar Monuments Project

<https://www.caorc.org/post/2019/05/23/preserving-cairos-islamic-tiles-the-al-darb-al-ahmar-monuments-project>