

Historic Interiors: Design, Function, and Meaning

University of North Texas/Department of Art History

Fall 2025/Mondays and Wednesdays/2-3:20pm

Art 223



Professor Paula Lupkin

Office Hours Wednesdays 11-1pm or by appointment in Art 311

Email via Canvas Mail only

Course Description: Using case studies from around the world, this course explores the representation and interpretation of historic interiors from prehistory through the 18th century. Students will engage with primary sources, visual materials, and emerging technologies that help reconstruct lost or ephemeral spaces. Students will develop skills in spatial and textual analysis, historical research, and visual interpretation, with the goal of understanding how interiors operate as both physical environments and cultural documents. By the end of the term, students will have developed an informed approach to interpreting historic interiors as evidence of cultural values, technological innovation, and social life.

Format: Lecture-based with required reading and annotation assignments, in-class activities, short written assignments, and image analysis activities.

Enrollment: 38 students (upper-level undergraduates in Art History, Studio, and Design)

Course Objectives

If you work consistently through the course material, engage actively with lectures, readings, and assignments, and creatively and diligently work students can expect to:

- gain familiarity with key examples of interiors, furniture, and architecture from diverse cultures.
- acquire the skills to identify and interpret the stylistic diversity and cultural role of historic architecture, interiors, and furniture.
- understand the role of changing technology and materials in design innovation.
- gain perspective on the meaning of interior spaces in your work and everyday life.

Course Readings and Materials

Willis Library Course Reserves, Password: historicinteriors

Stacy Sloboda, ed. *Interiors in the Age of Enlightenment: A Cultural History* (London: Bloomsbury Press) <https://discover.library.unt.edu/catalog/b7963261>

Ronald Knapp, *Chinese Houses: The Architectural Heritage of a Nation* (Tuttle Publishing, 2006)

Most readings, including the Sloboda text above, are available in electronic format. Some are linked directly to the web by URLs, others have been uploaded to Canvas as PDF files. I suggest that you purchase Knapp's *Chinese Houses* as a physical book. It is not only an assigned reading, it has gorgeous images that are very useful in tandem with lecture.

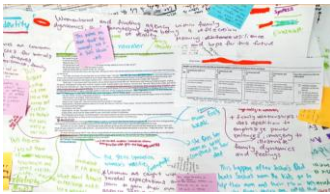
Technology: In this course you will need access to the internet to use the Canvas LMS, Word or Google Docs, and Adobe Acrobat Reader. It can be helpful to bring a laptop, phone, or other digital device to class to take notes directly on my powerpoint file, which are posted on Canvas before class. Many students have told me that this helps them retain material for exams more easily. If you wish to check out a tablet for this purpose, check for availability at the [CVAD Computer Lab](#).

Course Elements

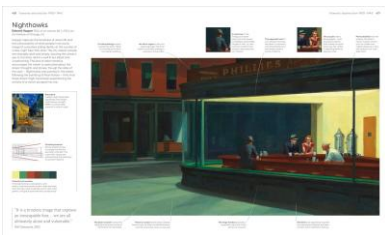
Course Element	Date	Points	Percentage of Grade
Film Clip Assignment	8/27	5	5%
Vitruvius Annotation Assignment	9/08	10	10%
Blue Book Exam 1	9/17	20	20%
Image Annotation Assignment	10/20	10	10%
Blue Book Exam 2	10/27	20	20%
Imagined Interior A&A Project	11/12	15	15%
Blue Book Exam 3	12/10	20	20%



Over the course of the semester there will be three *blue book exams*. Small, blank, lined, blue notebooks will be distributed in-class for handwritten responses to four (4) short-answer questions. Review and practice taking blue book exams will precede each exam. (graded by rubric)



One of the central learning activities of this course is active, critical reading of texts and images, known as annotation. After learning and practicing annotation in class, you will be responsible for submitting *annotated versions of one assigned reading and one "imagined interior"* during the semester. (graded by rubric)



For your *A&A (Annotate and Analyze) Project* this semester, you will choose an image from a list of selected examples, annotate it, and then write a 5-page essay based on your annotations and related research. (graded by rubric)

Course Content

Case studies will range from the symbolic structure of prehistoric cosmic domes to the intimate architecture of Ottoman homes and Edo-period Japan, including the Katsura

Imperial Villa and interiors of the “floating world” as seen in woodblock prints. We will analyze funerary interiors in ancient Egypt and China, the multifunctional courtyard house in the Islamic world, and the industry of interiors under Louis XIV, including the Gobelins manufactory and its role in royal patronage. Furniture and material culture are also central to the course, from the politics of mahogany in British and colonial interiors to the formal language of Chippendale design. We will study canonical texts including Vitruvius on architecture and proportion, and critically address issues of Orientalism and colonial influence in shaping Western perceptions of non-Western interiors.

Course Meeting Schedule

- M August 18** Course Start-Up
- W August 20** Historic Interiors: Evidence and Interpretation
- M August 25** Interiority, Prehistory, and the Cave
- W August 27** Werner Herzog and *The Cave of Dreams*
FILM CLIP ASSIGNMENT DUE @ 2pm
- M September 1** Labor Day (no class)
- W September 3** The Roman Domus and its Decoration Monday
- M September 8** The Domus in Ancient Texts
VITRUVIUS ANNOTATION ASSIGNMENT DUE @ 2pm
- W September 10** Exam Review and Preparation (Modules 1-3)
- M September 15** Blue-Book Exam Practice
- W September 17** Exam 1
- M September 22** Ancient Domes and Cosmic Symbolism
- W September 24** Sound, Smell, and the Ancient Interior
- M September 29** Nomadic Domes: Hogan and Yurt
- W October 1** Interiors in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts
- M October 6** Eating and Sleeping in the Middle Ages

W October 8	The Ottoman House in Damascus
M October 13	The Q'aa; Destruction and Conservation
W October 15:	Persian and Mughal Court Carpets and Thrones
M October 20	Persian and Mughal Court Interiors: Miniatures IMAGE ANNOTATION ASSIGNMENT DUE @ 11:59PM
W October 22	Exam 2 Review: Modules 5-7
M October 27	Exam 2
W October 29	Siheyuan Courtyard Houses
M November 3:	Ming Tomb Miniatures and Furniture
W November 5	Shoin, Sukiya, and the Tea House
M November 10	Ukiyo-e and the Pleasure Quarters
W November 12	What is an Interior in the Age of Enlightenment?
M November 17	Beauty and Style in the Enlightenment Interior IMAGINED INTERIOR A&A ASSIGNMENT DUE @ 11:59pm
W November 19	Chippendale and the Rise of the Interior Decorator
M December 1	Mahogany, Orientalism, and Global Interiors
W December 3	Exam Review (Modules 8-20)
W December 10	Exam #3

How to Succeed in this Course

1. Communication

Good communication, in class and outside of it, is essential to success in this course. Connect with me through email and/or by *attending office hours, either Wednesday from 12-2 or by appointment*. During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two

business days, please send a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

2. Classroom Culture

One way to succeed in this course is to value and participate in a positive classroom culture. I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom and email culture of open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion both for students and the professor. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

We will discuss our classroom's habits of engagement and I also encourage you to review UNT's student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline civility understanding <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

3. Attendance

Regular attendance is an important path to success in this course. Research has shown that students who attend class are more likely to be successful. This advanced undergraduate mostly-lecture course requires you to be actively engaged during class in several ways: effective notetaking, annotation of lecture powerpoints, and active participation via regular questions, responses, and comments, during class time, Monday and Wednesdays from 2-3:20pm

Being punctual indicates our respect for others. Please arrive before class begins to find a seat, prepare your materials, and connect with your peers. The beginning of class is especially critical—just like the beginning of a movie or book. Being late to class is sometimes inevitable. If you are late, know that you are welcome to join the class, but please do so without distracting others. More than three instances of tardiness will result in an absence from class.

You should attend every class unless you have a university excused absence such as detailed in the Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy. (PDF). If you cannot attend a class due to an emergency, please let me know, preferably in advance by email. Your safety and well-being are important to me. If you must miss class, you may be excused *with documentation* of the following:

- medical condition
- religious holy day

- military service
- official University event

Family vacations, weddings or life cycle events, travel or work scheduled during class time are not absences that can be excused.

If you have more than three unexcused absences your final grade will be docked 5 points per each additional absence.

Absent students are responsible for catching up on missed course material. Lecture powerpoints are available to you for review, and you may ask a fellow student for their help with class notes. You are always welcome to *come to my office hours or ask for an appointment* to discuss missed course material.

3. Late Work

Submitting work on time is an important aspect of success in this course. Late work will only be accepted in case of a documented medical emergency.

UNT Student Support Services & Policies

UNT is dedicated to your academic and personal success and provides a number of resources to assist you in your education. Of particular help in this course:

4. Writing and Research Support

This course is organized around reading, viewing, writing, discussion and research skills. Most undergraduate students are still developing these skills during their classwork. The University supports this process by providing the Writing Center, and a dedicated Fine Arts Research Librarian, Rebecca Barham.

Writing

“Our trained tutors help undergraduate students with structure, grammar, punctuation, citation styles and more. We'll teach you strategies and techniques to improve your writing for the long term. We offer both in-person and online appointments. Call us at 940-565-2563 or email us at WritingCenter@unt.edu to schedule your appointment”

Research in the Library and Online

Rebecca Barham is our dedicated art librarian at Willis Library. She knows the library collection and services well and can be a support to you as you

pursue research for this course. I urge you to take advantage of this resource.

5. Academic Integrity in the Age of Online Teaching and AI

UNT's [Student Academic Integrity policy](#) is available online. We will discuss this policy during the first week of class.

Its basic principles emphasize:

--the protection of the rights of all participants in the educational process

--validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the University

"Cheating," in this policy, means the use of unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise, including but not limited to:

- a. use of any unauthorized assistance to take exams, tests, quizzes, or other assessments;
- b. use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
- c. use, without permission, of tests, notes, or other academic materials belonging to instructors, staff members, or other students of the University;
- d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor;
- e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage on an academic assignment

In addition to cheating, other violations of UNT's Academic Integrity Policy can also include sabotage and plagiarism.

Consequences for cheating, sabotage, and plagiarism can include: Admonition, Educational Assignment, Partial or No Credit for an Assignment or Assessment, Lower Final Course Grade, Course Failure, Probation, Suspension, Expulsion, and Revocation of Degree. Probation, Suspension, Expulsion, and Revocation of Degree may only be handed out by the Academic Integrity Office with the final decision on appeal by the provost or designee, the other penalties may be assigned by the instructor. Admonitions and educational assignments are not appealable.

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Work for this Course

AI is an amazing, awful, game-changer for academic work. We have only begun to figure out how to use and be used by it.

Way, way back, in the time of Generation X, I went to college and graduate school. Personal computers had just begun to emerge, and the internet did not exist as far as I knew. When I wrote my dissertation, in the late 1990s, online and digital resources were few and far between. I took my SLR camera with me into the archives to shoot images and gave presentations with actual slides. I submitted so many copy requests to the archivists that began to refer to me as the “Ms. Xerox.” For annotating these xeroxed pages I had yellow highlighter pens, liquid paper, and post-it notes.



Card catalog cabinets dominated the first floors of university and research libraries. Reserve readings, mostly in books, had to be consulted in the library.

Looking back, it was an awful lot of time-consuming and frustrating work and I have no nostalgia for those days. The digital world has made it easier to find information, and AI has

made that process exponentially more efficient.

In this class, using AI chatbots to help with the research process is appropriate. You may also use AI to create summaries of readings as a helpful prop, if you find that you need help identifying major ideas and examples.

Please **do not** use AI for the brainwork of synthesis, thesis development, drafting, writing or polishing of written texts and annotations. Such tasks are designed and intended to be challenging. It is beneficial for your cognition and critical thinking to read, think, and write. An assignment that serves up a little friction is a good thing. So, in summary:

When to use AI:

1. as a research tool-it can efficiently find potential sources for you to find
2. to summarize readings and research material (provide a footnote with the URL for AI chat)
3. to format paper text according to assignment instructions

4.to format Chicago Style footnotes and bibliography

When not to use AI: Synthesizing, Developing, Drafting, Writing, Editing, or Polishing Text submitted for any assignment.

Statement of Integrity: I am going to ask that, for each assignment, you devise a [STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY](#) and place it on the first page. This statement should provide an explanation of how you may have used AI for the assignment. Sign it, and be sure to provide URLs to an AI chat for the assignment in the assignment bibliography.

Sample statement: “As I prepared the “annotation assignment” for this course I used Open AI’s ChatGPT to research and identify useful articles and examples of annotation to guide undergraduate students. I found many resources on pedagogy and annotation in a Canvas course for faculty. I tailored my prompts to narrow down what were an overwhelming number of options. Unfortunately, the AI made up/hallucinated a few fake sources that did not exist. Ultimately, I identified X article as the most useful and included it here. (link to bibliography). The URL of my chat can be found (here). Signed. . .Y

Consequences: I begin this course with the assumption that everyone in the class has integrity and will abide by these guidelines. If I do discover, in the course of reading or grading your work, evidence or likelihood of inappropriate use, I will ask that you meet with me to discuss your research and/or writing process. *If I determine that you have relied upon AI inappropriately, you will receive a zero for the assignment.* It is far better to turn something in, written in your own words, and receive credit instead of a zero.

6. Mental Health and Wellness

UNT strives to offer a high-quality education in a supportive environment where you can learn, grow, and thrive. As a faculty member, I am committed to supporting you in your graduate education, which can be stressful in both your roles as a student and as a teacher/employee.

I want to remind you that UNT offers a range of mental health and wellness services to help maintain balance and well-being. Utilizing these resources is a proactive way to support your academic and personal success. To explore campus resources designed to support you, check out available mental health services (<https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies>), visit unt.edu/success, and explore unt.edu/wellness.

7. Financial Well-Being

To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

8. ADA Accommodation Statement

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodations must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.

For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) [Links to an external site.](#) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

OTHER POLICIES

Calendar Changes

There may be changes to the course calendar. To understand the circumstances that will result in a campus closing consult the [Emergency Notifications and Procedures Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049). (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049>). You will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact our class.

Course Evaluation

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this

course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification.". Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](#) or email spot@unt.edu.

ARTH 4841 Historic Interiors
Course Reading Schedule
Fall 2025

Module 1: Introduction to Historic Interiors

Monday August 18 Course Start-Up: What is this Course? What is an Interior?

Glossary: Blue Book Exam, Reading Annotation

Wednesday August 20 Historic Interiors: Evidence and Interpretation

Readings:

- Aynsley and Grant, "The Imagined Interior" pp. 10-19 (focus on 10-16)
- Dr. Senta German, "Conservation vs. restoration: the Palace at Knossos (Crete)," in *Smarthistory*, March 24, 2018, <https://smarthistory.org/conservation-knossos/>.
- Amy Frearson "Garden flat in Lyon photographed before and after a party" Dank Architectes" *Dezeen*, December 1, 2013.

Prompt: What evidence and with what methods can we use to understand the design and experience of the interiors of the historic past? As you read/watch, identify concepts or problems that frame the study of historic interiors types of evidence used by authors: objects, drawings, photographs, paintings, texts

Glossary: conservation, restoration, reconstruction, imagined interior, material culture, evidence, archive

In-Class Activity • Chipstone Foundation. "This is Not a Chair." Teaching video created by Harvard University Teaching Fellows Cara Fallon, John Bell, Chris Allison, and Carla Cevasco. Milwaukee: Chipstone Foundation, 2019. <https://artbabble.org/video/chipstone/not-chair>.

Module 2: The Earliest Interiors: Caves and Tombs

Mon, August 25 Interiority, Prehistory, and the Cave

Readings:

- Spiro Kostof, "Chapter Two: The Cave and the Sky" *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (Oxford University Press, 1995) pp. 20–27 **course reserves**
- Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank and Dr. Steven Zucker, "Newgrange, a prehistoric tomb in Ireland," in *Smarthistory*, September 23, 2022, accessed July 17, 2025, <https://smarthistory.org/newgrange-a-prehistoric-tomb-in-ireland/>.
- Lupkin handout, "Interiority" **canvas pdf**

Prompt: Are prehistoric caves such as those at Lascaux, France, the first interiors? How might the concept of interiority help answer that question?

Glossary Terms: Interiority, historiography, Paleolithic, totemic, primitive, inhabitation, theoretical cave, phenomenology, Anthropocene, boundary, monument, purposeful use, hunter-gatherer, megalith, dolmen, passage-grave, reconstruction

In-Class Exercises: Close Reading and Annotation Modeling D.J. Huppertz, "The First Interior? Reconsidering the Cave," *Journal of Interior Design* 37:4 (2012), pp. 1–8

Wed, Aug 27 Werner Herzog and *The Cave of Dreams*

Reading/Viewing: Herzog, Werner, director. *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*. IFC Films, 2011. 90 min.

Film Prompt: How might Huppertz and Kostof's ideas about caves be applied to an analysis of Werner Herzog's film, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*? Does Herzog's narrative interpretation address the cave as an interior?

Film Clip Annotation Assignment Choose one short clip from the film that you believe is especially helpful in addressing these questions. Provide your selected clip along with timestamps and a justification of your choice in no more than 200 words. Upload to Canvas by 8/27 @ 2pm

Glossary Terms: proto-cinema, fluidity, permeability, figuration

Monday September 3 Labor Day (no class)

Module 3: Roman Domestic Spaces

Wednesday, September 5 The Roman Domus and its Decoration

Readings

- Dr. Jeffrey A. Becker "Roman Domestic Architecture: Domus." In *Smarthistory*, August 8, 2015. Accessed June 17, 2025. <https://smarthistory.org/roman-domestic-architecture-domus/>.
- Dr. Jeffrey A. Becker, "Pompeii: House of the Vettii," in *Smarthistory*, August 8, 2015, <https://smarthistory.org/pompeii-house-of-the-vettii/>
- Dr. Jessica Leay Ambler, "Roman wall painting styles," in *Smarthistory*, June 8, 2018, <https://smarthistory.org/roman-wall-painting-styles/>.
- Art Institute of Chicago, "[Ancient and Byzantine mosaic materials](#)," in *Smarthistory* 2015

Prompt : What form does the Roman House, as preserved in Pompeii and Herculaneum, take? How is space designed and ornamented? Using what methods and materials?

Glossary Terms: domus, atrium, peristyle, axial, alae, cubiculum, tablinum, hortus, mosaic, in-situ, tesserae, fresco, First Style, Second Style, Third Style, Fourth Style, trompe l'oeil

In-Class: Floorplan Identification and Comparison, Materials Mapping

Monday September 8 The Domus in Ancient Texts

Readings

- Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, Books 6 and 7
- Apuleius, [*The Golden Ass: Or, Metamorphoses*](#), Book IV especially IV.28–33 (*Cupid and Psyche*)
- Pliny the Younger, [*Letters*](#) Book 3, Letter 3; also Letters 55 and 86
- [*Juvenal, The Satires, Satire III*](#)
- Seneca, [*Letters to Lucilius*](#), letter 3, letter 55, letter 86
- •Metropolitan Museum of Art, [Villa of P. Fannius Synistor virtual tour](#)

Prompt: Drawing on the assigned readings from Apuleius (The Golden Ass), Pliny the Younger (Letters), Juvenal (Satire III), and Seneca (Letters to Lucilius, 3, 55, and 86), compare how each author uses descriptions of architecture, interiors, or urban settings to communicate moral, social, or philosophical ideas. Compare authors to each other with this helpful chart.

ROMAN AUTHORS ON SPACE, ARCHITECTURE, AND MORALITY				
	APULEIUS	PLINY THE YOUNGER	JUVENAL	SENECA
AUTHOR & GENRE	Narrative fiction	Personal correspondence	Satirical	Stoic philosophy
KEY SPACES & ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS	Lavish domestic interiors, sensory-rich rooms, thresholds that lead to danger	Villas described in detail, gardens, porticoes, baths, harmonious placement in natural landscapes	Insulae (crowded apartment blocks) grand gated houses, public streets	Simple villas, modest baths functional spaces over ornate ones
MORAL / SOCIAL THEMES	Luxury as seductive but moral unstable interiors are deceptive spaces	Architecture as an expression of personal virtue, leisure, and cultural refinement	Urban decay, inequality, nostalgia for rural virtue Archacteonoe	Simplicity fosters virtue, luxury as moral decay
POINTS OF CONNECTION	Compare with Juvenal's corrupt urban interiors	Juxtapose Seneca's Letter 55 critique of luxury	Share moral suspicion of wealth in Seneca	Align in moral critique with Juvenal

Glossary: Villa/Domus, Cavea, Curiositas, Insulae, Luxurias vs. Virtus, Rhetoric/Genre, Simplicitas

Assignment: Vitruvius Annotation Assignment: upload to Canvas by 2pm

Module 4: Reviewing and Writing for Exams

Wednesday September 10 Exam Review and Preparation

Reading: Lecture Notes, Powerpoints, and Annotations from Modules 1-3,

Monday September 15 Blue-Book Exam Practice

Wednesday September 17 Exam 1

Module 5: Cosmic Domes

Monday September 22 Ancient Domes and Cosmic Symbolism

Reading:

Paul Ranogajec "[The Pantheon](#)" in *Smarthistory*, 2015

Dr. William Allen, "[Hagia Sophia, Istanbul](#)," in *Smarthistory* 2014

Art Institute of Chicago, "Ancient and Byzantine mosaic materials," in *Smarthistory* 2015

Glossary: rotunda, oculus, dome, half-dome, exedrae, coffer, drum, cosmology, Early Christian, Byzantine, pendentive, fenestration, revetment, Procopius, Justinian, Anthemios and Isidorus, narthex

Wednesday, September 24 Sound and the Ancient Interior

Reading/Viewing

Duygu Eruçman "The Voice of Hagia Sophia" documentary film, 2019

<https://vimeo.com/357467398>

Glossary: echea, reverberation, sonic icon, virtual acoustics, auralization, place vs. space, embodiment, place vs. space

In-Class Activity Film Clip Discussion

Monday September 29 Nomadic Domes: Hogan and Yurt

readings:

Sarah Buder, "Made to Move" *Dwell Magazine*, August 2025, 82-91 **course reserves**

Kunabay, Alma. "Nomads." In *The Silk Road: Connecting Cultures, Creating Trust*. Smithsonian Folklife Festival, 2002. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.
<https://festival.si.edu/2002/the-silk-road/nomads-by-alma-kunanbay/smithsonian>.

Grossman, Daniel "The Nomad's Ger: Mongolia's Instant House." YouTube video, 7:32.
Aeon Video <https://youtu.be/ybCt14sQDFA?feature=shared>

Nabokov and Easton, "The Hogan, Ki, and Ramada" *Native American Architecture* (Oxford University Press, 1989) 322-337.

Prompt: How do these dwellings express cultural identity, cosmology, or social organization beyond mere shelter? For example, how does the hogan's east-facing door or the ger's interior zoning reflect larger worldviews?

Glossary: nomadism, pastoral nomadism, transhumance, steppe, felt, deel, tuurga, urkhkhana, toono, shangrak, yurt, ger, interior zoning, golomt (hearth) bagana, umi, hogan, female hogan, male hogan, ramada, kiva, sipapu, cosmology, orientation

Module 6 Domesticity in European Manuscript Interiors

Wednesday October 1 Interiors in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts

Readings

Witold Rybczynski, "Intimacy and Privacy," Chapter 2 in *Home: A Short History of an Idea*.

"The Context of Domestic Architecture and Interiors" in Eva Oledzka, *Medieval and Renaissance Interiors*, (British Library: 2016) 10-36

Prompt In each reading, what kinds of evidence (textual, visual, architectural) are most convincing in showing the emergence of domestic privacy in the Medieval

and Renaissance periods in Europe? How might you use the concept of “imagined interiors” to analyze Oledzka’s examples?

Glossary: stimmung, comfortable, intimacy, privacy, bourgeois, burgher, Borghese, hall/salle, tapestry, ecclesiastical, monastic, dorter, lavatorium, misiericord, public baths, mantled fireplace, chamber pot, garde-robe, cabinet, hotel, bedchamber, enfilade, close-stool, miniature, illumination

Monday, October 6 Eating and Sleeping: Furniture in the Middle Ages

Readings

“Essential Comforts: Material Possessions and their Distributions in Interior Space” in Eva Oledska, *Medieval and Renaissance Interiors* (British Library: 2016) 78-131

Prompt: How does the placement of objects (beds, cupboards, saltcellars, tapestries) organize social space in the hall, chamber, or solar? In what ways did “comfort” mean something different in the medieval/Renaissance household than it does today?

Glossary: hall/salle, tapestry, hearth, cupboard, coffer, buffet, high table, dais, trestle table, solar, chamber, chair of estate, display culture, comfort, saltcellar, plate, trencher, ewer and basin, ale bench/settle, public and private, noble and common, permanent and portable.

Module 7: The Ottoman House: Social Space and Museum Interpretation

Wednesday October 8 The Ottoman House in Damascus: Courtyards and Cross-Cultural Exchange

Readings

[Damascus Room | The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)

Macaulay/Zucker, "Bayt Farhi, a Jewish house in Damascus," *Smarthistory*, 2020

Prompt: What functions did a *qa'a* (Damascus reception room) serve in daily and social life? How do decoration, inscriptions, and furnishings communicate status, hospitality, and cultural identity? How do these rooms illustrate cross-cultural exchange?

Glossary: iwan, qa'a, ajammi, tazar, atabar, gesso, bent-axis entryway, calligraphy, muquarnas, UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sephardic, courtyard house, baranni, mashrabiyya, arabesque, polychromy, inlay, stucco

In-Class: labeling and pathway exercises

Monday October 13 The Q'aa; Destruction, Conservation, and Interpretation

Readings

Ellen Kenney, "Interpolated Spaces: The Metropolitan Museum of Art's 'Damascus Room' Reinstalled," in the *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* (2018)

[Conserving the Damascus Room at The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)

Prompt: What issues are at play in the collection, conservation, and museum interpretation of period rooms like the Damascus House? Why is Ellen Kenney critical of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Damascus Room? How does the Damascus Room in the Met change meaning when removed from its house and neighborhood context? What is lost or gained by its display in a museum?

Glossary: authenticity, provenance, restoration, conservation, historicism

Module Eight: Persial and Mughal Court Interiors: Carpets and Miniatures

Wednesday October 15 Ottoman, Persian, and Mughal Carpets

Ariel Fein and Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank and “Woven Cultures: Complex History of an Ottoman Carpet” in *Smarthistory*, 2022

Sumru Belger Krody, [Prayer Carpets](#), Khamseem

Kendra Weisbin, ["Introduction to the court carpets of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires,"](#) *Smarthistory*, 201

The MAP Academy, ["Imperial splendour: textiles and royal life,"](#) in *Smarthistory*, 2022

Prompt: How did carpets function in Islamic worship? How does the prayer carpet compare to a court carpet in design or use?

Glossary: Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal, Deccan, Kaaba, Qu’ran, Mihrab, Qibla, tawhid, wudu, nawaz, saz style, floral style, paisley, warp, weft, charh bagh, hybrid, transcultural, medallion, niche, darstarkhan, saf, sajjadah, patka, bolster, shamiama, soft power, turmeric, indigo, madder, mordant

Monday October 20 Persian and Mughal Court Interiors: Miniatures

Note: **Assignment 1 Due: Image Annotation**

Readings:

Map Academy. "Mughal Miniatures." Educational resource. New Delhi: Map Academy, 2023 <https://mapacademy.io/article/mughal-miniature-painting/>

[“A Family Celebration”](#) Chester Beatty Library

Prompt: What can be learned about the composition of Mughal miniatures from the birthday party project? How might this project help you understand the techniques used by Mughal miniature artists to **structure social, ceremonial, or private space**? To identify the relationships between people, including hierarchy?

Glossary: Perspective, Jharokha, Chhatri, Diwan-i-‘Am, Diwan-i-Khas, Pavilion, Courtyard, Terrace / Roofscape, Arcade, Screen / Jali, Canopy / Baldachin, Throne (Takht), Carpet / Floor Covering, Chamber / Room, Stacked Perspective, Axonometric / Isometric Projection, Processional / Circulation Space, Garden (Charbagh), Architectural Framing, Elevation / Section, Layered Space

In-Class: [Deconstructing Architecture in Persian Painting, Chester Beatty Library](#)

Module 9: Mid-Term Review and Exam

Wednesday October 22 Mid-term Review: Key Concepts and Comparative Themes in Modules 5-7

In-Class: Review Q&A and group activities

Monday October 27 Exam 2

Module 10 Chinese Domestic Interiors: Ming Dynasty

Wednesday October 29: Siheyuan Courtyard Houses

Reading:

Knapp, Ronald G. *Chinese Houses: The Architectural Heritage of a Nation*. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2005, 54–82.

[Yin Yu Tang: Chinese House](#), Peabody Essex Museum

Prompt: How do traditional Chinese houses organize interior and exterior space? Consider hierarchy, privacy, and circulation. What role do courtyards, axial layouts, and enclosures play in mediating family life and social interactions? Yin Yu Tang is an actual house relocated and reconstructed in a museum. How does experiencing a house in situ (even if relocated) differ from reading about architectural plans and descriptions?

Glossary: Key terms to know include **courtyard house (siheyuan)**, the traditional layout organized around one or more open courtyards along a **central axis**, reflecting **symmetry** and **spatial hierarchy** tied to **family structure** and **domestic ritual**. Important elements include the **main gate (menkou)**, **screen wall (yingbi)** for privacy, **roof eaves (xuan)**, and the **roof ridge (ding)**, often decorated symbolically. Interior spaces include the **hall of**

centrality (zhongting) for ceremonies, **ancestral hall** for worship, and private **chambers (shi)**. Circulation is managed by **covered corridors (lang)**, while structural systems like **dougong (brackets)** support roofs. The **material culture** of the house—furnishings, ornamentation, and construction—signals social status. Principles of **feng shui** guide spatial arrangement, and **vernacular architecture** reflects local materials and climate. **Adaptive reuse** is exemplified by the relocation of Yin Yu Tang to the Peabody Essex Museum, which preserves the architecture while altering its original domestic context.

In-Class: Siheyuan-Domus comparison

Monday, November 3: Ming Tomb Miniatures and Furniture

Readings:

Knapp, Ronald G. *Chinese Houses: The Architectural Heritage of a Nation*. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2005, 83-111.

Dr. Kristen Loring Brennan and Dr. Beth Harris, "[Miniature furniture and figurines in a Ming Tomb](#)," In *Smarthistory*, 2022.

Prompt: What do comparisons between real furnishings and their miniature representations reveal about the symbolic or functional importance of household objects in Chinese culture? How do furnishings in traditional Chinese houses—such as tables, chairs, screens, and beds—reflect social hierarchy, family roles, and daily activities? In what ways are miniature furniture and figurines in tombs modeled after real household furnishings? How do scale, materials, and design differ or replicate reality?

Glossary:

Altar table (供桌, gōngzhuō)

Bed / Kang bed (炕, kàng)

Chair (椅, yǐ)

Cabinet / Cupboard (橱 / 柜, chú / guì)

Desk / Writing table (案, àn)

Screen / Folding screen (屏风, píngfēng)

Stool / Low seat (凳, dèng)

Table (餐桌 / 工作桌, cānzhuō / gōngzuòzhuō) –

Side table / Accent table (小桌, xiǎozhuō)

Alcove / Chamber furnishing (内室陈设, nèi shì chénshe)

Miniature furniture (微型家具, wēixíng jiājù)

Figurines (小人 / 彩俑, xiǎorén / cǎiyǒng)

Model house / Tomb assemblage (模型屋 / 陵墓陈设, móxíng wū / língmù chénshe) –

Lacquer / Inlay / Carving (漆 / 镶嵌 / 雕刻, qī / xiāngqiàn / diāokè)

Arrangement / Spatial hierarchy (陈设秩序, chénshe zhìxù)

Functional vs. symbolic objects (实用与象征物, shíyòng yǔ xiàngzhēng wù).

Circulation / Pathway (通行路线, tōngxíng lùxiàn)

Display / Visibility (陈列 / 可见性, chénliè / kějiànxìng)

Module 11: Japanese Interiors: Tea Houses and Pleasure Quarters

Wednesday November 5 Shoin, Sukiya, and the Tea House

Readings:

Nishi, Kazuo, and Kazuo Hozumi. *What Is Japanese Architecture?* Translated by H. Mack Horton. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1985, 74–81, 90–91

[Shoin Room](#), Metropolitan Museum of Art

Anna Williamson, [The Tea Ceremony](#), Metropolitan Museum of Art

Prompt: How did tatami mats, sliding partitions, and the *tokonoma* influence movement and social interaction in early modern Japanese interiors? How does placing such an interior in a museum, like the Shoin Room, change the meaning and experience of these features?

Glossary: tatami, fusuma, shoji, tokonoma, shoin, chashitsu, furo, chakin, chasen, chawan, nijiriguchi, temae, mukozuke, wabi-sabi, ma, shibui

In-Class: [Japanese Chado Matcha Green Tea Ceremony](#)

Monday November 10 Ukiyo-e and the Pleasure Quarters

- Nishi, Kazuo, and Kazuo Hozumi. *What Is Japanese Architecture?* Translated by H. Mack Horton. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1985, 105–135.
- *Designed for Pleasure: The World of Edo Japan in Prints and Paintings, 1680-1860*, Asia Society, 2008

Prompt: How do ukiyo-e prints depict the interiors of houses in Edo's pleasure quarters, and what do these depictions reveal about the organization, function, and social interactions that took place within them?

Glossary: ukiyo-e, bijin-ga, kabuki, meisho, machiya, nagaya, chōnin, hanami, Edo, daimyo, samurai, chōnin culture, ukiyo, emakimono hanamachi, pleasure quarters (yūkaku, meisho-e, nishiki-e, bijin-ga, kakemono / kakemono-e.

Module 12 Enlightenment Interiors

Wednesday, November 12 What is an Interior in the Age of Enlightenment?

Reading: Stacey Sloboda “Introduction” *The Interior in the Age of Enlightenment* pp.1-13.

Prompt: According to Sloboda, how did Enlightenment ideas and socio-economic conditions shape European and colonial interiors, and how did concepts of public and private space reflect these broader cultural and social changes?

Glossary: interior, Enlightenment, salon, parlor, chamber, décor, furnishing, domestic space, public/private distinction, taste, display, hierarchy of spaces
ornamentation, interior rhetoric, spatial organization, comfort, proportion, symmetry, light, modularity, pattern books, . cultural capital, ritualized behavior, intimate space

Monday November 17 Beauty, Cultural Aesthetics in the Enlightenment Interior

Readings:

Nellis Richter “Magnificence, Artifice, Taste, Historicism, and Comfort” in Sloboda, Stacey. *Interiors in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2024) pp. 14-36

[Chateau de Versailles, “Versailles: Louis XIII to the French Revolution”](#)

Prompt: As you read Richter's chapter, pay attention to how concepts such as magnificence, artifice, taste, historicism, and comfort are defined and deployed in Enlightenment interiors. How do designers balance display and functionality, and how do these interiors communicate social status, cultural values, and moral ideals? Consider how public and private spaces are organized, and what choices in ornamentation, proportion, and materials reveal about the social and economic context of the time.

Glossary: magnificence, artifice, taste, historicism, comfort, display, Baroque, Rococo, Neo-Classical, Romanticism, nature, interior rhetoric, proportion, symmetry, pattern books, public-private distinction, aesthetic judgement, ergonomics, social signaling, luxury, taste hierarchies

Wednesday November 19 The Modern Interiors Industry

Readings:

Conor Lucey, "Designers, Professions, Trades: Conceiving and Making the Interior" in *The Interior in the Age of Enlightenment* 58-87

Chippendale, Thomas. [*The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director: Being a Large Collection of the Most Elegant and Useful Designs of Household Furniture in the Gothic, Chinese and Modern Taste*](#). London: Printed for the Author, 1754. [Preface, Names of the Subscribers, pgs. 64-100, 180-205, 266-288]

Prompt: How did the collaboration between designers, artisans, and tradespeople, along with social status and professional roles, shape the form and function of Enlightenment interiors? What was the role of the pattern-book, or catalog of designs at the time?

Glossary: designer artisan tradesperson, cabinet-maker, joinery, veneering inlay, gilding, polishing, pattern book, finishing, turning, mortise-and-tenon, dovetail, subscriber, Neo-Classical, Rococo, Baroque Gothic taste, Chinese taste (Chinoiserie) modern taste, social display. upholsterer, decorator, cabinet-maker, ebeniste, menuisier, Goeblins, boiserie, cabriole leg, console table, commode, Encyclopedie, Marchand-Mercier, fauteuil, chaise, draperie, tapisserie

Monday December 1 Mahogany, Orientalism, and Global Interiors

Reading:

Vanessa Alayrac-Fielding, "Exoticism, Hybridity, and the Global Interior," in *Interiors in the Age of Enlightenment*, pp. 97–145

Prompt: As you read Alayrac-Fielding's chapter, consider how the blending of European and non-European design elements in interiors reflects broader themes of cultural exchange, colonialism, and identity during the Enlightenment. Pay attention to how these hybrid interiors challenged traditional notions of taste and authenticity, and think about the role of exoticism in shaping European perceptions of the "Other."

Glossary: *exoticism, global interior, Chinoiserie Japonisme / Japonisme Orientalism, colonial trade, Columbian Exchange, Opium Trade, lacquerware – porcelain, textiles pattern books, authenticity, cultural appropriation cosmopolitanism, display aesthetic hybridity, curiosity cabinet / cabinet of curiosities, mahogany, Occidenterie, John Nash, Robert Adam*

Wednesday December 3 Exam Review Modules 10-12

Wednesday December 10 Final Exam