

Mediterranean Confrontations: Architecture, Colonialism, and National Identity in North Africa



Barnard and Columbia Colleges Architecture Department

GSAPP, Architecture

Fall Term 2021 / ARCH GU4140

Meetings: TBA

Room Number: TBA

Ralph Ghoche / 500K Diana Center, Barnard College.

Office Hours: TBA

Mary McLeod / 306 Buell Center, Columbia University.

Office Hours: TBA

Course Description:

This seminar examines architecture and urban planning in North Africa from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, through the French conquest of Algeria in 1830, the establishment of French protectorates in Tunisia (1881) and Morocco (1912), and the Italian colonization of Libya (1911), to the period of decolonization and post-independence, concluding with present-day struggles over national identity and governance.

A central concern will be the role of modernization in both colonial and postcolonial societies—a process, while integrally connected to European power, dominance, and violence, is often complex and ambiguous. In fact, modernization sometimes precedes European control as was the case in nineteenth-century Egypt, and, in other instance post-independence, it becomes a means to establish national identity and separation from European powers, as in the case of Egypt under Nasser or Algeria under Ben Bella or Boumediene (note, for example, the public commissions of the Brazilian modern architect Oskar Niemeyer in Algiers and Constantine, in which a modern architecture is seen as a distinct break with the Arabesque/ Neo-Mauresque forms of French colonialism). Nor should European influences in North Africa, however dominant and pervasive, be seen as only related to its political and economic control; multi-ethnic populations, trade and commerce, different places of architectural training, and cross-national infrastructures, such as railroad routes, all contributed and continue to contribute to making exchanges between European and Muslim culture diverse and multi-directional, if uneven in their power and influence.

Among the many issues the course plans to address, as it considers connections between architecture and its political and social context, are: modernization under the Ottoman empire, differences among English, French, and Italian colonization, the role of the Catholic church in the destruction of Muslim religious structures and urban transformation, stylistic hybridity, association versus assimilation, Lyautey's vision of cultural difference and urban segregation, colonial cities as "laboratories" of modernization, Mediterraneanism and visions of integration, debates about historic and urban preservation, modernism as form of national identity, and contemporary efforts to reclaim vernacular traditions.

Course Requirements:

Prerequisites: Knowledge of French or Arabic is welcome, but not required.

Readings: There are no textbooks in this class. There will be approximately 80-120 pages of reading a week. All readings will be posted online. All readings must be completed the night before the relevant seminar.

Course Assessment and Grading

Participation and Attendance	= 10%
Weekly Reading Responses	= 20%
Research Paper Presentation (last two weeks of class).....	= 20%
Research Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (approx. 1000 words)	= 20%
• Deadline: <u>Fri Oct 1</u> : You must have met with your instructor to discuss your essay topic	
• Deadline: <u>Fri Oct. 15</u> : Term Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (approx. 1000 words) emailed as MS Word document.	
Research Paper Final Submission (~3000 words).....	= 30%
• Deadline: <u>Fri Dec. 10</u> : Final paper (approx. 3000 words) emailed as MS Word document.	

Discussion Participation

Students are expected to attend all weekly seminars, to do all seminar readings, to wisely and consistently contribute to the weekly seminar discussions. Discussions will cover explicit and implicit questions concerning colonialism in North Africa, and should be used as an open forum for questioning.

Weekly Reading Responses

Weekly Reading Responses are due at midnight the day before class and should be submitted through canvas in the online discussion for the corresponding week. You will be able to see your classmates' responses only once you have added your own response to the forum. Once you have added your response, I recommend that you read the other responses on the forum. Reading responses written in fragmentary or note form will not be accepted.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1.	Introduction: Colonial Amnesia
Week 2.	Colonial Policies and Institutions
Week 3.	A Colonial Sea: Utopian Visions and Violence across the Mediterranean
Week 4.	Early French Colonialism in Algeria
Week 5.	Representations of North Africa and the Middle East in the Nineteenth Century
Week 6.	French Colonial Urbanism and Stylistic Hybridity: Jonnart, Lyautey and Prost in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco
Week 7.	Le Corbusier and Algeria
Week 8.	Colonization and Modernism in Libya
Week 9.	Modernism, Cosmopolitanism, and Pan-Arabism in Egypt
Week 10.	ATBAT in Morocco and Algeria and Post-World War II Housing Blocks
Week 11.	Counter-Insurgent Urbanism and Decolonization
Week 12.	Modernist visions post-independence and the Postmodern Search for Tradition
Week 13.	Contemporary Architecture in North Africa: Student presentations
Week 14.	Contemporary Architecture in North Africa: Student presentations